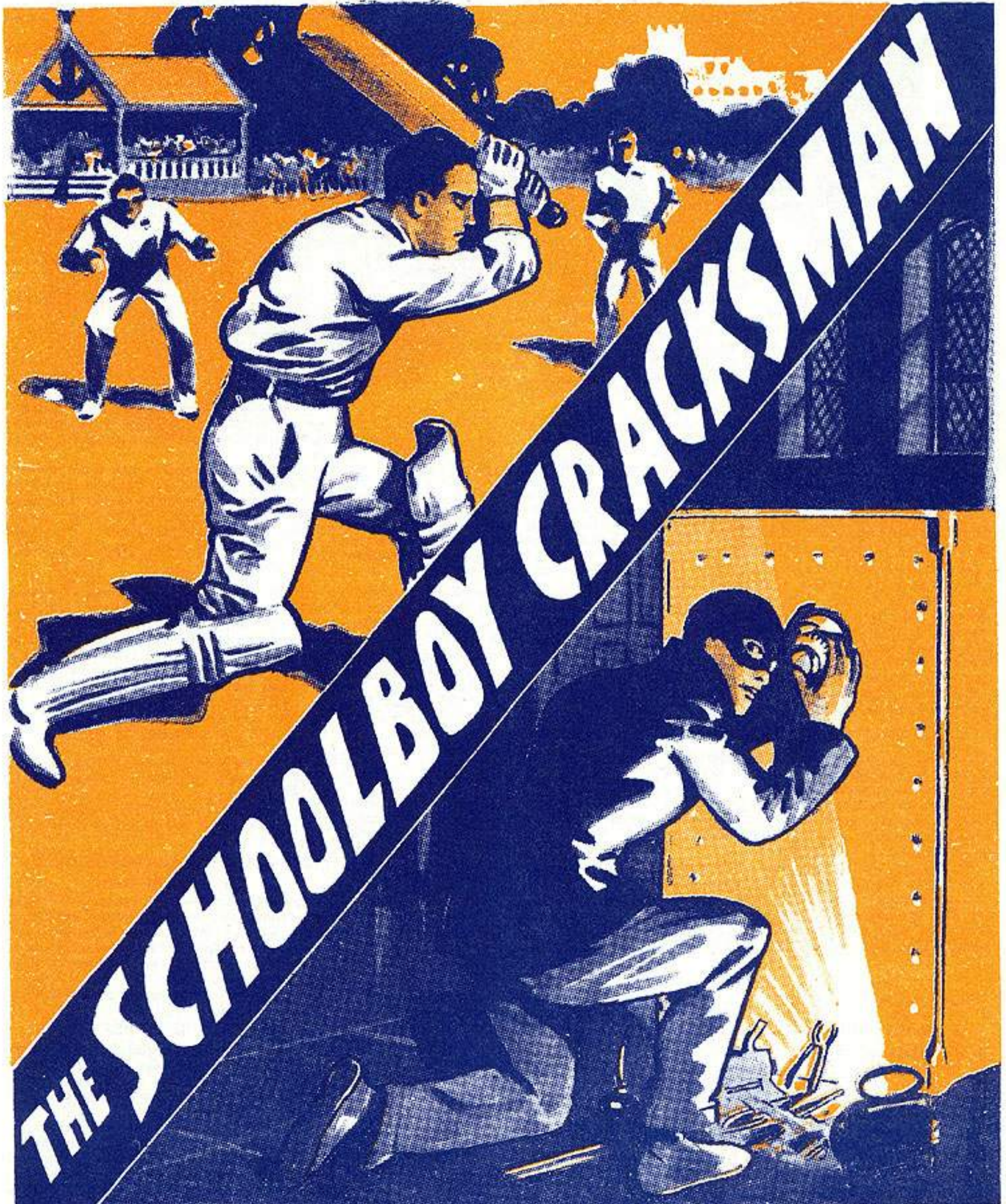


"THE SCHOOLBOY CRACKSMAN!"

Amazing Complete School Story—Inside.

The **MAGNET** 2^D





Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address:
The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HAVE you ever wondered how far the sound of St. Paul's clock striking can be heard? Jim Tasker, of Leytonstone, asks me if I can tell him. Well, of course, if the sound happens to be broadcast, it can be heard all over the world. But that is not exactly what Jim means. He wants to know how far it can be heard with the ordinary ear. In connection with this there is a very interesting story about

WHEN THE CLOCK STRUCK THIRTEEN.

In the time of William and Mary a sentry on the terrace at Windsor Castle was accused of sleeping at his post, and was condemned to death. He vowed he was awake, and declared that he had heard St. Paul's clock strike thirteen at midnight. This story was laughed at, first, because of the great distance between St. Paul's and Windsor Castle, and secondly, because no one would believe that the clock struck thirteen. But, when inquiries were made, it was affirmed by people in London that St. Paul's had actually struck thirteen that night—and the soldier thus escaped capital punishment!

So it would appear that, on a quiet night, the striking of St. Paul's clock can be heard as far away as Windsor.

In this particular case of the soldier, it appears that the evidence that saved him was perfectly correct, but that was not always the case in those days. For instance a man was being tried at the Old Bailey for highway robbery, and a witness swore that he saw his face distinctly, as it was a bright moonlight night.

But the highwayman had a smart lawyer on his side, and he was

SAVED BY AN ALMANACK.

After making the witness swear that the night was a moonlight one, the lawyer produced an almanack, which said that there was no moon at all on that particular night. The almanack was handed to the bench, who, after consulting it, immediately acquitted the prisoner.

It was not until some time afterwards that it was discovered that the almanack had been specially prepared and printed for the occasion—and that the witness was right after all! But it was too late then! The highwayman had escaped!

Have you ever heard of

A PLANT THAT CAN WALK?

Kenneth Dunbar, of Stamford, has asked me why we talk of people "sowing their wild oats." The reason is that the wild oat is of a rambling disposition, and therefore we liken an unstable person to it. It may come as a surprise to you to know that the wild oat has the power of moving from one place to another. For instance, if you moisten a head of it, and leave it on a table for the night, you will find that it has walked off by the next morning!

READY for a chuckle, chums? Right, then read this amusing yarn which Tom Wallace, of 1, Charlotte Terrace, Dalkey, Co. Dublin, has sent along. He gets a prize of a topping pocket knife for it:



"How's your little dog?" asked Mr. Brown, of his neighbour.

"Oh, he's a marvel," answered Mr. White.

"Quite!" ventured Mr. Brown. "Are you teaching him to do any tricks?"

"No need to," retorted Mr. White. "Fido's a perfect conjurer."

"In what way?"

"Why," answered Mr. White, throwing out his chest, "only yesterday he turned some sheep into a pen!"



Here comes

A QUERY FROM GLASGOW.

Jim McNeil, of that city, has been looking at Glasgow's coat-of-arms, in which a fish is depicted, bearing a ring in its mouth. He wants to know what the fish and the ring have to do with Glasgow. The story is rather interesting.

A certain queen in the olden days had a ring presented to her by the king, but she gave this away to a soldier. The king, learning of this, stole the ring from the soldier while he was asleep, and threw it into the Clyde. Then he demanded the return of the ring from the queen. The soldier knew nothing of what had happened to the ring, and, in great distress, the queen asked the help of a saint. The saint went to the Clyde, caught a salmon, and took from its stomach the missing ring, which was then returned to the king.

The arms of Glasgow to-day commemorate this story by being composed of the tree and bell of the saint, with the salmon of the legend crossing the tree with the ring in its mouth.

BOOKS, PENKNIVES and POCKET WALLETS offered for storyettes and Greyfriars limericks. All efforts to be sent to:

c/o MAGNET,
5, Carmelite Street,
London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY OF WINNING SOMETHING USEFUL!

YOU remember those amusing "howlers" which I passed on to you a little while ago? Well, here is **ANOTHER CROP OF "HOWLERS"**

which have been sent to me by various readers:

"An equinox is a cross between a horse and an ox."

"The Chinese eat a lot of rice with things called pitch forks."

"Nitrogen is not found in Ireland, because it is never found in a free state!"

"A circle is that part of a theatre which has the most expensive seats."

"Carte blanche" means an ice cream cart."

"A 'homme de lettres' is a postman." And Yorkshire readers will chuckle at this one:

"A Begum is a Londoner's pronunciation of 'By gum'!"

Well, that's enough to be going on with! Billy Bunter and Dicky Nugent will have to look to their laurels!

Just to finish up, we'll have a few **RAPID-FIRE REPLIES.**

The tallest man who ever lived (G. D., of Nottingham): Og, king of Bashan, was the biggest giant in history. He is said to have been nearly sixteen feet tall! The shortest man was an Englishman named Geoffrey Hudson, who was only eighteen inches high!

What is wormwood? (R. K., of Hanwell): Wormwood is not a wood—neither is it a worm! It is an aromatic, bitter plant.

How did buccaneers get their name? (A. H., of Lowestoft): Because they used to eat great quantities of the sun-dried flesh of wild pigs, which was called "bucan"—meaning "bacon." Therefore these men should really have been called "baconeers."

The following clever Greyfriars limerick which has been sent in by Jimmy Hillman, of "Lynton," Chesham Road, Weston-super-Mare, is a worthy winner of one of this week's dandy pocket wallets:

"I intend," said fat Bunter, at ease,
"To eat just as much as I please.

Although it is true,
My toes are from view,
I can still get a glimpse of my knees!"

BLACK book forward! Here is next week's programme—and a real, tip-topper you will agree. First of all comes a magnificent long, complete yarn of the chums of Greyfriars, entitled:

"The SHADOW of the UNDERWORLD!"
By Frank Richards.

The Famous Five are up to their necks in adventure—and thrills—next week, and there will be few readers who will put down their copy of THE MAGNET until they have finished every line of this first-rate yarn.

Added to this comes the grand opening instalment of

"LAND OF LOST PLANES!"
our great new flying serial, full particulars of which appear on page 25 of this issue. This unique story is a real scoop for the MAGNET, so look out for the first chapters in next Saturday's issue.

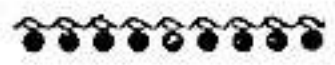
In addition to this splendid treat comes another ripping issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," together with more jokes and Greyfriars limericks and my usual chat.

Be with you again next week, chums.
YOUR EDITOR.

THE SCHOOLBOY CRACKSMAN!



By
**RANK
RICHARDS.**



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Looking for Loder!

WHARTON!" Wingate of the Sixth looked out of the window of the prefects' room at Greyfriars and called.

Harry Wharton looked round. The junior was in flannels, with his bat under his arm, and he was heading for Little Side when the Greyfriars captain hailed him.

Much as he liked old Wingate, Wharton would have preferred not to catch his eye at that moment. However, he turned back as cheerfully as he could.

"Yes, Wingate?"
"Have you seen Loder?" asked Wingate. "Know where he is?"

"Loder?" repeated Wharton.

Really, a junior of the Lower Fourth could hardly be expected to know where a Sixth Form man was. Really, it was not a junior's business to keep an eye on the prefects. And Loder of the Sixth was a prefect to whom all the juniors at Greyfriars gave as wide a berth as possible.

"Haven't seen him!" said Wharton briefly.
"Well, he's wanted," said the Greyfriars captain. "A man wants him on the telephone. Find him and tell him, will you, there's a good kid."

Wharton made a grimace.
"Oh, all right!"
Wingate had a rather disturbed expression on his face. Gwynne of the

Sixth, visible at the window, was grinning. Sykes of the Sixth, also visible, was frowning, and his lip was curling. It occurred to Wharton, as he glanced at the group of Sixth Form men, that there was something unusual, something rather peculiar, about that telephone call for Loder.

"Buck up, kid!" called out Wingate. "It's rather pressing!"
"Right-ho!"

Harry Wharton hurried away—not in the direction of Little Side. He had no idea where to look for Loder, but

Somewhere at large is the Wizard, a notorious cracksmán, whose identity is unknown . . . Then spreads the amazing rumour that the new boy in the Sixth at Greyfriars, a wizard with the willow, is in reality

THE WIZARD CRACKSMAN!

the slacker of the Sixth was not likely to be on the cricket ground. All that Wharton could do was to ask every fellow he met whether he had seen Loder of the Sixth, and that he proceeded to do.

"Seen Loder, Smithy?"
"No, and don't want to!" answered Vernon-Smith.
"Seen Loder, Fishy?"
"Nope!"
"Seen Loder, Skinner?"
"Certainly!" answered Skinner.
"Oh, good!" exclaimed Wharton. Skinner was only the third fellow he had asked, so he felt that he was in luck. "He's wanted. Where is he?"

"Blessed if I know!"
"You ass, you said you'd seen him!"
"So I have," agreed Skinner.
"Well, where did you see him?" exclaimed Wharton impatiently. "If he's still where you saw him—"

"I hardly think he's still there," said Skinner, shaking his head.
"Well, where was it, anyhow?"
"At dinner," said Harold Skinner cheerfully.

"At dinner?" repeated Wharton. "You silly owl, it's more than four hours since dinner, you funny idiot!"

Skinner grinned. Skinner was a humorous fellow. In the circumstances, the captain of the Remove had no use for Skinner's brand of humour. He introduced his cricket bat into the conversation, and Skinner ceased to grin, suddenly, as he received a lunge from the business end of it in his ribs.

"Ow!" roared Skinner. Leaving Skinner feeling much less humorous, Wharton went on his way, inquiring for Gerald Loder of the Sixth Form.

"Bunter—here, Bunter!"
Billy Bunter was rolling out of the House, and Wharton shouted to him. Bunter blinked round through his big spectacles. His fat face brightened.
"Here I am, old chap! What is it—a spread?"
"No, you ass! I'm looking for Loder."

"Oh, blow Loder!"
"Have you seen him?"
"No!" grunted Bunter. "But, I say, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,213.

old chap, I'll help you look for him, if you like. Let's look in the tuckshop."

"Loder's not likely to be in the tuckshop, fathead!"

"Well, he might be; and Mrs. Mimble has got some lovely new jam tarts in—simply scrumptious!"

"Ass!"

Mrs. Mimble's lovely new jam tarts did not appeal to Wharton so much as to William George Bunter. He had to find Loder. He tramped on, leaving the Owl of the Remove blinking after him.

"I say, Coker!"

Coker of the Fifth glared round at Wharton. Coker of the Fifth was a great man, at least, in Coker's own estimation, and he did not like being hailed in the quad by a mere fag.

"Seen Loder?" asked Wharton, just as if Horace Coker was an ordinary human being and not the great Coker at all.

"Cut off!" said Coker, without deigning to answer the question. Horace James Coker of the Fifth Form was not to be questioned by fags.

"You silly ass!" hooted Wharton. He had had no use for Skinner's humour, and he had less use for Coker's greatness.

"What?" boomed Coker.

"Loder's wanted. I'm hunting the silly dummy. Have you seen him?" hooted Wharton. "Haven't you sense enough to answer a question?"

Coker's reply was not in words. He made a stride at the cheeky junior, to cuff him. Coker was wrathful; so was Wharton. His bat was under his arm, and he let it drop as Coker reached him—on Coker's toe. There was a sudden howl from Coker of the Fifth, and he hopped.

"Ow, oh, ow! My toe, wow!"

Wharton hurried away, not only to seek Loder, but to get out of Coker's reach. Coker, just then, was dangerous at close quarters.

He almost ran into a Sixth Form man who was coming out of the House. It was Lancaster, the new fellow in the Sixth.

"Seen Loder, Lancaster?" called out Wharton.

Lancaster stopped; as a Sixth Form man he was a greater man than Coker of the Fifth, but he stopped politely and gave the Removeite a smile.

"Loder?" he repeated. "No!"

"He's wanted on the telephone," growled Wharton. "Wingate's set me hunting him, bother him!"

A glimmer came into Lancaster's handsome eyes. He seemed amused at something.

"Wanted on the telephone?" he repeated.

"Yes. If you've any idea where he is—"

"Sorry, I haven't," said Lancaster, and he walked on, smiling. Wharton stared after him for a moment, wondering what Lancaster found amusing in the matter. But he had no time to bother about that; he had to find the missing prefect.

"Seen Loder, Hobby?"

Hobson of the Shell grinned.

"Yes. Look in the Cloisters, if you want him—and if you want six."

"Six?" repeated Wharton. "What do you mean, you ass?"

"Well, if you butt in when Loder's smoking a cigarette you'll very likely get six."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton. "Well, I've got to find him; he's wanted."

Wharton cut across to the Cloisters. Now that he came to think of it, it

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was quite a likely spot to find the sportsman of the Sixth, if Loder happened to be feeling the urge for a smoke. In that secluded spot, cigarettes could be smoked, unseen and unnoticed; and in such matters a Greyfriars man had to be careful.

Loder was not likely to be pleased if a junior spotted him smoking. But Wharton had no choice in the matter, and he ran in among the old stone pillars of the ancient Cloisters, looking for Loder. A scent of smoke guided him, and then the sound of a voice.

"Look here, Walker, you could jolly well help me out if you liked. I tell you Hawke is dunning me!"

It was Gerald Loder's voice, and Walker's followed on.

"Sorry, old man! I'm simply stony! But I'll tell you what—the less you have to do with that man Hawke the better. He's a bad egg."

"Oh, don't jaw! If you can lend me a fiver—"

"I can't."

Harry Wharton gave a loud cough. He did not want to hear the shady secrets of the sportsmen of the Sixth—and such secrets were rather dangerous for a junior to hear. The voices died away instantly.

Loder and Walker of the Sixth appeared in sight the next moment, strolling along without a sign of a cigarette about them, though there was a scent of smoke in the air. Loder scowled at the junior.

"Wharton, what do you want here? What—?" Loder's official ashplant was under his arm, and he let it slide down into his hand.

"You're wanted, Loder!" exclaimed Wharton hastily. "Man hanging on the telephone in the prefects' room waiting for you."

"Oh!" exclaimed Loder. "Who the dooce—?" He hurried away without finishing the sentence.

Wharton was turning to go, when Walker of the Sixth called to him.

"Who wants Loder on the phone, kid?" he asked.

"I don't know. Wingate told me to find him, that's all."

"I wonder—?" Walker, like Loder, left his sentence unfinished. He strolled away; and Wharton, his task done at last, hurried away to Little Side, where his friends were at games practice.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry. "You're late, old bean!"

"The lateness is better than the neverfulness," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And Wharton, at long last, got to the cricket and forgot about Loder of the Sixth and all his works.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Asking for It!

WINGATE was frowning when Loder of the Sixth hurried rather breathlessly into the prefects' room. Several other Sixth Form men were present, and they all looked at Loder very curiously. The receiver was off the telephone, and Loder hurried across to it. The other seniors, exchanging glances, strolled out of the room, with the exception of the captain of Greyfriars. Wingate stood with the frown deepening on his rugged face.

"Look here, Loder!" he said abruptly.

"I've got a call to take," said Loder. "I think you might clear while a man's using the telephone, Wingate."

"Nobody's supposed to use this telephone for anything that the whole

school mayn't hear!" snapped Wingate. "But I'm going. Just a word to you first, Loder. This won't do!"

"What won't do?" snapped Loder.

"That man on the phone has given his name as Hawke. That name is pretty well known in the locality. It's the name of a boozey racing-man who puts up at the Cross Keys."

Loder's face paled. He stood with the receiver in his hand looking at Wingate.

"You're a prefect, and I suppose you know your own business best," went on Wingate. "But there's a limit. If the Head knew that you were in touch with that blackguard you wouldn't remain a prefect long—if you stayed at Greyfriars at all. I'm not blind, Loder; and I've a pretty clear idea of your dingy games outside the school. But letting a bookmaking blackguard phone you at the school is altogether too thick."

"I—I never—" stammered Loder.

"Any fellow might have taken the call. A master might have been in the room. If you haven't any decency, you might have a little sense!" exclaimed Wingate. "We don't want the Sixth disgraced by an expulsion. You'd be sacked like a shot if this came out. Are you out of your senses?"

"I—I can't believe that the man would have the impudence to phone me here!" gasped Loder, his face quite white.

"Well, he has! You'd better warn him off! I tell you plainly, Loder, that it won't do! I'm head prefect, and I won't stand it. I'm not sure that I ought not to report this to the Head as it is."

"You wouldn't get a man sacked!" muttered Loder huskily. "Don't be a rotter, Wingate."

"I don't think I'm the rotter here," growled Wingate. "But there's a rotter present, there's no doubt about that. Warn that man off, Loder! I tell you plainly that if he rings up Greyfriars again the matter goes before Dr. Locke!"

With that Wingate of the Sixth tramped out of the prefects' room, closing the door after him with a bang.

Loder stood, white-faced, the receiver trembling in his hand. More than once had Gerald Loder's sporting proclivities landed him in danger. But he had never dreamed of anything like this.

Jerry Hawke, the red-faced, disreputable racing-man, was an old acquaintance, but that acquaintanceship had been kept a careful secret from Greyfriars. For his own sake Loder expected the man to be discreet. He owed the man money, but he could not understand his impudence and effrontery in telephoning to the school.

His voice was quite faint as he said "Hallo!" into the transmitter.

