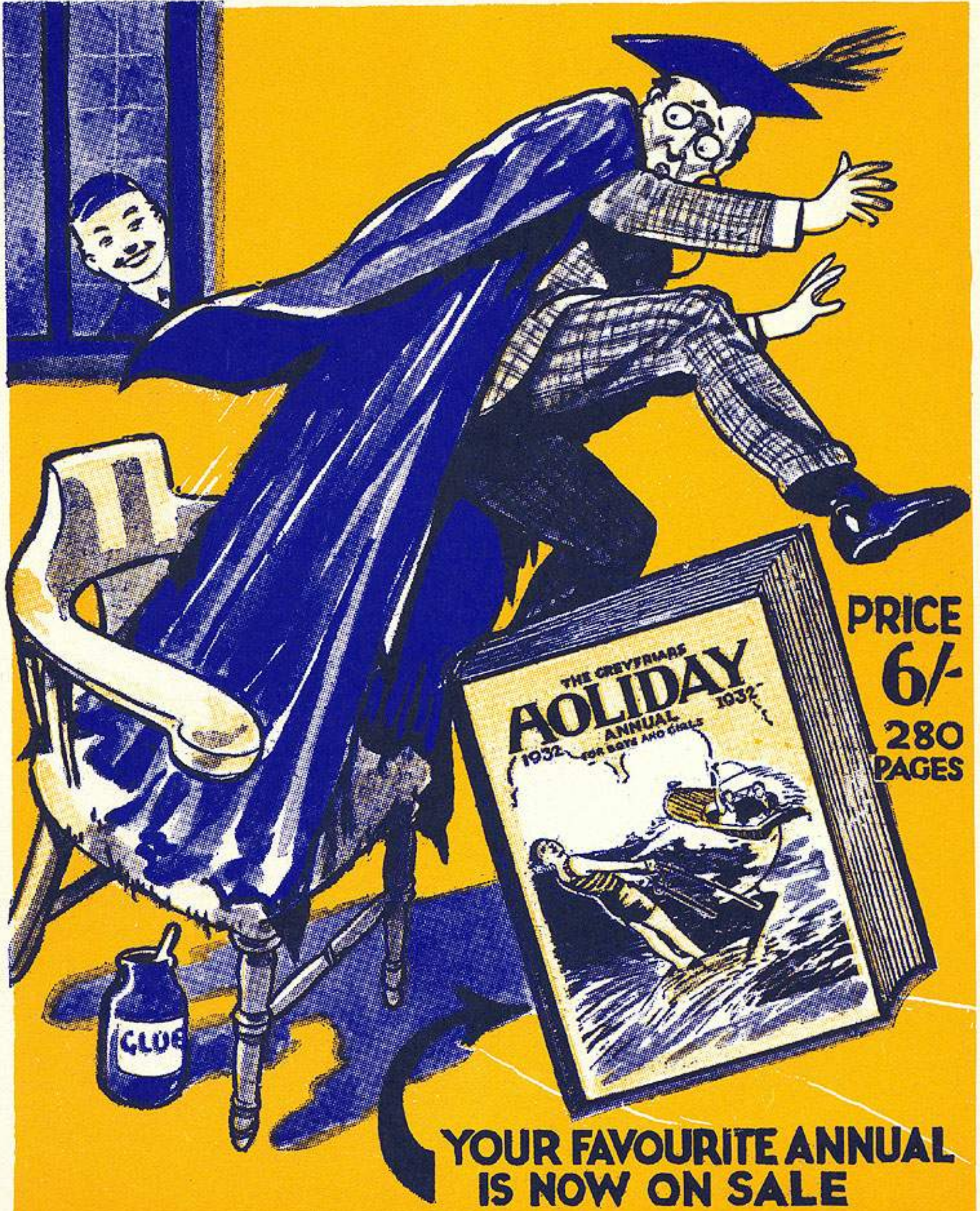


HARRY WHARTON & CO. BACK AT GREYFRIARS!

The MAGNET 2^D





WIDGERS ON THE WAR-PATH!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Something to Do!

"S TILL raining!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"Rotten!"
"Blow!"

"Bother!"

It was not cheery at Greyfriars School that afternoon.

The morning had been fine—one of those fine, clear, sunny, autumn mornings. It had given promise of a fine, sunny day, which would have suited the heroes of the Remove exactly, as it was a half-holiday, and they were booked to play football with the Fourth.

Football was off now, very much off.

The rain had started after dinner. Harry Wharton & Co. had hoped that it would prove merely a shower. Instead of which, it came down harder and harder, till the old elms were weeping, and the quad seemed to be swimming.

The Famous Five of the Remove gazed from the dripping windows of the Rag, and grouched in chorus.

It was not the way of those cheery juniors to grouse, as a rule. But this, really, was too thick.

If it wanted to rain, as Bob Cherry remarked indignantly, why couldn't it rain when fellows were in class?

Fellows could do Latin prose with Quelch, French with Mossou, or maths with Lascelles, while the rain dashed on the panes, and no harm done.

But fellows couldn't play football in a tremendous downpour of rain.

Splash, splash, splash! came on the windows of the Rag.

"Doesn't look like stopping!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Blow!"

"We can't stick indoors!" said Bob. "What about a walk?"

"Um!"

The weather was bad, but it had to be very bad indeed to keep Robert Cherry indoors on a half-holiday.

But the other members of the Co. looked dubious. Really, a walk in sheets of rain was not attractive.

"There goes Quelch!" said Bob.

The tall, angular figure of the master of the Remove appeared in sight, through the rain.

Mr. Quelch, muffled in a macintosh, with his umbrella up, had emerged from the House, and was on his way to the gates in the pouring rain.

The juniors had a glimpse of his face in the distance as he went, and the expression on it was grim. Mr. Quelch was not enjoying that autumn afternoon.

"If Quelch can stand it, we can!" remarked Bob, as the Form master disappeared in the rain.

"Quelch's got an appointment to keep, I expect," said Harry Wharton. "He can't be going out for fun."

"The funfulness would not be terrific, my esteemed Bob!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, shaking his head. "The wetfulness of this ridiculous rain is preposterous."

"Well, we've got to do something!" declared Bob. "We can't roost around like a lot of moulting fowls. What about a rag on the Fifth?" He looked round hopefully at his chums. "It's a long time since we ragged Coker of the Fifth. We got back late this term, you know, and he hardly knows we're here. Let's remind him of our existence."

"Well, there's old Prout to be thought of—"

"Bother old Prout!" grunted Bob.

But his chums shook their heads.

Ragging Coker of the Fifth might provide a little, harmless and necessary entertainment on a rainy half-holiday. But Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, had to be considered.

Prout was sure to butt in. Prout was rather given to butting in, even in matters that didn't concern him. And a rag on his Form, of course, would concern him.

"Well, what are we going to do?" demanded Bob. Strenuous energy was bottled up, as it were, in Robert Cherry. It had to find an outlet.

"Let's kick Bunter!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

Billy Bunter, reposing his fat limbs in lazy comfort in an armchair in the Rag, blinked round in alarm through his big spectacles. Johnny Bull's suggestion did not seem to appeal to Bunter in the least.

However hard up fellows might be for occupation on a rainy day, William George Bunter was not prepared to come to the rescue in the way suggested.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here it is!" exclaimed Bob, glancing round from the weeping window. "What about it, Bunter, old fat bean?"

"Beast!"

Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth came into the Rag.

They, like the rest of the Greyfriars fellows, did not seem to be enjoying the weather. In fact, they looked peeved.

Cecil Reginald Temple gave the Removites a disparaging glance.

"Fags here!" he remarked. "Blessed fags everywhere!" Which was sheer cheek on the part of Cecil Reginald.

Bob Cherry looked warlike at once. Really, it looked as if the lofty Cecil Reginald had blown in just in time to

provide the strenuous Removite with something to do!

"Rotten weather!" grunted Fry of the Fourth.

"Oh, rather!" growled Dabney.

"Putrid!" said Temple. "No chance of football to-day, Wharton. It's saved you fags from a lickin'!"

"You silly ass!" growled Johnny Bull, in a growl that was like unto the growl of the great huge bear.

Harry Wharton & Co. glared at the Fourth-Formers. They were quite accustomed to beating Temple, Dabney & Co. at games, and they had no doubt that, had the match come off, they would have finished four or five goals up. As the match hadn't come off, however, Cecil Reginald Temple was at liberty to take his own view.

"I'm rather sorry it's rainin'," said Temple blandly. "I was lookin' forward to moppin' up your kids at Soccer."

"Fathead!" said Harry Wharton politely.

"Cheeky ass!" said Frank Nugent.

"Kick 'em out of the Rag!" suggested Bob Cherry. "Can't stand Fourth Form swank in this weather."

"Good egg!"

"Something to do" had been discovered at last! The Famous Five left the rainy window, and advanced on the Fourth-Formers in warlike array.

Temple & Co. were nothing loath.

As a matter of fact, they were equally at a loss for something to do on that rainy afternoon, and they had looked into the Rag in search of trouble.

Temple had remarked that it was a long time since they had kicked those cheeky young ticks in the Remove, and his friends agreed that it was, and that they might as well make up for lost time. There were half a dozen of the Fourth, and only five of the Remove. But a small matter of odds like that did not bother the Famous Five. They were tremendous fighting-men, and full of beans.

"Oh gad, you men, they're goin' to kick us out!" chuckled Temple. "I'm frightfully interested to see how they're goin' to do it." Temple set the door of the Rag wide open. "Now then, you cheeky little sweeps—"

"Pile in!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Mop 'em up!"

And then, so to speak, the band played!

It was quite a good-tempered scuffle. Nobody really wanted to hurt anybody. There was no likelihood of black eyes or streaming noses. The thumps and punches that were exchanged only gave zest to the scuffle.

Still, there was plenty of noise. Trampling of feet, panting and gasping, bumping and thumping, overturning furniture filled the Rag with din. And there was a terrific yell when Bob Cherry and Temple, locked in a grapple, pitched over Billy Bunter, and flattened him down in his armchair. The voice of William George Bunter, like that of the turtle of old, was heard in the land, and it was heard on its top note.

"Yaroooooh! Beasts! Gerroff! Whooooop!" yelled Bunter. "Yow-ow-ow! You're squashing me! Gerroff! Whooooop!"

"Go it, Remove!"

"Back up, Fourth!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Thump, thump, thump! Crash! Bump! Bang! Far beyond the limits of the Rag rang the din of combat.

Cecil Reginald Temple, struggling manfully in Bob Cherry's powerful grasp, whirled towards the door.

"Out you go!" gasped Bob.

And Temple went, headlong. Like a stone from a catapult, Temple of the Fourth shot through the doorway of the Rag!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The High Hand!

"SCANDALOUS!" said Mr. Prout. He addressed Monsieur Charpentier, the French master.

At quite a distance from the Rag, the Fifth Form master was standing at a window, in conversation with Mossoo.

Distant as he was, the din from the Rag reached Prout's majestic ears.

"Scandalous!" he repeated. "Mr. Quelch's boys, of course! Such an unruly Form as the Remove—"

Monsieur Charpentier smiled indulgently. He was a good-tempered gentleman—and it was not so long since he had been a boy as it was since Prout had been one.

"Ze boy will be ze boy!" he remarked.

"Quelch has gone out, I think," said Prout, unheeding. "Naturally, his boys are turning the school into a bear-garden in his absence. The way Quelch manages his Form—"

When Widgers left school he vowed he'd return one day and give his Form master a good hiding. In due course the day arrives, and Greyfriars gets a good laugh!

"La jeunesse," said Mossoo. "It is ze high spirits of ze young, sair."

Snort from Prout.

Prout had no patience with the exuberant spirits of youth.

"Quelch is absent," he said. "But this disorder cannot continue. Quelch, no doubt, would be glad for some other member of the staff to keep his boys under control during his absence."

Monsieur Charpentier shrugged his shoulders. Prout, as usual, was going to butt in—he could see that.

Prout, as a matter of fact, was peeved by the weather, just as the juniors were. Possibly, like the juniors, he was hard up for something to do. Butting into another Form master's business was a natural resource to Prout.

"Come with me, sir," said Mr. Prout, turning in the direction of the Rag.

Monsieur Charpentier shook his head. "Zat good Quelch, he would not like—"

"Nonsense, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "Is the school to be turned into a bear garden? I shall certainly intervene!"

Prout rolled away majestically, to intervene. Monsieur Charpentier, with another shrug, walked in the opposite direction.

Crash! Bump! Bang! Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! The din increased as Mr. Prout approached the open doorway of the Rag.

No doubt the juniors were noisy. Still, they were in their own quarters, and it was a rainy day. Prout really might have walked away to his own study, where he would have been out of hearing of the uproar.

He did not think of doing so, however. Prout was an interfering gentleman, and this was a chance for interference not to be lost.

In majestic wrath he arrived at the wide-open doorway of the Rag.

He arrived at an unfortunate moment.

It was at that very moment when Cecil Reginald Temple, under the propulsion of all Bob Cherry's beef, hurtled like a cannon-shot through the doorway.

Temple would have landed on the floor of the passage had not Prout arrived at the psychological moment.

As it was, he landed on Prout.

There was a terrific crash.

Prout's ample waistcoat received Temple of the Fourth, and Prout staggered back as if a battering-ram had hit him.

Bump!

Prout sat down.

"Ooooooh!" gasped the Fifth Form master.

"Oh crikey!" spluttered Temple.

Temple sprawled over Prout. He could not help it. It was painful for Prout; but it was not Temple's fault.

"Boy!" gurgled Prout.

Temple detached himself as rapidly as he could. He jumped up, jumped away, and howled into the doorway:

"Ware beaks!"

Mr. Prout staggered to his feet.

He was a plump gentleman, and rather short of breath. What little he had Cecil Reginald Temple had knocked out of him.

He gurgled spasmodically as he staggered up.

"Oh! Ooooooh! Upon my word! Grooooooh!"

Temple jumped back into the Rag!

"Cave, you men!" he gasped.

"Beaks!"

"I say, you fellows, it's old Prout!" came Billy Bunter's squeak. "I say, you'll catch it, you fellows!"

Mr. Prout gave a breathless grunt. "Old Prout" was not a term applicable to him. Besides being disrespectful, it was incorrect. Prout was not old. He had reached ripe years. Mentally and physically, he was ripe—fully ripe. But he was not old. Perhaps a little over-ripe, but certainly not old.

The scuffling in the Rag ceased. Some of the juniors asked one another, in wrathful tones, what the dickens Prout was butting in for? Prout had no business in the Rag, where the Fifth did not congregate. Still, Prout was a beak, and beaks had to be given their heads.

Prout, crimson and breathless, rolled into the Rag. In his present winded state he was not quite so majestic as usual. The glory had departed from the House of Israel, so to speak.

Breathless juniors, in a rather dishevelled state, eyed Prout.

The Removites were glad that it was not Quelch. The Fourth-Formers were glad that it was not Capper. Prout, beak as he was, could not lick them, or give them lines.

"What does this mean?" gasped Mr. Prout. "What does this disgraceful uproar mean? I have been felled—felled to the earth—I mean the floor—"

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Temple. "It was quite an accident—"

"I have been felled!" boomed Prout. "I came here to put an end to this scandalous uproar, and I have been felled! Temple, I shall report you to your Form master! Wharton, I shall report you to Mr. Quelch!"

"Is anything the matter, sir?" asked Bob Cherry meekly.

"What?" hooted Mr. Prout.

"We're allowed to play games in the Rag, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

"Games! Do you call this disturbance a game?" boomed Prout.

"The gamefulness is terrific, honoured sahib," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Mr. Prout, still gasping, pointed to the door.

"Go!" he commanded.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Go! As you cannot behave yourselves here, I shall turn you out of the room and lock the door! I shall hand the key to Mr. Quelch when he returns," said the Fifth Form master sternly.

The juniors stared at him.

Prout was far exceeding his authority in acting in this high-handed way. There was rebellion in the looks of many of the juniors.

"Look here, sir—" began Temple.

"Silence, Temple! Go!" thundered Prout.

His plump and majestic hand pointed doorward.

Temple hesitated. He would have been within his rights in refusing. But a beak, after all, was a beak—and it did not seem good enough to Temple of the Fourth. He gave a grunt and marched out, and the other Fourth-Form fellows followed him.

"Wharton!" boomed Prout.

The Removites looked to the captain of the Form for guidance. Harry Wharton hesitated.

He was strongly inclined to tell the Fifth Form master to go and eat coke. Fortunately, he restrained that inclination.

"I am waiting, Wharton!" boomed Prout.

"Only Mr. Quelch has a right to give us such an order, sir!" said the captain of the Remove.

"What? What?" Prout became purple. "Wharton, if you do not instantly leave this room I will remove you with my own hands!"

"Oh crumbs!" said Wharton.

"Better hook it, old man!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"The hookfulness is the proper caper!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The scrapfulness with an esteemed and ridiculous Form master is the terrific impossibility."

Wharton grinned at the idea. He was not thinking of scrapping with Prout. But, really, it was either that or obedience, for Prout was advancing on him with the obvious intention of being as good as his word.

"Very well, sir," said Harry. "We will leave the Rag, sir—but under protest."

"Silence!" hooted Prout.

With angry faces the Removites marched out. Billy Bunter rolled after them.

Mr. Prout, with a snort, followed them out, locked the door, and put the key in his pocket.

With another snort, he rolled away.

Authority had been vindicated, and Mr. Prout was satisfied.

The Removites were not satisfied. That did not matter to Prout. He was, as he supposed, done with those cheery youths.

But, as a matter of fact, he was not quite done with them.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Talk on the Telephone I

B UZZZZZZZZZZ!

Harry Wharton jumped. The buzz of the telephone-bell in Mr. Prout's study, in Masters' passage, was rather alarming.

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in ordinary circumstances it would not have alarmed the captain of the Remove. But the circumstances were not ordinary.

Harry Wharton was in Mr. Prout's study, and he had been busy there for some minutes.

There was a large bottle in his hand, which had contained liquid glue. It no longer contained liquid glue. The glue was contained now by the seat of Mr. Prout's armchair.

Buzzzzzzzzzz!

The telephone-bell rang raucously.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wharton.

Gum in Mr. Prout's armchair was—in the opinion of the Remove at least—a just and fair retaliation for what had happened in the Rag.

The chums of the Remove agreed that Prout had to be made sorry for himself, and there was little doubt that he would be sorry for himself, when he sat in the gum.

Gumming a Form master was, of course, a serious matter, and a fellow had to be careful.

Wary scouting in Masters' passage had elucidated that Prout was in Hacker's study, chatting with the master of the Shell. Prout's booming voice could be heard from Hacker's study by any fellow in the passage.

When Prout's chin was going, it was a natural assumption that it would continue on the go. Prout was a chatty gentleman, and his chats were many and long-continued. Fellows in the Fifth averred that Prout never left off talking all day; some of them, indeed, declared that they believed that he even talked in his sleep. So the coast was clear; there was ample time to gum Prout's armchair and escape, long before Prout's well-exercised chin was weary.

The juniors had not counted on the telephone. It is the unexpected that often happens, and it happened now.

Buzzzzzzzzzz!

If that buzz reached Prout, it would bring him to the study. As the gum was already in the armchair, Wharton naturally did not want to meet Prout.

He stepped quietly to the door, and opened it a few inches, and peeped out.

As he did so, he heard Mr. Hacker's door along the passage open. Prout was coming out of Hacker's study.

Wharton jumped back from the door.

There was no retreat.

Prout had heard the telephone, and was coming to take the call. Already his ponderous footsteps could be heard in the passage.

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"Oh crumbs!" murmured the hapless captain of the Remove.

He stared round the study hastily for a place of concealment. Prout was not likely to remain after taking the call, and it might keep him only a minute or two. He could not have finished chatting with Hacker yet. When Prout started on a chat, he did not let his victims off lightly.

Prout's telephone stood on a little table by the window. Close to it was the window-curtain.

Wharton had not much time to think. Prout was coming, and to be caught in Prout's study, in the circumstances, meant being marched off to the Head. Wharton did not want to see the Head that afternoon.

He whipped round the telephone table, and ensconced himself behind the window-curtain. It was a thick curtain, and it reached to the floor. It concealed the junior completely, and he tried to still his breathing, as Prout rolled into the study. He was only two feet from the telephone.

Buzzzzzzzzzz!

He heard Mr. Prout grunt as he picked up the receiver. Then Prout's fruity voice boomed into the transmitter.

"Hallo! What—what—"

"Is that Greyfriars School?"

Wharton was so close to the telephone that he caught the words that came through. The voice was a sharp, strong, penetrating one.

"Yes—Mr. Prout speaking."

"Prout—old Prout?" came the voice.

Mr. Prout started almost convulsively. Bunter, in the Rag, had alluded to him as "old Prout"; but that was the folly and impudence of a fatuous junior who did not understand that a middle-aged gentleman was by no means old.

But it was amazing for his interlocutor on the telephone to use the same foolish and disrespectful expression.

"What—what—what did you say?" stammered the Fifth Form master.

"Old Prout!"

"Sir!" boomed Mr. Prout. "Who are you? What do you mean? To what, sir, and to whom, am I to attribute this impertinence?"

There was a chuckle on the telephone.

