

HERE'S A SCHOOL STORY WITH A PUNCH!

The Magnet ^{2^D}



**BUNTER
MEANS
BUSINESS!**

BLACKMAIL! *By* FRANK RICHARDS



FEATURING THE WORLD-FAMOUS CHUMS—HARRY WHARTON & CO., OF GREYFRIARS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Inky!

"INK?"

"Yes—quick!"

Billy Bunter seemed to be in a hurry.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, in Study No. 1 in the Greyfriars Remove, stared at the fat junior.

Bunter had a jam-jar in his fat hands. It did not, however, contain jam. It was a third full of ink.

Why Billy Bunter was carrying round a jar of ink was a mystery. It seemed still more mysterious when he demanded more ink. He had about a pint already.

"Ink!" repeated Harry Wharton blankly. "What the thump do you want ink for, you howling ass?"

"Oh! Nothing!" said Bunter. "I mean, I—I've got some lines to do, and—and we've run out of ink in my study. Gimme that inkpot, will you?"

"Potty?" asked Frank Nugent, in wonder.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I say, gimme that inkpot—I'm in a hurry! He may clear off any minute—"

"Who may?"

"Oh! Nobody! I say, you fellows, don't be mean about the ink! Gimme that inkpot!"

Wharton and Nugent, as it happened, were using the inkpot. They had lines to do for their Form-master, Mr. Quelch. But even had they not been using it, they would have wanted to know more before they handed it over to Billy Bunter.

Bunter stretched a fat hand across the table to it. Harry Wharton promptly rapped a set of fat knuckles with a ruler.

"Wow!" roared Bunter.

The fat paw was jerked back suddenly. Bunter sucked his fat knuckles, glaring wrath through his big spectacles. The jam-jar swayed in his left hand, and spilt ink dropped on the study carpet. A splash landed on Bunter's trousers.

"Ow! Beast!" howled Bunter.

"Ow!"

"What are you going to do with that ink?" demanded the captain of the Remove. "What the dickens are you up to?"

"Just collecting ink up and down the studies?" asked Frank Nugent, with a grin.

"Yes—that's it!" gasped Bunter. "I'm not going to mop it over anybody, you know. Only, don't you fellows say anything about it, of course! Loder will be in a fearful wax—"

"Loder!" yelled the two juniors.

Harry Wharton stepped to the door, shut it, and put his back to it. If Billy Bunter had an idea of mopping a jar of ink over Loder of the Sixth, it was time for Bunter to be restrained.

Not that the chums of the Remove had any objection, in principle, to any amount of ink being mopped over the most unpopular prefect of Greyfriars School. They were concerned for Bunter—not for Loder. Mopping ink over a prefect was one of those happy things that might be thought of, but really could not be done.

"You blithering, footling ass!" exclaimed Wharton. "Have you gone off your rocker? You're not going anywhere near Loder with that ink."

"I don't mean to go anywhere near him, you fathead!" hooted Bunter. "I'm going to mop it over him from a window—"

"Loder's going to stand under a window, just to oblige you?" asked Nugent.

"He's there already—I've spotted him, you see! He's leaning on that buttress, under Coker's window, reading a paper. For goodness' sake, don't waste time!" urged Bunter. "He may be gone any minute. Let me have that ink—"

"No fear!" grinned Wharton. "'Tain't safe to give Sixth Form prefects a shower-bath of ink, old fat man! Put that jar down!"

"Shan't!" roared Bunter. "That beast Loder gave me a fearful whopping the other day. He was going to give me some more, only Warren of the Fifth butted in and stopped him. Now I've got a chance to make him sit up. It's as safe as houses. How will he know who mopped ink over him, from a window twenty feet over his head? Besides, it's Coker's window. He can think it was Coker, if he likes!"

"And is Coker going to let you carry on, from his study window?" asked Nugent.

"He ain't there. Don't you know there's a meeting of the Fifth Form Debating Society in the games study? They're all there jawing. I say, you fellows, don't waste time—I may be too late for Loder—"

"The later the better, I think," said Harry. "You unspeakable ass, if Loder of the Sixth gets a shower of ink on his napper, he will raise Cain. You'll be spotted—"

"I tell you, he won't know!" roared Bunter. "How will he know a Remove chap was in a Fifth Form study? Look here, are you going to give me that ink or not?"

"Not!" chuckled Wharton. "Well, I dare say this will do," said Bunter. "I've got about a pint. I fancy Loder won't like a pint of ink down his neck. I say, gerrout of the way, Wharton! Wharrer you sticking at the door for?"

Harry Wharton laughed. "You're not going out with that ink, you fathead! You're going to stay here till Loder's wandered away from the danger-zone."

"Why, you cheeky beast!" roared Bunter, in great wrath. "Think you're going to stop me?"

"Just that!" agreed Wharton. "What's the good of asking for a flogging, you fat ass? You won't like it when you get it."

"Mind your own business!" howled Bunter.

"It's my business, at the present moment, to keep you from hunting trouble, old fat man. It's the duty of sane people to look after potty people," explained the captain of the Remove. "That's why they have lunatic asylums."

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Bunter.

"You can look on me as your keeper, just at present."

"You cheeky ass!" howled Bunter. "Will you gerraway from that door?"

"No!"

"I—I say, old chap, do let a chap pass! Loder may be gone—I mean, I ain't going to mop this ink over Loder—"

"You're not!" assented Wharton.