"Hallo!" came back a husky voice, the voice of Jerry Hawke, of the Cross Keys. "Is that you, Mr. Loder? You've kep' me waiting."

"Are you mad, Hawke? What are you phoning here for?" hissed Loder. "You might have given me away to the whole school!"

"Wot do I care?" came back the husky voice.

"What!" gasped Loder. "What did you say, Hawke?"

"I says, wot do I care?" came back in insolent tones. "You owe a man money! You ain't squared. You ain't even give a man a bit of writin'! Is that the way to treat a man?"

"I—I will see you as soon as I can; you've got to give me time!" breathed Loder.

"Ain't I give you time? You ask a

man to trust you, and you don't trust a man. What about that bit of writing?"

"I—I can't do that! I can't—"

There was an angry grunt over the wires.

"Well, that tears it!" said Jerry Hawke. "I ain't got much to say to you, Mr. Loder, but you better 'ear it. I want that bit of writing. If I don't get it I don't ring you up again; I ring up your headmaster! That's the lot."

There was a whirl on the line. The man at the Cross Keys had rung off.

Loder put up the receiver and stood pale and faint, his brow thick with perspiration. He wiped his brow with a shaking hand.

"Good gad!" muttered Loder.

He moved slowly away from the telephone. His knees almost knocked together. Why the man had cut up rusty like this Loder could not fathom. For whole terms he had had dealings with Jerry Hawke, and he had owed the man money often enough, but Hawke had always been civil. He had made a good thing out of the dingy sportsman of the Sixth, and it had paid him to keep in with him. Now the civil, oily rascal had turned into a threatening bully, and Loder could not understand why. But he could understand the danger it meant to him.

The door of the prefects' room opened. The slim, athletic figure and handsome face of Lancaster of the Sixth appeared there.

Loder gave him a glare.

There was terror in his heart, and his nerves were in tatters. The sight of Lancaster's handsome face at that moment was to Loder like a red rag to a bull. He had hated the fellow ever since he had come to the school, a few weeks before—more than ever since Lancaster had cut him out of the First Eleven. He made a stride towards the new senior.

"Get out!" he snarled.

Lancaster raised his eyebrows. He was perfectly calm and cool—a contrast to the excited, nervy Loder.

"This is the prefects' room!" snarled Loder. "You're not a prefect! You've butted into the Sixth, but the Head hasn't been fool enough to make you a prefect, after being fool enough to let you into the school. Get out!"

"My dear fellow—" drawled Lancaster.

Loder clenched his hands.

"Will you get out?" he shouted.

"Well, no," said Lancaster calmly, "I think not. As you point out, I am not a prefect, but I believe any Sixth Form man can enter these sacred precincts on the invitation of a prefect. And Wingate happens to have asked me here."

"Get out!"

"My dear man, I'm here to talk to Wingate about the cricket! As he doesn't seem to be present I shall wait for him."

"The cricket!" repeated Loder, his face flaming. "The cricket you've cut me out of, you pushing outsider! You've got my place in the First Eleven—you, a nobody from nowhere—"

"I suppose I play the game rather better than a somebody from somewhere," remarked Lancaster, smiling. "Wingate seems to think so, as he's put me up for the Rookwood match this week. Perhaps it's because I don't smoke in my study, or break bounds after lights-out, or play banker when I ought to be at games practice. What do you think?"

Loder choked.

"Will you get out of this, you rank outsider?"

"In the circumstances, no!" answered Lancaster coolly, and he walked into the prefects' room.

Loder sprang at him almost like a tiger. Once before Loder had used his

Lancaster was not even breathing quickly. He was cool as an iceberg.

"Better chuck it, Loder!" he said, and he walked across the room to an armchair, and sat down.

Loder staggered to his feet.

He stood for some moments, his hands clenched, his eyes burning. North of the Sixth came along the corridor and stared at him.

"What the thump—" began North.

Loder turned away. He had to "chuck it," as Lancaster advised. He knew that. His hands were of no use against the new man of the Sixth. Tom North stared after him as he moved slowly away, and went into the prefects' room.

"Loder's got his rag out about something," he remarked.

"Looks like it," agreed Lancaster.

"The cricket, I suppose? Loder can't



As Coker made a stride towards Wharton, the junior captain let his bat drop. There was a sudden howl from Coker as he hopped about on one foot. "Ow! Oh! My toe! Wow!" he yelled.

hands on his enemy in the Sixth, and he had crumpled up like an infant in Lancaster's sinewy grasp. But he forgot that now in his rage.

"You thrusting cad! You crook! You're going out!"

"Hands off, you fool!"

Lancaster's voice rang sharply. Loder did not heed. He grasped at the new senior, and whirled him towards the door. For the moment, in his tempest of passion, he seemed to have the better of it. But Lancaster's slim and elegant frame held twice the strength of the slacker of the Sixth. He stiffened in Loder's grasp, and returned grip for grip. For a few moments there was a struggle, and then there was a crash in the doorway as a falling figure landed there.

But it was not Richard Lancaster that landed. It was Loder, and he sprawled, gasping.

Lancaster looked down at him quietly and contemptuously. Loder was gasping and spluttering from his efforts, but

get over being dropped out of the team for Rookwood! But, dash it all, if a man slacks at games, and can't play—" North broke off. "What do you think of our chances on Wednesday, Lancaster? Rosy, what?"

The two were soon deep in "cricket jaw." Wingate and Gwynne and Sykes came in, and joined in cheerily. Loder, passing the window of the prefects' room a little later, glanced in, and saw the cheery group—Lancaster, the new man in the Sixth, the centre of it. Loder gritted his teeth and passed on.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Tea for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"No!" said the Famous Five of the Remove, with one voice.

Billy Bunter blinked at them.

"Eh?" he ejaculated. "No what?"

"No quids, no half-crowns, no bobs

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even!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Try next door!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Wrong shop!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Fact is, we're going to tea in Hall, Bunt!"

"If you fellows think I was thinking of tea——"

"Well, you couldn't possibly be thinking of anything else at tea-time, I suppose," remarked Frank Nugent, "unless it was supper."

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Try Smithy!" suggested Johnny Bull. "The Bounder's got tons of cof."

"The beast won't lend me any," said Bunter. "He's mean! Toddy's mean, too. He's teeing out, and he doesn't care if there's nothing in the study for a fellow. Mauly's mean, too. I passed him in the lane, and he dodged through the hedge—actually dodged a fellow, you know, as if he thought a fellow was going to touch a fellow for a loan——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows, I wasn't going to speak about tea. I've seen a man in——"

"Nothing very remarkable in that," said Bob Cherry. "I've seen lots."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Anything special about the man you've seen?" asked Harry Wharton. Billy Bunter had just rolled in at the gates, and caught the chums of the Remove as they came away from the cricket. Bunter's manner indicated that there was, in point of fact, something special about the man he had seen.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes jolly old Loder!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Looks merry and bright, doesn't he?"

The juniors smiled as they glanced at Loder of the Sixth.

Loder was looking anything but merry and bright. He was slouching along with his hands driven deep into his pockets, a black and moody frown on his brow, his eyes on the ground. He did not seem to observe the cheery bunch of Removites as he came slouching along the path towards them.

"Looks as if his favourite geegee has come in eleventh!" murmured Nugent, and the juniors chuckled. They knew more than Loder supposed of the manners and customs of the Sixth Form sportsman.

"I say, you fellows, I tell you I've seen that man!" persisted Billy Bunter. "I say——"

"What man, fathead?"

"You fellows remember him, I dare say—the man we saw hanging about Wharton Lodge in the Easter hols——"

Loder of the Sixth made a sudden movement, and looked up. He stared curiously at Bunter. The Owl of the Remove, quite unconscious of it, rattled on:

"You remember, that man called the Weasel. He knew Lancaster! You remember Lancaster said he was an old servant of his uncle's, and sticking him for a job. That ferret-eyed man, you know! I say, I've seen him. He was in Friardale Lane when I came back from the village! I say, you fellows, do you think he's hanging about here to see Lancaster of the Sixth?"

"What rot!" said Bob. "Come on, you men! We don't want to be late for Hall, and find all the doorsteps gone!"

"But, I say, you fellows, it's rather queer that man being about here, isn't it?" said Bunter. "It's the same man

we saw at Easter. We found out that Lancaster knew him——"

"Shut up, you ass!" breathed Wharton.

"Eh? What——"

Loder had stopped on the path. He was taking in every word uttered by the Owl of the Remove. Wharton caught Bunter by the arm, and hurried him towards the House. Loder stood looking after them as they went.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, dry up!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Don't you know Loder's got his knife into that new man in the Sixth, fathead?"

"Here he comes!" muttered Nugent. Loder of the Sixth strode after the juniors. He overtook them before they reached the House.

"Bunter!" he called out.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. He blinked round at Loder with alarmed eyes behind his spectacles. "I—I say, Loder, it wasn't me!"

"Eh?" ejaculated Loder. "What wasn't you?"

"I—I mean, I—I didn't!" gasped Bunter.

"You didn't what, you young ass?"

"Oh! Nothing! Anything!" stammered Bunter. "I—I say, Loder, I—I shall be late for tea!"

Loder laughed. Evidently William George Bunter was in fear of the ashplant. He had a good many sins of omission and commission on his fat conscience. Moreover, the bully of the Sixth did not always wait for a good reason before applying the ashplant. But Gerald Loder was not on the war-path now.

"Don't be a young ass, Bunter," he said. "The fact is, I've something to say to you. Like to come to tea in my study?"

Bunter jumped.

Great men of the Sixth Form sometimes asked fags to tea in their studies. But Loder had never exercised that sort of hospitality before. Wingate might ask Wharton or Hobson of the Shell to tea, to talk about junior games. But why Loder should ask Bunter to tea was a mystery—to Bunter, at least, though Harry Wharton & Co. thought they knew why.

But Billy Bunter did not care for whys and wherefores. He cared for the tea. His fat face was irradiated by a joyous grin.

"Oh! Yes! Rather!" he gasped. "I'll come with pleasure, Loder."

"Very well. Six o'clock," said Loder, and he walked away without a glance at the Famous Five.

"I say, you fellows! You can go into Hall, to your dish-water and doorsteps," grinned Bunter. "I'm going to have something rather better than that! He, he, ho!"

The juniors exchanged glances.

"Look here, Bunter! Come into Hall!" said Bob Cherry.

"Catch me!" grinned Bunter derisively. "Likely, when I'm asked to tea by a Sixth Form man, isn't it?"

"Look here, Bunter," said Harry Wharton quietly, "Loder wants to talk to you because——"

"My dear chap," said Bunter patronisingly, "I know why Loder wants to talk to me. Naturally, he would like to talk to an intellectual, well-informed fellow—a chap who's a cut above the Lower School. He's not likely to ask you fellows to tea. I can tell you that."

"You fat ass!" growled Johnny Bull.

Bunter waved a fat hand.

"No need to be jealous because I'm asked to tea in the Sixth!" he said



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reprovingly. "If you fellows had my manners, you might be asked to tea in the Sixth, too! As it is, you can't expect it."

"You frabjous fathead!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You needn't yell at me, Bob Cherry, because I've got a friend in the Sixth. I dislike this paltry jealousy."

That invitation to tea from a Sixth Form prefect had evidently got into Bunter's head a little. He seemed to have grown an inch or two taller. His podgy chest was puffed out; his fat chin lifted, and he eyed the chums of the Remove with the patronising loftiness natural in such circumstances—natural to William George Bunter, at least.

The Co. looked at him in exasperation. Never had they been so powerfully tempted to kick Bunter. However, they refrained from kicking him. Kicking was not the way to dissuade him from tea with Loder.

"Trot in to your dish-water and door-steps!" grinned Bunter. "If you see Smithy, tell him I'm not coming to tea with him. Tell him I've got something better on. If you see Toddy, you can mention that I've gone to tea with a friend in the Sixth, if he wants to know where I am."

"Listen to me, Bunter!" said Wharton. "Loder wants to pump you because he heard you say that you were with us in the Easter holidays when we first met Lancaster. He's tried pumping me; and now he knows you were with us at Easter, he's going to pump you. He wants to get hold of something against Lancaster of the Sixth."

"Rot!" said Bunter. "Do you think he would let a fat frog crawl into his study if he hadn't an axe to grind?" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—" "Better keep away from Loder," said Harry. "Look here, Bunter, keep away from that prying rotter, and we'll stand you a feed in the study. I'll borrow something from Smithy."

Bunter's fat lip curled. "If you think I'm after your fag feeds, you're jolly well mistaken!" he sneered. "I'm not likely to tea in a fag study when I'm invited in the Sixth!"

"You fat idiot!" "That's enough!" said Bunter, with another wave of a podgy hand. "I despise this paltry jealousy! Can't a man have a friend in the Sixth without all this miserable envy and carping?"

"You benighted chump!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Shut up, Bull! If you can't keep civil, don't talk to me! I might ask my friend Loder to touch you up with the ashplant, too!"

"Why, you—you—you—" Johnny Bull spluttered.

"Better mind your manners!" said Bunter warningly. "It may pay you to keep civil to a fellow who has friends among the Sixth Form prefects!"

"I'm going to kick him!" gasped Johnny Bull. "I'm jolly well going to kick him right across the quad!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Wharton hastily. "Look here, Bunter, if you go to tea with Loder—"

"No 'if' about it!" jeered Bunter. "I'm not likely to refuse an invitation to tea from a pal in the Sixth Form because a lot of scrubby juniors are sucking up to me and wanting my company!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Nugent. "Well, if you tea with Loder," said Wharton, trying hard to keep his boot away from Bunter, "don't let him pump you about Lancaster."

"Rubbish! I don't know anything against Lancaster. I think he's a jolly

decent chap. We were pally in the hols, though he's been a bit standoffish since he came here and got into the Sixth. Lancaster's all right, I can tell you. He gave me some choes yesterday."

"Well, keep off the subject," said Harry. "Don't mention anything that happened at Easter at my place."

"Teach your grandmother!" retorted Bunter. "It's not easy to pump me, I can tell you. I dare say Loder will ask me about my hols; he would naturally be interested. He knows I have a magnificent time at Bunter Court. He may be fishing for an invitation there."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob. "Look here, Bunter—" urged Wharton.

"I'm afraid I can't give you fellows any more of my time," said Bunter. "You see, I've got to see a man in the Sixth."

"You burbling bandersnatch!" "That will do," said Bunter. "That's enough from you, Wharton! I tell you plainly, I can't stand your fag manners! I hardly know what my friends in the Sixth Form would think of you. Anyhow, I'm fed-up! Keep your distance!"

And Billy Bunter turned, and rolled away with his fat little nose in the air, evidently very much above himself. It was a lofty, dignified, and contemptuous departure. Its effect was, however, a little spoiled by Johnny Bull making a jump after the fat and fatuous Owl and planting his boot forcibly on Bunter's tight trousers.

There was a wild yell from Bunter, and he tottered forward and dropped on his hands and knees. He glared round with an infuriated glare.

"Ow! Yow! I'll tell Loder! Wow!" he gasped. "I'll jolly well tell my friend Loder that you kicked me, you beast!"

"Tell him that I kicked you, too, then!" said Bob Cherry.

And he suited the action to the word. "Yarooooogh!"

"And mention that I kicked you, too!" chuckled Nugent.

"Whooooop!"

"And do not forgetfully omit to mention that the kickfulness of my esteemed self was also terrific!" chortled the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Yoooooooop!" Bunter scrambled away and fled. It was not, after all, a lofty, dignified, and contemptuous departure. It was a hurried flight, and Bunter puffed and blew as he fled.

Harry Wharton & Co. went into Hall to tea. They were feeling rather worried. It was a solace to kick Bunter; but that did not alter the fact that Loder was going to "pump" the fat Owl and draw from him information which he could use in his campaign against Lancaster of the Sixth. The chums of the Remove liked Lancaster and admired him, and they were up against Loder all along the line. But there was evidently nothing that they could do. Billy Bunter had to be given his head.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Not Nice for Loder!

GERALD LODER moved about his study with restless steps.

It was near tea-time; but Loder was not thinking of tea or of the Remove man he had asked to tea. He had forgotten Bunter—forgotten even his bitter feud against Lancaster of the Sixth in the stress of a more pressing matter.

That telephone call from Jerry Hawke had frightened Loder—frightened him to the marrow of his bones. The rascal's

threat to ring up the Head almost made his heart stand still. He owed the book-maker money—fifteen pounds, a large sum even for a Sixth Form man. Loder had had bad luck in other directions; all his "dead certs" and "suro snips" had somehow gone astray, as dead certs and suro snips so often do. He had hoped to recoup himself for his losses by a bigger plunge than usual, and Hawke had been willing—indeed, almost eager—to lend him the money. The big plunge was no luckier than the little plunges, and Loder was hopelessly in debt to the oily, shady rascal. That would not have worried him much but for the new line that Jerry Hawke had taken.

The man insisted upon having what he called a "bit of writin'"—a written acknowledgment of the debt. That was only reasonable, in a way; but Loder, whose reckless folly had a limit, had always taken care never to put anything into writing in his dealings with shady characters outside the school.

Such a bit of writing, shown to the Head, would have ruined him, and he dared not take the risk. But now he was in a cleft stick. Unless he gave Hawke that bit of writing, the rascal threatened to give him away at the school.

Proof of their dealings the man had none; Loder had been very careful of that so far. But, with a deep sinking of the heart, Loder realised that he dared not face the test. He could lie; he had lied often enough. His whole life at Greyfriars was a deception. But under the searching eyes of the headmaster, confronted in that august presence with Jerry Hawke, he knew that he would falter, that he would lose his nerve; that he was likely to make admissions, to contradict himself. He had a deep misgiving that the Head would somehow sift out the truth if the matter came before him.

Yet to give the man that bit of writing was to place himself hopelessly in the rascal's power. If Hawke chose to use it for purposes of blackmail, there was nothing to stop him.

But Loder, pacing his study with wrinkled brows, trying to think it out, did not think that it was that. Jerry Hawke was a dingy rogue, but he was not the man for that game. Petty roguery was his line of business, on the safe side of the law.

That was not it, Loder was certain. But the man insisted on getting the "bit of writing," to keep till Loder paid his debt. And Loder realised that he would have to submit, or face serious trouble.

He stopped his restless pacing at last, and stood at the open study window, staring into the sunlit quadrangle, bright in the May sunshine.

Some Sixth Form men were coming back from the cricket ground—Wingate, Gwynne, Sykes, Lancaster. They were talking cricket, in the best of spirits.

Loder eyed them bitterly.

They were thinking, and talking, of the Rookwood match which was to be played on Wednesday. They had no such miserable carking cares as were oppressing Loder's mind and heart.

Yet one of them—Lancaster—surely had thoughts in his mind that he would not have cared to let the others know—if Loder's suspicions were anything but the outcome of envy, hatred, and malice.

Was the fellow a crook? Did he look like a crook? Loder, staring from the window at the frank, happy, careless face, had to admit that he did not.

Happy, careless, at ease; enjoying life at Greyfriars! He had plenty of money

—not his own, if Loder was right! Loder told himself bitterly that he need not have been dunned by a rascally racing man, if he had helped himself to other people's money as he believed that Lancaster had done.

Yet all the fellows liked Lancaster, respected him; sought his company, as they never sought Loder's. Loder's hinted suspicions of the new man had been received with derision and contempt in the Sixth.

Lancaster glanced up.

A faintly ironical smile crossed his handsome face as he met the bitter, vengeful look from the prefect at the window.

Loder gritted his teeth as the seniors passed into the House. He stood staring moodily from the window. He had to knuckle under to the man Hawke, but there was solace in the thought of vengeance on Lancaster! He would show him up yet, as the crook he was!

He turned from the window as the study door opened, and Walker and Carne of the Sixth came in.

"Oh, here you are!" grunted Loder.

Walker closed the study door carefully, and produced cigarettes.

"Your fag won't be buttin' in, Loder?" he asked.

"Not till I call him! It's hardly tea-time," Loder blew out a cloud of smoke. "I've something to tell you men."

Walker and Carne exchanged a rather uneasy look. Of late, Loder had been dunning his friends in the Sixth for loans. They wondered whether he was going to begin again.

Loder smiled sarcastically, reading that uneasy thought in their looks.

"It's about Lancaster," he said.

"Oh, Lancaster!" Walker yawned. Loder's friends hardly concealed the fact that his feud with the new man bored them.

"What's he done now?" asked Carne with a grin. "Cracked the Head's safe, or held up the bank at Courtfield?"

Walker chuckled.

"You know what I think of him," said Loder quietly. "I've told you that he was at my relation's place, Danby Croft, when the safe was robbed there."

"So were you there, old bean—but Lancaster hasn't accused you of cracking the jolly old safe."

"Oh, don't be an ass," said Loder irritably. "I've written to Sir George Danby, asking him to come out plain with what he knows about the fellow, now that Lancaster's a Greyfriars man."

"Any answer?"

"Not yet," grunted Loder.

"Probably he won't waste a stamp on such rot," suggested Walker.

Loder scowled. He was assured that his suspicions of Lancaster were well-founded. But it was certain that he was alone in his belief. Even his own friends grinned at his suspicions.