"Same old Prout!" said the voice.

"Same old Pompous!"

Prout gave another convulsive start. So did Harry Wharton, behind the window-curtain. Wharton did not want, of course, to hear what was said on the phone; but he could not help it. The penetrating voice came through so clearly and distinctly, that it could have been heard all over the study.

Evidently the speaker was someone who knew Prout. Prout was called "Old Pompous" in his Form; Pompey for short; but it was a moot point at Greyfriars whether Prout knew it or not.

Possibly some whisper of his nickname had reached Prout's ears. It did not seem wholly unfamiliar to him now, so far as Wharton could judge. But it was clear that it had an exasperating effect.

"Who—who—who is speaking?" hissed Prout. "Who are you, sir, who have rung me on my telephone, and dare to be guilty of such impertinence?"

"You don't know my voice, Prout?"

"I do not, sir!"

"I know yours! It hasn't changed in all these years. Not a trifle. Same old fruity hoot."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I dare say mine's changed, Pompey—I'm older. You're older, too, though when I was at Greyfriars I thought you'd reached the limit in that line."

Wharton started. Every word came to him almost as clearly as to Prout, whose plump ear, reddened with rage, was at the receiver.

Apparently it was an "old boy" who was speaking; some fellow who had been at Greyfriars and left.

Old boys sometimes rang up their old Form masters. But it had never been written in the history of Greyfriars, so far, that any old boy had rung up his old master to talk to him like this.

This old boy was making history!

Wharton's involuntary start shook the curtain that concealed him. But Prout did not notice it. Prout's attention was concentrated on the instrument.

"You—you—you dare to call me by a nickname—a foolish and disrespectful nickname!" gurgled Prout.

Wharton grinned behind the curtain.

Evidently Prout knew that he was called "Pompey" in the Fifth. Perhaps he knew that the nickname had passed on from one generation of Fourth-Formers to another. Much water had passed under the bridges since Prout had first been a master at Greyfriars, and his nickname had been given to him by Fifth-Form men who were now men of the world.

Old associations, however, had not hallowed the name to Prout. He did not like it. He never had liked it, and he did not like it now.

"Don't they call you Pompey in the Fifth now, Prout?" went on the voice. "I reckon you live up to it, whether they call you it or not. A pompous old blighter like you, Prout, doesn't change."

Gurgle from Prout. "Sir! Who—who—who—"

"I'll tell you who I am, Prout. You're going to see me soon. You like old boys to drop in on you, don't you, old bean? I'm dropping in this afternoon. I've got a feeling that you'd like to see me again, and that's why I'm dropping in. See?"

"I shall refuse to see you, sir!" hooted Prout. "I am glad—gratified—proud—to receive former members of my Form, as a rule. I may say, with pride, that boys who have passed through my hands remember with respect, with affection, I may even say with gratitude. I am delighted to receive them, sir, when they revisit the scholastic haunts of boyhood. But you, sir, you are an impertinent rascal, sir—and I do not, sir, believe your statement that you are an old Greyfriars boy at all."

"You've forgotten Wigers?"

"Wigers!"

"W-I-D-G-E-R-S!" spelt out the voice on the telephone. "Wigers! I see you remember the name, Pompey!"

"Wigers! Goodness gracious! Wigers!"

The name was strange to Harry

Wharton. Wigers of the Fifth, if ever there had been a Wigers of the Fifth, had been before Wharton's time.

But evidently it was not strange to Mr. Prout. He repeated it in a gasping voice. Obviously, it gave him a shock.

"Wigers!" said Mr. Prout faintly. "Wigers! Good gracious! Goodness gracious me! Am I to understand that it is Bartholomew Wigers speaking?"

"You are, old bean!"

Prout seemed to recover a little.

"Wigers! So it is Wigers! It is the boy who was sent away from Greyfriars in disgrace, years, many years ago—whom I have forgotten, or, at least, would have been glad to forget! A boy who was disrespectful to his Form master—a boy who was a disgrace to his Form! A boy who was a disgrace

Discovery at that moment would have been unnerving.

It was clear that Mr. Prout was deeply disturbed. He was surprised, annoyed, exasperated, enraged by that talk on the telephone with his former pupil who rejoiced in the uncommon name of Bartholomew Wigers.

Prout, perhaps, had laid a cane about Wigers of the Fifth in the old days when Wigers had been at Greyfriars. There was no doubt that Prout would have liked to lay a cane about the grown-up Wigers.

"Scandalous?" gasped Prout. "Unparalleled impudence!"

He paced to and fro in the study, greatly disturbed.

Wharton hoped that he would not sit down.

There was gum all ready for him in



"Come on, chaps," said Bob Cherry, "kick 'em out of the Rag! We can't stand Fourth Form cheek!" "Yes, mop 'em up!" agreed Wharton. The next moment there was a wild and whirling conflict as Harry Wharton & Co. and Temple & Co. went at it hammer and tongs.

to his school! A boy whom I refuse, absolutely refuse, to recognise as an old boy of Greyfriars—"

"Are you wound up, Pompey?"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Wound up!"

"Knave!" roared Mr. Prout. "Insolent knave! I refuse to say another word to you, or to listen to a single syllable!"

Slam! The telephone rocked as Mr. Prout returned the receiver to the hook.

the armchair, and Prout was intended to sit in it. But not while the gummer was in the study! The fellow who had handled the gum wanted to be far afield before Prout sat in it.

Fortunately, Prout was too disturbed to take a seat. He roamed round the study like a caged tiger, muttering.

"Wigers! The young rascal! I suppose he is grown up now—it must be many years, many years, but he is the same insolent rascal as when he was in the Fifth Form here. The same impudent knave! I did my duty in insisting that he should be sent away from the school. I was merciful, too merciful, in sparing him the disgrace of a public expulsion! Rascal—knave—"

Buzzzzzz!

The telephone bell started again. "Goodness gracious! If that is Wigers—" gasped Mr. Prout. "If that young scoundrel has the insolence to speak to me again—"

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THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Remarkable Old Boy!

"ATROCIOUS!"

Mr. Prout snorted out the word.

"Impudence!"

He gasped with wrath.

"Outrageous! Unparalleled!"

Wharton made himself as small as possible behind the window-curtain.

Buzzzzzz!

Mr. Prout lifted the receiver.

"Hallo!" came through a cheery voice. "We seem to have got cut off, Pompey!"

"You young rascal!"

"Eh?"

"You impudent knave!"

"Can it, Pompey! I rang up to tell you something, don't jaw so much, but give a chap a chance to speak! You're not in your Form-room now, you know! Shut up a minute!"

Mr. Prout shut up, in sheer, breathless wrath.

"You haven't forgotten me," went on the voice, "will you be glad to see me again, Pompey?"

"Scoundrel!" gasped Prout.

"I'm calling to see you this afternoon—"

"Dare to do so, and you shall be ejected from the school, sir!" boomed Prout. "You will not be admitted, sir!"

"I'm calling to pay my debt!"

"Debt! What debt? Rascal as you were, knave as you were, you owed no debts when you left the school! What do you mean?"

"The debt I owe you, Pompey!"

"You owe me nothing!"

"I told you before I left that I should come back when I was a man, Pompey, and pay that debt!"

"Good gad! If you are alluding to your insolent remark on the morning you left—"

"I see you haven't forgotten, Pompey! I've always intended to call to pay that debt. I've never forgotten it! I haven't had a chance yet, but now I'm in Courtfield for a few days, I'm dropping in. I'm bringing a cane with me!"

"A—a—a cane?"

"Exactly! Probably you would not care to lend me a cane for the occasion, so I'm bringing one!"

"Are you mad, sir?" gasped Mr. Prout.

"Look out for teco, Pompey! You gave me teco! Do you remember licking me before all the Fifth? Do you remember jawing the Head into sack-ing me? Did I tell you I should come

back later and thrash you, or did I not?"

"Bless my soul!"

"I'm calling to-day to pay the debt! I only wanted to make sure that you were still at Greyfriars, old bean. Expect me to-day! By the way, I put some exercise books in my bags the last time you licked me!"

"Eh?"

"Better do the same—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I'm going to lay it on, Pompey! Hard!"

Slam!

Mr. Prout rang off again.

"Good heavens!" Wharton heard him ejaculate as he paced the study, with hurried, irregular strides.

The junior behind the window-curtain stood as if turned to stone. For his very life, he dared not be discovered now.

Prout would have liked to "whop" the egregious Widgers as he had whopped him in the old days when he was Widgers of the Fifth. That was impracticable, indeed, it looked as if Prout was going to get the whopping! But certainly he would have found relief and solace in whopping Wharton—had he discovered the Lower Fourth fellow in the study.

On that point there was not a shadow of doubt, and Harry Wharton carefully understudied Brer Fox on the occasion when that intelligent animal "lay low and said nuffin."

He hardly breathed.

An old boy of Greyfriars was coming back to whop his former Form master! It was difficult for the junior not to yell at the bare idea.

Such threats were sometimes uttered by irritated fellows. There were Remove men who declared that some day, in the distant future, they would drop in at Greyfriars and wallop Quelch.

But nobody expected they ever would!

Schoolboys might say such things, but they forgot them later. Time mellowed them. They looked back on their old school and their old masters through rosy glasses.

Indeed, Wharton had heard old

boys actually brag of how they had been whopped. Fellows who had been thoroughly wretched at school always made it a point when they reached the "old boy" stage to imagine that their schooldays had been a glorious time.

They gloried in the pranks they had played—or fancied they had played—and in the terrific whoppings they had received—or fancied they had received. There was hardly an old boy in existence, belonging to any school, who would own up that he hadn't had a gorgeous time at school.

This man Widgers was an exception, that was clear!

Perhaps the fact that he had been sent away in disgrace from Greyfriars made a difference! That circumstance, no doubt, barred him off from the usual "glorious-time" stuff! Anyhow, he was different—awfully different.

Probably he would have been glad, like any other old boy, to put across the customary stuff. Whoppings, once over for good and all, he would have been willing to believe that whoppings had, after all, been for his benefit. He might have gloried in them like any other old boy.

But being kicked out of the school was a geegee of quite another colour.

The most resolutely rosy old boy couldn't glory in that!

Wharton concluded that Bartholomew Widgers couldn't be a very nice man.

He had nursed a grudge for years—which was not nice of him. And if he had been kicked out of Greyfriars he must have asked for it somehow. Fellows weren't turfed out for nothing.

Disrespect to a Form master, after all, was bad form, even if it was only that! Wharton felt that that was so, perhaps forgetful for the moment of the gum in Prout's armchair.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! came Prout's heavy footsteps wandering about the study. Prout was evidently in a state of deep disturbance.

It was Prout's pride that he was a friend as well as a master to the Fifth. Often and often he dropped into the games-study for a friendly chat with his boys. He was quite unaware that Blundell, his head boy, had expressed a wish that a fire-escape could be rigged to the window of the games-study so that fellows could get out quick when they heard Prout coming along for one of his friendly chats.

Old boys, Prout was persuaded, remembered him with affection. He liked to see old boys; he liked them to remember that they had been in the Fifth, as well as the Sixth; he liked them to remember their old Form master, as well as their old headmaster.

He did not, apparently, like being remembered by this man Widgers. Widgers was an exception—a character not true to type.

"Atrocious!" repeated Prout.

Wharton had heard him say it ten times at least.

"Disgraceful! Can the wretch be in earnest?" Prout was communing with himself aloud, happily unconscious of a hearer. "Is it possible? Can it be possible that any man who was once at Greyfriars can be so utterly lost to all sense of propriety? A scene—a scene of violence—Good heavens!"

Wharton almost gurgled.

The mental picture called up by Prout's words was almost too much for him. Greyfriars School had seen many things, but it had never seen an old boy punching the head of a Form master. Not yet!

"I fear—I fear that the—the ruffian, the rascal, the—the hooligan may be in

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earnest," Prout went on communing. "I remember that he was impudent, reckless, audacious, regardless of appearances, oblivious of the fitness of things—I remember only too clearly. A scene—a disgraceful scene—my name the talk of the Common-room—Goodness gracious!"

Mr. Prout approached the window. For a moment Wharton thought that he was discovered. But the Form master was only coming to the telephone.

He took off the receiver and rang up Gosling's lodge. A few moments and the crusty voice of the school porter was heard on the wires.

"Gosling, it is Mr. Prout speaking."

"Yessir!" grunted Gosling. "Probably a—a—a person will call this afternoon, Gosling. He may give the name of Widgers. He may ask to see me. He is not to be admitted to the precincts of the school, Gosling."

"Ho!" said Gosling. "You may remember, Gosling, a boy who was once here—a boy of disrespectful and unruly character—named Widgers—"

"Don't I just!" said Gosling. "Don't I remember 'im putting the rats in my 'at? Ho!"

"That is the—the person I allude to, Gosling. Under any circumstances whatever, he is not to be admitted to the school!"

"Ho! Wot I says is this 'ere, sir—s'pose he jest walks in, sir?"

"You will prevent him, Gosling! You are authorised to use force—any force that may be needed to keep that person out of the school."

"Leave it to me, sir."

"Very good, Gosling. Take every care—"

"You leave it to me, sir!" There was a tone in Gosling's voice which hinted that he would not be sorry to use force in dealing with Mr. Widgers. No doubt he had not forgotten the rats in his hat.

"I rely upon you, Gosling."

"Yessir."

Mr. Prout breathed more freely when he put up the receiver. Prout, of course, was not afraid. He would have scorned the suggestion that he feared the vengeful old boy—or anybody else.

What he dreaded was the scene, the cackle in Common-room, the whole school rocking with laughter.

That was too awful to contemplate.

However, if the obnoxious Widgers failed to gain admittance all was well. Breathing more freely, Mr. Prout left his study at last.

And the junior, cramped behind the window-curtain, breathed more freely, too, when he was gone.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wharton, when the door closed at last behind Prout's portly form and he was able to emerge from his hiding-place.

He crossed to the door and peered out into the passage.

Prout was gone.

And in a moment more Wharton was gone, too.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Wants to Know!

"**H**A, ha, ha!" Billy Bunter started. That roar of laughter came from Study No. 1 in the Remove.

The door of the study was closed, but the laughter from within echoed in the passage.

Bunter blinked round in surprise. It was not raining so heavily now,

GREYFRIARS HEROES. — No. 7.

GEORGE WINGATE.

Our Greyfriars Rhymester fairly excels himself in this week's snappy poem. Courageous as a lion, as the popular captain of Greyfriars undoubtedly is, it is small wonder that his hero should be none other than the brave Richard Cœur de Lion.

*OLD Wingate's hero could have been,
Perhaps, a trifle cooler;
But braver men we ne'er have seen
Than England's famous ruler;
A more resplendent escapade
A warrior could not be on.
And better man led no Crusade
Than Richard Cœur de Lion.*

*Sometimes old Wingate, with a grin,
Consents to say that no men
But Richard and old Saladin
Could still be friends—but joemen!
When Saladin he talks about
He says that it would take a
Real good man to knock him out
As Richard did at Acre.*



"But Leopold I cannot stand," Says he. "The foreign traitor Thought he was greatest in the land Until he met a greater; The Lion-Hearted king he stole And in a castle bound him, Till Blondel with his Barcarolle Just snooped along and found him.

"And while all this was going on, With villainous effrontery, That utter rotter, young Prince John, Set out to steal his country; When Dick came back he saw the stunt, But didn't give John toco; If I'd been there, we hear him grunt, 'I'd soon have pulled his boko!"

Our Captain's right. Who doesn't feel His spirits rise from zero? What breast is dead to the appeal Of this courageous hero? Says Wingate, "Of all men on earth, Or with the brave departed, I know of none who has more worth Than Richard, Lion-Hearted!"

but it was still coming down. Few fellows were in a merry mood that afternoon. But, judging by the roar in Study No. 1, the Famous Five found some gaiety in existence, in spite of the weather.

Bunter rolled on to the door of Study No. 1.

He did not tap at the door, or open it; he stopped, with his fat ear bent to listen. That was one of Bunter's agreeable little ways. It had earned him more kicks than he could count in the Greyfriars Remove. But at the moment there was no one in sight in the passage, and Bunter gave ear unto what was passing in Study No. 1. Curiosity was Bunter's besetting sin. Something was on in Study No. 1, and Bunter wanted to know what it was.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was another peal of laughter.

"Poor old Prout! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep it dark, you men," said Harry Wharton. "Prout would be frightfully wild if it got all over Greyfriars."

Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed behind his big round spectacles. Something was to be kept dark!

That was enough for Bunter. He listened with all his ears.

"Well, it will get over the school fast enough if Widgers butts in!" said Bob Cherry.

"And you say he's coming along to butt in this afternoon!" remarked Nugent.

"Yes. But Prout's told Gosling to keep him out. He's hardly likely to kick up a shindy at the gate, I suppose—an old Greyfriars man!"

"Well, judging by what you heard him say to Prout, I fancy he's the man for that, or anything else," chuckled Bob.

"But we'll keep it dark, of course. Prout's an interfering old ass,

but it would make him look an awful fool if this got over Greyfriars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fancy Prout!" chortled Johnny Bull. "I've seen Price of the Fifth giving imitations of Prout. 'It is my desire—hem—hum—ha—to be regarded—hum—ha—rather as a friend—hum—ha—than as a master—hum—ha—hum—'"

There was a roar in the study.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And now there's an old Fifth Form boy thirsting for his gore!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "What an example to set the present Fifth! I wonder what Prout did to him when he was here?"

"Seems to have got him sacked," said Harry. "Turfed out, at least! The chap must have got Prout's rag out."

"But he must be rather a rotter, I think," said Bob. "Man ought not to nurse a grudge all these years. It isn't done."

"The grudgefulness must be terrific, if the esteemed Widgers is coming here specially to thrash Prout," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "It is preposterously bad form on the part of the worthy Widgers."

"Let's hope Gosling will be able to keep him out," chuckled Nugent. "If he doesn't—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Prout used to be a fighting-man and a boxer in the jolly old dear dead days beyond recall!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"I've heard him talking about it. But that must have been a long time ago. I fancy he would burst now if he was punched. He's jolly near as fat as Bunter."

"Beast!" murmured the owner of the fat ear at the keyhole.

"Fancy Prout boxing with an old Fifth Form man, who's coming here

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after his jolly old bald scalp!" gasped Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five yelled again.

There was no doubt that the projected visit of that peculiar old boy of Greyfriars was having a cheering effect on the chums of the Remove that dismal, rainy afternoon.

Outside the door Billy Bunter grinned.

This was news for Bunter, and very entertaining news, as well as very surprising news. How these fellows had got hold of it, he did not know; but they were going to keep it dark for Prout's sake. A fat lot Prout deserved at the hands of the Remove. They could keep it dark if they liked; but it was not likely to be kept very dark now that Bunter knew.

"Poor old Prout!" went on Frank Nugent. "He's a silly old ass, and he butts in where he isn't wanted! But we'll keep his Widgers dark. Serve him jolly well right to let Widgers in——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat! What a jape on Prout!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "If we got Gosling out of the way, and Widgers walked in and started hunting Prout——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Too bad on Prout!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "But—oh, my hat! What the merry thump——"

The study door burst open with a crash. A fat form hurtled in, yelling. It sprawled on the floor, still yelling; and the face of Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, grinned in at the doorway.

The Famous Five stared at him.

"You men confabbing over anythin' secret?" asked the Bounder.

"Well, yes, rather—what——"

"Then you'd better lynch Bunter! He had his ear to the keyhole when I came up, so I booted him in."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Ow, wow!" Billy Bunter sat up and roared. "I didn't! I wasn't! I never! You beast, Smithy! I was only stooping to—yow-ow-ow!—tie up my—yow-ow!—shoelace, you suspicious beast!"

"You fat villain!" roared Harry Wharton.

If Bunter had heard the talk in the study it was not likely that Bartholomew Widgers would be kept "dark." Really, considering Mr. Prout's proceedings that day, it was very kind of the Remove comrades to desire to spare him ridicule. But they were good-natured youths; neither were they given to tattling about what did not concern them.

Bunter was quite unlike them in that respect. Bunter liked to be the bearer of news, especially startling news.

And Widgers on the warpath was startling news—very startling.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, I—I never heard a word!" gasped Bunter. "Not a syllable! I'd just stooped down to—to pick up a pin when that beast Smithy came along and kicked me! I never even heard the name of Widgers."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob. "That tears it!"

"The tearfulness is terrific."

"I—I hope you fellows can take my word!" gasped Bunter, blinking in alarm at the Famous Five. "I don't know the name! I've never heard it. It's absolutely strange to me. I never know you were talking about Prout. In fact, I didn't know you were in the study at all. I just stooped down in the passage to pull up my sock, and then that beast Smithy——"

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"Kick him!"

"The kickfulness is the proper caper!"

"All together!"

"Ow! Wow! Help! Fire! Yaroooooogh!" roared Billy Bunter, as he rolled out of Study No. 1, propelled by five boots at once.

"Give him some more!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Yarooooop!"

Bunter scrambled wildly into the passage. There he picked himself up, spluttering.

"Ow! Wow! Ooooh! Beasts!" gasped Bunter. "I'll jolly well tell all the fellows now—— Ow! Keep off!"

Bunter fled.

Herbert Vernon-Smith looked curiously at the chums of the Remove. But he asked no questions.

"I came up to tell you men that you're wanted," he said. "Quelch has come in, and Prout's with him. Have you been getting Prout's rag out?"

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Bob. "Has the old duffer really reported us to Quelch? He's asking for trouble."

"Quelch wants you, anyhow," said the Bounder. "And Bunter. Where's that fat idiot got to? Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"Quelch wants you, fathead!"

"Blow Quelch!"

"Bunter had nothing to do with it," said Harry. "He was in the Rag, but he wasn't in the scrap with the Fourth. Too jolly careful of his fat skin."

"Well, Quelch wants the lot of you," said Vernon-Smith, and he went on to his study.

The Famous Five descended the Remove staircase. Billy Bunter followed them at a safe distance. He did not seem to want to come within reach of kicking again.

Harry Wharton & Co. were frowning as they made for Masters' passage. Prout had butted in and locked them out of the Rag. Even an interfering ass like Prout might have let it go at that, they considered.

Possibly that talk on the telephone with Widgers had given an unusual edge to Prout's temper. At all events, he had reported the juniors to their Form master, and they were called to account for the riot in the Rag.

Mr. Quelch's temper was never at its best on a rainy day. And he hated complaints of his boys from other members of the staff. So the anticipations of the juniors were not merry and bright as they trailed along to their Form master's study.

"I say, you fellows——" Bunter drew nearer as they approached Mr. Quelch's door. "I say, you fellows, you tell Quelch I had nothing to do with it, you know."

"Tell him yourself, fathead!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, he mightn't take my word," said Bunter. "It's a bit thick, you know, but Quelch has doubted my word more than once."

"Go hon!"

"That old ass Prout jolly well knows I wasn't in it," said Bunter, indignantly. "But Prout's such a silly old idiot——"

"Upon my word!" Mr. Prout, looking out of Mr. Quelch's study at that moment to see if the delinquents were coming, had the pleasure, or otherwise, of hearing Bunter's happy remark. "That—that—that is how you speak of a senior master, is it, Bunter?"

Bunter's jaw dropped.

"Oh crikey! No, sir! I—I wasn't calling you a silly old idiot, sir!" he gasped.

"What? I heard——"

"I—I was speaking of another silly old idiot, sir——" gasped Bunter.

"Wha-a-t?"

"On my word, sir!" groaned Bunter. "Quite another silly old idiot, sir! Not you at all, sir!"

Prout, purple, turned back into the study.

The hapless Removites followed him in, to meet the steely eyes of their Form master, Henry Samuel Quelch.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bartholomew Widgers Blows In!

MR. BARTHOLOMEW WIDGERS stopped at the gates of Greyfriars School.

Generally, on a half-holiday, there were fellows about the old gateway, going out or coming in, or loafing or chatting. But in the rain there was nobody about; and Gosling, the ancient porter, was in his lodge and extremely unwilling to leave its shelter.

Nevertheless, the gate stood open, as always on a half-holiday, and Mr. Widgers was free to step in if he liked.

Evidently he liked—for he did.

Gosling, looking out with a wary eye from his lodge, spotted him at once.

He did not recognise Mr. Widgers. B. Widgers had changed very considerably since he had been Widgers of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars.

He was naturally a good many years older. Like the lady in the poem, time had touched his form to riper grace.

He had an extensive waistcoat, which was well filled. Though still quite a young man, he was rather ponderous. His face was plump. He was rather beefy. His best friend, probably, would not have called him handsome. But there was a very square chin to his plump face, and he had a look which indicated aggressive determination. Likewise, there was a twinkle in his eye which told of humour; though it was very likely to be misdirected humour.

That twinkling eye, at least, was familiar to Gosling. It reminded him of the occasion when he had found rats in his best hat.

The rest of Widgers was unfamiliar; but Gosling had no doubt that this was Widgers, the man he was to keep out.

Unwilling as he was to emerge into the rain, Gosling came forth from his lodge like a lion from his lair.

Bartholomew Widgers, stepping in, found Gosling in his way, like a lion in the path, or like Horatius defending the bridge of old.

"Ho!" said Gosling unpleasantly. "Widgers, I s'pose?"

Widgers grinned.

"You s'pose correctly, old bean," he answered. "In fact, you've said it! Remember me?"

"Don't I," said Gosling, "just!"

"Same here," said Widgers heartily. "You haven't changed a bit, Gosling. I'd know you anywhere, among any number of dusty old frumps."

If Gosling had felt any compunction about dealing harshly with an old boy of Greyfriars, that remark would have banished his compunction on the spot.

Widgers, outwardly, had changed; inwardly, it was clear, he had not changed at all. He was the same cheeky, impudent, disrespectful Widgers that he had been in the old days in the Fifth Form at Greyfriars.

"Ho!" said Gosling. "You ain't

changed much, you ain't! No! Cheeking a man old enough to be your father!"

"You err on the side of under-statement," said Widgers. "You mean grandfather."

"Ho!" gasped Gosling.

"Or do you mean great-grandfather?" asked Widgers.

"Ho!" gasped Gosling again.

"Or perhaps you mean great-great-grandfather?" suggested Widgers. "That might be nearer the mark."

Gosling remembered, from of old, that it was useless to bandy words with this fellow Widgers.

"You get hout!" he said.

Widgers looked pained.

"Is that how you welcome an old

"Suppose I've called to see the Head?"

"You ain't," said Gosling. "You've called to see Mr. Prout, and you ain't coming in. You get hout!"

Widgers eyed him pleasantly and meditatively.

"Same old Gosling!" he remarked. "Same old crusty bird! Just the same at a hundred as I knew you at ninety."

Gosling became purple.

Gosling was a little touchy about his age. He owned up to fifty-five; in fact, he had owned up to that age for ten years or more. But he was not a hundred. He was not ninety, and never had been ninety in his life. Cheeky fellows sometimes exasperated Gosling

sort of fellow to be shoved, and Gosling shoved him.

But though Widgers was, in one way, a fellow to be shoved, in another way he wasn't. Physically, he was unshovable.

He stood like a rock when Gosling shoved him, without receding an inch, and replied to the shove with another of the same, which caused Gosling to recede a good deal more than an inch.

Gosling staggered, and sat down.

Splash!

In such a downfall of rain there were bound to be puddles. Gosling sat in one of them.

"Ho!" gurgled Gosling. "My hat! Ho! I'm wet! Ooooooh! Wot I says is this 'ere—"

But Widgers did not wait to hear

Heedless of the buzzing telephone bell, Wharton laid a plentiful supply of glue on the seat of Mr. Prout's armchair. "That'll bring the old bounder to his senses!" he murmured.



boy?" he asked. "Do you treat 'em all like that, when they come down to gasp and flounder in the old boys' match?"

Gosling glared. As a matter of fact, William Gosling had sometimes grinned a furtive grin at the sight of plump old boys in the old boys' match with the Sixth. Gasping and floundering was, perhaps, the order of the day on such occasions. But Gosling was not going to listen to this sort of stuff from an outcast like Widgers.

"You get hout!" he repeated.

"Head's orders?" asked Widgers.

"Mr. Prout's horders," said Gosling.

"Special instructions that you ain't to be allowed to enter the school."

"Is Prout headmaster now?"

"Which you know he ain't," said Gosling. "But horders is horders, though it's little enough you ever cared for horders, Widgers."

by asking him what the old school had been like in the reign of George the Third. He had even been asked whether he remembered the beacon burning on the Black Pike at the time of the Spanish Armada! But he was not going to stand this sort of thing from Bartholomew Widgers.

Words were wasted on Widgers. That was clear. Gosling proceeded from words to actions. He gave Widgers a shove.

Shoving an old boy out of the gates of Greyfriars was rather a new thing. But Widgers was rather an unusual old boy. A fellow who had been turfed out of the school was not an old boy in the proper sense of the words. He was an outcast, a pariah, a nobody; a fellow who ought to have had the decency to keep miles away from the school that had cast him out. He was, in fact, the

what Gosling had to say. Leaving the ancient porter sitting in the puddle, Widgers walked on.

Gosling picked himself out of the puddle, dripping.

Ho glared after Widgers.

Mr. Prout had ordered him to keep Widgers out. He was anxious to obey that order to the very letter. But Widgers was in!

Getting him out again, Gosling realised, was a task beyond his powers. Widgers had given him only one shove, but there had been a great deal of beef behind it. Gosling did not want another.

How to deal with Widgers was, in fact, rather a problem. Normal old boys were welcome, more than welcome, at their old school. Any normal old boy who had been unwelcome

would, naturally, have stayed away, offended but dignified. Widders, it was only too clear, was not a normal old boy; he was a frightfully abnormal one. An old boy who wasn't wanted, but who persisted in butting in, was something new, and Gosling, for one, did not know how to deal with him. He sagely decided to leave that problem to Mr. Prout to solve. Prout, after all, was the person chiefly concerned.

What was quite clear in Gosling's mind was, that he did not want another hefty shove, and did not want to sit in another puddle. He grunted, and retired to his lodge.

Meanwhile, Widders, regardless of Gosling, as he was of the rain, strolled across to the House.

Under the porch of the House were several seniors, looking out at the weather, and making remarks about it—a group of Fifth and Sixth.

Now they all looked at Widders. Wingate of the Sixth, who happened to be in the group, approached him politely. He supposed that he was some stranger who had wandered in by mistake.

"Can I do anything for you, sir?" asked the captain of Greyfriars, with the politeness that Greyfriars men always showed to strangers, though not always to one another.

Widders nodded cheerfully. "You can," he said brightly. "I happen to be an old boy, and I've called to see my old master—my dear old master."

"Oh!" said Wingate, interested. "If the Head is expecting you, sir—"

"Not the Head!" said Widders. "Owing to circumstances over which I had no control, I left while I was in the Fifth Form. It is Pompey that I have called to see."

"Pompey!" ejaculated Wingate. Blundell of the Fifth, who was also in the group in the porch, chuckled.

"Did they call him Pompey in your time, sir?" he asked. And the other fellows laughed.

"They did!" said Widders. "In fact, I claim the distinction of having invented the name. Prout never liked it, I believe."

"He doesn't now!" chortled Blundell. Wingate looked very curiously at this old boy.

"You've called to see Mr. Prout, sir?" he asked.

"Right on the nail." "Is he expecting you?" asked Wingate rather dubiously. Something out of the normal struck him about this Fifth-Former.

"Oh, quite! I phoned him this afternoon."

"Well, I suppose Prout's in," said Blundell. "Can't be out in this rain. I'll take you to his study, if you like, sir."

"Much obliged," said Widders. Leaving a drenched hat and a dripping raincoat in the lobby, Widders followed the obliging Fifth-Former.

He glanced about him with cheerful interest in Masters' Passage. A murmur of voices was heard from Mr. Quelch's study as they passed it. A deep-toned voice, not unlike that of the Bull of Bashan of old, was audible from that study, and Widders stopped.

"That sounds like old Pompey!" he remarked.

Blundell grinned. "Prout's there, with Quelch," he said. "But—"

"I'll step in."

"If you'd rather wait in his study till he comes back—" hinted Blundell.

"Not at all! I'm sure Pompey's as anxious to see me, as I am to see him."

Blundell paused. But it was, after all, no business of his. If this old boy chose to butt in while his old Form master was engaged with another Form master, it was his own look-out, not Blundell's.

"Oh, very well!" said Blundell, and he departed, leaving Bartholomew Widders tapping at the door of the Remove master's study.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Unparalleled!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. did not look, as they faced their Form master in his study, like fellows who were having the time of their lives.

They looked dismal and uneasy. They were not, of course, to blame; they had no doubt about that. But on a rainy day you never could tell with Quelch; rainy days brought out all the acerbity in his nature.

And Prout was in a "bait." Prout, intensely exasperated by that talk on the telephone, was practically ferocious.

So the chums of the Remove dimly anticipated the worst—blameless as they were!

Quelch, it was evident, had already heard Prout's complaint. His gimlet eyes bored into the juniors.

Not only the rainy days and twinges of rheumatism worried Quelch; but he hated complaints from other masters, especially Prout. Prout, as a senior master, had a way of advising other members of the staff in the conduct of their Forms, and no other member of the staff liked to give Prout an opening.

"It appears," said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice, "that you have been guilty of a disgraceful disturbance during my absence."

"Unparalleled!" said Mr. Prout, booming. "Unheard of! Such an uproar—such a din—"

"So you have already told me, sir!" said Mr. Quelch acidly. "I will now hear what these juniors have to say."

Prout snorted. "It seems," said Mr. Quelch, "that the disturbance was so serious that Mr. Prout had to lock you out of the recreation-room."

"Undoubtedly so!" Prout wedged in again; he found it difficult to keep silent for long. To his own ears, at least, his fruity voice was music. "The uproar was atrocious—ungovernable—inexpressible—"

"Have you anything to say, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir!" said Harry. "We had a bit of a—a—a romp—"

"A romp!" hooted Prout. "The romfulness was terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"But there was really no need for Mr. Prout to interfere," went on the captain of the Remove.

"No need!" roared Prout. "None at all," said Harry.

Prout became purple. "Mr. Quelch, you hear this! You hear—"

"I hear every word, sir," said Mr. Quelch coldly. "My hearing, fortunately, is not at all impaired."

The juniors exchanged a hopeful look. That acid observation showed that Quelch was more annoyed with Prout than with them.

Prout spluttered. "Sir! Mr. Quelch! Sir! The disgraceful conduct of these boys in your

Form is—is—is unparalleled! I am bound to say—I am compelled to say—that no other Form at Greyfriars would ever dream of behaving as the Lower Fourth behave! I am glad to say—I am happy to say—that in the Fifth Form there is not a single boy who would dream of making a riotous and disgraceful disturbance!"

"Mr. Prout—"

Prout waved a plump hand. "I repeat my words, sir! I am bound to repeat them! I repeat, sir, that in the Fifth Form, since I have been master of that Form, there has never been a boy who would dream of behaving with riotous audacity and unparalleled impertinence!"

Tap! The door opened. "Go it, Pompey!" said a voice at the door.

Instead of "going it," Mr. Prout broke off suddenly.

He whirled round towards the door with a gasp.

Mr. Quelch stared blankly at the stocky man who stepped in and closed the study door behind him.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at him, also. Billy Bunter blinked at him. He was a stranger to the juniors.

Widders—for, of course, it was Widders—gave Mr. Prout a nod.

"Pile in, Pompey!" he said. "I heard your fruity old toot as I was passing the door, so I dropped in. Don't let me interrupt you. Get it off your chest, old bean!"

Prout gasped. He did not recognise the young man who, years and years ago, had been a boy in his Form. But he guessed who he was. Gosling, after all, had not barred off the threatened visit.

And now the juniors guessed. Harry Wharton & Co., though Prout was not aware of it, were in possession of inside information, as it were. They exchanged a joyous grin.

"Who—who is this man?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Widders, sir—Barty Widders," said the man cheerfully. "I dare say you remember me. I was in your Form once."

"And—and what—"

"Glad to see you again, sir," said Widders, with a nod to the amazed Remove master. "You were a bit of a crusty old corker, I remember, when I was in your Form. But your bark was always worse than your bite."

"Sir!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"It's Pompey I've called to see," explained Widders. "Sorry to have to interview him in your study, Quelch; but I have to see him where I can find him. He's not really anxious to see this particular old member of his Form, and I fancy he would dodge if he could. Isn't that so, Pompey?"

Prout gurgled. Widders, once of the Fifth, put his hand behind him, turned the key in the study door, and drew it out.

Apparently he was taking precautions against interruption.

"Oh, my only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Prout was still gurgling. Wrath and consternation mingled in his purple face. Quelch, cool as ice, stared at the intruder.

"I fail to understand your conduct, Mr. Widders—if you are Mr. Widders," he said coldly. "I remember your name. You were compelled to leave this school when you were in the Fifth Form. It is scarcely in accordance with the dictates of good taste for you to return here."

(Continued on page 12.)

FOOTBALL FAVOURITES!

No. 2.—
VIVIAN GIBBINS,
the famous
Amateur
Inter-
national
of
West Ham.



By "OLD REF."

Local Product!

IN the early afternoon of a dark and dismal day last winter I was walking with the late Mr. J. W. H. T. Douglas across Wanstead Flats when we came upon a score of boys playing football, their glad shouts seeming to give a different hue to the dreary surrounding scenery. We watched the game for a while.

Suddenly a whistle was blown, and a young man—presumably their schoolmaster—proceeded to give a practical demonstration of trapping, dribbling, and shooting.

It was superb, and Douglas said: "By Jove! This is worth looking at!" Then in a flash we both recognised the young man, for he was Vivian Gibbins, the West Ham United amateur and England centre-forward, and he was doing the job that lay nearest to his heart in coaching the boys of his school.

Vivian Gibbins is now twenty-nine years of age, and was born in the district of West Ham. My first meeting with him was when he was a very small boy. I was on friendly terms with a schoolmaster in the neighbourhood of Forest Gate, and, on one occasion, assisted him in some coaching of his boys. There was one youngster who displayed quite a lot of natural ability, but who could only use his right foot when kicking. My friend persevered with him, making him use only the left foot until he was equally clever with both. That youngster was Vivian Gibbins.

I went down to witness one of the school matches, and although the side on which Gibbins played lost 12-1 it was apparent that this boy was no ordinary player. He scored the only goal—with his left foot—but right from the start the opposing defence, realising that he was likely to be the only thorn in their flesh, concentrated all their powers to "block his scoring strokes."

A Thank Offering!

IDID not meet Gibbins again until he joined the Clapton club. He was then seventeen years of age, and was a student at the West Ham Secondary School, which boasted a really strong side. The boy had come on by leaps and bounds, but it was about a year later that I saw him play a champion game against Chatham in a Cup-tie. He looked very tired when he returned to the dressing-room, and, in reply to my inquiry, he said: "Yes, I am a bit fagged. Fact is, I played in a match for my school this morning."

In the season 1923-24 Clapton won the Amateur Cup—a result which was mainly due to the sparkling displays of Vivian Gibbins, "Bill" Bryant, who later joined Millwall, but has now returned to Clapton, and Stanley Earle, of West Ham, who were then members of the side.

It was at the end of that season that Gibbins was given his first "cap," being chosen by the authorities to represent England against France, at Paris. We had a fine side, and won the game by 3-1 before a huge crowd. But the match was marred by two casualties, England finishing with nine men. Fox, the goalkeeper, was injured, but it was Vivian Gibbins who was the worst victim, with a smashed knee. I remember Tom Parker, the present Arsenal full-back, who was then with Southampton, carrying him off the field, and loud were the lamentations of some of the French spectators.

It was feared that Gibbins would never again play football; but Charles Painter, the West Ham trainer, who had known Vivian for many years, took him in hand after his knee had been operated on, and, in the opinion of those who understood the case, performed a miracle. It was as a thank offering to Painter that his patient signed amateur forms for West Ham United.

The Biter Bit!

I WAS in the players' dressing-room of the West Ham United Club when Vivian Gibbins paid his first visit to do a little training. He changed into shorts, a sweater, and running shoes, and went out for exercise. It was then that I heard one of the younger professionals say to another: "What's he doing here? We don't want a lot of young toffs training with us!"

I took no notice until I saw the two whispering together, as if they were conspiring to commit something of which they were ashamed. Then the first one went out and brought back a couple of six-inch nails, but, seeing that I was watching him, he changed and went out to do some sprinting.

A minute or two afterwards the one who remained in the room asked me which were the "young toff's" boots. He had the nails and a hammer in his hand, and I scented mischief. "Here they are," I replied, handing him the pair which had been taken off by the other conspirator. In a moment the fellow drove a six-inch nail through the sole of each boot, so securing both of them to the floor. "He won't want to train with us again," he murmured.

I draw a veil over the scene which followed some twenty minutes later. It was a case of "the biter bit." But I must,

in justice to the practical jokers, admit that they hadn't the foggiest notion of Gibbins' identity at the time, and that there is no happier family of honourable professionals—who are justly regarded by Vivian Gibbins as his friends—than those of West Ham United.

I must have witnessed at least fifty games in which Gibbins has played. In addition to the International with France, I was present when he helped England v.

Ireland, at Belfast; v. South Africa, at Southampton and Tottenham; and v. Scotland at Leicester and Hampden Park, Glasgow.

I don't think I know a more modest man than is Vivian Gibbins, and he is quick with self-condemnation when he has been guilty of not playing up to his best form.

On one occasion I was with him as he made his way from the ground of one of our most celebrated League clubs, after playing a poor game. "Excuse me, sir," said an individual, "but are you one of the footballers?" I don't know what the man wanted—he may have been a tout. Nothing mattered to Gibbins as he replied very shortly: "No, I'm not a footballer—I'm a fool. But other people might have a more lurid way of putting it."

No. Vivian Gibbins is no fool! He is a member of that very small circle of gentlemen footballers who fraternise with professionals for the good of their fellow-creatures, and for the great and lasting good of the game.



A nailing bad trick!

WIDGERS ON THE WARPAT!

(Continued from page 10.)

"Bless your little heart!" said Bartholomew Widgers. "I never was a whale on good taste. Was I, Pompey?"