"Old Danby knows something," he said. "He had Ferrers Locke, the famous detective, looking into the robbery, and I'm certain Locke had suspicions, at least. He's bound to speak out now that the rotter has butted into Greyfriars—if he knows anything."

"If!" said Carne, with a wink at Walker.

"And that's not all!" continued Loder.

Walker gave a deep, deep yawn.

"Isn't it?" he said. "I rather hoped it was."

"I've got another string to my bow," said Loder unheeding. "I fancy that there have been robberies wherever Lancaster happened to be—"

"What a fertile fancy!" said Walker.

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"He was mixed up with a mob of Remove kids in the Easter holidays—Wharton and his crew. I've asked Wharton questions—and he would tell me nothing—whether anything of the kind happened anywhere near his place while Lancaster was around—"

"Nothing to tell, most likely."

"Well, we shall see! I've asked Bunter here to tea. I've found that Bunter was staying with Wharton last Easter. If anything happened, he knows! The other young sweeps are keeping mum, because they're friendly with Lancaster, and they know I'm against him. Bunter will tattle fast enough!" Loder grinned maliciously. "You fellows will hear from Bunter whether there were any robberies in the vicinity while Lancaster was in Surrey last Easter."

Walker and Carne stared at him.

"You've asked a fat, frowzy fag to tea—for us to meet!" exclaimed Walker, "and we're to listen to his tattle! Thanks!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" exclaimed Loder irritably.

"I'm not ass enough to tea with a frowzy fag, and listen to his silly chin-wag!" snorted Walker. "If you want fags to tea, Loder, you can leave out Sixth Form men while you're entertainin' them. I'm off!"

"Look here, you fool—" roared Loder, as James Walker made a movement towards the door.

"Comin', Carne?" asked Walker.

"Yes, rather," grunted Carne. "You can have your dashed fag and his tattlin' all to yourself, Loder! Like your cheek to ask us, I think!"

And the two seniors left the study, Walker closing the door after him with unnecessary force.

Loder scowled after them blackly.

He had not expected that, though certainly his friends had let him see, plainly enough, that they were fed up with his feud. Sitting down to tea with a grubby fag of the Lower Fourth, and listening to his "chin-wag," did not seem good enough to two lofty Sixth Form men.

A few minutes later, there was a tap at the door, and it opened to reveal the fat and fatuous countenance of William George Bunter.

"Here I am, old chap!" said Bunter.

That "old chap" from Bunter nearly earned him the licking of his life. Loder was in the mood to lay the ashplant round that podgy form, and to lay it hard. But he remembered in time that he had a use for Bunter—who could, after all, be thrashed afterwards for his cheeky familiarity. Loder contrived to change his black scowl into a welcoming grin.

"Come in, kid!" said Loder.

Bunter rolled in.

Loder stepped to the door, and shouted "Fag" down the passage.

Tubb of the Third made a prompt appearance. Loder's fag seldom kept him waiting. The results were too painful if he did.

Tubb looked at Bunter! Bunter glanced at Tubb, with lofty patronage. The fag had an almost homicidal expression on his face.

It was the first time that George Tubb had been called upon to fag for a Remove junior! It roused the deepest ire in the breast of Tubb. Fagging for Loder, and his Sixth Form friends, was not agreeable, but it was in the day's work, as it were, for a Third Form "man." But getting tea for a mere junior—a measly fag like himself—fairly got Tubb's goat, as Fisher T. Fish would have expressed it.

It was like Loder's cheek, to expect

such things of a Third Form man! Tubb would have told him so, had he dared. As he dared not, Tubb had to content himself with giving Billy Bunter ferocious scowls.

Loder did not even observe that there was anything wrong with Tubb. That youth was a "man," and a man of some consequence, in the Third Form. To a Sixth Form prefect, he was little more than a microbe.

Tubb performed his bounden duties, and retired from the study as soon as Loder told him that he could "cut." He marched off with feelings too deep for words, to tell the other "men" in the Third Form room that he had had to fag for a measly junior, and to debate with his friends, Paget, and Bolsover minor, whether it would be safe to kick Bunter next time he met him in the quad. Utterly regardless of Tubb and his outraged feelings, Loder and Billy Bunter sat down to tea.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Tea for Two I

BILLY BUNTER frinned expansively.

Loder of the Sixth was in a "stony" state, and in debt all round; but his credit was still good at the school shop. So there was quite a handsome spread on the table; and Billy Bunter eyed it with satisfaction.

He did not need telling to begin. He began!

Loder, perhaps, was not a beaming hospitable host! Only now and then, when he thought of it, he forced a smile to his face.

But that did not bother Bunter! Beaming hospitality would not have interested him so much as the foodstuffs.

The spread was good, and it was ample, and that was all the fat junior cared about. He tucked in, and enjoyed life.

Loder ate little and spoke less. Bunter had nothing to say for a time. But when he had eaten enough for three fellows, and taken the keen edge off his appetite, Bunter became affably conversational.

"Decent spread, old chap!" said Bunter.

Loder suppressed his feelings.

What might be Loder's motive in asking him to tea Bunter did not know; unless Loder had suddenly discovered what a bright and intellectual and attractive chap he was!

That, after all, seemed probable enough—to Bunter! Anyhow, there he was, teeing with a Sixth Form prefect, and convinced that he had left the Famous Five green with envy. If Loder wanted him to talk, as Harry Wharton & Co. had warned him, Bunter had no objection to talking! He rather liked it, in fact. If Loder wanted to find out something about Lancaster, Bunter did not quite see the point; so far as he knew, there was nothing to find out. But he was willing to talk about Lancaster, or anybody else, so long as he talked!

All he stipulated was that he should have his mouth full while he talked!

"You must come to my study to tea some time, old fellow," went on Bunter, with great affability. The more cheek Loder stood from him the more Bunter gave him to stand; that was his little way. "What about to-morrow? No—not to-morrow—I've a party on. What about Wednesday? You'll be free on Wednesday; you won't be playing cricket—he, he, he!"

As his exclusion from the First Eleven

Swish! "Whooooop!" roared Bunter. "Oh, crickey! I—I say, old chap——" The Owl of the Reserve made a wild jump for the door and tore it open just as Loder raised his cane for another swipe.



on Rookwood day was Loder's sorest grievance, this was unusually tactless, even for Bunter. Bunter saw no reason, however, why he should not give his friend in the Sixth a little playful badinage.

"I hear that Wingate's frightfully bucked at getting that new man, Lancaster, into the team!" went on Bunter. "I say, this is good cake!"

"Speaking of Lancaster, I believe you saw him in the holidays last Easter," remarked Loder.

"Oh, yes! Not at home, you know," said Bunter. "He was not in the immense crowd of guests at Bunter Court. I saw him at Wharton's place. Not a bad little place, Wharton Lodge—humble, you know, and unpretending. I put in a few days there, as I'd rather thoughtlessly promised Wharton I would. Hardly my style, as a matter of fact. Pass the cream-puffs, will you?"

Loder passed the cream-puffs. They disappeared down Bunter's capacious gullet one after another, like oysters.

"Lancaster staying there—" asked Loder.

"Oh, no; he was putting up at an inn half a mile away. Ripping chap, isn't he?" said Bunter. "He came over to tea once. I forget which day. Oh, yes, I remember; it was the same day as the burglary."

Loder's eyes snapped.

"A burglary at Wharton Lodge?" he almost gasped.

"The same night," said Bunter. "Somebody broke in, you know. The local police thought it was most likely the same man who had robbed the bank at Wimford the week before."

Loder breathed hard and deep. He

had failed to draw any information from Harry Wharton. Bunter was evidently a different proposition.

While Lancaster was staying near Wharton Lodge, there had been two burglaries in that part of Surrey! Loder scarcely needed more to confirm him in his suspicions.

He wished that Walker and Carne had been present to hear this. They could scarcely have failed to be struck by the fact that robberies seemed to haunt the footsteps of Dick Lancaster.

"Did they get the man?" he asked carelessly.

Bunter gobbled and shook his head. "No fear! Nobody knows who robbed the Wimford bank; and as for the burglar at Wharton Lodge, I scared him off. I went down for some grub, you know, and butted fairly into him, and frightened him away."

"You—you saw him?"

"Only a sort of shadow in the dark," said Bunter. "I shouldn't know him again. But for me he would have cleared out the place. But I can tell you, I tackled him. My pluck's pretty well known. I——"

"Oh, cheese it!" snapped Loder.

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, go on!" said Loder hastily. "Try these tarts, Bunter—they're good!"

"Thanks, I will, old scout!"

Bunter tried them, and proceeded to pack them away safely after the cream-puffs.

"Was Lancaster staying alone at the inn?" asked Loder. "I—I suppose he had some friends there—or visitors."

"Only that man he called the

Weasel," said Bunter. "Any more tarts?"

"The Weasel?" repeated Loder. "Did you say the Weasel?"

"I said tarts——"

"Try the doughnuts. Who was the Weasel?"

Loder was struck by that peculiar name. He was intensely interested. Bunter was more interested in the doughnuts. Loder waited with savage impatience till a doughnut had disappeared and a second was on the downward path.

"Oh, a man!" said Bunter, with his mouth full. "We found him hanging about Wharton Lodge one day. That was before the burglary. I had rather an idea that he might know something about it—shifty-looking brute, you know—but when I found that he knew Lancaster, I knew it was all right, of course."

Loder's eyes fairly blazed. He was certain now that he was getting on the track of something! Harry Wharton might have told him all this had he chosen? Why had Wharton kept it dark? Did he suspect Lancaster, too?

"Shifty-looking man?" said Loder.

"Ugly little blighter, with eyes like a ferret and sandy hair," said Bunter. "I can tell you I was surprised when I came on him talking to Lancaster in the wood one day. You see, he had been a servant of Lancaster's uncle, and was looking for a job."

"Lancaster told you that?"

"Yes; he talked quite a lot. Rather pally, you know," said the fatuous Owl. "Any more doughnuts?"

"N-no! There's a cake! Have some more tea? Help yourself! What was the man's name?"

"Lancaster called him Weasel—a nickname, you know. He never mentioned his name. Like his cheek to worry Lancaster about getting him a job, I think. I dare say that's what he's after now."

"Now?" repeated Loder.

"Didn't you hear me telling the fellows I'd seen him?" said Bunter. "I say, all the sugar's gone! I like plenty of sugar in my tea."

"You've seen the man—here?"

"Yes. Is there any sugar in the cupboard? I don't mind getting it, if there is! I like six lumps, and there's only three left."

"Yes, yes, yes! Plenty in the cupboard, you—you—"

Loder checked himself. He waited while Bunter renewed the supply of sugar.

"I say, there's a pie in the cupboard," said Bunter. "Did you mean that for tea, Loder?"

Loder had meant the pie for supper. But he gave assent at once. The news he was getting from Bunter was worth a pie.

Bunter lifted out the pie, and helped himself to half of it at one fell swoop! For some minutes he was too busy to talk. Loder eyed him almost wolfishly.

"You've seen this man Weasel hanging about the school?" he asked.

"Not exactly hanging about the school—I say, this is a ripping pie! I saw him in Friardale Lane this afternoon. Not like our pies at Bunter Court; but jolly good, Loder! You ought to kick Tubbs for leaving it in the cupboard when you've got a man to tea!"

"Did he speak to you?"

"No fear! He seemed to me to want to keep out of sight," said Bunter. "Anyhow, he dodged through the hedge when I met him in the lane, and was gone in a second. I fancy he know me! People who see me once remember me, as a rule," said Bunter complacently. "If you're not going to have any of the pie, Loder, I'll finish it, if you like."

"Do!" gasped Loder.

"Thanks, old chap, I will."

And Bunter did.

While he finished the pie he talked. But it was soon clear to Loder that Bunter had exhausted his repertoire, so to speak. He had told all that he knew.

By the time Bunter had finished with the pie, Loder had finished with Bunter. He had learned all that the fat junior could tell him; and he had no further use for a fat, frowsy, footling fag. He rose to his feet.

"I've got to see a man now," remarked Loder. "You can cut, Bunter."

Bunter blinked at him.

This was rather abrupt, after asking a man to tea and revelling in the delights of his entertaining conversation.

"All serene, old fellow; I'm in no hurry," said Bunter. "I haven't sampled the jam yet."

Loder gave him a quite unpleasant look.

"I told you you could cut," he said.

"Oh, really, Loder—"

"Cut!" snapped Loder.

Bunter blinked at him. Loder's manner had grown distinctly unpleasant; and even upon Bunter's obtuse brain it dawned that the Sixth Form man had pumped him dry, and was done with him. On the other hand, there was a pot of jam on the table and Bunter liked jam. Indeed, he loved it. He had kept up a pretty good rate of speed during tea; but had he foreseen that

Loder's hospitality would peter out so suddenly, he felt that he could have accelerated a little. His fat hand hovered over the jam.

"I—I say, old fellow—" said Bunter.

Loder picked up his cane. He had no reason now for tolerating "old fellow" from Bunter.

Swish!

"Yarooooh!" roared Bunter, jumping. "Oh crikey! I—I say, old chap—"

Swish!

"Whooooop!"

Bunter forgot even the jam.

He made a wild jump for the door and tore it open. Another swish from the cane caught him as he bounded out, and a yell floated back from the Sixth Form passage.

Loder kicked the door shut and threw down the cane.

His look was gloating.

"I've got him now—got him!" he muttered. "I've got him fair and square! He's a crook—a crook—it's plain enough for the blindest fool to see! I've got him!"

It was not proof; though to Loder's mind it was as good as proof. Wharton could have told him all this; and he had kept it back because he knew how it would tell against Lancaster. He was shielding the fellow! But Loder knew it all now; and before long all Greyfriars would know how robberies happened wherever Lancaster happened to be. Loder gloated.

But the elation faded from his face as another matter came into his mind—Jerry Hawke, and his demand for the "bit of writing." Loder's problem still had to be settled.

That evening the "bit of writing" was in the hands of the sharper at the Cross Keys. There was no help for it; and Loder had to submit. But he solaced himself with the prospect of "showing up" Lancaster of the Sixth; his enemy should pay scot and lot, and pay for the offences of others as well as for his own. And it never occurred to Gerald Loder that in dealing with the schoolboy whom he believed to be a crook, he was little more than clay in the hands of the potter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

An Unexpected Meeting!

"ONLY Lancaster!" said Bob Cherry.

It was the following day, in morning break.

Harry Wharton & Co. were sauntering under the trees in Friardale Lane. During break fellows did not go out of gates. For that reason the Famous Five had dropped out by a corner of the Cloisters. It was "lines" if a prefect happened to spot them; and so the sight of a Sixth Form man coming up the lane from the school was not reassuring. But it was only Lancaster, as Bob remarked; and the new man in the Sixth was not a prefect, so it did not matter.

The chums of the Remove gave him a cheery grin as he came up. Lancaster, as one of the Sixth, was entitled to walk out in the break if he liked. He gave the juniors rather a severe glance.

"You kids ought not to be out of gates!" he said.

"The ought-notfulness is terrific, my esteemed Lancaster," agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But there is no absurd harmfulness in a small trot; and you will not mention that you have beheld us out of ridiculous bounds."

Lancaster laughed. He seemed to

find Hurree Singh's wonderful flow of English entertaining.

"All the same, you'd better cut in," he said. "Rules were made to be kept; not to be broken. I think—"

Lancaster broke off suddenly. From a gap in the hedge, at a little distance, a man stepped into the lane.

He was a small, wiry man with sandy hair and sharp, ferret eyes. Lancaster's glance fixed on him, and the flash that leaped into his eyes startled the juniors. They looked round to see what had brought that blaze of sudden anger into the eyes of the new senior.

They recognised the ferret-eyed man at once. They had not forgotten the "Weasel," whom they had seen at Wharton Lodge in the holidays.

The man with the ferret eyes stopped, staring at Lancaster and the group of juniors. Obviously, he had not known they were there when he stepped out from the field-path into the lane.

For a moment Lancaster's face was black with anger; and the juniors stood uncomfortable and wondering. According to Bunter, the ferret-eyed man was some old servant of Lancaster's uncle—apparently he had told Bunter so. If the man was out of work and bothering him for help it might be annoying; but was scarcely a cause for the fierce anger in Lancaster's looks.

But in a twinkling almost, the Sixth-Former recovered his composure. The black look passed from his face as if it had been wiped away.

He gave the ferret-eyed man a nod.

"Hallo, you here!" he said pleasantly.

"Yes, sir!" said the Weasel, touching his hat, quick to take his cue. "Quite a surprise seeing you, sir! I'm looking for a job, sir, and I been after one at Lantham, sir."

Harry Wharton & Co. walked back towards the school.

They wished that they had not left the school precincts after all. They walked back in silence.

They believed in Lancaster; they liked and trusted him. They regarded with contempt the rumour Loder had set afloat concerning him. But there were several peculiar circumstances connected with the senior they liked; and the Weasel was one of them. If he was only a family servant in hard luck, even a troublesome one, why that sudden fierce anger in Lancaster's look at the unexpected sight of him? It was strange, and it was disquieting. The juniors wished that they had not seen that meeting. They were careful not to look back as they walked away; but they knew that Lancaster was in talk with the man; and they had a lurking feeling that he had been angered, if not alarmed, by the fact that they had seen the Weasel near Greyfriars.

Lancaster glanced after the juniors; and then made a sign to the Weasel. The latter stepped back through the hedge into the field adjoining; and the Greyfriars senior followed him.

There they were out of sight of anyone passing in the lane. And the Greyfriars man's face darkened with anger; he took no further trouble to disguise what he was feeling.

"You here!" he said, between his teeth. "What are you doing here, Weasel? What's this game?"

The Weasel eyed him furtively.

"Jest mooching round, Dick," he said. "There's some likely places in this quarter; as I dessay you've seen since you been at the school."

Lancaster gritted his teeth.

"Did Slimy Sugden send you here?"

"S'pose he did?" grunted the Weasel.

"I've told Slimy that he's got to cut

out Greyfriars! He agreed! If you've got an eye on the school—"

"You ain't asked to take a 'and, if I have," said the Weasel sullenly. "It would be pie to you, Dick—you inside the place and knowing where things is. What's the matter with you since you been at the school? You only got to crack the safe and pass the stuff to me out of a winder—"

"I've had that out with Slimy! Greyfriars is to be let alone!" said Lancaster, in a low, passionate voice. "If Sugden's double-crossing me he'll repent it. Weasel, if you butt in at Greyfriars, look out for trouble! You've got me against you, if you do."

The ferret-eyed man snarled. "You better think twice, Dick! Slimy's leaving you out, as you made a point of it! But you'd sent us all the information we needed before you cried off. It's an easy crib to crack. You stand pat if you like; all you got to do is to be fast asleep when the job comes off."

"I tell you," said Lancaster, in a low, tense voice, "that if you make any attempt on Greyfriars you've got me to reckon with. I mean every word of that, Weasel; and if you're looking for a seven-year stretch keep on."

"If you gave a cove away—" muttered the Weasel. His ferrety eyes seemed to burn at the Greyfriars senior.

"I think you know I'm a fellow of my word," said Lancaster. "Keep clear of my school or look for bad trouble. Now hook it."

"Look 'ere, Dick—" "Hook it!" snapped Lancaster savagely.

The Weasel eyed him, long and hard; and then, without another word, turned and tramped across the field. Twice he looked back, and there was a threatening scowl on his low, beetling brow. Lancaster watched him with glinting eyes till he disappeared at last across the fields.

With a black brow, the Greyfriars senior walked on. The sight of the Weasel had evidently disturbed him deeply.

Had Harry Wharton & Co. seen Lancaster arrive at his destination, they would have been surprised. From the towpath by the Sark, the senior swung himself over a gate that gave admission to the long garden of the Cross Keys. Under the trees there a squat, oily-faced man was waiting, smoking a cigar. Lancaster remained only a few minutes; but when he left there was a paper in his pocket, and a banknote remained in the greasy hand of Jerry Hawke.

Mr. Hawke stared after Lancaster's disappearing form, and then stared at the banknote in his hand and grinned. It was a note for a large sum; such a sum as seldom came Mr. Hawke's way in his dealings with his dupes. He grinned with satisfaction; but he seemed puzzled, too. He walked thoughtfully up the long garden to the inn, where he changed the banknote and stood himself a drink.

Lancaster walked swiftly back to Greyfriars. His face was dark, telling of black and bitter thoughts. The ferrety face of the Weasel, the oily visage of Jerry Hawke, haunted his mind, and both were equally repellent to the Sixth-Former of Greyfriars.

But his face was clear, cool, careless when he came into the school again. The schoolboy crook was not likely to betray himself by his looks. In the Sixth Form room Loder gave him a scowl; but Dr. Locke had a benignant smile for the new senior, who seemed as keen on Greek as he was on games.

When Richard Lancaster left the Form-room he walked between Wingate and Gwynne, chatting pleasantly; and Harry Wharton & Co., sighting him in the quad, almost wondered whether he was the same fellow whose brow had blackened and whose eyes had flashed at the sight of the Weasel.