"In any case, you are interrupting," said Mr. Quelch. "I request you to leave this study, or, at all events, to remain silent until Mr. Prout is finished here."

"Heave ahead!" said Widgers. "I'm in no hurry! Pompey will keep!"

Gurgle from Prout.

"You were saying," said Mr. Quelch, with a grim, gimlet eye on Prout—"you were saying, sir, I think, that there never had been a boy in your Form who would be guilty of riotous audacity or impertinence."

The juniors suppressed a chuckle. Really, it was rather unfortunate for Mr. Prout that the former Fifth Form man had butted in just then.

"I—I—I—" gurgled Prout.

"Speak up, Pompey!" said Widgers encouragingly. "Don't mind me!"

Prout recovered his lost voice.

"You insolent knave!" he boomed. "The school porter had orders not to admit you. How did you come here, rascal?"

"Stretched Gosling," answered Mr. Widgers cheerfully. "Left him sitting in a puddle, old thing."

"Good gad! Ruffian—"

"Hear, hear!" said Widgers. "Go it, Pompey!"

"Scoundrel—"

"Ain't he eloquent?" said Bartholomew Widgers. "Same old Prout! Same old Pompey! Blow off steam, old bean!"

"Wretch—"

"Mr. Prout," interrupted the Remove master, "this scene cannot continue in my study. Mr. Widgers, I request you to leave at once!"

"Guess again!" said Widgers.

"Sir!"

"Keep it for the Lower Fourth, Quelch," said Widgers, "and don't butt in, if you're not hunting for more trouble than you can handle. Now, Pompey—"

Widgers picked up the Remove master's cane from the table.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Cherry.

Prout stood petrified.

Incredible as it was, unbelievable as it was, it looked as if Widgers, once of the Fifth, intended to carry out the threat he had made when he left Greyfriars so many years ago.

In the circumstances, it was fortunate for Mr. Prout that that amazing old boy had not cornered him alone.

Mr. Quelch made a stride towards the intruder. The affair between Prout and his old boy did not concern him; but he was not a man to be cheeked in his own study.

He raised a commanding hand.

"Lay down that cane, sir! Leave my study!" he thundered.

"Can it!" answered Widgers.

"I order you—"

"Bottle it up!" answered Widgers, and he knocked the commanding hand of the Remove master aside without ceremony.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"You cheeky fathead!" roared Bob Cherry indignantly. "Keep your cheeky paws off our Form master. Bag him, you men!"

Mr. Quelch staggered under an unceremonious shove from Bartholomew Widgers. That was too much for the Famous Five.

Widgers could deal with Prout as he

liked, so far as they were concerned; but Quelch was their Form master, and they were not standing for this.

Like one man the Famous Five jumped at Bartholomew Widgers.

"Here, hands off!" roared Widgers. "I'll thrash the lot of you! I'll—I'll—I'll—Yarooooh!"

Bump!

Bartholomew Widgers went down on the floor with a terrific concussion, the Famous Five sprawling over him.

The scene in Mr. Quelch's study, for the next few minutes, was wild and whirling—what Prout would doubtless have described as unprecedented and unparalleled. Two Form masters stared on aghast, while an old boy of Greyfriars, five young boys of Greyfriars, several chairs, and other articles of furniture, mingled in a cloud of dust on the study floor.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Exit Widgers!

"COLLAR him!"

"Bag him!"

"Give him jip!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ow! Wow!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch feebly, while Prout's palsied lips seemed to frame, silently, the word "Unparalleled."

"He, he, he!" contributed Billy Bunter.

Billy Bunter did not take part in the scrap. But he enjoyed it thoroughly as an onlooker.

Bump! Crash! Thump! Bang!

The study table rocked. Chairs flew right and left. Books and papers flew in all directions.

REMEMBER! REMEMBER! THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER!

Can anyone give a guess as to what the fireworks of 1950 will be like? When I went over the Standard Fireworks factory in Huddersfield, I found a special department given over to experimental work, where new ideas are constantly being tried out with the object of making fireworks more startling and noisy than ever.

The manufacturers are doing their level best to imitate the sound of artillery—the whip-like crack of the 60-pounder, the electric gun, the shrapnel gun and the air bomb.

Some of these novelties, which can be bought for as little as a few pence each, ascend a hundred feet into the air, explode twice, and give off a couple of blinding flashes. Not bad for four-pence!

The Standard Fireworks factory resembles a big munition works.

And how the "hands" work in this great factory! Just like lightning! Everyone knows what a Rocket is like—the commonest of fireworks—but before one of these can be made, the paper must be cut and rolled, then the nose of the cylinder is choked, the choke tied, the cylinder filled, a hole bored down the centre, the priming put inside, and then it has to be quick-matched and touch-papered.

For each of these processes the rocket passes through a different pair of hands. No wonder the factory "hands" are kept busy! Especially when you remember that something like half a million pounds worth of fireworks are made for each Gunpowder Plot Day, and that most of the fireworks are far more complicated than rockets. Imagine the amount of work that must go to the making of "Devil Among the Tailors," "Egyptian Pyramids," "Lighthouses," and "Rising Suns."

If you want the best of all fireworks, boys, insist on the "Standard" brand.

Bartholomew Widgers was a rather beefy young man, and he put all his beef into the struggle.

Five to one as they were, the chums of the Remove had plenty of work in hand to hold Widgers.

Widgers had come there to thrash Prout. That intention, expressed the day he was turned out of Greyfriars, had never changed; and he was there to get on with it, after many years. He was not to be stopped by the Remove master, or a mob of Remove boys—if he could help it.

As it happened, he couldn't help it.

He gave the Famous Five a lot of work; but the odds were too heavy, and at long last Widgers was down and out.

Stretched breathless on the floor, with hardly a gasp left in him, Widgers was sat upon by the victors in the terrific affray.

"Ooooooooooooooh!" came from Widgers. That was now his only remark.

"Got him!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"The gotfulness is terrific."

"Sit on him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oooooogh!" came in painful, suffocated accents from Widgers.

"Bless my soul!" stammered Mr. Quelch.

"We've got him, sir!" said Harry Wharton breathlessly. "Shall we roll him along to Mr. Prout's study, sir? I think he called to see Mr. Prout."

"Certainly not!" gasped Prout, before the Remove master could answer. "Most certainly not. Do nothing of the kind."

"I—I—I thank you, my boys!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "This—this riotous ruffian—this—this outrageous hooligan—bless my soul! I thank you for having secured him, and—and preventing a scene of violence. Hold him securely."

"We've got him, sir."

"Oooooooooogh!" said Bartholomew Widgers.

"Let him be removed!" stammered Prout. "Let him be ejected from the school. Let him be thrown from the gates—hurled forth—"

"But he called to see you, sir," said Bob Cherry demurely.

"Silence!" roared Prout. "Mr. Quelch, this impertinence from a boy of your Form—"

"Really, sir, I think you have reason to be grateful to these boys of my Form!" said Mr. Quelch tartly. "Only the presence of these boys, sir, of whom you were making complaints, has prevented a scene—"

"Let him be ejected!" gasped Prout. "Let him be hurled forth! Let him be cast from the gates—"

Harry Wharton & Co. did not heed Prout. They had collared Widgers because he had cheeked their Form master; and it was to their Form master that they looked for instructions. So far as Prout was concerned, they had no desire whatever to interfere.

"Take the key from him, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch. "Unlock the door."

"Certainly, sir."

There was a buzzing crowd in Masters' passage by this time. Seniors and juniors swarmed in the passage in a state of high excitement.

Scores of eyes stared in as the door was unlocked and thrown open. The voice of Coker of the Fifth was heard.

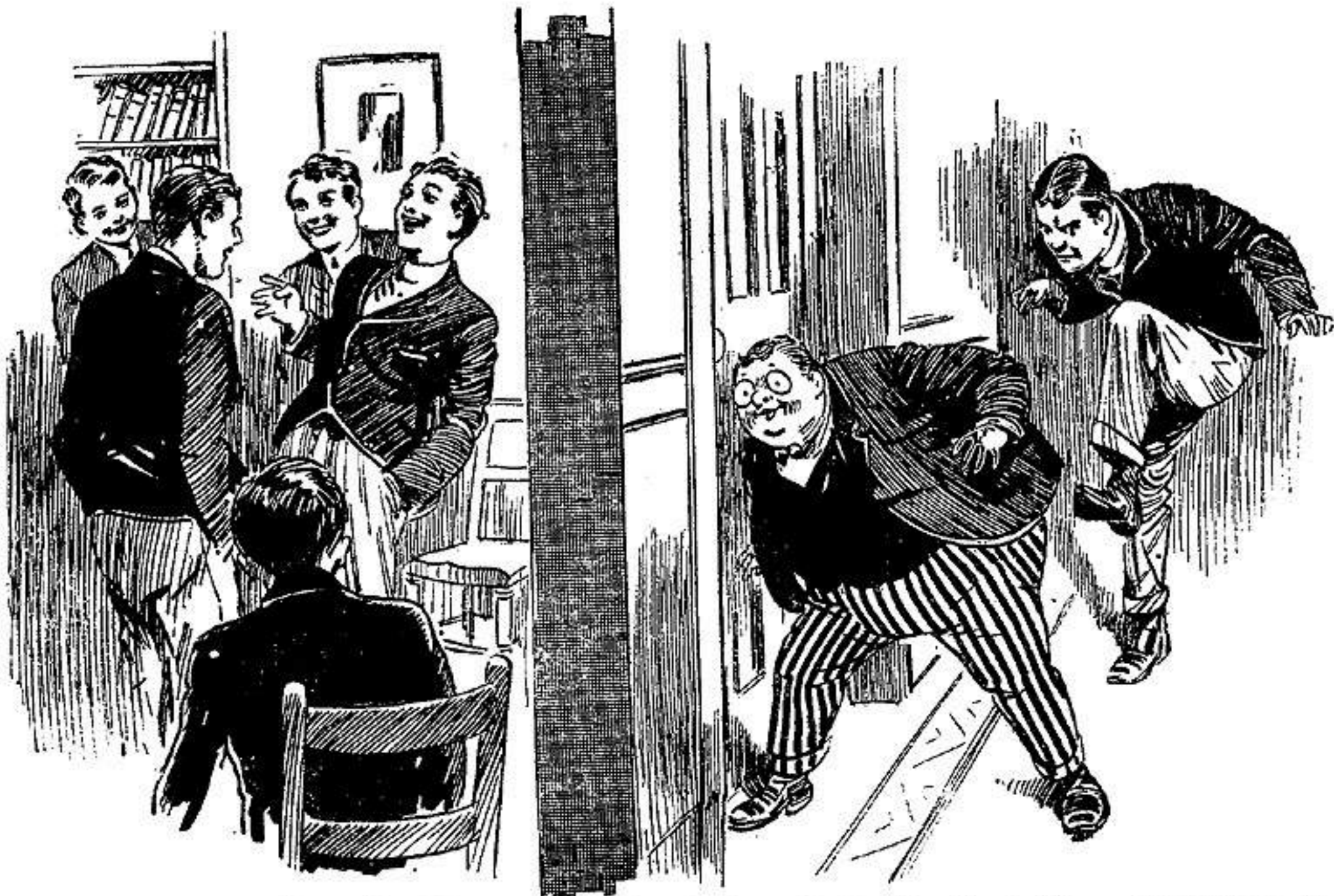
"What's the row, you men? Quelch and Prout can't be having a fight, can they?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it sounds like it," said Coker. "If it's not that, what is it? Look here, give a fellow a chance."

Horace Coker shouldered through the crowd.

"Coker!" gasped Mr. Prout. "You



"Fancy Prout boxing with an old Fifth Form man, who's coming here after his jolly old scalp!" gasped Bob Cherry. So interested was Bunter, listening at the keyhole, at this surprising news that he failed to hear Vernon-Smith approaching from the rear.

—you—you utterly stupid boy! Take five hundred lines!"

"Oh crikey!" said Coker.

"And go to your study!" roared Prout.

"Oh, my hat!"

"At once, sir, or I will cane you!" boomed Prout.

"Oh crumbs!"

Horace Coker faded out of the picture. Prout glared from the study at the crowd. A crowd was the last thing that Prout desired to see on the spot.

Widgers had not carried out his fell intention. That was so much to the good. But Prout was anxious, feverishly anxious, to keep Widgers dark, as it were. He dreaded lest Greyfriars should discover who Widgers was, and why he had called.

How was Prout ever to hold up his head in Common Room again if the Staff learned that an old boy of his Form had dropped in at Greyfriars to thrash him?

How was he to face the school if the school learned the secret history of that afternoon's exciting happenings?

Prout clung to the hope of keeping Widgers dark.

He waved an argy hand at the crowd.

"Go!" he thundered. "Disperse!"

"Really, sir!" said Wingate of the Sixth. "We came to see what was happening—we were quite alarmed—"

"Nonsense! Go!"

Wingate looked past Mr. Prout at Mr. Quelch and at the breathless, speechless Widgers gasping in the clutches of the Famous Five.

"Can we help, sir?" he asked, addressing the Remove master.

"Thank you, Wingate," said Mr. Quelch. "If you will kindly help in removing this obstreperous person from the precincts of the school—"

"That—that person, sir? He told us that he was an old boy of Greyfriars," said Wingate.

"He has forced himself in here, Wingate, and he must be ejected," said Mr. Quelch. "If you will kindly assist—"

"Certainly, sir."

"Lose no time!" boomed Prout. He was anxious to see the last of Widgers before he cou'd talk too much.

"This instant—"

"Oooooooooogh!" gurgled the hapless Widgers.

He was yanked to his feet. Wingate and Wynne of the Sixth, and Potter and Greene of the Fifth, grasped him.

Who he was, what he was, and why he was there, nobody understood. But all understood that he was an obstreperous person who had kicked up a shindy in a Greyfriars Form master's study. That was enough.

Harry Wharton & Co. relinquished him to the seniors.

Wingate and Wynne, Potter and Greene, ran him out of the House, at a rapid rate, half-carrying the breathless and exhausted old boy of Greyfriars.

"Oooooooooogh!" gasped Bartholomew Widgers.

That was his only remark as he went. He reached the gates in quick time. He was dumped down in the road outside. His hat and raincoat were tossed after him. Gosling slammed the gates and locked them.

Widgers was left in the rain.

It was a wet, muddy, and breathless Widgers who picked himself up, and, giving up for the present any idea of interviewing his old Form master, trailed away wearily to Courtfield.

Widgers, on the warpath, had lost the first round.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Keeping It Dark!

"TROCIOUS!" gasped Prout. "Extraordinary!" said Mr. Quelch coldly.

Harry Wharton & Co., dusty and dishevelled after their strenuous attentions of Bartholomew Widgers, waited to be dismissed. Billy Bunter had already sidled out of the study.

"Such—such conduct!" gasped Prout. "I cannot fathom the man's motive in coming here and making a scene," said Mr. Quelch, his gimlet-eye on the Fifth Form master. "Perhaps you are acquainted with it, Mr. Prout."

"I prefer not to discuss that—that ruffian, and his possible motives, sir," gasped Prout. "By what right, sir, do you assume that I am acquainted with the man's motives?"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged a grin.

They knew, if Mr. Quelch did not, that Prout was quite acquainted with Bartholomew Widgers' motives in coming to Greyfriars that afternoon.

In the light of their knowledge Prout's words certainly seemed to savour rather of the wisdom of the serpent than of the innocence of the dove.

But Prout, evidently, wished to conceal, if he could, the fact that a former Fifth Form man of Greyfriars had called to thrash him. Charitably, the Famous Five were willing to let him get away with it if he could.

"I assume nothing, sir!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "But this man apparently called to see you—"

"It was your study he entered, sir—I happened to be here," said Prout—

(Continued on page 16.)

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WIGGERS ON THE WAR-PATH!

(Continued from page 13.)

an answer that savoured still more strongly of the wisdom of the serpent.

"Obviously, sir, it was you he desired to see—his words—"

"I decline to take any notice of the words of such a character! I decline to have it assumed that I have any concern with the wretched ruffian."

"As you please, sir," said Mr. Quelch acidly. "At all events, the man is gone now, and I trust we shall see no more of him. As for these boys—"

"These boys—" repeated Prout.

His eyes turned sharply, almost with anguish, on the Famous Five. Certainly he had been glad of their presence when they had handled Wiggers. But how much had they guessed? How much did they know?

Five innocent faces met his eyes blandly.

"So glad we were able to help, sir," said Wharton demurely.

"You were able to help your Form master," said Mr. Prout. "That atrocious ruffian treated your Form master with disrespect, and you very properly interfered." He turned to Mr. Quelch. "Possibly, Quelch, the man retains some vindictive recollection of—of the time when he was a Remove boy, in your hands—"

The chums of the Remove fairly blinked. Hitherto they had regarded Prout as an old donkey. They had never suspected him of being so deep as this. He was actually trying to make out that it was on Henry Samuel Quelch's account that Wiggers had come on the warpath.

Mr. Quelch shrugged his shoulders.

"I am quite indifferent on that point, Mr. Prout," he said. "I hardly think that the man will venture to repeat his visit, at all events. In view of the assistance these boys gave you—"

"You, sir," said Prout. "It was you they assisted—"

"Really, Mr. Prout—"

"Really, Mr. Quelch!"

"In view of the assistance they gave, at all events," said Mr. Quelch tartly, "I think that the incidents of which you complained may very well be overlooked. My boys, you may go."

"Thank you, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

And the Famous Five went. Mr. Prout lingered.

He believed, he hoped, that he was done with Wiggers! Surely what had happened would not encourage that disagreeable person to call again. The wretched fellow had happened to be in Courtfield that afternoon—no doubt on the morrow he would be gone.

He was done with Wiggers! All that remained was to keep Wiggers dark—to hide the awful fact that an old boy of Greyfriars had called to thrash his old Form master.

The juniors, Prout could see, suspected nothing. He was not so sure about

Quelch. Quelch was uncomfortably keen.

"I trust, Quelch, that you have no idea that that—that person's call had any special reference to me," said Mr. Prout. "I trust you do not think—"

"My thoughts are my own, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

Prout breathed hard.

"If any such thought is in your mind, sir, I trust I may rely upon your discretion—upon hearing no unthinking discussion in Common-room—"

"I trust that I am not a man to tattle in Common-room, sir," answered Mr. Quelch acidly. "So far as I am concerned, the matter is dismissed from my mind."

And with that Mr. Prout had to be content.

He left the study.

After all, Quelch was not a man to tattle. Whatever he thought he was not the man to spread it all over Common-room; he was not, in fact, a man like Prout.

Prout, satisfied now, took his way to his study. Wiggers was gone—Wiggers was done with—nothing more would be heard of Wiggers; and Greyfriars would never know that a former member of Mr. Prout's Form had come back to Greyfriars to whop Prout.

Probably—very probably—Mr. Prout would have felt less satisfied had his footsteps taken him to the Rag instead of to his study.

Harry Wharton & Co. arrived in the Rag, to find a hilarious crowd gathered in that apartment.

Billy Bunter was the centre of the crowd.

Bunter was talking.

Every fellow at Greyfriars was excited and curious about what had happened in Quelch's study. Some sort of a hooligan had butted in and kicked up a shindy—that was all the fellows knew—though there was a rumour about that the hooligan was an old boy of Greyfriars.

Bunter was enlightening the ignorant—shedding light on the darkness. Bunter was the fellow who knew!

The Famous Five would have said nothing. Prout had irritated them that afternoon; he had locked them out of the Rag, he had called them on the carpet before their Form master. Nevertheless, the Famous Five would have said nothing, taking pity on Prout. Only too well they understood how that lofty gentleman's pompous dignity would suffer from a revelation of the wicked intentions of the unspeakable Wiggers.

But Billy Bunter had no such ideas. Bunter loved to be the retailer of news—especially startling news.

Now he was going strong.

"I say, you fellows, it's true! Wharton knows! I tell you I heard them! That man Wiggers was in Prout's Form, and Prout got him turned out of Greyfriars donkeys' years ago. He said he would come back and thrash Prout—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He came back to-day to thrash Prout—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was just rotten luck that Prout was in Quelch's study, and Quelch interfered. He was going to thrash Prout—"

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

"I say, you fellows, isn't it so?" squeaked Bunter, as he sighted the Famous Five coming in. "Didn't that man Wiggers come here to thrash Prout—"

"Shut up, you fat ass!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Is it true?" asked the Bounder. "Is that what Bunter heard at your keyhole this afternoon?"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Give us the news, you men!" chuckled Skinner. "Is that man Wiggers really an old boy, and did he come back to wallop Prout?"

"Cough it up, Wharton, if you know!" said the Bounder, laughing.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Tell us all about it, old bean," exclaimed Peter Todd.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Better ask Prout, if you want to know," said the captain of the Remove. "Prout's the man who knows."

"Oh, really, Wharton! You know jolly well you know—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Look here, has Bunter got it straight?" demanded Skinner. "Is that man named Wiggers, and is he really a man who used to be in Prout's Form, and did he come back to whip Prout?"

"They jolly well know—" roared Bunter.

"Speak up!" chuckled Herbert Vernon-Smith.

But Harry Wharton & Co. declined to speak up. They strolled out of the Rag again, without satisfying the curiosity of the excited juniors.