Lancaster, passing them, gave them a nod and a smile. He walked on with his friends, and the juniors cast admiring glances after him. They were thinking what a splendid chap he looked and was! It was fortunate, perhaps, that they could not read what was in his mind and in his heart.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Crushing Blow!

L ODER of the Sixth looked over the letters in the rack and scowled. There was no letter for Loder, and he wondered why.

"Come on!" said Walker, grinning.

YOU CANNOT HELP SMILING, LADS,
at this amusing joke which has won for R. Goodchild, of 8, Stanley Villas, Shortheath, Farnham, Surrey, a
SPLENDID SHEFFIELD STEEL PENKNIFE.



Old Lady (to tramp): "Take your cap off when you ask me for food."
Tramp: "I can't, ma'am, it's full of sandwiches!"
YOU would be delighted with one of these topping prizes. Send in your ribtickler right away.

Walker knew what letter Loder was expecting—the answer from Sir George Danby, at Danby Croft, on the subject of Richard Lancaster. For several days now Loder had been expecting that answer; but it had not come.

He was puzzled and irritated as he walked out into the quad with Walker. Walker's view was that Loder's relative had regarded his inquiry as footling nonsense, and was not taking the trouble to reply. That was not Loder's view; but he could not understand why he received no answer.

"It's queer!" grunted Loder. "Old Danby is an old Greyfriars man—he's sure to feel it, knowing that the fellow is here at his old school."

"Why?" yawned Walker. "Lancaster, from what I hear, is the son of an Army captain—a man who fell in the War. Decent enough for Greyfriars—or any other school."

"You know what I mean!" growled Loder. "I'm convinced that old Danby suspected him, at least—"

"Rot!" said Walker.

Loder grunted and was silent. Certainly, Sir George Danby's failure to reply to his inquiry looked as if Sir George regarded it as "rot." It did not even occur to Loder that his letter had never reached Danby Croft at all. He suspected Lancaster of being a "crook"; but it never crossed his mind that the schoolboy crook might have intercepted that letter. Yet it might have been obvious to him that if the suspected fellow could "crack" safes, the school letter-box would give him no difficulty.

Lancaster of the Sixth was strolling on the path under the elms as the two Sixth-Formers came along. He stopped and looked at Loder.

"I'd like to speak to you, Loder, if you've a few minutes to spare," he said in his pleasant tones.

Loder stared at him grimly.

"I think I've told you that you're not the sort of fellow I care to speak to!" he said.

"Dash it all, Loder—" began Walker uneasily.

"The fellow knows what I think of him!" said Loder bitterly. "It's like his cheek to speak to me!"

"Look here," exclaimed Walker, "this is too jolly thick, Loder! If you want to rag a man like that, leave me out of it. Lancaster, don't fancy that I'm in this. I'm not!"

And Walker stalked angrily away, leaving Loder alone. Loder scowled after him and gave Lancaster a black look.

"Your friends do not seem to share your opinion of me, Loder," said the new senior, with a slight smile.

"They will," said Loder, compressing his lips. "I'm getting it clear now—they'll have to be convinced when I've got it clear enough for a blind man to see. I've been getting information, if you'd like to know—I've found out what happened in the Easter holidays."

"Did anything happen?"

"Only a couple of burglaries, within a short distance of the place where you were staying!" sneered Loder. "One of them at a place where you'd wedged in during the day. The Danby Croft bizney over again! I fancy the fellows will see what it looks like."

Lancaster smiled; but there was a glint in his eyes.

"Ah! You have been chatting with my young friends in the Lower Fourth," he remarked.

"Your fag friends never said a word—they knew what I wanted to find out, and they were hiding the truth!" sneered Loder. "Looks to me as if they think there's something in it themselves. Anyhow, they deliberately kept it dark. I got it out of Bunter."

"You are quite a detective!" drawled Lancaster.

"I dare say you know a lot about detectives! You must have come across a good many in your line of business."

"My line of business?" repeated Lancaster, raising his eyebrows. "I don't quite follow."

"I think you do. The crook business!" said Loder. "Wedging yourself into wealthy places to crack cribs."

"You really think—"

"I don't think—I know! If I had doubted, I should have been certain that night you shut me out of the House when I was out of bounds. Only a crook would have thought of such a trick." Loder gritted his teeth. "Wait till I get my answer from Danby Croft. That will fix you, I fancy."

"And then—" Lancaster still smiled.

"Then," said Loder, "you'll be shown up in your true colours. The fellows will have to believe the truth. I fancy the evidence will be strong enough for me to go to the Head. In that case you go out of Greyfriars, neck and crop!"

His look was gloating.

Lancaster stood silent, looking at him. His face expressed nothing but a faint amusement. But there were strange thoughts in his mind, strange feelings in his heart. Loder did not know it, could not guess it, could not even have understood it had he known—but had a fellow like Wingate uttered these words, or even a junior like Wharton or Bob Cherry, the self-possession of the schoolboy crook would have crumpled up. Overwhelming shame would have driven that smile from his face; his glance would have faltered and drooped. He would have stood guilty and condemned.

Lancaster knew it; and he was thankful, for his safety's sake, that his enemy was not a fellow whom he could respect, whose motives he could respect.

Loder hated him, but not because he was what he was. But for that bitter, personal animosity, Loder would never have suspected that Lancaster was a crook at all. Envy and malice were at the bottom of Gerald Loder's deadly feud. Had Lancaster been as open and above suspicion as any man in the Sixth, Loder would still have hated him and sought to injure him. It was Lancaster's good qualities, not his bad ones, that had stirred the Sixth Form bully's bitter malice.

The schoolboy crook, at least, was free from such base feelings as envy, malice, unreasoning animosity. Circumstances, and evil training, had made him what he was; yet at heart he was, and knew himself to be, a better fellow than Gerald Loder. And that knowledge sustained him; he could hold up his head in the presence of a fellow for whom he felt contempt.

Loder waited for him to speak; but he stood silent. The bully of the Sixth went on at last, "rubbing it in."

"You've got another day or two—make the most of it! You'll play in the Rookwood match to-morrow—make the most of that! I've had no answer from Danby Croft yet." Loder could not understand the fleeting smile that glided over Lancaster's face. "Perhaps it will go direct to the Head. Anyhow, when it comes, you're done for here, I fancy! If you wriggle through somehow, there's still Ferrers Locke!"

"Ferrers Locke?" repeated Lancaster.

"He knows you, and he's related to our headmaster here. If old Danby doesn't finish you, I'm getting in touch with Locke, somehow. Dr. Locke being related to him, he's sure to chip in—if he knows anything about you, and I fancy he does."

"You have it all cut and dried," said Lancaster, laughing.

"You'll find out that I have."

"I advised you once that people who live in glass-houses should not throw stones," drawled Lancaster. "It was a good tip, though you disregarded it."

"You won't get another chance at me," sneered Loder. "I'm not breaking bounds again, so long as you're at Greyfriars."

"Quite an improvement in you; I hope that you will give up rotten blackguardism altogether and become a decent fellow in the long run," said Lancaster coolly. "By the way, I saw your friend Hawke this morning."

Loder gave a violent start.

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"You—you rotter! You've nosed that out!" he breathed.

"Doesn't one good turn deserve another? You're nosing out things about me, are you not?" smiled Lancaster. "If it's your duty to turn out a fellow from the school because you think he's not up to the mark, isn't it my duty to turn out a fellow I know to be a blackguard, a gambler, and a disgrace to this school, or any other?"

"You can't hurt me there; you can't get Hawke to help you—you can't—" Loder's voice trailed off. An undefined but deep terror was in his heart.

"I think you left a paper with Jerry Hawke."

"A—a—a paper?" whispered Loder.

"Which would get you the sack here if the Head saw it, faster than anything could get the sack for me."

Loder caught his breath.

"Hawke would not—would not—"

"That paper," said Lancaster quietly and coolly, "is now in my hands."

Loder stood as if turned to stone.

"You call me a crook; but you're not prepared for crooked ways," said Lancaster bitterly. "I don't choose to have you spying and prying and talking about me in the Sixth. I told you I'd make you stop it! You've left me only one way. You say I'm going to be turned out of Greyfriars. If I go, Gerald Loder, I go in company."

Loder stood speechless.

"If that paper with your signature on it goes before the Head you're done for here. So long as you let me alone I'll let you alone. You've made yourself my enemy without cause. Let me alone. One more word of slander from you and you go up before the Head for the sack!"

Loder found his voice at last.

"It's a lie—a lie! Hawke would not—"

"You poor fool!" Lancaster laughed contemptuously. "Do you think there is anything that rogue would not do for money? Do you look for a sense of honour in a man who makes a living by duping mugs? It only had to be made worth his while, and he jumped at it. Can't you see, now, that I pulled the strings? You can ask Hawke if you like."

Loder stood dumb.

"I've no desire to harm you. Your rotten dinginess is not my business. Leave me alone and I'll leave you alone. Give me any more trouble and I'll crush you like a worm!"

With that, Lancaster turned and walked away. Loder, still dumb, and white as chalk, stared after him, motionless, as if rooted to the ground.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

All Clear!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Something's up!"

"The upfulness is terrific!"

"What the thump!"

The Famous Five stared at Wingate. He came striding out of the House, with a deep frown on his brow, and a glint in his eyes.

Seldom, or never, had the juniors seen the captain of Greyfriars looking so angry.

Something, evidently, was "up." It was utterly unlike "old Wingate" to get in a bait like this, and especially it was unlike him to let the public eye fall on him at such a time. Wingate seemed to have forgotten for the moment that he was the cynosure of all eyes at Greyfriars—the greatest man in that little community, whose

frowns were almost as awe-inspiring as the frowns of Jove on high Olympus.

He was passing the juniors with long, rapid strides, when he suddenly swung round towards them and rapped out a question.

"Seen Loder about?"

"Yes, he's over yonder, under the elms," said Harry Wharton.

Wingate strode on towards the walk under the elms. Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances.

"Looks like trouble for Loder," remarked Nugent.

"He's asked for it long enough," grunted Johnny Bull. "I dare say it's something about that man Lancaster. I hear that Loder's got out something fresh against him."

"Something he wormed out of Bunter yesterday, I suppose," growled the captain of the Remove. "That fat tattling ass—"

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

"Let's kick Bunter," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Keep off, you beast! I say, you fellows, Wingate looks frightfully ratty," said Bunter. "I say, I'm going to see what's on. I say, do you think there's going to be a scrap? Fancy a scrap between two prefects! He, he, he!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob.

Billy Bunter rolled off on Wingate's track. If there was anything on, Bunter was not going to miss it, especially if it was something so wildly exciting as a scrap between two Sixth Form men, both of whom were prefects.

"Come on, you men," said Bob. "If Wingate's going to punch Loder, we want to see him drop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, Loder will want carrying home afterwards. We're Scouts, and know how to render first-aid. Come on, my infants!"

The chums of the Remove hurried after Wingate. A score of other fellows, at least, were converging towards the same spot. George Wingate's unusual aspect of wrath and excitement was drawing general attention.

Loder, pacing moodily under the elms, glanced up at the buzz of voices. His brow was black.

The wretched fellow had rushed down to the Cross Keys, after his talk with Lancaster, careless of the risk of being seen entering such a place in the daytime. He had to know the truth.

A few words with Jerry Hawke had been enough.

The impudent rogue had admitted it all. Lancaster's motive was a mystery to Hawke, but it was not the motive he cared about; it was the bribe. That had been large enough to overcome Jerry Hawke's scruples—if any!

He had persecuted and scared Loder into giving him the "bit of writing." The "bit of writing" had passed into the hands of the fellow whom Loder had made his enemy. Lancaster had pulled the strings all the time; Loder understood that now.

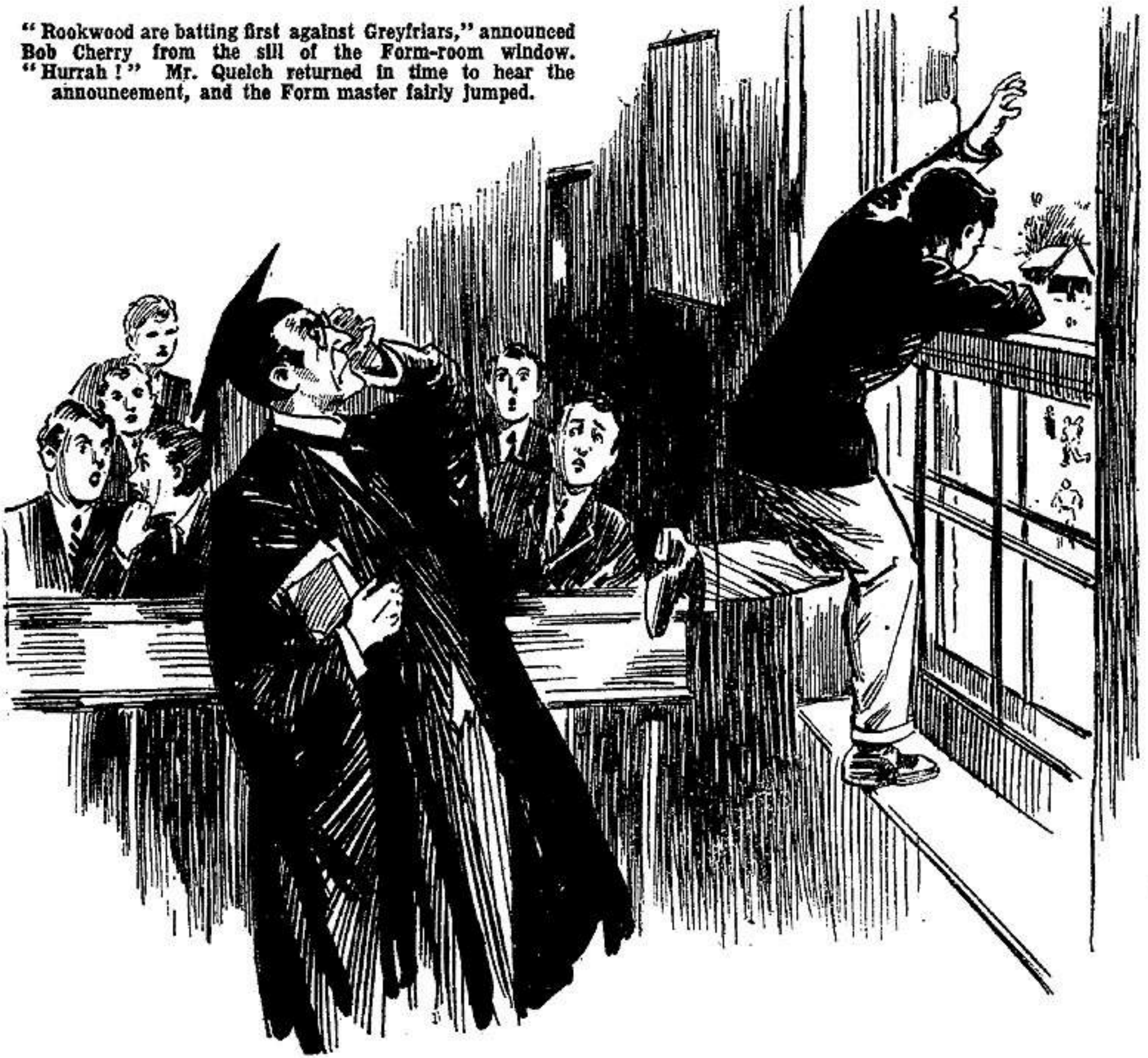
And now he knew—he knew beyond the shadow of a possible doubt that he was right about Lancaster. Only a crook could, and would, have worked such a scheme.

That was a certainty. But in the very moment when absolute certainty came to Loder, his teeth were drawn. For now he dared not act.

That "bit of writing" was in Lancaster's hands. Placed before the headmaster, it meant that Loder would be expelled in disgrace from the school. He might ruin Lancaster, but he was certain to ruin himself if he did so.

He realised, with a shudder, that his

"Rookwood are batting first against Greyfriars," announced Bob Cherry from the sill of the Form-room window. "Hurrah!" Mr. Quelch returned in time to hear the announcement, and the Form master fairly jumped.



safety was now bound up in his enemy's. If Lancaster fell, he fell; if Lancaster was "turfed" out of Greyfriars, Loder would be "turfed" out at the same time. The fellow held him in the hollow of his hand.

His own rascally ways had placed him at Lancaster's mercy. He had himself to thank, if that was any comfort to him.

His campaign had to cease. He was driven to hope that "old Danby" would take no action on the letter he had written to him. Instead of hoping that Ferrers Locke might visit his relative, the Head of Greyfriars, and recognise Lancaster, he was driven to hoping that Ferrers Locke would not come, or that he would not see Lancaster if he did!

Such were the dismal thoughts in Gerald Loder's mind when Wingate came striding up to him under the elms, and forty or fifty Greyfriars fellows gathered round, wondering what on earth was up.

"Loder!" The Greyfriars captain almost barked out the name.

Loder gave him a glare. "Well?" he snapped.

"I've just heard some talk in the prefects' room. It seems that you've been getting some tattle out of a Lower

boy, and making up a fresh yarn about the new man here."

Loder started. His campaign against Lancaster had to stop, for his own safety's sake. It had gone too far already for his safety. In the stress of what had happened since, he had almost forgotten that he had been talking about what he had learned from Bunter; he was reminded now!

"You've been against the man ever since he came!" Wingate's voice was sharp and loud. "You've spread rotten yarns about him ever since he was put into the First Eleven—in the place you lost by rotten slacking. I've warned you about it. Now you've started again. Come with me to the Head!"

"The—the Head?"

"You say you've got something against the new man! You say he's not a fit man to be at Greyfriars! There's been enough hinting and whispering and beating about the bush. If you've got anything to go upon, it's for the Head to hear it—not fellows up and down the school. Come to the Head with me and have the whole thing cut."

"Hear, hear!" said Sykes of the Sixth.

"Go it, Loder!" yelled Hobson of the Shell. "Let the Head hear about it!"

Loder stood pale and scared. A few

hours before he would have taken Wingate at his word. He had not wanted to drag the headmaster into the matter till he had proof. But he would have risked it rather than have backed down before the school! But now he dared not! He trembled at the thought of Lancaster standing in the presence of the headmaster and laying on Dr. Locke's table the "bit of writing." He was in a cleft stick now.

"You hear me?" exclaimed Wingate. "I tell you, I mean it! Either you come with me and lay the whole thing before Dr. Locke or you withdraw your insinuations here and now, on the spot. You've got the choice."

All eyes were fixed on Loder's pale, troubled face.

But for that "bit of writing"—

"Can't you answer?" demanded Wingate. "You hint and whisper things about a fellow who seems as decent as any man that ever came to Greyfriars. You've got to speak out. Stand by what you've said—or take it back, before all these fellows! Here and now!"

Loder almost choked! If he had dared to face the Head—if, in other words, he had only been a decent fellow, with a

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(Continued from page 13.)

clear conscience! But he was not a decent fellow, and his conscience was not clear. The way of the transgressor is hard; and Loder's transgressions had brought upon him the bitterest humiliation he had ever suffered.

For he dared not defy Lancaster now. He dared not go to the Head! He dared not say what he felt and knew to be the truth! He dared do nothing that would bring his own rascality to light. And the alternative was to eat his own words, under a sea of scornful eyes.

"I'm waiting!" rapped Wingate.

Loder tried to speak. His voice was husky when it came.

"I—I—I—I find there was—was a mistake—"

"A mistake?" repeated Wingate scornfully. "What do you mean by a mistake? There's no room for a mistake in this matter. Either you've told the truth or you haven't."

"I—I mean I—I was misled." Loder hardly knew what to say, but he knew that he had to surrender utterly. "I—I rather suspected things about Lancaster, but—but I can see now that I was mistaken."

There was a murmur from the crowd of fellows. Loder's pale face flushed crimson as he heard it.

"We've got to have this clear," said Wingate icily. "Do you admit, in plain English, for all these men to hear, that there's nothing at all in all you've hinted against the new man?"

"Yes!" breathed Loder.

"You own up that you know nothing whatever against him, and that if you suspected him of anything it was without cause?"

"Yes!" gasped Loder.

Wingate's lip curled with contempt.

"I think that's plain enough," he said. "We can let it go at that! If you've any decency you'll apologise to Lancaster. You make up a rotten slander about a fellow you dislike, and you take it all back rather than stand by it when you're put to the test. By gad, you make me sick!"

Wingate turned his back on Loder and walked away. The crowd broke up with a buzz of voices. Loder was left alone under the elms. His eyes were on the ground; he could not meet the scornful looks that were cast on him by the fellows as they went.

"Well, that's that!" said Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five walked away.

"The thatfulness is terrific!" grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"All clear now!" said Harry Wharton. "Of course, we all knew that there was nothing in it—a splendid chap like Lancaster!"

"Of course!"

"Still, it's jolly satisfactory to have it cleared up like this," said Frank Nugent. "I fancied that Wingate

would jump on him, sooner or later. He's jumped—hard!"

Wingate strode into the House. He knocked at the door of Lancaster's study in the Sixth, and went in. Lancaster looked up from Greek, and gave him a cheery smile.