But it really did not matter much whether they spoke or not. Billy Bunter was going strong. He had heard the whole story at the keyhole of Study No. 1 that afternoon, and he related it all, and a little over; for a story always grew in the telling, when Billy Bunter told it.

Juniors in the Rag roared over it. It spread to seniors—it was talked of in the Fifth Form games-study; it was whispered in the prefects' room, where the high and mighty Sixth most did congregate.

It reached Masters' Common-room, and gave that apartment a sort of electric shock. Never had Common-room had such a delightful titbit to discuss.

Some of the masters remembered Wiggers as a Greyfriars boy. All were glad to hear of him again. Hacker and Capper and Twigg and most of the staff fairly revelled in this.

Mr. Prout, in his study, was under the happy delusion that Wiggers was being kept dark. The scoundrel would never dare show his face at the school again; nobody knew why he had called, the whole wretched and ignoble affair would pass into oblivion.

That was Prout's view—while from end to end of Greyfriars, in every Form, in every master's study, it was known that Wiggers of the Fifth had come to Greyfriars to thrash Prout.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Sticking to It!

MR. CAPPER, master of the Fourth, tapped at Prout's study door.

He opened it, and glanced around the room.

Prout was sitting at his table, having just finished tea.

Generally, Prout tea'd in Common-room with the staff. On this especial afternoon he had preferred to tea in the seclusion of his own study.

"My dear Prout!" said Capper amiably.

Prout changed an angry glare into a friendly smile as quickly as he could.

He did not want to see Capper. He did not want to see anybody. For the present, he preferred to understudy the flower that blushed unseen. He desired to avoid the public eye, until the painful episode of the afternoon had been forgotten a little. Nobody knew the facts—Prout still believed that nobody knew the facts. But he did not want to join in any discussion of the peculiar incident.

"Pray step in, Capper!" said Prout, with a ghastly assumption of his usual cheery, chatty manner. He was not feeling cheery, or even chatty.

Mr. Capper stepped in. There was a sympathetic expression on Capper's mild face. Many a time had mild Mr. Capper been overborne in Common-room by the overbearing Prout. Many a time had he listened, inwardly writhing, to ponderous advice on the conduct of his Form. Now it was Mr. Capper's turn, and he had come to Prout's study to show sympathy—barbed sympathy.

Perhaps Capper did not realise that he had come there to torment Prout. Perhaps he really felt sympathetic. Perhaps he did not realise that sympathy, on such a subject, was the surest way to make Prout writhe.

Prout, determined to act as if matters were normal, as if he was not at all disturbed, waved Capper to the armchair.

Capper sat down in the armchair. It was the first time that armchair had been sat in since Harry Wharton had attended to it earlier in the afternoon.

Prout had walked about the study till his tea was brought in, then he had sat down to tea at the table. He had not even glanced at the armchair. He was quite unaware of the gum.

So was Capper! Mr. Capper sat down comfortably in the deep, easy-chair. His scholastic gown immediately began to soak up gum. Capper, for the present, remained happily unconscious of it.

Prout turned his chair round from the table, and faced Capper. With an effort to drive troublesome reflections from his mind he proceeded to chat.

He began on the weather. Capper switched the subject off to the strange episode in Quelch's study. Prout switched it back to the weather. Capper asked him if he had any clear recollection of a boy named Widgers who had once been in his Form. Prout answered that he had a very indistinct recollection of such a boy, and turned the subject to old boys in general.

For quite a long time the two masters attacked and parried, as it were, Capper continually bringing in Widgers, and Prout as continually dismissing the topic of Widgers.

If Capper had had any doubt of the truth of the story that was now buzzing through the school, and being excitedly discussed in Common-room, Prout's evident distaste for the subject of Widgers would have banished that doubt.

Capper was not to be baffled. He had come there to sympathise with Prout, and he was going to sympathise with him.

He came out into the open, as it were, at last, after prolonged fencing.

"A shocking occurrence, Prout," he said, shaking his head.

"Very unpleasant indeed for Mr. Quelch," said Prout, still parrying. "The fellow actually raised his hand to him. Had not some boys of his Form been present, I really think Quelch would have been roughly handled."

"I remember the boy Widgers when he was in my Form—"

"No doubt. Fortunately, such old boys of Greyfriars are rare. Speaking of old boys, I met, during the last vacation—"

"Very rare, indeed," said Capper. "An old boy nursing a grudge against a Form master—"

Prout's heart stood almost still. "You refer to Mr. Quelch?" he asked faintly.

"Not at all! It seems that this man Widgers called to see you, my dear Prout. And his intentions—"

Prout knew now that Capper knew. "His intentions," pursued Capper, "I can only characterise as utterly indefensible. The mere suggestion of inflicting chastisement upon a former master at his school—"

Prout suppressed a groan. "The man is absolutely outside the pale," said Mr. Capper. "I remember that, when he left, years ago, there was some talk of certain wild words he had uttered—no doubt you remember, Prout—"

"I remember nothing of the kind!" gasped Prout.

"No doubt you dismissed the matter from your mind, as unworthy of attention, as indeed it was," said Capper. "A threat to return to the school at a later date to chastise a Form master—"

"Mr. Capper!" "Such words were absolutely inexcusable," said Capper. "Believe me, Prout, I sympathise deeply in this unfortunate, this distressing state of affairs. That an old boy of Greyfriars should actually come to the school to carry out such an intention—"

"I see no reason why you should suppose—"

"It is painful, indeed, humiliating," said Mr. Capper sadly. "It places you in a very unhappy position, my dear fellow."

Prout gasped. Capper was almost openly gloating now. "Nothing of the kind!" gasped Prout. "If—if you have heard any ridiculous rumour of this kind, Capper, I advise you to dismiss such absurd nonsense from your mind."

"Then the story is unfounded?" exclaimed Mr. Capper heartily. "I am delighted to hear it. With your authority, Prout, I will immediately contradict it in Common-room."

"If—if Quelch says—" gasped Prout.

"I have heard nothing from Quelch. The story appears to be over the whole school. The staff have all heard it."

"Oh!" "The boys are discussing it—"

"Oh!" "It appears to be the single topic at Greyfriars at present," said Mr. Capper agreeably. "I hear it at every corner. As I came here a number of juniors were saying—"

"Oh!" "That Widgers had come back to whop Prout," said Mr. Capper inexorably. "That was the expression used—to whop Prout!"

Prout suppressed another groan. "Some Fifth Form boys were laughing—" continued Mr. Capper.

"L-l-laughing!" gurgled Prout. "Although far from desiring to intervene in another man's Form, Prout, I took it upon myself to chide them," said Capper. "I pointed out to them that it was by no means a laughing matter that a boy formerly in the Fifth Form should have come here with the express intention of whopping, as they called it, his old Form master—"

Prout jumped up. There was a limit to human endurance, and he could stand no more of Capper's sympathy.

"I am rather busy, Capper; I must ask you to excuse me—" gasped Prout. "Another time—"

"Certainly!" said Capper. "The fact is I only called in to express my sympathy—my deep sympathy—"

He rose from the armchair. At all events, he started to rise. But as he had now been seated in the gum nearly an hour, that adhesive substance had had plenty of time to attach itself affectionately to his gown.

Capper half-rose and sat down again quite suddenly.

"Why, what—what?" he ejaculated. It seemed to the amazed Fourth Form master that an unseen hand had plucked him back as he tried to rise from the armchair.

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Capper. "What—what—"

He half rose again. Mr. Prout stared at him. Capper, half-up, plumped back again, with an expression of utter bewilderment on his face.

"What is the matter?" snapped Prout.

"I—I hardly know. I—I appear to be—to be adhering to the—the seat of the chair!" stuttered Capper. "Was—was there anything of a sticky—of an adhesive nature in this chair, Prout?"

"Absurd!" Up came Capper again with a jerk. This time he escaped from the sticky embrace of the armchair. But the tail of his gown still adhered, and the chair rolled along on its castors after Mr. Capper.

Mr. Capper jumped almost clear of the floor. He had sat in many armchairs in his time, but he had never known one to pursue him like this when he rose from it.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Capper. "What—what—what—" He stared round with bewildered eyes at the chair trundling behind him.

Prout stared at him. At that moment Mr. Capper bore an absurd resemblance to a dog chasing its tail.

"Really, Capper!" exclaimed the Fifth Form master. "I am sticking to your chair, Prout!" shrieked Capper.

(Continued on next page.)



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"Nonsense!"

"Look for yourself!" howled Capper.

"Absurd!"

Mr. Capper gave a terrific wrench, and the gown came away at last. It parted from the gummy seat of the chair with a snap.

"Upon my word!" gasped Capper.

"This conduct, Prout—"

"Conduct! What conduct?" hooted Prout.

"Such a foolish prank—"

"What, what!"

"Had I not been the victim of this trick I could never have believed a member of Dr. Locke's staff capable of such—such childish foolery!" hooted Capper.

And in great indignation Capper whisked out of the study, holding the gummy tail of his gown in his hand.

Prout stared after him. He stared into the armchair. He detected the remains of the gum—most of which had been soaked up by Capper's gown.

"Bless my soul!" said Prout.

He grinned.

Some person or persons unknown evidently had played this trick for Prout's benefit. Capper, in his sympathetic visit, had got the benefit instead of Prout. Perhaps Prout considered that this was what Capper deserved for his sympathy; for, instead of being shocked and pained as he ought to have been, he grinned.

Mr. Capper did not grin. Capper was bristling with indignation when he got back to Common-room.

There he displayed the gummy tail of his gown to the shocked and surprised members of the staff.

"Can you believe it?" gasped Capper.

"Such a trick—such a childish prank! Unworthy even of a thoughtless boy in the Third Form!"

"Amazing!" said Mr. Wiggins.

"Extraordinary!" said Mr. Twigg.

"Prout must be very much annoyed," said Mr. Hacker. "He is placed in a very painful position—a very humiliating position! I am not surprised that he is annoyed. But a prank like this is—"

And the masters shook their heads over it with the solemnity of a gathering of owls. Such a prank on the part of a senior Form master of a school like Greyfriars was indeed amazing and extraordinary.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Too Much Widders!

"WIDDERS!"

That name caught Mr. Prout's ear as he came along to his Form-room the following morning.

Coker of the Fifth, standing with other Fifth Form men at the Form-room door waiting for Prout, uttered the name.

Some of the seniors laughed.

Prout's face was not good-tempered that morning. Somehow the true story of Widders was known all over the school.

It really was Prout's own fault. Had he not butted in the previous day and locked the Famous Five out of the Rag, Harry Wharton certainly never would have visited his study with a bottle of gum. Had not Wharton been cornered in the study on his gumming expedition he never would have heard that talk on the telephone, which certainly he had not wanted to hear. Had he not heard it he never could have told it to his friends in Study No. 1 as a screaming joke. Had he not told it to his friends Billy Bunter never could have spread

it all over Greyfriars after deriving knowledge of it through the keyhole. It was a most unfortunate sequence of events, but there was no doubt that Prout had started it by butting in that rainy afternoon where he had no business.

But whoever's fault it was, the damage was done. All Greyfriars buzzed with the name of Widders; it had even reached the headmaster. From Dr. Locke down to the smallest and inkiest fag in the Second Form all Greyfriars knew about Widders, once of the Fifth, who had carried out his threat to come back to the school and whop Prout.

He had not whopped Prout. That awful culmination had been avoided. But he had come back intending to do it.

Greyfriars was not likely soon to forget Widders, once of the Fifth!

Mr. Prout, who was fond of classical tags, no doubt murmured "Horresco referens" when he thought of Widders. But most of Greyfriars looked on the unspeakable Widders as a joke, a merry jest, a real shriek.

Coker of the Fifth was grinning as he mentioned the name. The Fifth-Formers laughed as it was uttered.

Prout frowned portentously.

"Widders—" repeated Coker.

"Widders, from what I hear—"

"Ware beaks!" murmured Potter of the Fifth, spotting Mr. Prout coming up the passage like a thundercloud.

And Coker was silent, and the smiles faded from the faces of the Fifth. Prout's expression told that it was no time for smiling.

Prout, affecting to have heard nothing, opened the Form-room door and let in his Form. The Fifth took their places with great gravity.

Coker had Prout's special attention that morning.

Prout, of course, could not punish Coker for having uttered a name that was on every lip at Greyfriars. But he could punish him for being slack and stupid and argumentative. And he did.

That morning with Prout almost turned Horace Coker's hair grey.

Other fellows came in for the acid edge of Prout's tongue. Nobody in the Fifth had a pleasant morning. Indeed, Prout seemed determined to make the present Fifth feel as Widders in the past had felt towards his Form master. Prout, usually genial and pompous, was angry and irritable and suspicious. The slightest smile was enough to get his rag out; he concluded at once that if a fellow smiled that fellow was thinking of Widders. It was not a happy morning in the Fifth Form room.

"My hat!" said Coker, with a deep breath, when the Fifth were dismissed at last. "My hat! I wish Widders had got away with it yesterday!"

"What-ho!" murmured Greene.

"If Prout keeps on like this," said Coker, "there's somebody in the Fifth who will whop him without waiting to become an old boy!"

Which dark threat expressed Coker's feelings, though not perhaps his serious intentions.

At dinner Mr. Prout sat with a face as expressionless as he could make it, affecting not to notice that eyes were turned on him from every table in Hall.

Even from the high table where the Sixth Form prefects sat; glances turned on Prout, and he was aware that Loder of the Sixth whispered to Walker, and that Walker whispered to Carne, and that all three grinned.

Billy Bunter, at the Remove table, turned his spectacles continually on the Fifth Form master, grinning.

Mr. Prout was well aware of it, and of many other disagreeable incidents.

"I say, you fellows," murmured Bunter, "old Prout looks awfully sick."

"Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter, blinking round at his Form master at the head of the Remove table. "I—I didn't speak, sir."

"Take a hundred lines, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, really, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I didn't speak, sir! I never even opened my lips! I only said that Prout was looking sick, sir."

"Take two hundred lines, Bunter."

"Oh lor'!"

After which Billy Bunter ceased to grin.

Mr. Prout left Hall as soon as he could. He did not approach Common-room. He did not stop any other master for a chat. He did not seek to inveigle any other member of the staff into his study for a pleasant talk. Prout, for the present, was abandoning all his usual manners and customs.

He walked in the quad and selected a quiet walk under the elms where he was secluded from the public gaze.

Prout had always filled a rather prominent place in the public eye at Greyfriars, though not perhaps so prominent as he had supposed. He had always liked it. Now, however, he seemed to be cultivating a coy retirement. The spotlight, for once, was not what he wanted.

He wanted to avoid smiling glances and the bitter sympathy of his colleagues. He wanted Widders to be forgotten.

The man himself was gone. That was so much to the good.

Dr. Locke, greatly scandalised by the proceedings of Widders, had got in touch with the Courtfield police station that morning, prepared to take any necessary measures to prevent a repetition of Widders' visit to the school.

The direst penalties of the law were to fall upon Bartholomew Widders if he ventured to repeat his performance.

But the Head learned, greatly to his relief, from Inspector Grimes, that a gentleman of the name of B. Widders, who had stayed for a day at the Courtfield Hotel, had left overnight.

He had gone, without waiting to be warned off by the police, or to incur the dire penalties of the law.

Prout fervently hoped that he was gone for good. He fervently hoped that his visit would soon be forgotten. Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

"Widders!"

The name suddenly caught Mr. Prout's ear as he paced gloomily under the elms.

He spun round.

Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth were strolling under the trees, idly kicking away fallen leaves and chatting. The name that reached Mr. Prout's ear revealed the subject of their chat.

The glare that Prout bestowed on the Fourth-Formers caused Temple & Co. to cease their chat and depart hastily from the spot. But from a distance, as they went, Prout heard the sound of a laugh.

Breathing hard and deep, Prout walked away towards the House.

He passed Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth, and noted that they were smiling. He passed them like a thundercloud.

Near the steps of the House two Remove fellows were standing. They were Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry.

They had their backs to Prout, and did not see him coming. So naturally he heard what they were saying as he came along.

"Poor old Prout!" was Bob Cherry's remark.

"It's rather a shame!" said Harry. "I hear that he's given the Fifth a high old time in Form this morning."

"I fancy he's made them feel like a whole crowd of Widgers!" Bob chuckled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Prout crimsoned with wrath.

This was the way these disrespectful young rascals talked of him, and that offensive, former member of his Form!

Prout's wrath boiled over.

He made a stride at the two juniors and grabbed them by their collars. Wharton and Bob Cherry spun round in startled amazement.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob.

"Ow! Leggo!" ejaculated Wharton.

"What—"

Bang!

Two youthful heads came together with a loud concussion.

Two simultaneous yells rang across the quadrangle.

"Yooooop!"

"Yaroooh!"

Apparently finding solace in it, Prout banged their heads again.

Bang!

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter, blinking out of the doorway through his big spectacles. "I say, you fellows, look! He, he, he!"

"Leggo!" roared Bob Cherry, furiously struggling in Prout's grasp. "Leggo, will you? 'Tain't my fault Widgers came here to whop you."

Smack!

Prout let go; but he smacked Bob's head with a mighty smack. Bob Cherry sat down in the quad.

"Ooooooooh!" he gasped.

Prout swept into the House.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wharton.

Bob Cherry staggered to his feet. His face was crimson, his eyes gleaming. He made a rush towards the steps, and Wharton caught his arm in time.

"Hold on, old chap—"

"Think I'm going to have my head smacked?" bellowed Bob.

"Hold on!"

The other members of the Co. came running up, and Bob was restrained by main force. Prout was hopelessly in the wrong: but obviously it was not judicious for a Lower Fourth man to go after the master of the Fifth and tell him what he thought of him.

Bob, fuming with wrath, was led away, gently but firmly, by his chums.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

"Six" for Six!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"You fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You pernicious porpoise!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Bag him!" growled Johnny Bull.



Widger's reply to Gosling was to shove him, and the old school porter staggered and sat down. Splash! In such a downfall of rain there were bound to be puddles, and Gosling sat in one of them! "Ooooooh! Groooogh!" he gurgled.

Billy Bunter jumped back in alarm.

It was after class that day, and the Famous Five of the Remove were looking for William George Bunter.

They found him—or, rather, he found them—under the elms. Billy Bunter had been disappointed about a postal order—not for the first time in his life—and he was looking for the chums of the Remove in the hope of raising a little loan. But Bunter did not raise the loan—he was not even able to raise the subject.

"Here, no larks!" exclaimed Bunter, eyeing the chums of the Remove warily through his big spectacles. "I say—"

"You've said too much already, you fat sweep!" said Wharton. "Now you're going to get toco. Got the fives bat, Bob?"

"Here you are!"

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were feeling sore, literally as well as figuratively.

Their heads had been banged together, and Bob's had been smacked in addition. That sort of thing was not to be tolerated by the heroes of the Remove, and they were strongly tempted to "rag" Prout in retaliation.

But ragging a Form master was not an easy business, and, after discussion, the chums of the Remove agreed that it was really Bunter's fault that Prout was going about like a bear with a sore head. But for Bunter's prying and spying, and tattling and babbling, the name of Widgers would not have been echoing in every corner of the school, and Prout would not have been smacking fellows' heads.

It was Bunter who had caused all the mischief, and the chums of the

Remove agreed that it was time that Bunter had a lesson about his keyhole methods of acquiring information that did not concern him. And they agreed that the required lesson could not be conveyed better than by a vigorous application of a fives bat to his tight trousers.

Billy Bunter, quite unconscious of that need of a lesson, had no desire whatever to receive it.

He made another backward jump.

"I say, you fellows, wharrer you getting your rag out for?" he demanded. "If this is what you call gratitude after I shaved all your wives—I mean saved all your lives on that trip to Africa—"

"You fat sweep, you've got the fat into the fire by your prying and tattling," said the captain of the Remove. "Bend over and take what you've asked for!"

"Why you—you beast!" Bunter made another kangaroo-like hop. "I say, keep off! 'Tain't my fault Prout smacked your heads! You shouldn't stand it! I wouldn't!"

"Collar him!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Beast!"

"The whackfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed, disgusting Bunter," said Hurrce Janset Ram Singh. "The spyfulness and the jawfulness are too terrific!"

"After him!" yelled Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter turned and fled.

It was not often that William George Bunter moved rapidly. But with five wrathful juniors and a fives bat behind him, Bunter could put on speed.

He went down the path under the elms like a charging rhinoceros.

After him whooped the Famous Five.

"Stop, you fat villain!"

"Stop, you benighted porpoise!"

"Collar him!"

"Ow! Wow! Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, and he redoubled his efforts as the pursuing footsteps drew closer behind him.

It was sheer ill-luck that Mr. Prout, once more seeking solitude, turned into the path under the old elms at that moment.

He met Bunter in full career.

Crash!

Bunter was going too fast to stop. Prout did not see him till he crashed.

The fattest fellow at Greyfriars landed with a terrific concussion on the best-filled waistcoat on the staff.

"Good gad!" gurgled Prout.

He staggered back gasping, and sat down.

Billy Bunter sat down simultaneously.

The Famous Five, racing on behind, were close on Bunter. Unfortunately they were too close and going too fast to stop in time. They strewed themselves over Bunter and over Mr. Prout.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!"