"Something to tell you, old man," said Wingate. "I think you'll be glad to hear it. I've tackled that silly ass, Loder, and made him own up and take back all the rotten things he's hinted about you. There'll be no more of it. I thought you'd like to know. It can all be forgotten now."

Lancaster's eyes dwelt curiously on Wingate's honest, rugged face. To Wingate's surprise, his face grew sombre.

"Don't fancy that any man except Loder ever thought, or believed, a word of that silly rot!" said Wingate hastily. "Don't fancy that, Lancaster! I thought it my duty, as captain of the school, to have the thing out plain and knock it right on the head. I hope you agree."

"I can only thank you, Wingate," said Lancaster, in a low, troubled voice. "Not so much for what you've done as for your belief in me."

Wingate laughed.

"Well, I hope I know a decent chap when I see one," he said. "Of course, this has been rather rotten for you; but it's over now, and Loder will take jolly good care to say nothing more. In fact, I dare say he's sorry by this time that he made such a fool of himself."

With a nod to the new senior, Wingate left the study. Lancaster sat staring at his book, the Greek characters dancing before his eyes. Loder, "mooching" miserably under the elms, was feeling shamed and humiliated. But his shame and humiliation were as nothing compared with the feelings in Dick Lancaster's heart. Loder's enmity, Loder's hatred, Loder's suspicions, he disregarded and despised. But the honest trust of Wingate cut him to the very heart. The shame in his breast was like a physical pain. The handsome face was pale, troubled, almost haggard.

"What can I do?" The schoolboy crook breathed the words aloud. "What can I do? I am what I am! What else can I be? If I'd never come here! Oh, if I'd never come here—if I'd found enemies instead of friends! If only they did not trust me! Gad, if Wingate knew—if he knew—"

He winced, as if he had received a blow, at that thought. He rose from the table and moved restlessly about the study. If Wingate knew! If the other fellows knew! If Wharton and his friends knew! If only he could have thrown the past, with its sin and shame, behind him, and become like the other fellows—with a clear conscience, with no secrets to keep! The schoolboy crook gave a bitter laugh. It was useless to think of that.

But was it useless? The past was irrevocable—but the present was in his hands, and the future! Was it ever too late to mend? Many times, of late, had that thought crossed Dick Lancaster's mind. Now it was taking a firmer root and growing into something like a resolve.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. The Rookwood Match!

"QUELCHY ought to let us off to-day!" remarked Bob Cherry, on Wednesday morning. "Any good asking him, do you think?"

"Not a lot!" said Wharton, laughing.

It was a glorious May morning. And it was Rookwood day. The match was to begin early; and never had the Form-room, and the valuable instructions they received from Mr. Quelch, seemed quite so irksome to the chums of the Remove.

They were, in fact, as keen on the First Eleven match with Rookwood as on their own junior fixture with Jimmy Silver & Co. of that school. Which was saying a lot!

Lancaster was to play; and big things were expected of Lancaster. If he was not the best man in the eleven, he was at least as good as any, and better than most. Harry Wharton & Co. were quite notable persons in the Lower School just now, simply because they had known Lancaster in the holidays, and the great cricketer gave them a nod when he happened on them in the quadrangle. A nod from the great man was something!

Naturally, the cheery Co. took a friendly interest in Wingate's new recruit. They were very keen on seeing him knock up runs for Greyfriars. Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh declared that the runfulness would be terrific, and his comrades agreed with him.

But classes claimed the Famous Five in the morning. Bob Cherry had an idea of asking Quelch for special leave; but his chums were very doubtful. Quelch took a benign interest in school games; but he had never realised that games were more important than classes—though any fellow in his Form could have told him so.

"After all, it's a big thing," argued Bob; "and, dash it all, Quelch is a human being, though he's a schoolmaster. He must have been a boy once and played cricket. Let's ask him."

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, he can't bite a man's head off," said Bob. "I'm jolly well going to risk it."

And when Henry Samuel Quelch came along to the Form-room Bob eyed him critically and hopefully. It was a fine morning—a very fine morning—and Quelch looked good-tempered. On a damp morning the thing would have been hopeless; Quelch would have had twinges of rheumatism, and would have taken a pessimistic view of the universe. But on that glorious morning the bright May sunshine was reflected in Quelch's face in a frosty smile. He bade his Form "Good-morning!" in quite a pleasant voice.

Bob resolved to chance it. After all, as he had said, Quelch couldn't bite his head off. The fellows could hear the creak of the roller on the cricket ground, and they thought of the cricket to follow. Never had classes appealed to them less.

"Please, sir—" began Bob in his meekest tone.

"Well, Cherry?" said Mr. Quelch, quite agreeably.

"It's Rookwood day to-day, sir," said Bob.

"I was aware of it, Cherry."

"We'd like awfully to see the game, sir," said Bob, taking the plunge.

Mr. Quelch looked at him.

"You will be free to see the cricket this afternoon, Cherry, as it is a half-holiday," he said—"that is, of course, if, by careful attention to your lessons, you avoid detention this afternoon."

"I—I was thinking of the morning, sir."

"The morning?" repeated Mr. Quelch.

His eyes took on the gimlet-like look

that his pupils knew so well. Some of the Remove grinned. They did not think that the hopeful Bob was going to have any luck.

"Yes, sir," said Bob. "If you would be so awfully kind as to give us leave—"

He broke off. The gimlets seemed to be boring into him.

"You would be prepared to give up classes for the day, Cherry, in order to watch the cricket match?" asked the Remove master, with genial sarcasm.

"Ye-e-e-s, sir."

"No doubt it would be a sacrifice on your part?" suggested Mr. Quelch. "But you would make it, in order to encourage the senior cricketers with your presence?"

"Oh! Um! Yes, sir!" gasped Bob. "Is it your opinion, Cherry, that you have made so much progress this term that you can safely neglect your lessons to-day?"

"I—I think so, sir!" stammered Bob, beginning to wish that he had not raised the subject. "I—I hope so, sir."

"You hope so, Cherry? Obviously, you have a hopeful nature," said Mr. Quelch. "I am sorry to say that I am less sanguine. I should be very glad, Cherry, had you made such progress. But your hopeful nature deceives you. You have not made such progress, Cherry. Far from it."

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"Very far indeed from it," said Mr. Quelch, still genial and still sarcastic. "I regret, therefore, that I think it necessary for you to give me what little attention you can this morning, in spite

of the greater attraction of the cricket field. We will now proceed."

Bob sat down, with a very red face, and they proceeded.

In the Form-room they heard the arrival of the Rookwood team. The big game began on the Greyfriars ground, and the juniors longed for break. Bob Cherry's eyes sought the clock continually. So did many other eyes. It was rather fortunate for the Remove that Henry Samuel Quelch was in a specially good temper that morning.

There was no doubt that attention often wandered; and once, when Mr. Quelch was called out of the Form-room for a few minutes, Bob clambered up to a window to stare in the direction of the playing-fields, and to announce over his shoulder that Rookwood were batting first—he could see Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, at the wicket. Mr. Quelch returned in time to hear that announcement, and he stared fixedly at Bob Cherry's back.

"Hurrah!" yelled Bob, with a yell that woke every echo of the Form-room, and made Henry Samuel Quelch jump in the doorway.

"Bob!" breathed Wharton.

"Bulkeley's out!" yelled Bob. "Caught out! Hurrah! Good old Lancaster! Didn't I tell you men that he was a prize-packet? Didn't I? I tell you old Lancaster's caught out the Rookwood skipper! Hurrah!"

"Cherry!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.

He dropped from the window in a hurry—rather too great a hurry. There was a bump as he rolled on the floor.

"Wooooooh!"

"Cherry!" gurgled Mr. Quelch. Bob sat up rather dizzily, and blinked at his Form master.

"Oh crikey!" he ejaculated.

"Cherry, what does this mean?"

"Oh, Bulkeley's out, sir!" gasped Bob. "I—I—"

"Go to your place, Cherry! You will be detained for an hour this afternoon!"

"Oh lor'!"

Bob sat down in his place, crushed. The look on his face was so woebegone that Mr. Quelch blinked at him, and blinked again, perhaps remembering that he had been a boy once, though much water had passed under the bridges since that time.

"Um—um!" said Mr. Quelch. "I—um—I shall not detain you this afternoon, Cherry! You may take fifty lines instead!"

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Bob, as gratefully as if fifty lines were a gift of inestimable value.

Mr. Quelch smiled, and proceeded with the lesson. Bob concentrated his attention on class after that narrow escape. The mere thought of detention that afternoon made him feel quite faint.

Break came at last, and the Remove were free for a quarter of an hour. There was a hurried scampering down to the cricket field.

The tail of the Rookwood team was still batting, but the innings was getting near the finish. The score stood at 90. Lancaster was bowling to Knowles, of Rookwood, when the Famous Five arrived, breathless.

Lancaster was a batsman, but he was

(Continued on next page.)

A few more miles to go



A FEW more weary miles to go before there is a halt for tea. Now is the time for Wrigley's. The delightful flavour of Wrigley's Chewing Gum will buck you up—will refresh the mouth and take away the parched feeling.

And Wrigley's "after every meal" will aid digestion and cleanse the teeth.

In two flavours—P.K., a pure peppermint flavour; and Spearmint, a pure mint leaf flavour. Only 1d. a packet, but the finest quality money can buy.

The flavour lasts—British made



WRIGLEY'S

1^d PER PACKET



the best bowler in the team except Sykes. In the field he was as good as any man in the eleven. It was no wonder that Wingate was delighted with his new recruit. Knowles, of Rookwood, was a good man at the wickets, but he had to play Lancaster very carefully, and his care did not avail him. At the third ball of the over the wicket went down, and there was a joyous yell from the Famous Five.

"How's that?"

"Well bowled, sir!"

"Good old Lancaster!"

"Bravo!"

Lancaster glanced round and smiled. Bob Cherry tossed his cap into the air. It came down on the head of a scowling Sixth-Former who was watching the game, and Loder glared round.

Another Rookwood man came in, and another wicket rewarded Lancaster at the end of the over.

"Isn't he a jolly old prize-packet?" grinned Bob. "Didn't I tell you men he was? But wait till he gets hold of the willow! Then I can tell you that Rookwood will open their little peepers!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Wharton.

Break seemed to vanish in a twinkling, and the chums of the Remove reluctantly returned to the Form-room for third school. As they went in a shout from the cricket field reached them.

"Well caught!"

"Oh, well caught, Lancaster!"

There was no doubt that the new man in the Sixth was a prize-packet. And never had third school seemed so long to the chums of the Remove.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

King Cricket!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Come on, Bunter!"

"But, I say——"

"They haven't knocked off for lunch yet."

"Eh?" Billy Bunter blinked. "Who haven't?"

Bunter, apparently, was not thinking of the Rookwood match when the Remove came out after third school.

Bunter's powerful intellect was occupied, in fact, by a much more important and pressing matter.

There was still an interval to dinner. Bunter was hungry. Bunter had been disappointed—not for the first time—about a postal order. Bunter, therefore, desired to raise a small loan among his friends—pending the arrival of the expected postal order—to be expended in refreshment, liquid and solid, which would enable him to survive the dreary blank till the bell rang for tiffin.

With such a matter as this upon his mind, William George Bunter was not likely to be thinking about cricket matches!

"Come on, you men!" shouted Harry Wharton, regardless of Bunter. "Greyfriars are batting—come on."

"I say you fellows——" shrieked Bunter.

"Get a move on, Fatty! We shall see some cricket before tiffin," exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Come on, old porpoise!"

"Cricket!" repeated Bunter.

"Yes, ass! This way, fathead!"

"Oh, are they playing cricket?" said Bunter.

"You benighted bandersnatch——" gasped Bob.

"Well, look here, old chap, let a fellow speak," said Bunter. "I say, I told you I was expecting a postal order

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—yarooogh! Leggo! Wharrer you up to, you silly ass?"

The Co., and a crowd of other Remove men, were rushing off for Big Side, to see how the cricketers were getting on. But Bob Cherry kindly spared a moment or two for Billy Bunter. He felt that the Owl of the Remove ought not to miss it. So he grabbed Bunter by the collar, and hooked him along.

Bunter went—he had to go, with that powerful grip on his collar. But he went, wriggling and roaring.

"Yow-ow! Leggo! I say, old chap—beast!—look here, old fellow—you awful rotter! You frightful old chap—I mean, beast!—whoop!"

"Put it on, Fatty!"

"Leggo!" roared Bunter. "I say, leggo! Wharrer you dragging me about for, you frightful beast?"

"This way to the Rookwood match!" chuckled Bob. "No charge for admission! Push for front seats, though."

"Blow the Rookwood match!" shrieked Bunter. "I say, there's Mauly—I want to speak to Mauly! Lemme go while I speak to Mauly! Whoop!"

Bob chuckled and propelled the fat junior onward. Bob's opinion was that Bunter ought to see the Rookwood match, and for once, Bunter was going to do what he ought. Bunter, like the deep and dark blue ocean in Byronic verse, rolled on. Lord Mauleverer, strolling gently in the same direction, was probably not sorry to miss an interview with Bunter. Bunter rolled on, and his hope of raising a small loan from Mauly faded away. Breathless and gasping, the Owl of the Remove arrived on the cricket field, Bob Cherry acting as propeller.

"Oh! Wow! Wow! Yooohooop!" gurgled Bunter. "Oh, you beast, I'm winded! Leggo! I say, you fellows, make him leggo! Oh crikey!"

"Lancaster's batting!"

"Blow Lancaster! Leggo!"

Bob Cherry let go at last; on the ground, he had no more time to waste on Bunter. William George sat in the grass and gasped for breath. He gasped unheeded; the Famous Five had eyes only for the Rookwood game.

"Rookwood all out for 85," said Harry Wharton. "They must have found the bowling rather stiff."

"Greyfriars two down for 40," said Johnny Bull. "Not so bad! Wingate hasn't batted yet. Did Lancaster open the innings?"

"Yes. Shouldn't wonder if he's not out at the finish! Look at the way he shapes! They can't touch him."

"Grooogh!" came unheeded from Billy Bunter.

"That man can bat." The juniors heard the voice of Coker of the Fifth. "He can bat! Not my style—but he can bat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Not your style, Coker! Not a little bit!"

Coker glared round, and went on talking to Price of the Fifth.

"I met that man Lancaster in the vac, last Easter, and licked him—though he seemed to think he had licked me. We had rather a row. But he's a jolly good man at cricket! I'll say that for him. Hardly my style, but he has a lot of luck! Look at that! I should have played forward to that ball——"

"And lost your wicket?" chuckled Bob. "Lancaster wants to keep his sticks up, Coker; not your style at all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker of the Fifth glared again, and moved farther off, out of the neighbourhood of these cheeky fags.

"I say, you fellows." Billy Bunter,

having got his second wind, weighed in again. "I say——"

"Shut up, Bunter!" said Nugent. "Use your eyes now, old porpoise, and give your chin a rest! Look at Lancaster."

"Oh, really, Nugent! I say, you fellows, can you see Mauly? I want to speak to Mauly! It's rather important."

Important as it was, the Famous Five did not take the trouble of looking for Mauly. Bunter snorted, and rolled away to look for him-himself. It really was important to find Mauly, if Bunter was to raise a little loan in time for a feed before dinner.

Nearly all Greyfriars swarmed round Big Side. First Eleven matches always drew a big crowd, but interest was more than usually keen in the Rookwood fixture. Every man wanted to see how Wingate's new recruit shaped, and there was no doubt that he was fulfilling expectations.

Lancaster made a handsome figure at the wickets—slim, alert, graceful; as handsome a cricketer as had ever been seen on the Greyfriars ground. And he was playing a great game. The Rookwood bowling was good, and it had already accounted for two of the home wickets, but it had not touched Lancaster. He seemed to have taken its measure already, and Harry Wharton & Co. were not the only fellows who thought it likely that he might last through the whole innings.

A third wicket went down to a catch by Bulkeley, and Wingate came in to join Lancaster. Wingate had the bowling, and the crowd looked for the mighty hitting they were accustomed to expect from old Wingate. And there was something like a groan from Greyfriars when the mighty hitter of the Sixth went down to his first ball. It was good bowling from Rookwood, and bad luck for Wingate; but there it was, the captain of Greyfriars was out first ball for a big round O.

"Oh crumbs!" said Bob Cherry blankly.

"Rotten luck!" said Johnny Bull.

"The rottenfulness is terrific."

Wingate carried out his bat. He was a sportsman and knew how to lose, but his rugged face was a little clouded. Sykes of the Sixth came in next, but Sykes was a bowler, and his batting was not equal to the strain. He fell for two. Potter of the Fifth came next, and was still in when the cricket stopped for lunch.

"Anybody's game!" said Bob Cherry, as the chums of the Remove walked back to the House, "but I think we're going to win! They can't touch old Lancaster, anyhow."

"They jolly well can't!" agreed Wharton.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You haven't thanked me yet, Fatty! You'd have missed seeing Lancaster bat, if I hadn't run you down to the cricket! Where's your jolly old gratitude?"

"Beast! I never saw Lancaster bat. I was looking for Mauly! I believe the beast was dodging me—I couldn't find him!" grunted Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, what about going to the pictures this afternoon?" asked Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five.

"The—the pictures?" gasped Bob.

"Yes! They've got a new crook film at Courtfield—frightfully thrilling. Skinner says; he's seen it. My treat, you know—I'll stand admission, and a tea at the bunshop afterwards. One of you fellows lend me ten bob——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! Look here, you'd better come—it's a half-holiday, and there's nothing else on to-day—"

"What about the Rookwood match?" bawled Johnny Bull.

"Eh?" Bunter had forgotten the Rookwood match again. "Oh, don't be an ass! Never mind that—"

"We're going to mind it," chuckled Bob, "and you can rely on me to run you down to the field again after dinner, Bunter. We're going early to get front places—and I'll see you through. Rely on me."

"Beast!" answered Bunter ungratefully.

After dinner, Billy Bunter made haste to disappear. When the Famous Five started for Big Side, Bob looked round for Bunter, but saw him not. The Owl of the Remove had cornered Mauly, at long last, and extracted a loan from that long-suffering youth. In a stuffy picture palace, Billy Bunter stuffed chocolates and watched crook films, while the rest of the School watched the Rookwood match.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Fight to a Finish!

THE May sun shone brightly. Harry Wharton & Co. sat in the warm grass, and shared the contents of a bag of oranges, and watched the cricket. Big Side was crowded; few Greyfriars men had engagements elsewhere that afternoon. Billy Bunter was at the pictures; Skinner was smoking in some secluded corner; Fisher T. Fish was counting his money; but every other man in the Remove had rolled up; even Lord Mauleverer displayed signs of excitement, in the intervals of napping under shady branches. Shell and Fourth had gathered; even fags of the Third and Second; the Fifth were there almost to a man, and the Sixth.

The long-drawn-out struggle was going on hard and fast; it was good cricket all the time. One Greyfriars man had lived through the innings from start to finish—Dick Lancaster of the Sixth—and his individual score had been 51. That score contrasted with the Greyfriars captain's figure of 0, and some skippers might have been a little perturbed thereby, but not old Wingate. Old Wingate's rugged face had fairly beamed as he watched Lancaster putting paid to the Rookwood bowling.

That bowling had been good—distinctly good—and after Wingate's bad

luck there was no doubt that Rookwood would have been ahead on the first innings but for the Greyfriars new recruit.

Loder of the Sixth looked on for a time with a scowling brow, and even Loder had to realise that had he been batting in Lancaster's place he could not have stood the test. There was no doubt about that in any mind—not even in Loder's own. It did not make him feel any the kinder towards his enemy, however.

Greyfriars had taken 102 in their first innings—exactly half of them credited to the new man. That was quite as much as Wingate could have expected in his most hopeful moments. Good as the new recruit was, however, it was a hard fight for the home team.

Bulkeley and his merry men from Rookwood were in great form. They had come over to win if they could. And in their second innings they rather made the fur fly. Sykes, the champion bowler, damaged his wrist slightly, but enough to put him off his bowling form. That little incident made a great deal of difference. Lancaster, on the other hand, though regarded only as a change bowler, performed the hat trick, amid uproarious applause and hand-clapping from a crowded field. But Rookwood totalled 120 for their second innings, leaving Greyfriars with plenty to do.

Wingate opened the second innings for Greyfriars, with Lancaster at the other end. This time the Greyfriars captain's luck was better. But there was no doubt that the visitors' bowling

was uncommonly good, and they were handy men in the field. They seemed unable to touch the new man, but Wingate went down with 25 to his credit.

Good bats like Gwynne, North, and Blundell followed him—good men and true—but the average of runs was not high. The score crept up slowly.

Coker of the Fifth shook his head over it. Coker's chum, Potter, was in the eleven; Coker, as usual, was left out. His other chum, Greene, was also out of it; and, for once, Greene was inclined to agree with Coker that Wingate's judgment was sometimes at fault. Coker and Greene chatted with Potter as he stood waiting his turn to bat, and Greene was encouraging—Coker pessimistic.