"Yaroooh! Gerroff! Help! Yooop! You're squish-squish-squashing me! Yarooooooop!" yelled Bunter.

"Boys!" thundered Prout. "Boys! How dare you?"

Harry Wharton & Co. scrambled up.

Prout glared at them with a deadly eye. Already those cheery youths had incurred his wrath, and since the visit of Bartholomew Widders, Prout's wrath was always on the boil. It boiled over.

"Ow! Keep them off!" yelled Bunter. "I won't be battered! I say, keep them off! Help!"

"How dare you!" thundered Prout. "Groogh! Good gad! Ooooooooh!"

"It was quite an accident, sir!" gasped Wharton.

"You may explain that to your Form master! I shall take you to Mr. Quelch at once! Come with me!" thundered Prout.

"Oh crumbs!"

Billy Bunter sat and gasped.

With a thunderous brow, Mr. Prout picked up his portly person from the earth.

"Follow me!" he gurgled.

"It really was an accident, sir!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Follow me! Bunter, get up at once and follow me!" boomed Prout.

"Oh crikey! I—I can't! I—I can't move, sir!" gasped Bunter. "My neck's broken—"

"What?"

"I—I mean my leg—yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as Prout, affixing a finger and thumb to a fat ear, assisted him to rise. Bunter found that he could get up, and quite quickly.

Six hapless juniors trailed after Prout to the House. They trailed after him to Mr. Quelch's study.

Mr. Quelch, busy correcting papers for his Form, looked up with scarce-suppressed irritation as Mr. Prout presented himself with his flock.

"What—" began the Remove master.

Prout waved a plump hand at the dismayed delinquents.

"These boys, sir—these boys of your Form—these young ruffians—"

"Really, Mr Prout—"

"I repeat it, sir—these young ruffians!" boomed Prout. "I have been knocked over—charged over—"

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hurled to the earth, sir—deliberately—maliciously, sir—"

"It was an accident!" gasped Wharton.

"A terrific and lamentable accident, esteemed sir!"

"We couldn't help—"

"We never saw—"

"How dare you tell these palpable untruths?" boomed Prout.

Prout, in a more reasonable mood, would doubtless have realised that the whole hapless affair was an accident, that six Remove fellows really would not have charged over a Form master and sprawled on him if they could have helped it. But Prout was not in a reasonable mood. Prout was in a state of irritated nerves, caused by Widders, and the hapless juniors had to suffer for the sins of Widders.

Prout fairly boomed with wrath.

"Mr. Quelch! I refuse to listen to the prevarications of these impudent juniors! I—"

"We're not prevaricating!" hooted Johnny Bull. "It was an accident, and you jolly well know it was!"

Prout gurgled.

"Bull! Be silent!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. He rose, and picked up his cane. "If this occurrence was an accident, it was such an accident as should not be allowed to occur. I shall cane you all severely!"

"I—I say, sir, it—it wasn't me!" gasped Bunter. "Those beasts were after me with a fives bat when I bunged into Prout's bread-basket—"

"What? What? What expressions are these? Bunter, bend over that chair at once!"

"Oh lor'!"

What followed was painful—very painful!

Six juniors "bent over," one after another. Six whacks descended upon each in turn. And when the infliction was over, six hapless victims trailed drearily away from Mr. Quelch's study, feeling that life—for the present, at least—was hardly worth living.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Brainwave!

WHAT about Widders?"

"Oh, rot! Wow!"

"Wow! Wow!"

Bob Cherry asked the question, but only sounds of woe answered him. The Famous Five were in Study No. 1, whither they had retired to recuperate, at it were.

Bob was the first to show signs of recovery. It had been a severe "six." Mr. Quelch had not run the risk of spoiling the Removites by sparing the rod. He had, in fact, laid it on not wisely but too well. Five juniors wriggled with anguish, and breathed wrath.

Their wrath was not directed against Quelch. Quelch really had had no choice in the matter. Prout was the offender. And the Famous Five, just then, were feeling that a proper punishment for Prout would have been something lingering, with boiling oil in it.

"But what about Widders?" repeated Bob.

"Oh, bother Widders!" groaned Nugent. "It's Widders who has turned old Prout into a ferocious old cannibal! Oh! Ow! Wow!"

"I jolly well wish Widders would blow in again!" mumbled Johnny Bull. "We jolly well wouldn't stop him next time!"

"Wouldn't I like to see him whopping Prout!" sighed Nugent.

"Wouldn't I just!" said Harry Wharton.

"The likefulness would be terrific!" groaned Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"That's what I was thinking," said Bob.

"Oh, rot! Widders is gone!" growled Johnny Bull. "He doesn't want to be mopped up and chucked out again, bother him! I wish he'd come back and whop Prout! But he won't!"

"But I think—"

"Oh, rot! Ow!"

"Wow, wow!"

"Give a chap a chance to speak!" urged Bob. "It's a jape, old beans!"

"Oh, who wants japes now? Ow!"

"A jape on Prout—"

"Well, give it a name!" said Harry, slightly interested at last. Anything up against Prout was of interest to the suffering juniors.

"We're not standing this," said Bob.

"We stood by old Prout when his precious old boy was here—and he thanks us by banging our heads together, and smacking a fellow's napper, and getting us licked! He jolly well knew it was an accident, bowling him over under the elms, and he made out that we were telling crammers! We're not sitting down quietly under this!"

"Ow! Wow!" groaned Johnny Bull.

"I'm not, anyhow! I don't want to sit down again for a week!"

"The sit-downfulness is preposterously painful!" mumbled Hurree Singh.

"Well, we're going to make Prout sit up!" said Bob determinedly. "He's got to have it!"

"How, fathead? Are you suggesting calling on him, and giving him six, same as Quelch gave us?" demanded Johnny Bull, with crushing sarcasm.

Bob Cherry nodded.

"Yes," he answered.

"Eh?"

"What?"

Bob Cherry's chums stared at him blankly.

"Gone off your rocker?" asked Wharton.

"I tell you it's a jape, fathead!"

"Well, if giving a senior Form master six is a jape, you can call it off, you ass! We're not going to ask the Head for the sack."

"The sackfulness would be terrific!"

"Not if Prout thought it was Widders!" said Bob.

"Eh?"

"I've been thinking it out while you fellows have been moaning and groaning!" explained Bob.

"Oh, don't be an ass! What do you mean?"

"If you mean anything!" added Nugent. "Ow! Wow!"

"Hacker's gone out," said Bob.

"Blow Hacker!"

"I mean, as he's gone out, we can use his telephone—"

"Blow his telephone!"

"And talk to Prout—"

"Blow Prout!"

"And tell him—"

"Rats!"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Well, I'm going to talk to Prout," he said. "You fellows can go on groaning while I'm gone."

And Bob opened the door of Study No. 1.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Wharton, in alarm.

"Follow on, old beans," answered Bob.

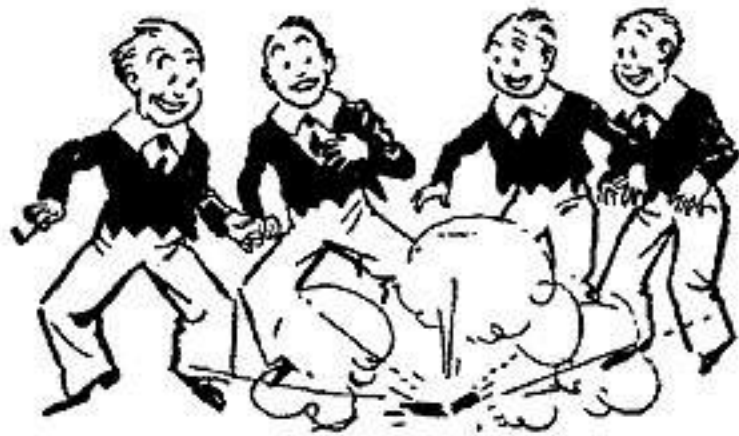
"It will do you good to hear me talk to Prout on the phone."

"But, look here—"

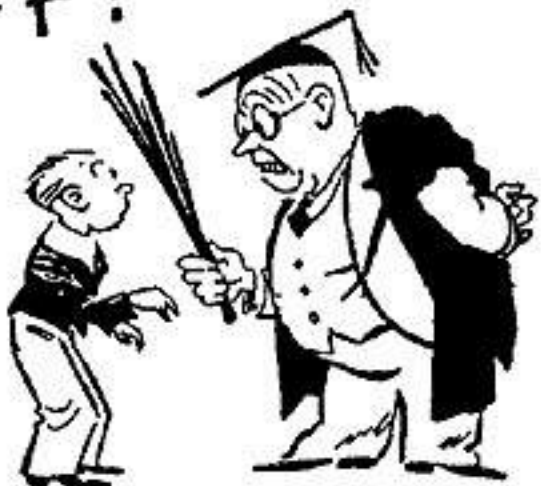
But Bob Cherry did not "look there." He walked down the Remove passage to

(Continued on page 22.)

A GOOD "LET OFF"!



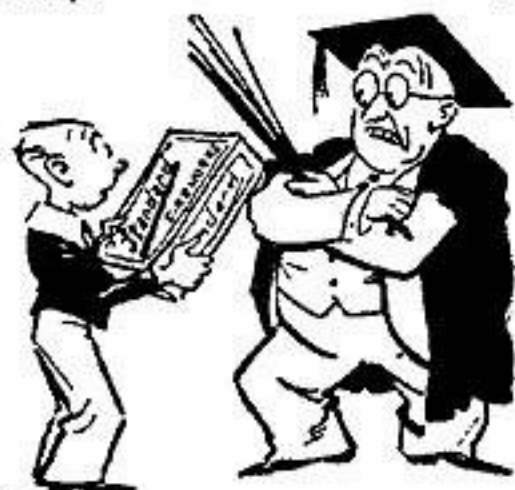
YOUTH WILL HAVE ITS FLING!



"AND NOW, SIR, WHAT HAVE YOU TO SAY?"



... ER, BY THE WAY, HAVE YOU ANY MORE FIREWORKS?"



"Y-Y-YES, SIR, A WHOLE BOXFUL, BUT —"



"P-P. PLEASE SIR, DON'T TAKE THEM AWAY, THEY'RE STANDARD FIREWORKS!"



H'M, STANDARD ARE THEY? A DISCRIMINATING YOUTH!"



WELL, SMITH MINOR, WHILE I STRONGLY OBJECT TO FIREWORKS BEHIND MY BACK —



-I THOROUGHLY ENJOY, AH, PARTICIPATING IN PYROTECHNIC DISPLAYS UNDER PROPER CONDITIONS AND —



AS THEY'RE STANDARD FIREWORKS YOU ARE DISCHARGED AND I DON'T MIND JOINING YOUR PARTY MYSELF ON THE NIGHT OF THE HISTORIC 5TH"

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SOLD EVERYWHERE

STANDARD FIREWORKS LIMITED. HUDDERSFIELD

WIDGERS ON THE WARPATH!

(Continued from page 20.)

the stairs, and the Co., rather alarmed, followed him.

"Look here, Bob—" called out Nugent.

"Follow on!" called back Bob cheerily. And as there was evidently nothing to be done but to follow on, the Co. followed.

As Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, was gone out, it was not difficult to dodge into his study. Bob Cherry crossed to the telephone, and Wharton hastily shut the study door.

"Bob, old man—" he urged.

"Lend me your jolly old ears!" answered Bob.

He took the receiver from the hooks and asked the exchange for Mr. Prout's number.

The Co. exchanged rather hopeless glances. Bob Cherry, evidently, had taken the bit between his teeth, and it was useless to argue. They only wondered what was going to happen next.

"Hallo!" Bob Cherry spoke into the transmitter in a deep, husky voice, which sounded as if he had a bad cold.

"Hallo! Is that Prout?"

"Speaking!" came the fruity voice of the master of the Fifth.

"Here we are again, Pompey!"

"What?"

"Forgotten Widgers, old fat bean?"

"Widgers?"

"W-I-D-G-E-R-S—Widgers!" spelt out Bob. "Have you forgotten, then, so soon, my podgy old tulip?"

"Rascal!" Prout's voice, booming from the telephone, was audible to all the juniors in Hacker's study. "Ruffian! I do not recognise your voice, but I recognise your impudence! Rogue!"

"You talk too much, Pompey! Give a fellow a chance to speak!" barked Bob into the transmitter.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wharton.

The Co. gazed on, almost speechless, while Bob talked to Mr. Prout, a few studies away.

Had Prout guessed how near his interlocutor was, certainly he would not have remained in his own quarters. He would have come along the passage at about 70 m.p.h., with his heftiest cane in his hand. But Prout did not guess. He had no doubt that it was the unspeakable Widgers again, speaking from afar.

"Wretch!" gurgled Prout. "Ruffian! Then you have not departed, as I was informed! You dare—"

"Can it, Pompey!"

"The police shall be instructed to take you into custody!" boomed Prout. "Far be it from me to desire to bring such disgrace upon the name of Greyfriars; but you leave me no choice, you—you ruffian! You shall be taken into custody, sir!"

"Bow-wow! I'm coming to see you, Pompey—"

"Dare to present yourself at this school, sir, and you shall be handed over to the police on the spot!" boomed Prout.

"Expect me this evening, Pompey!"

"Upon my word! I—I—I—" Words seemed to fail Prout.

"I'm going to give you six—"

"Wretch!"

"The best thing you can do is to stuff some exercise-books into your bags before I call—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Co. That advice, given to a senior Form master, was too much for their gravity.

There was a whir on the line. Mr. Prout had rung off suddenly. He

seemed to have had enough of the cheery and genial conversation of the supposed Widgers.

"Dear man!" said Bob. "He seems waxy! Did he strike you men as waxy?"

"Ha, ha! Just a few!"

"The waxfulness was terrific!"

"I'll ring him up again—I haven't finished! I haven't said anything about his features yet."

"You ass, chuck it!" gasped Wharton. "If Hacker should come in—"

"I haven't finished—"

"You jolly well have!" chuckled Johnny Bull. And the Co. grasped Bob Cherry and dragged him away from the telephone.

Mr. Prout, in his study, paced to and fro, like a lion in a cage haunted by the thought of Widgers. In Study No. 1 in the Remove, five young rascals were

HEARD THIS JOKE, CHUMS?



Mrs. Brown (complainingly): "I've got an 'arrible 'eadache, dear."

Mrs. White: "Um! What you want is a couple of aspirates!"

R. Hooton, of 1, Laurie Avenue, Forest Fields, Nottingham, who sent in the above winning joke, carries off one of our

USEFUL POCKET KNIVES!

chuckling. They still felt severe twinges from the "six," but they were undoubtedly feeling much better now.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER!

Done in the Dark!

"H E'S asked for it—"

"I know. But—"

"Man ought to get what he asks for—"

"Yes, but—"

"The butfulness is terrific, my esteemed, idiotic Bob!"

"Rats!"

Bob Cherry was adamant.

Bob was not the man to bear a grudge. Seldom indeed did he let the sun go down upon his wrath. But now Bob Cherry's back was up, and he was not to be argued with.

The cup of Prout's offences was full to overflowing. There was a limit; and Prout was the limit.

Possibly, too, the tremendous jape of "whopping" a Form master appealed to Robert Cherry's exuberant sense of humour.

Prout, he declared, had asked for it. No doubt he had. The Co. agreed that Prout had indeed begged for it, like a

dog sitting up and begging for biscuits. But they tried to point out that you couldn't give a Form master what he asked for and even begged for. You really couldn't!

Bob was persuaded that he could. And all the eloquence of his comrades failed to dissuade him.

"It's the sack if it comes out!" said Nugent, almost tearful in his earnestness.

"It won't come out!" assured Bob.

"But—" groaned Wharton.

"Rats! Prout's gone out of the House," said Bob. "I've watched him. He daren't show his nose in Common-room these days; he gets too much Widgers from his dear friends there. He's taking a walk all by himself in the quad, and it's as dark as the inside of a hat. We bag him—"

"Oh dear!"

"And whop him—"

"Oh scissors!"

"And he thinks it's Widgers all the time—"

"Does he?" objected Johnny Bull.

"Of course he does, after he was told on the phone to expect to see Widgers this evening!"

"But look here—" implored Wharton

"I jolly well believe that's why he's gone trotting in the quad," said Bob. "He's afraid Widgers may butt in and find him in his study."

"I shouldn't wonder. But—"

"Widgers seems to be giving him a miss. I mean, Widgers the First. Prout is going to meet Widgers the Second!"

"You frightful ass, if we all collar him, will he think that there are four or five Widgerses—"

"He will think Widgers has brought a friend or two to help. Bound to!"

"But I tell you—"

"Nuff said! If you fellows ain't game, I'll ask Smithy; he would back me up like a shot!"

"Never mind Smithy! I dare say Smithy would be ass enough! But—"

"Well, are you game?" demanded Bob.

"The gamefulness is terrific, my esteemed Bob, but the butfulness is even more preposterous!"

"You can't do it, old chap!" said Wharton. "Prout's an exasperating old ass, and he's given us a high old time, but you can't do it. It's not the thing."

"Too thick!" said Nugent.

"Is that the lot?" asked Bob, unmoved. "You can talk till you're all as black in the face as old Inky, but I'm going to whop Prout all the same, and Prout's going to think it was Widgers."

"My esteemed idiotic Bob—"

"Well, I'm going," said Bob. "I've sneaked Loder's ashplant from his study, and I'm going to pass it on to Prout. Are you men coming, or shall I ask the Bounder to lend a hand?"

"If you're going to make a crass ass of yourself, we'll make crass asses of ourselves, too, fathead!" said Harry. "But—"

"You butt like a billy-goat! Come on."

"It's past lock-up, ass, how are we going to get out? Think we shan't be spotted if we walk out of the House after lock-up?"

"We can get out of the Fourth Form window. Old Capper always leaves his Form-room unlocked."

"Yes; but—"

"Look here, are you coming?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Oh, we'll come!" said Harry.

Bob Cherry's mind was made up. He

was past argument. And with many misgivings his friends gave in.

Prep was on in the Remove studies. It was rather a serious matter to cut prep and cut House bounds after lock-up. But that was a slight matter in comparison with what was to follow.

Whopping Prout was quite a fascinating idea to all the fellows who had so recently been whopped. But the mere thought of carrying out such a stunt was unnerving.

Yet, as Bob pointed out, there was every chance of "getting away with it."

Prout, in his new love of solitude, was taking a solitary walk under the dark elms. He was under the impression that Bartholomew Widgers intended to attempt to interview him again that evening. If he was collared and whopped, was he not certain to jump to the conclusion that Widgers was the whopper?

After administering that well-deserved whopping, the Famous Five would scud off in the deep shadows, return to the House as they had left it, and would be sedately sitting at prep in their studies when the storm burst. It was, Bob declared, safe as houses.

In calmer moments Bob would doubtless have realised, what Wharton tried to point out to him, that "whopping" a master was bad form—outside the radius—a thing that wasn't done. Whatever a master's faults and failings, that was a thing that no fellow could do.

Later, no doubt, Bob would realise that. Unfortunately, for the present, he had dismissed all such considerations from his mind.

Dissuasion having failed, his comrades had the choice of backing him up, or letting him go ahead on his own. On that point they were not long in deciding. "Sink or swim together" was the motto of the famous Co.

The matter having been settled, the amazing stunt decided on, it only remained to carry it out.

During prep a prefect was on duty, who was supposed to see that the juniors did not leave their studies without good reason. But the prefect this particular evening was Loder of the Sixth, and the juniors knew that Loder was more likely to be smoking cigarettes in his study than thinking of his duties. The coast was clear so far as that went.

Four members of the Co., perhaps, would have been glad to find that it was not clear as they made their way to the Form-room passage downstairs.

But it was clear, and they found that Mr. Capper had, as usual, left his Form-room unlocked, and they were soon in the darkness of that apartment.

Opening a window and dropping into the quad was easy enough after that.



As Mr. Prout turned into the path under the old elms, he met the fleeing Billy Bunter in full career. Crash! "Good gad!" gurgled the Fifth Form master, staggering back.

Except where the lights fell from windows all was dark and shadowy in the dim October evening.

Standing under the window from which they had dropped, the Famous Five peered into the shadows. No one was to be seen. No one was likely to be out of the House on that dim, raw autumn night—except Prout, who had his own reasons for finding charms in the face of solitude.

"All clear!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Worse luck!" muttered Nugent.

"What's that, fathead?" grunted Bob. "If you're getting cold feet—"

"Oh, rats! Get on with it, as we've come out to make fools of ourselves," grunted Johnny Bull.

There was a swishing sound. Bob Cherry, who had borrowed Loder's official cane and concealed it about his person, drew it from its hiding-place and swished it in the air.

"All ready for Prout!" he whispered.

"Fathead!"

"Come on, if you're coming!" grunted Bob.

The lack of enthusiasm on the part of his comrades did not seem to please him, and it evidently made no difference to his determination. He started, cane in hand, and the rest of the Co. followed him.

The walk under the elms was at a distance from the House, far from lighted windows. No light was there, save what fell from the few stars in the dim sky, which was next to nothing.

Dimly through the gloom the old trees loomed up; and on the earth, carpeted with fallen leaves, the footsteps of the juniors made no sound. A cold wind blew from the sea, rustling fading leaves from the branches, and causing some of the juniors to shiver. But Bob Cherry did not heed the wind.