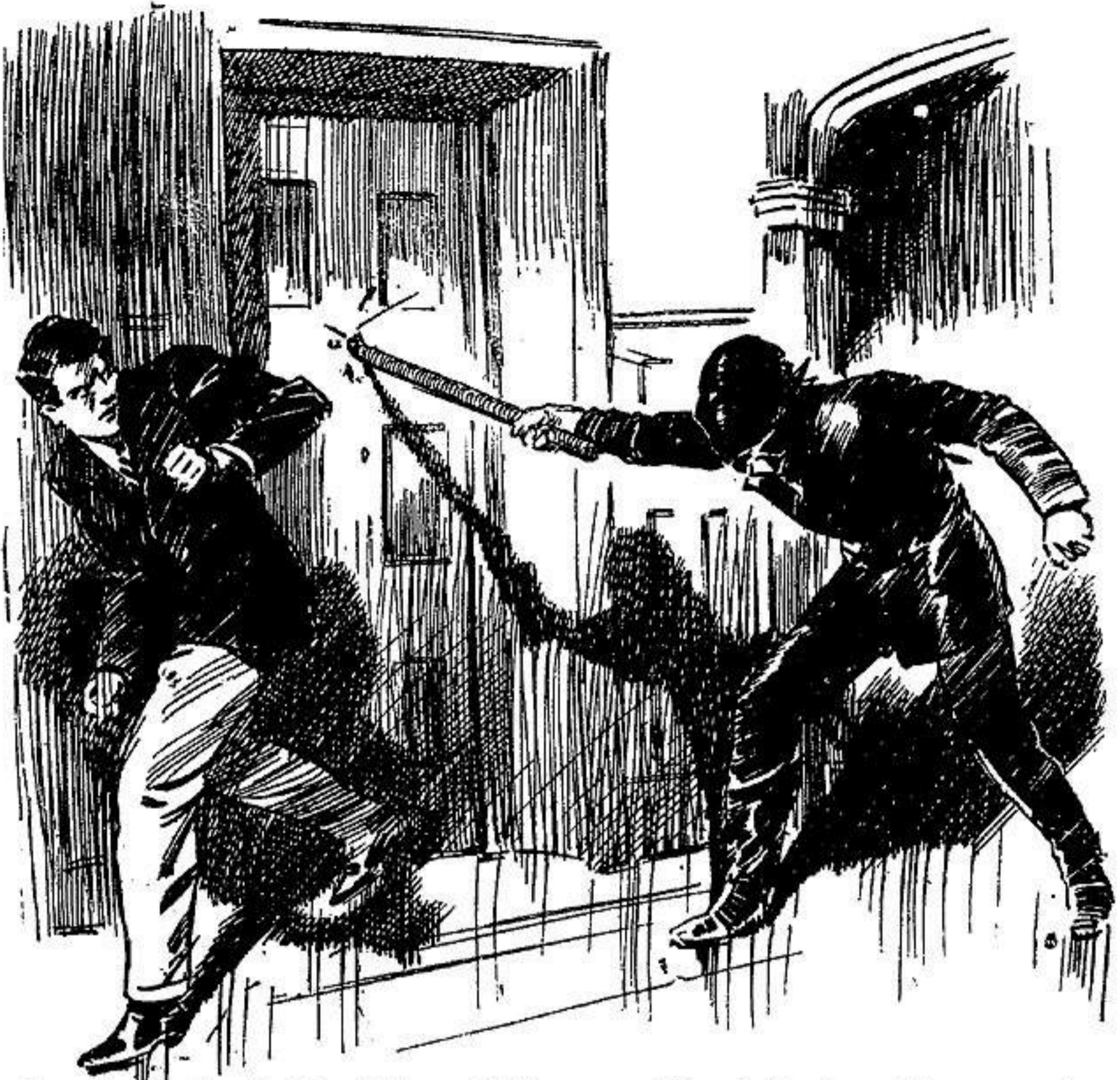
"We may pull it off," said Coker, "we may! But, dash it all, we can't expect too much when Wingate leaves out the best cricketer at Greyfriars!"

"Dash it all, Greeney's good, but he's not the best cricketer at Greyfriars!" said Potter.

Coker gave him an icy look. "I wasn't speaking of Greene, Potter."

"Oh! You don't mean Loder?" "I don't mean Loder, you ass! I was speaking of cricketers, not slouching slackers. I mean me!"

"You!" said Potter. "Me!" said Coker. "But didn't you say you were speaking of cricketers?" asked Potter innocently.



Lancaster dodged as the Weasel's heavy steel jemmy swept through the air, and it was upon the solid oak of the study door that the crashing blow fell!

Greene exploded in a chortle. Horace Coker, disdaining to answer such a question, stalked away. Potter and Greene, thereafter, were deprived of his running commentary on the game—which was not regarded by those youths as a great loss.

Potter followed Blundell in, and made 6 before he was slaughtered. He told Greene afterwards that 6 wasn't a lot—Greene agreed heartily that it wasn't—but that 6 was pretty good against such bowling—to which Greene agreed less heartily.

Man after man went in and did his best, but it could not be denied that the Rookwood bowling was a cut above the Greyfriars batting. Only one man stood firm, and that was the new man, Lancaster, not out in the first innings, looked like being not out in the second. Every man in the team had put up a good game, but they had to meet men who were at least as good. Even Wingate himself was not more than equal to Bulkeley of Rookwood. There was one man who stood out head and shoulders above both teams, and that was Lancaster of the Greyfriars Sixth.

Even a man who did not know the game could have seen that he was a born cricketer. He lived and breathed the game. He was obviously enjoying every minute of it, and he seemed tireless. He had done plenty of bowling and plenty of leather-hunting in the Rookwood innings, but he seemed as fresh as paint now that the game was drawing to its close.

"Didn't I tell you men he was a prize-packet?" Bob Cherry inquired a dozen times at least.

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh declared that the prize-packetfulness was terrific.

"It's a one-man show!" said Hobson of the Shell.

Hobby exaggerated, but there was no doubt that the game hung on Lancaster. If he failed, it was clear that the tail of the Greyfriars team would never pull it out of the fire.

But he did not look like failing. He was set at the wickets, and Rookwood tried him with every kind of ball in vain. And he gave no catches to the keenest men in the field. And even his

admiring friends in the Remove had left off counting his 4's.

"Last man in!" said Nugent.

The chums of the Remove were not sitting in the grass now. Hardly a man on the ground was sitting down. Evon Lord Mauleverer was wide awake. Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout had walked down from the House together. A rumour spread that the Head was looking from his study window. Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, almost danced with excitement and chapped his hands vigorously when a Greyfriars wicket went down, blissfully unaware that he was enthusing at the wrong moment. Prout's deep voice was heard telling Quelch and all the world of batting experiences of his younger days—when, it appeared, he had stood up to the foe as Lancaster was standing now, if fond memory did not deceive Prout. But nobody listened to Prout. Nobody had ears for anything. Fellows were all eyes—and all eyes were on the game.

"Last man in! Luckily, Bancroft's a stonewaller!" said Wharton. "If he keeps the game alive for Lancaster, all right!"

"And if he doesn't," sighed Bob—"all wrong!"

There was no doubt about that. Rookwood had a total of 215 for their two innings. Greyfriars had 102 on their first, and so far, on their second, 100; 13 were wanted to tie, 14 to win, and the last man at the wickets had the bowling. Bancroft of the Sixth was a stonewaller and little else, and Greyfriars could only hope that he would stonewall successfully till Lancaster got the bowling again.

"Thank goodness it isn't Loder!" said Johnny Bull, unconscious of the fact that Loder of the Sixth was standing a little behind the group of juniors and in hearing.

"My hat, rather!" gasped Wharton. "Loder wouldn't keep his sticks up for a single ball of that bowling!"

"The thankfulness is preposterous," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Loder scowled blackly. It was all the more disagreeable because he knew that it was true. The new man had his place in the eleven, and even Loder had to admit his right to it. And Loder

knew that had he been last man in the eleven and gone in to join Lancaster the game would have been a "goner." All depended now on keeping the innings alive for Lancaster—and Gerald Loder could not have done it.

Almost anguished eyes were fixed on Bancroft. He stopped his first ball dead, and his second ball; he ventured to tap the third, and Bob Cherry favoured him with a ferocious scowl.

"Does that idiot think he can hit?" hissed Bob. "Doesn't he know that he's there to keep his sticks up? My hat! If that howling chump tries to show off we'll jolly well mob him after the game!"

But the batsman had tapped the ball safely away. He knew what he was there for as well as Bob did, and he played up manfully. No ball tempted him to take risks and the change of ends put the game into Lancaster's hands.

Bob Cherry breathed as if he had come up from a deep dive.

"Fourteen!" he said. "Lancaster's good for it, with any luck! I tell you men that Bancroft could not live through another over! I tell you they've got him spotted, and they'll kill him next time! My sons, this is the last over, win or lose."

His comrades agreed. All Greyfriars knew it, and all Rookwood knew it. And Bulkeley put on his best bowler to deal with the Greyfriars champion—and that bowler was an uncommonly good man. There was a hush round the crowded field—and something like a sigh when Lancaster stopped the ball dead.

"Is this a time for caution?" moaned Bob Cherry. "Doesn't the fathhead know that this is the last over?"

"Old bean, he knows as much about cricket as you do!" said Wharton.

And Bob grinned and admitted that that was probable!

A wild yell pealed from Bob and was echoed round the field when the second ball met the bat. The batsman did not run; there was no need.

"Four!" said Harry. "Ten to win!"

Another hush! And the Rookwood bowler prepared more carefully than ever for his next shot. And he sent down a quite different kind of ball. But the result was not different.

"Four!" shrieked Bob, while the leather was still whizzing hot from the bat.

And he was right; it was another boundary.

"Six to win!" howled Johnny Bull. "My only hat! Are they never going to send that ball in! Are they never going to let the man bowl! Are they never—"

"The neverfulness seems to be terrific!" groaned the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Oh, buck up! Buck up!"

"Six to win!" came Horace Coker's voice from somewhere. "Gad! I wish I were in Lancaster's place now!"

Coker was the only man that wished it!

After what seemed endless delay—though it really wasn't—the bowler got going again. The ball was blocked dead.

"What we want," said Bob, wiping the perspiration from his brow, "is a hit out of the ground to put us out of our pain! There he goes—oh dear—they're running!"

"Two!" said Wharton.

"Blow!" said Bob. "Four more wanted."

"We'll tie, anyhow—"

"Blow! Who wants to tie?"

"The tiefulness is not the proper caper! The blowfulness is terrific!" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.



Daredevils of the Dirt-Track!

Z-z-z! Engines roar, cinders fly in choking showers, exhausts belch out searing flame and smoke. Crash! A rider's over! On come the crouching figures. Here's "Broadside Bruce." Look how he's taken that corner! How they cheer "Broadside Bruce" as he

flashes past the checked flag. "Broadside Bruce" and "Dirty Dick," his Cockney mechanic, are out to make dirt-track history in South America. Meet them in a roaring-all-thrilling series of complete dirt-track yarns appearing in THE RANGER.

Britain's Best Boys' Coloured Paper

The RANGER

THRILLS! ADVENTURE! LAUGHS! COLOUR! Now on Sale 2d.

"Last ball of the last over!" murmured Bob. "I keep on telling you it's the last over—except for a single ball to knock Bancroft into a cocked hat. If Lancaster doesn't give us a boundary this time I'll never forgive him."

The click of leather meeting willow was heard over a silent field. The batsmen ran a desperate four. Bob Cherry watched with his mouth wide open. They'd got the leather—it was whizzing in—crash! But the bat was on the crease; the wicket crashed, too late, and the umpire shook his head.

Bob Cherry yelled.

"What price that? What?"

"Hurrah!"

"Greyfriars wins!"

"Hip-pip! Hurrah!"

A storm of hand-clapping, a rush of feet, a roar of voices. Caps and hats went wildly into the air. In the midst of a shouting swarm, Lancaster of the Sixth, tossed like a bark on a stormy sea, was mounted, laughing and breathless, on the shoulders of Wingate and Gwynne.

"Hurrah! 'Rah! 'Rah! 'Rah! 'Rah! 'Rah!" Bob Cherry was going on like a gramophone. "'Rah! 'Rah! 'Rah! 'Rah! 'Rah!" He thumped fellows frantically in the back, eliciting howls of anguish. "'Rah! 'Rah! 'Rah! 'Rah! 'Rah!"

Greyfriars had won the Rookwood match. And Dick Lancaster had won it for Greyfriars.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Put to the Test!

DICK LANCASTER sat at his open study window, watching a silver crescent of moon that crept up over the ancient roofs of Greyfriars. It was a clear, cold night, after the bright sunshine of the day. The hour was late; all Greyfriars slept. But Lancaster of the Sixth could not sleep. There were thoughts in the mind of the schoolboy crook that no man at Greyfriars could have guessed.

The day had been happy and exciting. He had enjoyed every minute of it. Cricket had driven black thoughts from his mind; that day he had been a Greyfriars man heart and soul; and nothing else. The long fight with Rookwood, the glorious game and the happy triumph; the enthusiastic celebration that had followed, with himself the hero of the hour, the cynosure of all eyes, had filled mind and heart; and Lancaster had forgotten what he was; what one Greyfriars man suspected him to be; what Slimy Sugden and the gang knew him to be.

But the shouting and the tumult died; Greyfriars slept, and in the silent hours memory came back tormenting.

How the school had wrought such a change in his heart Lancaster hardly knew, but he was only too keenly conscious of the change.

His triumph that day had been great. He was at the top of the tree in the schoolboy world. Handsome, wealthy, clever in class, a great man at games; friends with all his Form but one or two who did not count; admired and liked by almost every fellow in the other Forms; it would have seemed to an observer that he had little more to ask.

But there was a canker at the heart of it all; the knowledge of what he was; the consciousness that his life was a lie.

If he could have thrown over the past—

Could he? He was thinking of it now, wondering. The cool breeze of night, that blew

IT'S EASY, CHUMS!
SPILL A GREYFRIARS
LIMERICK AND WIN A
WALLET

like A. Brown, of 22, Bradshaw Street, Leyland, near Preston, who submitted the following winning effort which our artist has illustrated:



Prout boasts he's shot grizzlies galore,



And finished off wolves by the score.



Yet only last night



He fainted with fright



When he saw a dead mouse on the floor!

More prizes waiting to be won, and it's up to YOU to win one.

Don't forget, **SPLENDID BOOKS, PENKNIVES, and POCKET WALLETS** offered for amusing storyettes and snappy Greyfriars limericks.

from the sea, fanned his cheeks as he sat at the open window. Grey and ghostly seemed the ancient, ivy-clad buildings of Greyfriars in the glimmer of the moon. A quiet, old-world place—a haven of rest to the crook, after the life he had known of wild and feverish excitement. But the last place in which a crook might have expected to find himself.

If he broke with the gang, what would happen? Slimy Sugden, the Weasel, Ratty the Rogue, and the rest? What would they do? Would they let him go? Would they hold their tongues if they let him go? He could not hope for that—he could not expect it. He was too valuable to them—he, the "Wizard," whose light fingers on a safe were worth a fortune to them! What was the use of thinking of it, when there was no hope? So far from letting him go he believed that Slimy was even false to his promise that Greyfriars School should be cut out of the list of "cribs" to be "cracked"; he had believed so, ever since he had met the Weasel in Friardale Lane.

A deep sigh left his heavy-laden breast. Then he sat silent, moody, staring into the dusky quad.

He started a little as a dark figure flitted for a second in a patch of glimmering moonlight and vanished again.

His lip curled.

Some sportive senior returning from the breaking of bounds—Loder, perhaps, untaught by his bitter lesson at the hands of Jerry Hawke; or perhaps one of his friends, Carne or Walker. It was no business of his; he gave it no thought, only his lip curved with contempt.

But another thought came into his mind and he leaned a little from the window, his eyes searching the quad, patched with shadow and silvery light.

It was a late hour—a very late hour—for even the most reckless breaker of bounds to be stealing back to the school. It was past one in the morning. Even Loder could scarcely have kept it up so late. And on reflection it seemed to him that there had been something vaguely familiar in that glimpse of the fitting figure, dim and vague as it was.

His heart beat sharply.

He watched. Closer to the House, appearing for a flashing moment in a pool of moonlight by an old wall, he caught the fitting figure with his eyes; a swift, noiseless, slight figure; hardly so tall as any Sixth-Former of Greyfriars; but a man's figure. It vanished again, leaving Lancaster with his brow as black as night.

It was not a breaker of bounds returning. He knew that now. It was a thief in the night; and he was almost certain that it was the Weasel. He had known—he had felt—what the ferret-eyed rascal was in the neighbourhood for, and now he did not doubt that the man was on the scene of the intended "job." Bitterly he remembered that he had given Slimy all the necessary information for a "job" at Greyfriars; for the first plan had been that the "Wizard" should carry it out in conjunction with the Weasel. The Weasel could carry it out without his help—and that was why he was there.

Lancaster rose to his feet.

His desire to break with the gang was strong; his resolve to do so half-formed. But on one point he had long been determined; even if he remained a crook, a desperate breaker of the law, Greyfriars should be spared. The roof

that sheltered him should not be outraged; the headmaster who trusted him should never be a victim.

His eyes burned fiercely under knitted brows.

He stepped quietly back from the window and drew on a pair of rubber shoes. He stepped to the study door, opened it, and listened—as he had listened, with bent head, many a time in the silence and darkness of a night. He knew what he was going to risk; he knew that if the Weasel was seized in the act of robbery the enraged rascal would denounce him, drag him into a share of his fate. He knew that, and he did not hesitate. He was setting everything on a cast; but his resolve did not falter.

Softly he trod down the passage; softly as the "Wizard" was accustomed to tread in the small hours.

If it was a thief in the night, if it was the Weasel, he knew where to look for him. He did not think of taking a weapon of any kind, though well he knew the ferret-eyed man's desperate character. He knew that the Weasel would be at the headmaster's study, where the safe was, where he knew that the loot was, from what Sugden had learned from Lancaster. The job was "pie" to the Weasel, if he was not interrupted. But he was going to be interrupted.

Softly, silently, Lancaster traversed the dark passages, seemingly able to see in the dark. In the corridor on which Dr. Locke's study opened he paused and listened.

There was no sound.

Only faintly to his ears came the sighing of the wind, from the sea, in the branches of ancient elms.

Possibly he had been mistaken. Fer- vently he hoped that he had been mistaken. In those moments, when he was prepared to throw up all that he had won at Greyfriars, rather than allow the school to be looted, he realised more clearly than ever, how dear the place had become to him—how he shrank from his schoolboys friends learning the truth, from the amazement, the scorn, the horror that would follow such a discovery. If only he had been mistaken—if only Slimy had kept his word and spared Greyfriars!

He trod softly down the corridor. There was no sound from the Head's study. Silently he tried the door. It was locked. He knew that the Head, as a rule, locked his study door at night, though sometimes he omitted to do so. The lock would not have stopped the Weasel for more than a minute. But the door was locked; the Weasel was not there.

Lancaster breathed more freely.

But he waited.

Minute followed minute. He heard the half-hour—half-past one—chime from the clock-tower.

Following the chime came a faint sound in the corridor where he waited. His heart sank.

It was a stealthy footfall.

He had not been mistaken. The thief was in the House; only Lancaster had been swifter in reaching the spot aimed for by the thief. Standing with his back to the Head's locked door, Lancaster listened. Soft and stealthy, the footfalls came up the passage.

In a dim glimmer from a window he had a glimpse of a creeping, cringing figure, and he knew the Weasel. The man was coming directly towards the door of the Head's study. His mean,

shifty face was concealed under a black cloth, but Lancaster knew him. Every line in the cringing figure, every motion—swift, stealthy, rat-like—was familiar to him. He had worked many a time with the Weasel.

The man was only a yard from him when he became aware of the Greyfriars senior's presence in the deep shadow.

The Weasel stopped dead—his narrow, shifty eyes glittering like a rat's over the cloth that hid his face, his breath coming in a hissing gasp—for a split second, then he sprang. But even as he sprang a voice arrested him, and he stopped in his spring like a baulked tiger.

"Chuck it, Weasel!"

Lancaster's voice was quiet, cold, hard. The ferret-eyed man stood, shaking, peering at him.

**ANOTHER READER WINS
A TOPPING BOOK
for supplying the following
laugh!**



Prison Visitor (sympathetically): "Now, my good man, what brought you here?"
Convict: "Mistaken confidence."
Prison Visitor: "Really? In whom were you deceived?"
Convict: "Myself. I thought I could run faster!"

*Sent in by Malcolm Macdonald,
140, Kent Road, Glasgow, C.3.*

"The Wizard!" he breathed:

He stood staring. There was doubt and rage in his face, savage suspicion. But he keyed his voice low:

"You, Wizard? You knew? You're going to take a hand, after all?"

"No!"

"You ain't?"

"No!"

The Weasel's eyes burned at him in the gloom.

"Then what are you here for, Dick?"

"To stop you!"

"Stop me?" the Weasel hissed. "Stop me, Dick?"

"Slimy promised. He's got to keep the promise! Get out of this, Weasel! Get out, or—"

"Or what?" breathed the Weasel.

"Or you'll have to deal with me!"