"Keep your peepers open," he whispered. "We may come on him any minute now."

The hapless Co. were only too well aware of it.

"Collar him the minute you see him!" breathed Bob. "Bump him down and sit on his head."

"Oh crikey!"

"If he yells he will bring half the House here. We don't want this to get out!" grunted Bob.

"We—we don't!" gasped Wharton. "No, we don't—exactly! As we should be marched in to the Head to be sacked on the spot—"

"Well, mind you sit on his head, then, so that he can't squeal too loud. I'll lay on the cane."

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Nugent. "Look here, old chap, hadn't you better—"

"Hush! Here he comes!"

The juniors hushed.

Four members of the Co. had nourished a last hope that they might miss Prout in the deep gloom under the branches. After all, there was a good chance of missing a man in the dark.

But that hope seemed delusive.

There was a soft footfall on the path under the elms—soft on the carpet of fallen leaves. Dimly through the gloom, a dim figure loomed up, coming directly towards the Famous Five.

They backed against the dusky trunks at hand.

The figure came on—apparently going towards the House. It came abreast of the unseen juniors.

Even then, the Co. hoped that Bob, at long last, would think better of it, and realise the awful seriousness of his proceedings, and give it a miss.

But that hope, too, was delusive.

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As the shadowy figure came abreast, Bob Cherry made a jump, tackled it low, and brought it down with a bump. "Ooooooh!"

It was a breathless gasp of surprise and alarm from the man who had been so suddenly and unexpectedly collared.

There was no help for it now. Either Bob's chums had to back him up, or desert him. They backed him up.

Four swift figures closed in on the sprawling, gasping man. Four pairs of hands were laid on him.

His features were pressed hard into a bed of fallen leaves, and kept there by Johnny Bull sitting on the back of his head. The other fellows took care of his arms and legs. It was necessary—frightfully necessary—to keep him from yelling; the House was within call, and the bare thought of being discovered "whopping" a Form master was unnerving.

Gurgles, gurgle, gurgle! came from the face squashed into the thick, soft leaves, as the man was flattened out and held.

Bob Cherry lost no time. He realised that there was no time to lose. In an enterprise of this sort, a fellow could not get through too rapidly.

Loder's cane, in Bob's hefty hand, rose and fell, with mighty swipes.

Whack, whack, whack!

The hapless man, gurgling in the dead leaves, was favourably placed for a whopping. And Bob Cherry whopped with all his beef.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Prout Is Pleased!

MR. PROUT started. Prout was walking on the shadowy path under the old elms, in a worried and troubled mood.

That last talk on the telephone had fairly put the wind up, and given a final edge to Prout's nerves.

Widgers, whom he had believed gone, was not gone. Widgers had threatened to come again—that very evening—or so Prout believed. He was not done with that former member of his Form. Walking to and fro, with a sombre brow, Prout thought it out dismally.

It was bad enough to have such a matter the talk of the school. But if Widgers came—if he succeeded in getting to close quarters—if he actually did "whop" Prout—

Prout was no coward. But his scrapping days were over—long ago. He felt the awful indignity of the thing, too. He shuddered at the thought of meeting Widgers on the warpath.

Gosling had strict instructions not to open the gate to Widgers. But the wretch, knowing his way about the school from old, might very likely get in surreptitiously, in some obscure corner of the old walls. The House was closed; but the masters' door was unlocked; Widgers would know all about that. Or a window—

Prout felt safer away from his study. That, of course, would be Bartholomew Widgers' immediate objective, if he got in. But this state of affairs was absolutely intolerable. On the morrow, he would see that the police dealt with Widgers. But if he came now—

And then Prout started, as he heard a soft thud, and realised that a climbing figure had dropped from the school wall, within a dozen paces of him.

Prout's plump heart throbbed. Widgers, of course. Widgers, coming in surreptitiously. Prout backed round the trunk of an elm, palpitating.

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If Widgers met him there, away from the House, away from help—Prout shuddered.

Peering from behind the elm he saw a figure pass down the path, in the direction of the House.

He had only a glimpse of it before it vanished in the gloom under the trees. But he knew that it was Widgers.

Widgers had come! He had not, as Prout believed, telephoned that he would come; Bob Cherry had done that. But he had come. He had passed within three feet of his old Form master—the Form master whom he was there to "whop."

Prout hardly breathed.

He stared along the dusky path after the vanished Widgers. The wretch had gone towards the House; doubtless to look for Prout there. What was Prout to do now?

Suddenly he became aware that something was going on under the elms.

Distinctly to his ears, from the shadowy gloom, came a sound of faint, horrible gurgling, and a series of loud, cracking sounds that could only have been made by a cane brought down hard and heavy.

Whack, whack, whack!

Prout wondered whether he was dreaming.

There was nobody in the quad, so far as he knew—nobody but himself, and the obnoxious, unspeakable Widgers on the warpath. Yet he distinctly heard a sound of gurgling, of panting breath, of rustling and wriggling, and of a whacking cane!

Whack! came the sound again, loud and clear, and followed by a hideous gurgle.

Whack, whack!

The cracks of the cane sounded almost like pistol-shots.

"Good gad!" muttered Prout dizzily. He strode along the path. Had some other master been strolling on the elm walk, and had Widgers pitched into him by mistake? Of what did it all mean? Prout wanted to know.

It was dark under the elms, but his eyes were accustomed to the gloom. Dim starlight fell through leafless branches, on a strange and startling scene.

A man lay extended on his face in a carpet of dead leaves. A Remove junior was sitting on his head. Two other Remove juniors held his arms; another grasped his legs. And yet another was whacking him with a cane, with hefty swipes that rang like the cracks of a pistol.

Whack, whack!

Bob Cherry had intended to give Prout "six." But he was warming to his work, and no doubt he felt that a job that was worth doing at all was worth doing well.

And as yet not the slightest suspicion had crossed Bob's mind, or the minds of his comrades, that the man they had collared in the dark was not Prout!

How were they to guess that Bartholomew Widgers, on the warpath, had chosen that very time and place for butting into the school out of which he had been turfed so long ago? Naturally, they couldn't guess.

Whack, whack!

Prout's eyes almost started from their sockets.

He understood now.

Widgers, who had come to whop, was getting the whopping. Instead of being the whopper, he was, so to speak, the whoppee.

He was getting it hot and strong. He was wriggling and gurgling frightfully under the crashing cane.

And these juniors—these boys upon whom Prout had been so severe—these dutiful and indeed admirable lads—had collared the obnoxious Widgers, and were thrashing him—doubtless shocked, disgusted, and pained by his wicked intention of assailing so majestic a gentleman as Prout!

It was all clear—to Prout.

His plump heart warmed to the Removites.

He had been severe on these excellent lads—he had been hard on them. He admitted it. And they were heaping coals of fire on his head, as it were, by thus testifying their disgust and condemnation of the obnoxious Widgers.

They must have been keeping watch for the villain—suspecting, no doubt, that he would seek to enter the school surreptitiously on his lawless errand—and this showed a concern for Prout, indeed an affectionate regard for him, that could not fail to touch his heart.

Prout, unseen in the gloom, smiled on the juniors.

He was in no hurry to intervene.

In fact, the sound of the cane whacking on Bartholomew Widgers was music to the ears of Prout.

Whack! The last stroke fell at last.

It was a round dozen, and the last whack fell more like a rifle-shot than a pistol-shot. Bob Cherry had plenty of beef, and he was putting it all into the whopping of the wrong man.

"That will do!" came a voice from the shadows, a voice that made Bob Cherry jump clear of the ground.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Great pip!"

"Oh crikey!"

Five amazed juniors stared round.

They stared at Prout.

They goggled at him.

In their amazement they forgot the man they had been holding. Widgers got his crushed features out of the bed of leaves at last. He spluttered and roared. He scrambled to his feet, still spluttering and roaring.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not heed him.

They heeded only Prout.

They goggled at Prout with starting eyes, as if he had been the ghost of a fat Form master.

"Pip-pip-Prout!" gurgled Bob Cherry.

"P-p-Prout!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh, holy smoke!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" Widgers was roaring. "Ooooooogh! Whoooooh!"

Widgers staggered, breathless, against a tree.

Mr. Prout smiled at the juniors.

"My dear boys!" he said.

"Prout!" said Bob dazedly. "Prout!

Then who—what—which—"

"Widgers!" gurgled Nugent.

"Great pip!"

"The great pipfulness is terrific!"

"You young villains!" roared Widgers. "You young scoundrels! I'll smash you—I'll pulverise you—I—I—I—I—I—Ow! Ow! Wow!"

"Silence, rascal!" boomed Prout.

"Boys! I thank you—I thank you from my heart—for having dealt with this ruffian as you have dealt with him! I regret—I regret sincerely—that I have hitherto misunderstood you—that I have under-valued your regard and esteem for me—I regret it deeply! My boys, you have touched my heart."

The astounded juniors still goggled at him.

They were surprised to hear that Prout's heart was touched. From his remarks, they concluded that it was his head that was "touched."

(Continued on page 23.)

YOU CAN START THIS "THRILLER" TO-DAY!

OOM

THE TERRIBLE



Fast prisoners in a secret stronghold, the pick of the world's scientists and engineers labour under the dictates of a tyrant who aims to be Master of the World!

Playing a Part I

THERE was dead silence for a few seconds after Oom's startling statement.

The Flying Bandit stood looking at the brothers Dare, with his thin lips wreathed in a cynical smile, whilst Tom and Dick stared back in horrified amazement at such an appalling proposal.

Then Oom glanced downwards through the plate glass bottom of the plane to where the great basin, in which stood his stronghold, showed ever clearer.

"Zere is no hurree," he said suavely. "I vill give you twenty-four hours to decide, and I have no doubt you vill see sense. Now, I am reequired elsewhere, as ve are about to land. You shall be treated as guests during our—vat you call?—armistice; after that your fate is in your own hands. Au 'voir!"

Rick turned and looked at his brother. Tom was staring down at the busy scene in the basin towards which they were slowly dropping. It was like viewing a disturbed ant-heap from above, for the doors of the buildings had opened, and dozens of men were pouring out and running towards the spot where the great wireless plane would descend.

It was impossible for the inventor not to feel a thrill of pride as he realised that it was his own invention, the Dare Stabiliser Auto-gyro, which was enabling this huge machine to hover perfectly still over one spot and gently descend without the slightest vibration, like a butterfly.

But though he was listening to the low hum of his invention, his ears were also attuned to something else. Out of the corner of his eye he shot a quick glance towards one corner of the luxurious cabin, and saw two little wires almost concealed by the cornice, with a shell-like terminal to each. He gave one

quick smile, and turned his gaze downwards again. Then he gave a deep sigh, shrugged his shoulders, and muttered:

"Tchah, it's hopeless! What's the use of bucking against Fate? We're in a cleft stick!"

Rick thrust out his hand and gripped his elder brother by the wrist with a horrified exclamation.

"Tom," he cried, "you—you're never thinking of doing what this skunk says, falling in with his ghastly proposition, to give your brains, your inventive skill to his dastardly work. A world robber! Using his power for the basest ends—the power that he has acquired by kidnapping other brains as he has us. What would it matter if he did carry out his threat and plant me down somewhere as an accomplice?"

"You don't know this man, Rick!" said Tom, in thrilling tones; and his own hand closed over that of his brother. "Not only is he utterly ruthless, but he has brains and cunning beyond any telling. Certainly he has kidnapped some

of the best brains of science, but he himself is—"

He poured out a voluble speech, all about Oom's record during the War, his scientific attainments before that period, his utter disregard for consequences, his world domination, and so on. At first Rick listened in amazement as Tom reeled off what sounded like a flow of complimentary testimonials to their captor's supreme cleverness and tremendous powers.

Then he suddenly realised that the fingers which rested on the back of his hand were beating out a rapid tattoo which held its own significance.

It was an old trick of the brothers, both of whom were expert telegraphists. It was as easy for them to communicate with each other in company, without a soul knowing, as if they had an entire Morse apparatus at their disposal.

Rick read in the "dots and dashes" the message his brother was tapping out on his hand while pouring out an impassioned stream of words.

"Play up, you ass; he is listening in to every word we say, and likely can see us as well. There are detectaphone wires up in the cornice. Don't look! Play up to me. There's Ham and Alf to be thought of, and if I appear to fail in with Oom's plans—we'll find some way out, never fear!"

Rick signalled back "O.K.," whilst his voice rang out passionately:

"Oh, my stars, I never thought to find my brother was a coward!"

"Coward? Ah, kid, don't call me that! If it was only myself I'd defy this man to do his worst, but there are times when even the best of us meet our match. Could I bear the thought of you lingering out the best years of your life in some stinking foreign gaol, rotting slowly to death? After all, this man is simply carrying out what all the rest

HOW THE STORY STARTED.

OOM, the TERRIBLE, a German flying ace named Baron von Aumsteufel, operating from his secret mountain stronghold in South America, is determined to become master of the world. By means of a super wireless-controlled plane, fitted with an ingenious sucking device, he has raided at will—stealing the world's wealth and kidnapping the master craftsmen of science and engineering. Oom's latest victim is TOM DARE, inventor of the Dare Stabiliser. Resolved to rescue his brother, young RICK DARE, accompanied by ALF HIGGS, a Cockney mechanic, and HAM, a powerful negro servant, gives chase in Tom's plane. Oom's suction device puts paid to the venture, however, and the three pals are taken prisoners along with Tom to a secret stronghold. Here Oom endeavours to terrify Tom into submission by threatening to "frame" Rick with a crime of his own doing.

(Now read on.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,227.



Alf Higgs hung on to Ham's coat-tail, remonstrating excitedly, as the big negro flourished a razor under the "Spiggotty's" nose!

of the world is doing. It is a case of the strongest wins."

"Tchah!" snapped Rick.

"Well, won't it be ever so much better for me if Oom takes me over?" said Tom, in a whisper, but so sibilant that it carried even better than his former tones. "He promises me a much bigger rate of pay than old Silas Merger ever paid me, and he's got all the latest appliances and machines for me to experiment with. Bah! What is there in it? Here have I been working for the Merger Corporation for what is practically a pittance. You know I've been dissatisfied for some time."

In response to the pressure on his wrist Rick played up.

"Tom, that was honest work; you weren't working for a thief—a scoundrel!" he cried.

Tom gave a laugh, a terrible, hard, callous laugh—or it would have been if Rick had not known that he was doing it just for effect.

"Silas Merger's a millionaire ten times over, isn't he?" he cried. "Did he get those millions by the sweat of his brow, by honest work? Did he blazes! He got 'em by sucking the brains of poor beggars like me who have been mugs enough to let him do it and say 'Thank'ee, sir!' What difference does it make if I work for a man who's got the pluck to rob the world, like Oom, and is honest enough to acknowledge himself a robber, or for a smug hypocrite like Merger, who professes to be a philanthropist?"

"Oh, Tom!" cried Rick in horror, for his brother sounded so convincing that he almost believed he was genuinely "knocking" his generous old employer and benefactor. "Why, Merger's—"

"Like every other business man—playing for his own hand!" snapped Tom.

"Well, I'm going to play for mine, and if Oom likes to give me the terms I want I'll work for him! It's to save our lives as well, don't forget, but I'll have due reward for it into the bargain. This baby's been played for a sucker long enough! Look down there, Rick; there are armed men—fifty to one against us—am I goin' to kick against that? Am I a mug?"

Ham Gets Annoyed!

TOM and his brother were shepherded out of the great plane between two rows of heavily armed men. They were all of the swarthy, black-browed South American type, clad in a sort of uniform of dark green shirt and breeches, with the big high-crowned straw hats of the country. The brothers thought they had never seen a more villainous collection of hangdog countenances than those owned by Oom's satellites.

In the forward part of the big plane some of the crew, clad in their fur-lined flying-suits, were busily engaged unloading big leather sacks and handing them carefully over to other men, who placed them in a small motor-truck which trundled off towards the big stone building which the boys rightly surmised to be Oom's private dwelling.

The chief bandit had evidently already gone, for he was nowhere to be seen. But a tall, lanky individual, with a broad smile and a strong American accent, came towards the brothers and introduced himself as the "Major-domo."

"Glad to see you, gents, an' I hope you'll see fit to take things kinder easy an' not make a fuss as wouldn't do you

no good," he said, in ingratiating tones. "We aim to make you as comfor'ble as poss'ble, an' b'leve muh thar's durn leetle you kin ask for thet you cain't have in this yer camp. Thar's on'y one thing I'd impress on you good an' hard—it ain't no manner o' good thinkin' o' gettin' away. Nuthin' but a mountain goat can climb them cliffs, an' th' hull place is guarded an' is alive wi' armed men who kin all shoot straight. Come along hyar, an' I'll show you your quarters. They'll be ab-soloot private, an' you'll have servants to wait on you."

"Thanks!" said Tom Dare dryly. "We brought a couple with us; we'd like to have them if convenient?"

"Waal, I guess not," replied the man doubtfully. "You see, th' bos'll likely have his own ideas 'bout thet until you git kinder settled down—"

"Don' yuh go fo' to push muh, yuh pore white trash, or I'll jestnatterally cyarve yuh up wi' mah razzar!" came in Ham's unmistakable tones from a small cabin they were just passing. "Jest recommember dat I am a gom'man from ol' Kintuck, an' Ah don't reckon to be handled by no yaller spiggotty. Me Ah'm peaceful as a suckin' dove s'long's

as yuh keeps yo' fingers off'n muh. But, by golly, Ah'll cyarve yuh an' cyarve yuh deep—"

Out from the shack backed a swarthy-faced "spiggotty," armed to the teeth, but shaking with fright as Ham flourished a huge razor under his nose. Hanging on to the big nigger's coat-tail was Alf Higgs, remonstrating with him for endangering both their lives and trying to drag Ham's nineteen stone back into the cabin.

"Shurrup, yer 'arf-atched 'ippopotomus!" he growled. "Cawn't yer see w'en yer up ag'inst it? Wanter git both our 'eads laid open with one o' them machets? We're blinkin' pris'ners, and 'ave gotter sing small. Put that razor away, or it'll be took from yer, an' then yer'll look like Uncle Tom's Cabin—"

Alf succeeded in dragging the big nigger back, and the spiggotty slammed the door shut and locked it.

"I did not touch heem, senor; but geeve heem one leetle push, and he bring out ze beeg razor. I not t'ink heem armed—" began the spiggotty, but the American cut him short.

"Your own fault," he said in fluent Spanish and in a low tone. "You heard the orders; the prisoners are not to be molested for the next twenty-four hours, but to be allowed to do as they please until the chief gives further orders—"

"But the chief orders that the big negro is to be his own servant," argued the man. "I go to take him across to the big house when he draws that sharp weapon and threatens to cut me in half—"

"Be silent! Go tell the chief, and perhaps he will make other arrangements. For the present, leave them alone!"

Tom heard all this, but pretended to pay no attention. It was just as well to give the impression that they knew no Spanish, so that they might overhear something which would be useful if their captors talked freely before them.

Their guide led them to a spacious and well-furnished bungalow, and bade them make themselves at home.

"I'll have some grub sent you from the cook-shack in a brace of shakes," he said. "Just now I guess you'll like a wash and maybe a rest; but, when you feels like it, you are at liberty to take a stroll around th' camp and look at what you want. There are no restrictions s'long as you don't try to git away; but you can see for yerselves thet's useless. Make yerselves at home!"

A hot and well-cooked meal was brought in by one of the white-clad peons who seemed to act as servants throughout the whole camp. It was well served on silver dishes which bore the crest of some noble family, and doubtless formed part of the loot obtained in one of Oom's raids. The Indian was a deft and obliging servant, but could only converse with them by signs. Later the brothers were to discover that every Indian in the place had had his tongue cut out at some time or another!

"H'm! They seem to be going to treat us well enough, Rick. It's certainly a wonderful organisation Oom's got here, and I guess it's up to us to make the best of things. I reckon he's done mighty well at his job all round."

Rick quite understood that his brother was only talking in this way in case of their being overheard by means of some concealed apparatus, and he growled out a reply that intimated his disgust with his brother's acceptance of their lot.

"You'd best lie down and take a rest; I'm goin' to have a stroll around," said Tom, as if impatient with his brother. "For the love o' Mike take that durned peevish look off your face. We've got to take things as they come and say thanks that they're no worse. There's nothing to be gained by grousing!"

A Staggering Offer!

TOM took a handful of excellent cigarettes from the silver box on the table and strolled out of the hut, humming to himself.

He noticed that guards were everywhere, and that in four bomb-proof turrets set at each corner of the basin the grim-hooded shapes of anti-aircraft guns showed. Evidently Oom had made provision against any possible attack from the air in the unlikely event of his secret hiding-place ever being discovered.

"About as much chance of gettin' out of here as a rat in a trap," he murmured to himself. "The only thing is that Oom is evidently anxious for my help, and is prepared to give anything to get it. We'll have to wait our time and trust to luck to give us the opportunity of hitting back when he's been lulled to a sense of security."

Tom Dare noticed many men in overalls hastening from one shed to another, who glanced hurriedly at him and then averted their faces as if ashamed to be seen. These were unarmed in contrast to the guards who lounged about with weapons at their belts. To Tom the faces of these men seemed vaguely familiar, and he guessed that they were the scientists and engineers who had been kidnapped and pressed into the bandit's service willy-nilly.