"You double-crossing, weak-kneed young 'ound! Have you turned copper's nark?" snarled the Weasel.

"Get out! I'm giving you a chance to clear!"

"I'm giving you a chance, Dick, to

get back to bed, and leave me to carry on. I'm here for business. Get out of this!"

Lancaster did not stir.

The Weasel's hand was close down at his side, and Lancaster knew that it gripped a jemmy. He knew that the man was desperate, enraged. But there was no throb of fear in his heart.

"You going, Dick?" The Weasel's voice was a low hiss.

"No!"

"You letting me carry on?"

"No!"

"You're asking for it, Dick!" said the Weasel hoarsely.

Lancaster laughed contemptuously.

It seemed as if that contemptuous laugh removed the last restraint from the enraged rascal who had been his associate and confederate. The Weasel sprang like a tiger, his right hand swinging up. There was a glimmer as a heavy steel jemmy swept through the air, and the fierce blow crashed down, aimed straight at Lancaster's head.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Hero of the Hour!

CRASH!

It was a sound like thunder in the sleeping House.

But it was not upon the handsome head of the schoolboy crook that the murderous blow had fallen.

Lancaster, watching the ruffian like a cat, was ready for the attack. He moved in time, swift as lightning, and it was upon the solid oak of the study door, against which he had been standing, that the crashing blow fell.

The door rang and groaned under its force, and the heavy impact jerked the jemmy from the murderous hand. It clanged on the floor.

Almost in the same instant Lancaster's grasp was on the ruffian.

"You dog!"

The words grated between his teeth.

The Weasel panted. He was maddened with rage—rage at the associate who had turned on him, whose motives he could not begin to understand, who was to his eyes a traitor, a "double-crosser." That desperate blow, had it fallen where it was aimed, would have cracked the schoolboy's skull like an egg-shell. The Weasel, who had come as a thief, would have fled with the brand of Cain on his brow. In his reckless rage he had not cared. But his weapon was gone now, and Lancaster's powerful grasp was on him.

Strong, supple, and sinewy as he was, a man against a boy, the Weasel could not get the upper hand.

"Dick!" the Weasel panted. "Dick! You mad fool! If they get me, they get you! It's both of us for the stir!"

"You dog! And you'd have killed me—"

"I never meant—"

"Save your breath! You'll want it!"

With an effort, Lancaster bore him back to the wall. The Weasel jammed there, struggling, but powerless to escape the steely grip of the Sixth-Former of Greyfriars.

He panted desperately.

"You got me, Dick! I never meant to out you! You know that! You mad young fool, they'll get us both! You think I'm holding my tongue if they nail me? If they get me, they get the Wizard, and the cops'll be better pleased to get you than to get me!"

Lancaster's eyes were like cold steel.

"I gave you a chance!" he muttered.



Hidden in the high-backed chair, Bunter heard the drawers of Lancaster's desk pulled out and pushed in. Then a figure bent over a locked suitcase, and Bunter's eyes fixed on the back of Loder of the Sixth!

"You're mad, Dick!" The Weasel's voice came cracked and hoarse. "You can 'ear them coming!—Let go, Dick!"

There was a sound of footsteps. The crash, after all, had been heard. It had awakened someone. At the end of the corridor a light flashed. Another flash, as the electric light in the corridor was switched on. In the sudden flood of light the struggling figures were revealed to the eyes of Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, staring along the corridor.

"Good heavens!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He was in dressing-gown and slippers. Evidently the crash had awakened him, and he had come down to investigate the cause. No doubt the Remove master had been thinking of the possibility of burglars; but he was amazed, astounded, by the sight that met his gaze as he switched on the light in the Head's corridor.

For a second he stood spellbound.

"Lancaster!" he exclaimed. "What—who—bless my soul!"

Mr. Quelch was a middle-aged gentleman, and it was many years since he had been an athlete, if ever he had been one. But he sprinted down Head's corridor as if he were on the cinder-path.

There was plenty of courage in Quelch's spare frame. He saw a Sixth Form boy of Greyfriars struggling desperately with a man whose face was masked by a black cloth, and he needed to see no more.

Henry Samuel Quelch rushed to Lancaster's aid.

The Weasel's eyes burned at Lancaster.

"You mad fool!" he breathed. "Both—both you as well as me—"

For a moment Lancaster did not heed

him; his grasp was still like steel on the writhing rascal. But as Mr. Quelch came speeding down the long corridor, his dressing-gown flying behind him, Lancaster remembered. He remembered what he was—what the Weasel could tell his captors he was! His grasp on the rascal relaxed.

The desperate Weasel needed no more.

He tore himself away, and rushed down the corridor in the direction opposite from that by which Mr. Quelch was coming. Lancaster staggered back against the wall, panting for breath, as if overcome by the intensity of the struggle. Henry Samuel Quelch was a keen gentleman, well known in the Remove as a downy bird; but not for an instant did it cross his mind that Lancaster had allowed the midnight thief to escape.

"My boy!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

Lancaster panted.

"I'm all right, sir! If—if you'll get help, sir, I—I'll follow him—"

"No, no! You must not run such risks! Stay—"

But Lancaster was gone, fast on the track of the fleeing malefactor.

His face was black and bitter, as it was turned away from Mr. Quelch. He was acting now—playing a part, for he had no intention of recapturing the escaping cracksman.

He was cool again now—icily cool—and his wish was that the Weasel should get out of the school as quickly as possible and vanish into the night. In his anger, in the excitement of the struggle, it had been in his mind to hold on to the scoundrel—to deliver him to justice; but that had passed. He had prevented the robbery, and that was

enough! The sooner the cracksman was gone the better.

He heard the crash of a breaking window.

The Weasel was cut off from the window by which he had entered. But he was at no loss. Once he was free of the schoolboy crook's steel-like grasp the cracksman was safe enough. He smashed through a window and scrambled out, dropping lightly into the quad.

Dick Lancaster reached the window.

He stared out through broken, shattered glass into the moonlight in the quadrangle. A running figure appeared for a moment in a patch of moonlight, and vanished again. Echoing footfalls died away into silence.

Lancaster breathed hard and deep.

The Weasel was gone.

Lancaster turned back. A grim, hard smile was on his face. The Weasel, captured, would have denounced him as a confederate; but the Weasel had escaped, and his tongue was silent. He might rage and mutter revenge, but Slimy Sugden would call him to heel. There was nothing to be feared now from the Weasel.

In Head's corridor Lancaster found a crowd gathering—the alarm had spread. Three or four masters, six or seven of the Sixth, two or three of the Fifth, half dressed, excited, had gathered there, with a buzz of excited voices.

Mr. Prout had picked up the jemmy, and he was pointing to the deep dent in the oak of the Head's study door, where it had struck.

All eyes turned on Lancaster as he came hurrying back. Perhaps some noticed, with surprise, that he was fully

dressed, and had evidently not been to bed, late as the hour was.

"Lancaster, old man!" Wingate ran towards him. "You're not hurt—"

"A bit out of breath, that's all. I had rather a tussle—"

"The door was struck—a terrible blow!" came Mr. Prout's deep voice. "Was the blow aimed at you, Lancaster?"

"Yes, sir. Luckily it missed."

"But the man—" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I'm sorry he's got clear, sir. He burst through a window on the quad."

"Thank goodness you have not been hurt! The wretch's escape matters little, in comparison!"

"I will telephone to the police station at once!" said Mr. Prout.

The Fifth Form master hurried away.

"Here is the Head, sir!" said Wingate.

Dr. Locke came on the scene, in voluminous dressing-gown, startled and agitated. The matter was explained, and his eyes turned anxiously on Lancaster.

"You are sure you are not hurt, my boy?"

"Quite, sir." Lancaster was smiling now. "No harm done, sir, and luckily I spotted the man before he was able to carry out his game here—"

Loder of the Sixth joined the crowd in the corridor. Lancaster felt, rather than saw, his enemy's eyes upon him searchingly. In the distance some juniors appeared—unheeded for the moment.

"But how did you come to discover the man, Lancaster?" Dr. Locke glanced at the fully-dressed senior.

"Had you not been to bed?"

"No, sir; I was disinclined to sleep, and I sat up late," said Lancaster. "I played rather a lot of cricket to-day, sir, and I think it must have made me rather sleepless. I was sitting at my window when I spotted the man, and, guessing what he was after, left my study to see if anything was up."

"My dear boy, that was taking a terrible risk!" exclaimed the Head. "You should have called some of the others—"

"Well, I wasn't sure there was anything up, sir, and I didn't want to give an alarm for nothing. I came on the man rather suddenly in this corridor—"

"He must have intended to enter my study," said Dr. Locke, with a nod.

"It looks like it, sir."

"Looks as if he knew that the safe was in your study, sir," said Loder. "How could he have known that?"

Several eyes turned sharply on Loder. He had spoken almost involuntarily, forgetful for the moment of his fear of Lancaster—of the fact that his campaign against the new man was ended. Lancaster looked at him, full and clear in the eyes; and Loder started and paled. He remembered! Whatever suspicion might be in his mind he dared not utter it.

Yet what suspicion could he have? It was clear, even to Loder, that Lancaster had prevented a robbery. Mr. Quelch had seen him struggling with the burglar; and the dint in the oaken door showed how narrowly he had escaped a murderous blow.

Even to Loder there seemed no room for suspicion; yet his suspicion was strong. But he dared not give it voice.

"These wretches have many means of gaining information, Loder," said the Head. "Obviously, the man's intention was to reach the safe. Lancaster, you have saved me from a very heavy loss;

I can only thank you and commend your courage; though you should not have taken such a risk. You are a brave and gallant boy!"

"Good old Lancaster!" came a voice along the passage—the voice of Bob Cherry.

The Head glanced round.

"Bless my soul! What are you juniors doing out of your dormitory? Cherry—Wharton—all of you! Go back to bed at once—"

There was a scampering of feet in rapid retreat before the Head finished.

Wingate pressed Lancaster's arm as they walked back together to the Sixth Form quarters.

"You are a plucky ass, old chap!" he said. "But don't do it on your own again. Call me next time." He laughed.

Lancaster laughed, too.

"Not likely to be a next time!" he remarked.

But he wondered.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Butts In!

"BOB, old fellow—"

"Stony, old chap!" answered Bob Cherry, with a shake of the head.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Try Loder of the Sixth!" suggested Bob. "You told us you were frightfully pally with Loder. You go to tea with him, and all that."

"I'm not going to tea with Loder again! The beast cut up rusty, for some reason, last time. Horrible manners, you know!" said Bunter. "I've turned Loder down!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob, quite taken with the idea of Billy Bunter of the Lower Fourth turning down a Sixth Form prefect.

"I wasn't going to speak about Loder! Blow Loder! I was going to ask you—"

"Nothing doing, old fat bean! Stony!"

"I wasn't going to ask you to lend me anything, you silly ass!" hooted the Owl of the Remove.

"Then why the thump did you call me old fellow?" asked Bob, in natural surprise.

"Look here, you silly chump—I mean, look here, old chap—if you see Coker of the Fifth, tell him I'm gone home for the day, will you?"

"Eh? You're not going home?"

"Well, perhaps I'm not exactly going home," admitted Bunter cautiously—"n-n-not exactly. But I'd rather keep out of Coker's way. If he thinks I'm gone home for the afternoon, he won't be looking for me."

"And why should he be looking for you, anyhow?"

"Well, you know what a suspicious beast Coker is. He may think I had the chocolates," explained Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"The fact is, I've no doubt Potter or Greene had them," said Bunter. "If a fellow leaves a box of chocolates on his study table on a half-holiday, he might expect his study-mates to help themselves. Or some fag may have nipped in and bagged them. There's fellows at Greyfriars who would do such a thing," said Bunter, with a sad shake of the head.

"There's one, at least!" agreed Bob. "You'd better take Coker's chocs back to Coker's study, you fat villain!"

"Of course, I know nothing about them," said Bunter. "So far as I know, they're still on Coker's table, where he

left them. I've not even seen them. The actual fact is, I don't even know whether Coker had any chocolates at all. Very likely he hadn't."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Still, he's a suspicious beast! He may be hunting for them. Tell him I'm gone to Courtfield for the pictures—I mean, that I'm gone home because my pater's been run over by a lorry! Look here, tell him anything you like! I leave it to you," said Bunter generously. "And, look here, I'll let you have some of the chocolates! There!"

"Some of the chocolates you haven't bagged, and that you don't know anything about?" asked Bob.

"Yes—I—I mean—"

"Turn round!" said Bob Cherry.

"Eh—what am I to turn round for, you ass?"

"I'm going to kick you all the way to Coker's study!" explained Bob.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter departed in haste without asking further aid from Bob Cherry. He did not want to be kicked as far as Coker's study—or, indeed, kicked at all.

Bob Cherry chuckled and joined his chums, who were waiting on the Greyfriars raft for no less a person than Lancaster of the Sixth. It was Saturday afternoon, a half-holiday, and their Sixth Form friend was going up the river in a boat with the juniors. It was a gracious act on the part of so great a man, and the Co. were correspondingly bucked. Lancaster, being new at Greyfriars, had not yet seen all the sights, and Harry Wharton & Co. were going to show him Popper's Island and other delectable haunts.

Billy Bunter rolled into the House, with a wary eye open behind his big spectacles for Coker. Bunter had a feeling that Coker would think of him if he missed that handsome box of chocolates that had come from his Aunt Judy. And Coker, though not a suspicious fellow, was very likely to get suspicious if he noticed the box that was bulging under Bunter's jacket at that very moment.

Bunter did not want to see Coker until the chocolates had been disposed of internally, after which Bunter would be able to state that he knew nothing whatever about them. So long as they were under his arm, he realised that such a statement would not carry conviction.

Like a boa-constrictor, Billy Bunter wanted to retire to some hidden spot to devour his prey at leisure. He had rolled into the Cloisters, but he had found Loder of the Sixth "mooching" there. His study was no use; Coker was likely to look in his study. And when he saw Lancaster of the Sixth walk out, in flannels and blazer, Bunter decided on the spot at once. If Lancaster was going out, Lancaster's study was a safe retreat. Certainly, it was a fearful "check" for a junior to make free with a senior study, but, really, it was a case of any port in a storm. Coker was not likely to look for him in the Sixth, and that settled the point for Bunter.

He whipped into Lancaster's study and closed the door. From the window he watched the handsome Sixth-Former disappear in the distance in the direction of the river. He grinned, and sat down in Lancaster's comfortable arm-chair. It was a large, deep, high-backed chair, well padded, and Bunter liked it at once. He turned it with its back to the door, so that any Sixth Form man who might glance into the study for Lancaster could not see that he was there, and would think the room empty.

Then he opened the box of chocolates on his fat knees and settled down to business.

It was a large box, crammed with the best chocolates. Aunt Judy was very good to her dear Horace, though in this case her goodness was benefiting Bunter of the Remove instead of Coker of the Fifth. Chocolate after chocolate vanished down Bunter's capacious throat, and he grew happy and shiny and sticky. This was a way of spending a half-holiday that appealed to Bunter, where he lived, as Fisher T. Fish would have expressed it.

The chocolates were finished at last. Bunter lolled back in the deep chair, breathing rather hard after his exertions. He rather needed a rest. Lancaster had gone on the river, and was not likely to be back yet. Bunter felt that he had time for a rest.

The door-handle suddenly turned, and he started.

The door opened. If that beast Lancaster had come back—

Apparently, it was not Lancaster. Somebody was looking into the study without entering—some Sixth Form man who had looked in to see if Lancaster was there, no doubt—and Bunter sat tight, glad that he had arranged the chair to conceal him from a casual glance into the study.

He expected the fellow, whoever he was, to go. To his surprise, there was a quick step inside the room, and the door closed. He heard a hurried, suppressed breathing.

Bunter's heart thumped.

Somebody had looked in, not to see if Lancaster was there, but to make sure that he was not there. Finding the room empty, as he supposed, he had stepped in and closed the door. Had Lancaster been sitting in the armchair, his head would have been visible over the high back. Bunter's head was a foot below it. The newcomer evidently supposed that nobody was there, and Bunter wondered who on earth he was, and what on earth he wanted. It could not be Lancaster's fag, Paget, sneaking into the room like this.

Bunter made no sound.

He heard that hurried, startled breathing quite clearly. Then there was a sound of someone moving about the study. Bunter heard the drawers of Lancaster's desk pulled out and pushed in. Then a figure passed within his line of vision and bent over a locked suitcase that lay in a corner.

As it bent, Bunter's eyes and spectacles fixed on the back of Loder of the Sixth.

He sat, amazed.

It was Gerald Loder who was searching Lancaster's study in his absence. He had his back to Bunter, but if he turned he could not fail to see the fat junior sitting in the armchair. Bunter gazed at him as if mesmerised.

Loder tested the locks on the big suitcase. Muttering words dropped from his lips.

"Here, most likely. He must keep it somewhere, and this is the only thing that's locked! Hang him! If that paper's in this bag—"

suitcase, and lifted it. He swung round to stride back to the door.

As he did so, his eyes fell on Bunter in the armchair.

Bunter's eyes were fairly goggling behind his big spectacles. Loder had come there to steal Lancaster's suitcase—that was the only possible explanation to Bunter's mind. In amazement, in horror, Bunter goggled at the bully of the Sixth.

Crash!
The suitcase dropped from the hand of the startled prefect. It crashed on the floor with a resounding crash.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Loder looked at him with starting eyes. Up to that moment he had believed himself alone in the study.

His face went white as chalk.

"Oh crikey!" repeated Bunter.

Loder stood, overwhelmed, for some moments. He scarcely seemed to breathe as he stared at the Owl of the Remove.

Then savage rage flashed into his face, and he made a stride towards Bunter. The fat junior whipped out of the chair and dodged round it.

"Ow! You keep off!" gasped Bunter. "I'll tell Lancaster! You beast, keep off! I'll tell Lancaster you came here to pinch his bag!"

Loder stopped. His hands were clenched convulsively.

"You—you young ass!" His voice came thick, almost croaking. "What—what do you mean? What are you doing in a Sixth Form study?"

"What are you doing, if you come to that?" retorted Bunter. "I'd like to know where you were going to take Lancaster's suitcase."

"I—I was not going to take it, you young idiot! I was going—"

Loder broke off. "I—I came in to—to speak to Lancaster. Get out of this room!"

"Shan't!" said Bunter.

"What?" roared Loder.

"Shan't!" repeated Bunter. He had realised by this time that he had the whip hand, and his terrors had vanished.

"You jolly well get out, or I'll yell!" Loder stood trembling with rage. Bunter grinned at him. Bunter, who had trembled at Loder's frown, rather enjoyed making the bully of the Sixth tremble in his turn.

Slowly the prefect turned to the door again. Without another word, he left the study.

Bunter chuckled, and sat down in the armchair. He did not intend to go, now, before Lancaster returned. He had something to tell the new

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Loder straightened up, his back still to Bunter. The locks on the suitcase were beyond his powers to deal with. Loder was thinking hard. That dangerous paper—the "bit of writing" Lancaster had obtained from Jerry Hawke, the paper that placed Loder utterly at his enemy's mercy—must be in the suitcase. He was convinced of that. And Loder made up his mind swiftly. He could not break open the locks, but the suitcase itself could vanish. The coast was clear; not a man of the Sixth was indoors, as Loder knew—as he had taken care to know.

To Bunter's utter amazement, Loder stooped again, grasped the handle of the

realised by this time that he had the whip hand, and his terrors had vanished.

"You jolly well get out, or I'll yell!" Loder stood trembling with rage. Bunter grinned at him. Bunter, who had trembled at Loder's frown, rather enjoyed making the bully of the Sixth tremble in his turn.

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(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,213.

THE ISLAND OF SLAVES!

BY STANTON HOPE.



Crossing the room, with a broad-bladed knife in his hand, was Ras Dhin, the giant Abyssinian!

To allay his anxiety, the skipper allowed Higgs to put Tony ashore, and engaging a one-horse vehicle, he drove through the darkened streets of Akhab.

At the gate leading to the residence official servants denied Tony entrance; but, determined to send a wireless message himself to the Hawk, he stealthily effected an entrance to the house and reached the consul's study where the wireless set was installed.

After lighting a lamp, he made some necessary adjustments to the instrument and bent over to send the message. As he did so, his eyes caught a movement on the polished green surface of a jade vase on a near-by ebony stand, and, keyed up to meet the slightest sign of danger, he spun round hastily. He was not a moment too soon! Crossing the room, with a broad-bladed knife in his right hand, was Ras Dhin, the giant Abyssinian.

"G-good heavens!" Tony gasped.

The thick mouth of the murderous slaver was twisted in an expression of fiendish hatred, but his yellow eyes were as cold and inhuman as those of a tiger.

At Death-Grips!

LEAPING forward, Ras Dhin slipped on a leopard-skin rug, and Tony, sidestepping in a flash, snapped a right hook to the slaver's ear.

To a grunt of fury, the negro sprawled sideways, recovered himself, and came after the sub.

Again Tony hurtled aside, and Ras Dhin, carried forward by his own impetus, went reeling over a leg which the sub shot out.

His knife cracked down on the stone floor, and the steel blade broke off short. Once more he regained his balance, and advanced, gripping the hilt of the knife to which was attached a jagged piece of shimmering metal.

In desperation, Tony whipped up a chair and crashed it full into the face of his terrible foe, and Ras Dhin reeled under the shock. That blow would have killed most men, but the skull of the negro giant was thick even for a man of his race.

Headless of a second blow, he advanced remorselessly and got one of his huge hands round Tony's throat, and wrenched the broken chair from his grip. Tony punched wildly with his left hand, but the grip of the negro's fingers tightened on his throat like relentless bolts of steel.

"Dog of a feringhee!" Ras Dhin rasped. "By the beard of the prophet, you will die like those other dogs under the sea!"

Tony's left hand had dropped, and he felt it touch a drawer of Major Gundath's desk. There was just the

Cornered!

THE great thing is to put a wireless message through to the Hawk and get help," said Tony Dunn anxiously.

"You need have no worries on that score, Dunn," the consul said. "I sent one of my trusted Arabs ashore as soon as I could to have a message broadcast from the installation at my residence. There isn't a set aboard this steam-yacht, unfortunately. The man would have gone before, but for the fact that the miscreant who assassinated the steersman knocked aside a couple of my men, and made off in a small motor-boat. I ran along the deck and fired several shots after the murderer, but failed to stop him."

"That was Ras Dhin!" Tony exclaimed.

"It was a giant negro," the consul nodded; "the most powerful-looking brute I've ever seen. I'm afraid nothing will prevent his escape, for

once through Akhab he has the hills and the whole of the great desert beyond for sanctuary."

The consul explained that the Wotan had been about to take him round to Aden, but the steam-yacht would remain standing by the spot where the submarine had gone down. He had no dry clothes of his own on board, but he offered to get an Arab rig-out for Tony.

"Come aboard the Sirdar, Dunn," Third-Officer Higgs invited. "I can fit you out with my duds."

This invitation Tony accepted, but before he left the Wotan he saw the slain Arab. The man had been killed with a knife, and with surprise Tony noted that the blow with it could only have been delivered by a left-handed man of great power.

In company with Higgs, Tony went to the Sirdar, where he changed. But he was restless and wanted to make sure that the wireless message had been broadcast from the consul's residence.

chance that the consul kept a pistol, and he jerked the drawer open and fumbled desperately. Then his groping fingers fastened upon the butt of a small pistol, and as he drew it out something tinkled on the stone floor. With a final agonising effort, he twisted the pistol round and pressed the trigger.

Zzzip!

Ras Dhin stiffened, and on his black face appeared an expression of mingled surprise and agony. To Tony it seemed as though the hard amber of his eyes became glazed, but this might have been because his own senses were leaving him. What he did realise was that the grip relaxed from his throat, for he dropped limply down upon his knees, scarcely aware even that he had fired a shot.

Shaking himself like a terrier after a fight, Tony gradually got his breath back and his head cleared. The study was in confusion, and Ras Dhin was sprawled upon the floor, his great black fingers like talons clawing the stonework of the floor where the crimson stain extended from the Abyssinian's hip to the head of the crumpled leopard-skin rug.

No mercy was in Tony's heart at the sight of his enemy; from the first, when Ras Dhin had shot the escaped negro slaver from the dhow, he had never regarded him as anything but an inhuman beast, whose life was forfeit. Under the dark waters of Akhab Harbour were Guy and a number of other fellows, a thousand times more valuable to the world they lived in than this savage fiend. Tony staggered across to the wireless instrument, aware that the Abyssinian was far too badly wounded to stop him, and took the knob of the transmitter in his fingers.

"Tic, tic, tac! Tic, tac, tac—"

He sent out through the ether an urgent message for help for H.M.S. Vixen, down on the bed of Akhab Harbour, with her crew aboard.

Three times Tony repeated the message, and felt satisfied that he had done all he could. He turned away from the wireless set at last, and knelt down beside Ras Dhin.

He found that the man had a bad wound near the right hip, and had lost consciousness from loss of blood. Using a portion of the negro's own robe, Tony stanching the wound as best he could, and dragged the slaver behind a bookcase.

The pistol with which he had shot the negro was of a curious type, fired by compressed air, and he slipped it into his pocket. Taking another look round, the young sub saw a pair of tortoiseshell glasses which, although he knew it not, he had jerked out of the drawer at the time he took out the pistol. These glasses were lying smashed on the stone floor, and he picked up the rims with part of the glass attached and dropped them into the drawer.

A final glance round showed him the study looking fairly presentable, and he put out the light and quietly left by the double doors that led out upon a veranda. His throat was painful, and his head reeled, but he got through the compound unseen. By devious ways he got back to the water-front, where the Sirdar's boat was waiting. But before he could speak his sorely-taxed strength failed, and he lurched unconscious into Higgs' arms.

Unmasked!

WHEN Tony came to he found himself aboard the Sirdar, and Higgs in attendance on him.

"Sorry for having been such an ass!" he apologised. "I hope to heavens that the Hawk has got the wireless message I sent, and that she won't be too late."

"Come on deck, old man!" Higgs smiled.

Revived by the night air, Tony saw that the Hawk was anchored in the harbour and was already engaged in the salvage work.

"She came up under forced draught," Higgs said, "and her divers have reported that they've had replies to their signals. Holes have been bored in the submarine, and air-pipes fixed to the hull to give fresh air to the survivors."

Ships were hastening from Aden, and the Falcon was on her way from Khoof. Before long special apparatus for pumping out water from the submarine and raising her to the surface would be available.

Acting on orders, Tony reported to Captain Golding aboard the Hawk, and received the splendid tidings that Guy, Chotajee, and at least several others, were alive.

Captain Golding reported that Major Gundath was ill with malaria; and this, combined with the shock, had forced him to take to his bunk aboard the Wotan. In the meantime, the captain acceded to Tony's request for a guard of marines to go with him to fetch Ras Dhin.

"This is the Abyssinian slaver, wanted for murder, sir," he said, and the consul reported that he's the man who put the Wotan head on into us."

(Continued on next page.)

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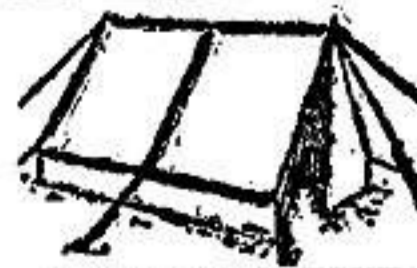
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The faint yellow rays of dawn were in the sky when Tony went ashore with a captain of marines, a surgeon, and a number of armed Jollies, hoping that Ras Dhin had not yet been discovered in his hiding-place.

No Arab servants seemed to be about the residence, and the shore party broke in without opposition. On entering the study they found the Abyssinian still behind the bookcase, much to Tony's joy.

The negro had lost a good deal of blood, but after lengthy treatment at the hands of the surgeon he opened his eyes.

"Dogs and sons of dogs!" he spluttered, when he found handcuffs on him. "Why are these things on my wrists?"

"Because you're nobbled, old son," Tony told him. "You're to be charged with murder, and with the deliberate sinking of one of His Majesty's ships."

"Fool!" Ras Dhin exploded. "What could you prove?"

"A good deal!" retorted the sub. "Apart from your other crimes, we have the word of the consul himself that it was you who stabbed the Arab steersman aboard the Wotan and put the helm hard over."

The thick lips of Ras Dhin twisted with rage, but before he could reply the door opened, and in came Major Gundath himself, pale and ill-looking.

At the sight of Ras Dhin under arrest the consul staggered as if under a blow.

"What is the meaning of this?" he demanded, glaring round. "How dare you come into my residence without formally notifying me?"

"Captain Golding told us you were sick, sir," Tony began, "and as we—"

He broke off, for Ras Dhin burst into a torrent of abuse.

"Treacherous dog of a feringhee!" Ras Dhin spluttered. "It is this way you repay all I have done for you?" His yellow eyes were fixed full upon the consul. "There is the dog himself who killed the Arab and sank the English ship!"

"You—you black liar!" the consul spat out.

His left hand went to his pocket, but Tony launched himself upon him and wrenched the automatic pistol from his grasp.

"Here!" he exclaimed. "Look after him!"

Two marines blocked the exit from the room; and Tony, whose brain worked lightning-fast, recalling various strange incidents, went across to the consul's desk. The drawer he opened was the one from which he had taken the other pistol, and he looked at the consul's broken spectacles, which he had replaced there after his encounter with Ras Dhin. From a lens of them had fallen out a piece of glass in the shape of a half-

moon, a fragment identical with that which Guy had found after the negro slave had been killed in that self-same room. That negro and the Arab aboard the Wotan had been killed by left-handed blows—and the consul, taken unawares, had used his left hand to reach for his pistol.

Tony whispered to the captain of marines, and they examined the desk, and afterwards managed to open a safe despite the consul's furious protests. Inside that safe were various documents which made Tony gasp with amazement. The Unknown behind the slave trade was discovered at last! He was none other than the cunning arch-villain who held the post of consul of Akhab Major Gundath himself!

The game was up! Certain that Ras Dhin had cleared off straight away into the desert, the consul had not hesitated to accuse him of the terrible crime which he himself had committed. That delay by the Abyssinian to rob the residence had proved the undoing of them both!

Under strong escort they were taken back to the Hawk, where they were formally charged and placed in confinement.

To Tony's delight, the work of rescue had been going on apace. Arrangements had been made for pumping fresh air into the sunken submarine, and when the Falcon and other naval craft arrived the Vixen was raised and the survivors released.

Several brave men had met their death in the after-compartments, which had borne the brunt of the collision. The remainder, including Guy and Chotajec, speedily recovered. Their amazement was intense when they heard that it was Major Gundath, who, under cover of his official position, had been amassing a fortune in slave traffic.

"Sorry I wasn't in at the death, old man," Guy said to Tony; "but it's jolly consoling to know that we have done our job and that these devilish crooks will get it right in the neck."

"Of truth it is a clean sweep of all such rascality," remarked Chotajec. "Would, however, that opportunity had been given for meeting between myself and the unspeakable Ras Dhin! Although honourable 'failed B.A.' and man of learning rather than 'soldier full of strange oaths,' as British poet has said, I would have torn such debased dog limb from limb with utmost cheerfulness!"

To which Guy cheerfully replied: "When they give medals for trumpet-blowing, Chota, old cherub, I'll hang in your name for a giddy V.C.!"

THE END.

(Don't miss the grand opening instalment of "LAND OF LOST PLANES!" starting in next week's bumper issue. See page 25 of this issue.)

The Schoolboy Cracksman!

(Continued from page 25.)

fellow when he came in. And he was pretty certain that if the study was left empty Loder would not be far away. Loder was not going to bag that suitcase if Billy Bunter could stop him; and Billy Bunter could!

It was an hour later that the study door reopened, and Lancaster of the Sixth came in.

He stared blankly at the fat figure that rose from his armchair.

"You cheeky young ass, what are you doing here?" exclaimed Lancaster.

"Looking after your things for you, old chap," answered Bunter affably.

"What?"

"You'd never have seen that suitcase again, I fancy, if I hadn't been looking after it!" grinned Bunter.

"What do you mean, you young duffer?"

"I mean, that I stopped a fellow bagging that suitcase."

"What utter rot!"

"Oh, really, Lancaster!"

"Well, who was it, then?"

"Loder of the Sixth."

Lancaster started violently.

He stood silent, looking strangely at Bunter. Then he made a gesture towards the door.

"Very well," he said, "you can cut! Thanks, if it's as you say. Cut!"

Billy Bunter rolled away.

Lancaster shut the door after him. He stood looking at the suitcase. A strange, worn, almost old expression was on his face. He did not doubt what Bunter had told him; he knew what Loder must have been seeking. And he knew, too, what Loder did not know, what Bunter did not dream of: that the strange tools of the schoolboy crook, the tools that had done lawless work in the hands of the Wizard, were locked up in that suitcase.

Lancaster breathed hard and deep. Cool, self-possessed as he was, that narrow escape had made him almost giddy. He wiped the perspiration from his brow.

Billy Bunter, of course, told Harry Wharton & Co., and everyone else who would listen, of the strange happening in Lancaster's study. Knowing their Bunter as they did, they did not believe a word of it. No man in the school, not even Loder, suspected how nearly that day had been the last day at Greyfriars for Lancaster of the Sixth—cricketer and cracksman!

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the next yarn in this ripping new series, entitled: "THE SHADOW OF THE UNDERWORLD," which will appear in next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET.)

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Greynriars Herald

Edited by
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OLD CROCK'S' RACE

Scoter v. Penny-Farthing Bike



ENDS IN DEAD-HEAT

It was Wingate's idea to hold an Old Crocks' Race, and a brainy wheeze it was, too, allowing for the fact that it came from a Sixth-Former! These were the rules:

1. That only vehicles which had been discarded as useless should enter.
2. That each entrant must have owned and used his vehicle at some period in the past.

Wingate imagined that the race might attract a dozen entries. To his surprise and gratification, however, over a hundred fellows sent in their names!

Every imaginable thing on wheels figured among the entries. There were toy motor-cars, scooters and hobby-horses. A hundred lumber-rooms were ransacked for long-forgotten means of transport.

The race was held on Saturday afternoon, the course being a circular route from the school to Friarsdale, Cliff House, and back again. Mr. Lascelles started the competitors and the gallant participants rounted their ancient "grids" and squeaked off down

the lane amid a roar of cheers and an even louder roar of laughter.

The procession created a sensation in Friarsdale, the villagers turning out en masse to gaze and cheer. At the village bunshop, Bolover major was leading in his little pedal motor-car, with Cherry on a boyole-horse in close pursuit, and Coker on a venerable penny-farthing bicycle left him by his grandfather, a good third. Behind them came Vernon-Smith on a hand-propelled truck, Hobson on a tricycle and Wharton on a scoter.

At Cliff House, Vernon-Smith, Hobson and Bolover had fallen behind, and Bob Cherry and Coker were neck-to-neck in front, with Wharton gaining ground rapidly.

In the last half-mile Coker collapsed, half a dozen times, finally falling across Cherry's boyole-horse and incapacitating that worthy from further effort! The hero of the fifth was still stuck to his task, however, and on the last lap he took to the school gates as dead level with Wharton's scoter all the way. Both Coker and the Remove skipper strained every nerve to pass the winning-post first, but the end was reached with not an inch between them, and the umpire had to declare the result a dead-heat.

Unfortunately, Coker had to be taken to the sanary to recover from his many injuries before he could receive his prize. Wharton afterwards challenged the unbeaten Coker to another race round the same course. We are officially informed that Coker will decline the challenge. We can't say we blame him!

TAKING THEM AT THEIR WORD

Ever thought of what would happen if fellows took you at your word and did as you told them? Reports like these should be simply flooding the editorial office!

Stott was found in the coal-sellar, gnawing at a handful of black substance. He said that Skinner had just told him to go and eat coke!

Bunter was seen flopping down the Remove passage, making a strange libellous noise. We understand that Wharton had instructed him to buzz off!

Bulstrode entered the kitchen, unobserved, and started rubbing his nose into a pen on the stove, the explanation being that Vernon-Smith had requested him to go and fry his face!

Diamond surprised the School by fishing out of his study window. Hazeldene, we believe, had ordered him to sling his hook!

A fried-fish emporium in Courtfield was the scene of a strange incident when Tom Brown rushed in, carrying a hatchet. He explained that Bob Cherry had suggested that he should go and chop chips!

MYSTERY OF BUNTER COURT

Earth Opens and Swallows Famous Mansion

FAMOUS FIVE FLABBERGASTED

A big, luxurious car drew up outside the School House Wednesday and a uniformed chauffeur got out.

"Master Bunter in, young gentles?" he asked, saluting.

"Yes, just inside the Hall," answered Wharton.

"In that case, sir, would you like to tell him the car's here to take him to Bunter Court?" asked the chauffeur, respectfully.

We jumped.

We had heard of Bunter Court. Most people have. The funny thing about it is that the whole world seems to have heard of Bunter Court, yet nobody has ever seen it.

Bunter himself came out before we had recovered from the surprise.

"Oh, here's the car; good!" he said, with elaborate concern. "I say, you fellows, would you like to come for a spin with me to Bunter Court?"

"Pinch me, someone; I'm dreaming!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Coming?" asked Bunter.

We assented, half-dazed as we were. The prospect of seeing Bunter Court was too good to be missed.

"Stop at the best place in Lantham for tea, James!" cried out Bunter, as we rolled off.

And the chauffeur saluted obediently. We could only think: "We stopped at Lantham for tea. It was rather a special treat at rather a special kind of restaurant. There was only one drawback about it: Bunter left us to pay."

"Which way now, sir?" asked the chauffeur, when we were outside again.

Bunter frowned.

"Bunter Court, of course. You know the way, don't you?"

"Er, I don't, sir!"

We looked at each other. A slight suspicion had occurred to all of us simultaneously. Up to this point we had assumed that the chauffeur was one of Bunter's retainers. Now we wondered.

"All serene, you fellows," said Bunter. "James is new to the job. We'll get there all right. It's in Surrey."

James looked a bit dubious, but he carried on.

ROBOT BOXING-MAN

Sensational New Invention

The Robot Boxing-man is here! We should say WAS here; he only stayed a couple of hours.

Bernard Glynn introduced him to Greyfriars when he came over with the St. Jim's cricket team. Carrera II, he called him.

Carrera II, proved the doubtless boxer ever seen at Greyfriars. He was constructed of cast-iron and wood, with a padded chest and strong springs for arms.



Electricity was his motive power. When a switch was pressed at the back of him he started hitting out hard and often! We tried him out in the Rag. He was a huge success. With Carrera II, as a sparring-partner, we began to have visions of the Remove rapidly becoming a bunch of world champions.

Wingate came in after the first performance had ended. He impetated the new arrival with great interest.

"A kind of mechanical man, I suppose?" he said. "But what the thunder he's doing with boxing-gloves on! I fail to—ooh! Or—ow!"

Someone had switched on by mistake and Wingate was quickly enlightened as to the reason for the gloves!

"That wouldn't have been so bad. It was when Quick spotted in to have a look round that the fat was in the fire. The Remove Fight master looked it over with great approval."

"Quite a remarkable achievement!" he said. "The powerful inventor is to be

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER—

Greyfriars In Our Time

The following are extracts from remarks made by Old Boys who have visited Greyfriars recently:

COLONEL FIREBRAND: "As I said to Gosling, at that time a chubby-faced youngster—"

DR. DOAPARD: "As I glanced at the Clock Tower, which, of course, in those days was merely a water-watch—"

THE REV. ALONZO GOODMAN: "Walking down to Friarsdale, which consisted then of one primitive hut—"

GRIZZLY OLDYEARS, Esq.:

"Talking about the River Sark, which in my day was just a tinkle of rainwater—"

LORD SLUMBERLEIGH: "I was in the Third when William the Conqueror dropped in one day and after taking retirement at the tuckshop—"

SIR TOOTHLESS GUMMIS: "I remember Noah telling me before Greyfriars was built—"

"That'll do for this week, thanks very much! If you Old Boys, carry on in this strain for long, some of our readers may begin to suspect that you're drawing the long bow!"

SWIMMING IN THE SARK

Strange Life-Saving Exhibition by Coker

A spell of fine, warm weather last week-end attracted crowds of fellows down to the Sark for the first dip of the season in the swimming-pool.

Coker, not for the first time, provided an element of humour—unintended, of course!

The great man of the Fifth came out of the dressing-tent with Potter and Greene. Potter and Greene were frowning.

"About this life-saving," Coker said.

"Blow the life-saving!" snapped Potter, not for a lesson in life-saving!

"You'll get both," retorted Coker. "I must say, Potter, I'm surprised at you fibbing at learning anything so useful as life-saving. What would you do now if you spotted some poor, helpless creature struggling for life in midstream?"

"Dive in and save him, probably," grunted Potter.

"And that's just where you'd feel the need for a proper training in life-saving like I'm going to give you," said Coker, triumphantly.

"Now watch me."

"Oh, crickey! What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to dive in and save an imaginary fellow in the middle of the pool," said Coker. "Watch me closely."

Having no alternative short of mortally offending their leader, Potter and Greene watched. About fifty others watched too. Coker



was usually entertaining in circumstances like these.

Splash!

With a mighty sound, Coker crashed into the water—it would be a misdescription to say "dived."

A second or two passed. No Coker appeared.

Then suddenly he shot out of the water again for a brief instant, only to disappear again. In that brief instant a yell had left his lips.

"Help!"

Splash! Crash!

Almost simultaneously Potter and Greene dived into the water and brought Coker safely ashore again.

"Thanks, you men!" Coker managed to gasp, at length. "I was all right, of course—just lost my breath for a sec, when I got into the water."

"Oh, quite!" said Potter.

"No need for us to have done anything, of course," remarked Greene, with elaborate sarcasm. "Impossible for you to get into difficulties!"

"Exactly!" said Coker. "And now, to resume that lesson I was giving you in life-saving—here, wharver you doing? Or—yoooh!"

Potter and Greene didn't trouble to explain what they were doing. They did it! And after rolling the yelling Life-saving Expert in the mud on the bank, they dived in and had a swim.