He nearly ran into one young fellow who came out of one of the power-houses—a keen-faced youngster, who gave a startled exclamation at sight of Tom Dare and half-stopped in his tracks.

"Terry—Terry Page, of Yale!" Tom exclaimed. "Why—"

"S-sh! Not now!" hissed the other; and, side-stepping the airman, he disappeared into one of the sheds.

Tom stared after him open-mouthed. He recognised the young fellow as the son of a millionaire railroad king who had been at Yale when Tom had lectured there on aviation, a brilliant young scientist of whom great things were anticipated.

"Gee whiz! But Oom's certainly picked the best brains for his foul work," Tom muttered. "Now, if only we could get some of these kidnapped fellers banded together—Great Snakes! There's Alf Higgs!"

Alf Higgs it was, with his face dirty and oily as it usually was when at work, wiping his hands on a bit of cotton waste and peering out of the window of a machine-shop from whence came the low hum of powerful dynamos.

"'Allo, guv'nor!" he greeted. "S'elp me bob, but I'm glad to see yer! I thought that 'ound 'ad done yer an' Rick in. If 'e's did yer any 'arm I'll 'arf slaughter 'im, if hevery minnit's me lawst!"

"No; we're all right so far, Alf," replied Tom. "But what are you up to? You seem to have got a job."

"Yuss, I 'ave!" grunted the Cockney, with a rueful grin. "That Oom bloke seems to 'ave rumbled as I'm a hengineer, an' 'e sent word by one o' them yaller-faced blighters that if I liked to git to graft I sh'ud 'ave treble pay, but if not me rashuns 'ud be cut orf. I didn't like th' idee, but—"

"Quite right. Hold the candle to the devil, Alf," said Tom, keeping his voice low so that the hum of the dynamos would drown it. "What machine are you on? What does it work?"

"Dynos for 'lectric light. Fancy me, an' ighly trained hengineer, drivin' a hengine to supply a lot o' dago bandits with light! Lummy! It's like puttin' Paddy-rewski to turn th' 'andle of a barrel-horgin!"

"Never mind!" whispered Tom. "Stick it, and hang on to that particular job as long as you can. See?"

"O' course, if yer say so, sir," Alf agreed dolefully. Then his face cleared. "Strike me perishin' 'andsome! Yer've got something up yer sleeve—something to dahn th' blighter?"

"Mum's the word at present, but we'll find a way out. What's Ham doing?"

"Won't do a blinkin' thing, sir! 'E nigh cut th' lights out o' one o' them yaller guards wot told 'im to go hover to the privit 'ouse o' th' big noise for to be 'is pussonal servant—"

"Great Scott! The very thing!" exclaimed Tom. "If he can get inside there he may pick up something that'll be jolly useful. Ham's got his thick head screwed on the right way, and knows how to keep his eyes and ears open. Tell him to hurry up and snaffle that job right away, or he'll likely be taken up in the plane and dropped from ten thousand feet. He can't monkey with Oom; he's got to obey orders. Tell him that from me!"

Exactly twenty-four hours after they landed in the stronghold a couple of guards fetched the Dare brothers across to the big house. They were astonished at the magnificence of the furniture and

(Continued on page 28.)

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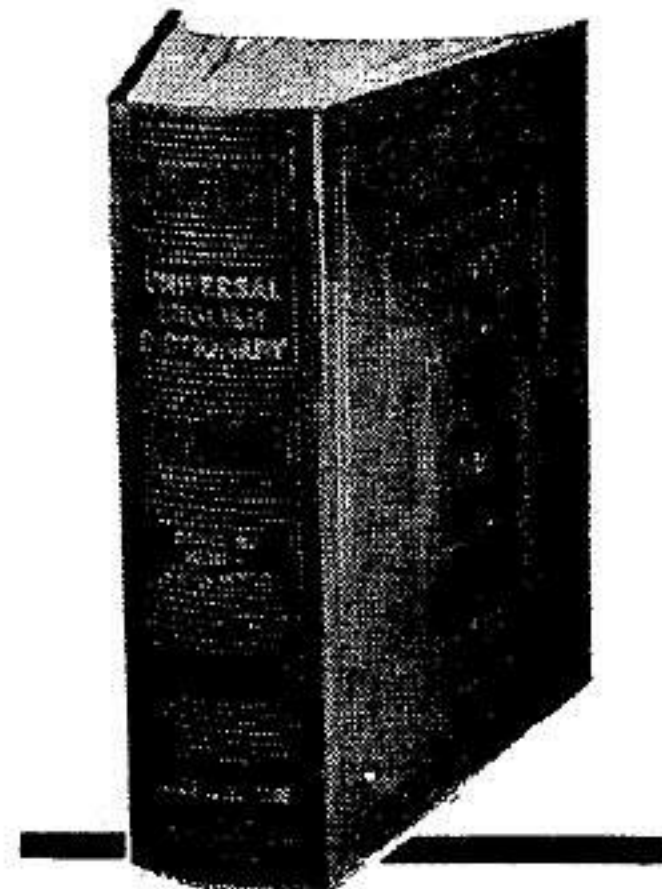
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OOM, THE TERRIBLE!

(Continued from previous page.)

appointments of the place, and Tom realised that he had been right when he said that Oom, the Terrible, was making a pretty good thing of his nefarious profession.

The Flying Bandit was seated at a mahogany desk, and seemed to be busily examining some plans and papers. Squatted on a cushion at his feet was the tiny dwarf, Maleze, who eyed them with malevolent little black beady eyes. He was playing with a black tube half as long again as himself, which Tom recognised was a blowpipe.

Oom welcomed them with a satirical grin, but politely hoped they were rested and had been made comfortable.

"Yes; we've nothing to grumble at, except that we're prisoners," said Tom shortly.

He knew that if he was to deceive the shrewd and cunning man before him he must not appear to accept his offers too readily, or he would smell a rat.

"Say, rather, my guests—and soon, I hope, my comrades!" said Oom. "Now, tell me—you have thought over my offers?"

"Well, it seems to be a case of 'must,' and there's no way out," said Tom sulkily. "But you mentioned that the pay would be large. It 'ud have to be; for I'd lose all the benefit of my inventions, and once having been a member of your gang I could never mix with dec—ordinary people again."

"You would be recompensed for that," said Oom suavely. "I will pay you a retaining fee of a thousand pounds per month, and will purchase any of your inventions at your own price."

Tom Dare was staggered, for the offer was evidently meant. There would be no necessity for the bandit to bluff, for he had them absolutely in his power.

"That's very handsome of you," said Tom, "and I accept. My brother, by the way, is my right-hand helper. Can he work with me?"

"Of course, if he so desires," agreed Oom. "But I should have thought that a lad of spirit would have preferred something more adventurous—something with a spice of danger—such as my expeditions hold. But there, perhaps he has been used to being tied to his broder's apron-strings!"

Rick's brain had been working like a machine, and he saw his opportunity.

"I don't want to work with my brother!" he burst out passionately.

"I think he's a durned coward to accept your offer! But just to show I'm not, I'll go with you on your next expedition!"

Half an hour later the two brothers left the house and strolled slowly back across the basin.

"What's the idea, Rick?" said Tom. "What made you change your mind so suddenly and say you'd go on one of this blighter's raids? You've got something up your sleeve, I know."

"Sure!" was Rick's terse response. "It's the only chance of one of us getting free and bringing a nest of hornets round this bandit's ears. Tom, you had an idea for a flying-cloak that would act as a parachute if necessary. Could you make it on the Q.T.?"

"Yes. But I've never tested it, and I'm not dead sure it'd work; I've never properly tried it out—"

"Have one ready by the day after to-morrow, when he's going to take his next trip," urged Rick excitedly. "I've got a hunch it's a chance that may never come again. You see why he's so anxious to get me as a willing member of his gang? He'd have such a hold over us both that we'd never be able to get away and face decent folk again. Oh, Tom, put in all you know and make your Angel Wings cloak, and it may be the means of our circumventing this scoundrel and ridding the world of its greatest menace."

At sunset on the appointed day the great plane was wheeled out from its hangar.

"Well, we should be back in two to three days," the bandit assured Tom. "Your broder will be quite safe, and he will come back richer and wiser than he left you. Bid him au 'voir!"

Maleze chattered like an infuriated monkey, but shrank back, fumbling with his blowpipe.

Rick gave Tom a parting grip of the hand and vanished inside the saloon as the Dare Auto-gyro whirred, then the machine lifted, and finally disappeared.

With a heavy heart Tom realising that his young brother, being a lightweight, was to take the place of this venomous little dwarf and operate that ghastly contrivance, the vacuum suction-tube, in his place!

(Rick's certainly booked for a thrilling experience, isn't he, chums? Be sure and read all about it in next week's gripping instalment of this serial.)

WIGGERS ON THE WARPATH!

(Continued from page 24.)

"I repeat, I thank you!" said Prout. "You have dealt with this rascal as he deserved—"

"Yow-ow-woooooh!" contributed Wiggers.

"I shall express to your Form master my high opinion of you!" continued Prout, the juniors still goggling at him blankly. "I shall congratulate Mr. Queleh on his Form including boys who are a credit to the school—who would be a credit to any school. Boys, I thank you, and I am proud of you."

"We're dreaming this!" said Bob Cherry.

"Now, secure that man—he must be given into custody—he will be charged with frequenting with felonious intent—"

Wiggers vanished in the gloom. "Secure him!" boomed Prout.

"He—he—he's gone, sir!" babbled Wharton.

A thud was heard from the road, as Wiggers dropped from the wall. It was followed by a sound of running feet.

Wiggers was gone.

"I shall telephone to the police," said Prout. "He shall be arrested—he shall be charged—if he remains in this neighbourhood. Boys! Come with me to the House—you should not be out of the House at this hour, but I shall excuse you to your Form master—I shall explain to him your dutiful, your meritorious conduct."

Like fellows in a dream, the Famous Five followed Prout to the House.

Wiggers, once of the Fifth, was not heard of at Greyfriars again.

And for a long, long time Prout never came across the Famous Five without giving them a kind nod and a smile. "Where ignorance is bliss," as the poet remarks, "it's folly to be wise." And Prout never knew, and never dreamed, of the secret history of that dusky evening under the Greyfriars elms, when the Famous Five of the Remove had—quite by mistake—whopped Wiggers on the Warpath!

THE END.

(Now look out for next week's MAGNET and a ripping Guy Fawkes' yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "ALL THE FUN OF THE FIFTH!" It's full of big bangs and explosive surprises. See that you order your copy EARLY!)

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Magnificent Mansion for Sale!

Known as "Banter Court," this wonderful Jacobean mansion, complete with spare parts and all accessories, will be offered for sale next Tuesday, by FISH, FISH & FISH, LTD., Auctioneers. The grounds, comprising the better part of England, are studded with lakes, rivers, deer forests, volcanoes, etc. MUST BE SOLD. Owner hard up. The Guy who buys the place will have to find it. Banter Court has been left out of the maps and directories owing to jealousy. ROLL UP!

Greiffranz's Herald

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.
October 31st, 1931.

SALE NOW ON!

DR. SKINNER, of Study No. 11, announces his GREAT WINTER SALE. Large stock of pills and potions to dispose of. No reasonable offer refused.

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COMIC FOOTBALL MATCH

In Aid of Courtfield Cottage Hospital

LITTLE SIDE RAG



The Courtfield Cottage Hospital held an Appeal Week last week, in which they endeavoured to raise £5,000 to build a new wing. When completed, the new wing is to be opened by our respected headmaster, Dr. Locke, so naturally Greiffranz was well to the fore in collecting the money.

One of the items organised by the Remove was a comic football match. It was held on Little Side and a collecting-box was sent round the crowd. The players were two mixed junior elevens, and each fellow found his own costume.

Squiff came out to keep goal in a top hat, walking-stick, monocle, and spats. Next came a large pram, wheeled by a nurse, containing a large baby and a larger bottle. The "baby" was Bob Cherry, and the nurse was Frank Nugent. Roars of laughter were heard when the pram careered around the football ground; the nurse trying to kick the ball, and the baby howling in a loud voice. The baby howled still louder, however, when it was pitched out of the pram.

Harry Wharton, sporting a pair of crutches and a leg simply smothered with bandages, led one side. Cecil Reginald Temple, dressed in a suit of armor, was the captain of the other side. Temple made a loud clanking noise as he ambled about the field, and he was rather dangerous at close quarters.

Bolover Major was mounted on roller skates, and every two minutes there was a loud thud as Bolover hit the ground. However, Boley managed to score the first goal, by shooting the ball past Squiff, who tried vainly to poke it out with his walking-stick.

Vernon-Smith had borrowed a horse from the village, and he was mounted on this—a fireman's helmet on his head and a long polo stick in his hand. The players gave way respectfully whenever this effort for a good cause.

SMALL ADS. CORNER

SLAVE-TRADER REQUIRED
to instruct Greiffranz's protect into the manner of employing slaves in chain-gangs, etc. Said protect can see no other way of getting work out of the fags. PAT GYNNNE, Sixth.

WANTED. DICTIONARY giving the meaning of the words used by Lord yesterday when he fell downstairs.

IF THIS ADVERTISEMENT catches the eye of any titled relative of William George Bunter, the age of miracles will NOT have passed.

STARTLING WAGER. Fisher T. Fish wagers the sum of FOUR POUNDS (£4) that no fellow will come along and give him a fiver. ROLL UP!

NOTICE. The object recently discovered in the Quadrangle is NOT a statue of Gosling sweeping leaves. It IS Gosling sweeping leaves.

PUBLIC NOTICE. George Potter and William Greene hereby give public notice of their intention to slay Colker with a hatchet on Thursday next at about 6.30 p.m. Any persons having objection to this proceeding are required to put in such objection before the date mentioned. No further warning will be given.

LOST! Copy of Euclid's "Elements." Will anyone kindly drop it into the nearest waste-paper basket? DICKPENFOLD, Remove.

IF THIS ADVERTISEMENT is seen by the young lady in a black-and-white hat and a green jumper who was in Chankley's on Wednesday last, will she kindly send her name and address to "MAULY," Box 803, "Greyfriars Herald," as said Mauly has forgotten it.

PERSONAL. Unless H.S. Sootable PUNISHMENT for PEA-SHOOTING. Put in a tub of cold oil and heated to a temperature of 1,000°

SCORING OFF SKINNER

FORM MASTER'S LITTLE FUN

Who would have thought that Quelchly had a sense of humor? It was proved in class this week. Skinner proved it. He wishes now he hadn't.

Skinner ventured to be funny during Roman history. When Quelchly described how the galley slaves were ill-treated, he went on to say that many of them were ill during Roman history. When Skinner proved it, he wishes now he hadn't.

Gosling's Punishment Plan

What Gosling says is this here: The punishments are now doled out in Public schools are nothing like sufficiently adequate. Boys in this generation are admittedly such draughty humps that "six on the bags" or a hundred lines is merely joking with a serious matter.

Gosling informs us that he has drawn out a list of suitable punishments which he proposes to submit to the Board of Education, with a view to its adoption in all schools throughout the country. We have been privileged to see this list, and, without permission, we are printing extracts from it. Here follows the said extracts:

Sootable punishment for IDOL-NESS.
1st Offense: To be flayed alive.
2nd Offense: Flogged with coke-hummers.
Each Subsequent Offense: Death.

Sootable Punishment for CHEEK.
Each Offense: Hung, drawn, and humped.

Sootable Punishment for Breaking BOUNDS.
1st Offense: Bare feet to be tied over a lighted candle.
2nd Offense: Chained to the front wheel of a steam-roller.
Each Subsequent Offense: Cast to hungry Hussesent.

Sootable Punishment for RAGGING.
1st Offense: Shot out of a gun.
2nd Offense: Teeth drawn out with pinchers.
Each Other Offense: Drowning at birth.

FASHIONS FOR ALL

ECONOMY COATS

The new winter fashions are here (writes our expert). I can thoroughly recommend the new overcoat in patterns of a large check. Unfortunately, it needs a large "cheque" to purchase one. Chankley's, however, do an overcoat at a bargain price of £15.

The economy overcoat, now on sale, is a double-sided coat, which may be turned inside out and worn as a different garment. Each side is made of tweed, with a different pattern, and the article looks very striking. This coat is particularly useful for fellows who wish to break bounds, as they can change the colour of their overcoat in a second.

The combination bowler hat and crash-helmet for reckless road-hogs is a useful and neat invention. Coker, of the Fifth, has bought one, and says that it acted perfectly on a recent occasion when he nose-dived into the bonnet of a bus. Coker wasn't hurt a bit; but the bus will never be the same again. Of course, with Coker's head, a crash-helmet is quite superfluous.

Jackets are now tailored specially for fags, with inkstains already inserted by the manufacturers. This saves the fag the trouble of spilling the ink on his coat. Collars on the same principle are to appear shortly.

The latest suits, which are made without pockets, will be useful for fellows like Manly who are always being dimmed. When a man attempts to wipe Manly's ear for a little brass, our fagless lord will be able to say with perfect truth that he hasn't any money with him.

The vogue for long, Oxfordish trousers appears to have come to stay. My own bags are very long, and it will be longer still before I pay for them. Here's a tip which I found very useful. If you drop a spot of grease on your suit, and find that you cannot get the stain out, the best thing to do is to make identical spots all over your suit at regular distances. It then looks just like a pattern, and is very fetching. I like the look of mine so much that I have already decided to insist on having spots of grease inserted in my next suit.

Whereat Skinner's sense of humor was completely dashed. When classes were over, Quelchly dashed on the board:

"Carla manus brovis ubi!"
Acta mana nota bo di."

"You will construe that passage from a poem, Skinner," said Mr. Coker grimly. "When you have done so correctly, you will hand it to me."

Skinner gasped with relief. This was pure luck. Two lines would not take five minutes to construe. The seal of the Remove had been expecting about two pages.

When he came to parse those remarkable lines, though, Skinner was not so sure of his luck. After about ten minutes, he had a dim suspicion that the joke was on him. After half an hour, he was certain of it.

"Canta!" he groaned. "Should rot that be 'canto' or 'cantata,' air?"

"It should be what it is, Skinner," replied Quelchly. "Oh, crumms! Is 'manus' combative or genitive, sir?"

"That is for you to find out, W-ner. You are construing the 154th—not I."

The dinner-bell found Skinner still springing hopelessly at the sentence. Quelchly smiled grimly.

Your wis are obviously, un-aid, "You may go."

"Thank you, sir. But would you mind construing those words for me? I can't make head or tail of them."

Quelchly thereupon read out the translation of the sentence. Skinner really wondered whether he was deceiving as he heard it.

"Can't a man as brave you be, Act a man, and not a booby?"

Quelchly had scored off Skinner without a doubt.

DO YOU WANT 10/- A WEEK FOR LIFE AT THE AGE OF 70?

If so, send me a pastry Pound (£1 0s. 0d.) and I'll hand you over my entire rights to an Old Age Pension! If preferred, you can have my next Postal Order instead—when it arrives! Snap up this wonderful chance, somebody, before it's too late!—W. G. Bunter, Study No. 7, Remove Passage.



PROGRAMME OF CONCERT BY AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY

- AT 8 P.M. BRANK IN THE RAG. GRAND CONCERT PROGRAMME.
- (In aid of the next grand concert.)
1. CONCERT SOLO. JOHNNY BULL. "Those Lips, Those Eyes, Those Ears."
 2. RECITATION. AROZZO TORD. "Oh, he was a naughty boy."
 3. PIANOFORTE SOLO. CLAUDE HOSKINS. "Discord in A Flat."
 4. SOLO. W. G. DUNTER. "Two Lovely Pork Pies."
 5. THE REMOVE AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY presents: "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM." Original play by William Shakespeare. Revised and greatly improved by WILLIAM WIBLEY. (The audience is requested not to throw anything until the end of the play.)
 6. COMB-AND-PIPER SOLO. DON CHERNY. "Symphony in B Minor" (Shubert.)
 7. GERMAN SOLO. HAROLD SKINNER. "Tom inter den garden, Maud."
 8. CONJURING. OLIVER KIPPS. Magic and Mystery.
 9. VENTRILOQUAL TURN. W. G. DUNTER. "The Voice of the Porpoise."
 10. SOLO. AROZZO TORD. "Dear Children, Good-Night."
- GOD SAVE THE KING.

ANONYMOUS LETTER

(The letter printed below was written in a disguised writing on a plain sheet of paper, and we have been unable to discover the writer. Joltland Yard are as puzzled as we are—more so, in fact. —Ed.)

"Esteemed and Ridiculous Sir,—I neediness or two ago I compositionally made up a short story which I desired you to insert in your magnificent and immortal paper. And, what a wonderful result! The result? The story-fabrics has not appeared, and when I went to foolishly search for it in your study, I fortuitously discovered my ridiculous masterpiece in the esteemed and absurd basket of waste-paper.

"The too-thickness of this proceeding is terrific, honorable penitit, and unless you promptly publish the short story forthwith, it will be my dutiful path—or painful duty—to busily that you are in your optic.

"Esteemfully yours," E. R. J. S.