"The—the fact is, Quelch sent me to get some ink! He—he's told me to fill the inkpots in the Form-room. I say, he's waiting for me."

"Let him wait!" said Harry.

"You can't keep a beak waiting, you ass! Look here, I don't mean Quelch—I mean the Head! The Head told me to fill the inkpots in the Sixth Form Room. Now, you know a fellow can't keep a headmaster waiting. Lemme get out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Quelch—I mean the Head—is waiting for me this very minute—"

"Pile it on!"

"If you don't believe me, Wharton—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look here, if you don't let me out of this study, I'll jolly well punch your head, so there!" roared Bunter.

"Get on with it!"

"Beast! Gerraway!"

Bunter rolled to the door. Holding the jar of ink in one hand he grabbed at the door-handle with the other.

Harry Wharton took hold of the back of his collar and jerked him back.

"Leggo!" howled Bunter.

"You silly ass, I tell you— Oh! Ow! Gooorggh! Ooooch!" spluttered the captain of the Remove, as Bunter, evidently in a desperate state, jerked the jam-jar at him, and a wave of ink splashed in his face.

Wharton let go the fat Owl's collar, and staggered back. He clawed at the ink drenching his face, gurgling and gasping.

"Urrrgh! Ooogh! Ooogh! Urrrgh!"

Bunter whipped open the door. He whipped into the passage. He whipped

across the landing towards the Fifth Form studies.

Wharton did not follow him. Wharton was busy with ink. He grabbed out his handkerchief, and dabbed ink from his eyes and nose and mouth. He gasped and gurgled as he dabbed.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Frank Nugent. "You look like a jolly old Ethiopian, old bean!"

"Ooogh!" Wharton spluttered and dabbed. "Ugggh! I'll kick that fat villain! Ooogh! I'll jump on him! Urrrgh!"

Nugent chuckled. "You want a wash, old chap!" he said.

"Urrrgh!"

Harry Wharton had wanted to restrain the reckless Owl, and save him from himself, as it were. Now, what he chiefly wanted was a wash!

Billy Bunter was left to his own egregious devices, while the captain of the Remove went along to the tap at the end of the passage to wash off his Abyssinian complexion. Billy Bunter had only half a pint of ink left—Wharton had had half! But if Gerald Loder of the Sixth was still in the same spot, it looked as if he was going to get that half-pint!

Jim Warren, the boy with a borrowed name, has been up against it more than once since he has been at Greyfriars; but never before has he had to contend with such a serious matter as—blackmail!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter Gets On With It!

WHAT do you want, you fat freak?"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

Coker of the Fifth was stooping over the fender, about to stir his study fire. He had taken the poker in hand for that purpose when his door opened, and he glanced round instead.

He stared at Billy Bunter—not genially. Coker had no use for Remove fags, anyhow. And Bunter had not even knocked at the door before coming in. Only Potter and Greene were entitled to enter that study without knocking. Even Warren, the fellow in the Fifth whom Coker most delighted to honour, would tap before he came in.

So when the fat Owl of the Remove rolled in, unheralded by a knock, Coker stared and glared, and took a business-like grip on the poker in his hand. He had been going to stir the fire with that poker. Now he thought of another use for it.

Bunter jumped, greatly startled. He had not had the faintest idea that Coker was in the study.

There was a meeting of the Fifth Debating Society in the games study, and he had seen the seniors going there in a crowd, Coker and Potter and Greene among them. How was Bunter to know that Coker, insisting upon speaking out of order and at undesired length, had been howled down, and had departed from the debate in a bad temper, slamming the door of the games study behind him, and returning to his own study like Achilles to his tent?

Bunter did not know. But he knew now that Coker was in his own study; for there was Coker, standing and glaring at him, with a poker in his hand

and an expression which made Bunter feel very uneasy, considering the poker!

"You cheeky little fat frog," went on Coker, "barging into a senior study without even knocking! I'll—"

Then Coker observed the jar of ink in Bunter's paw, and broke off in surprise. He had been about to stir, not the fire, but the Owl of the Remove, with the poker in his hand. But, in his surprise, he stopped.

"What the dooce are you doing with that ink?" he demanded. "Ink in a jam-jar! Great pip! What on earth have you brought that here for?"

Bunter could have groaned. All this waste of time meant that Loder of the Sixth might walk away and escape the deadly vengeance planned by the vengeful Owl.

If Loder cleared off before Bunter got going with the ink, all Bunter's trouble was wasted. It was probable that he had a kicking to come from Wharton—and all for nothing!

Obviously, he could not mop that ink over Loder from Horace Coker's study window under Horace Coker's eyes. Secrecy was required in such an enterprise as inking a prefect. Indeed, a fellow could not possibly be too secretive about such an enterprise as that!

"I—I—I—" stammered Bunter. He blinked at Coker through his big spectacles over the jam-jar in dismay. "I—I—I— You see, I—I—I—"

"Japing in this study—what?" asked Coker, his eyes beginning to gleam. "I heard of somebody sticking gum in Hacker's armchair the other day! Is that what you're up to here with your ink—what?"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "The—the fact is, I—I thought you—you might have run out of ink in this study, Coker, so—so I brought some—"

Coker was not a suspicious or distrustful fellow. But even Coker was not likely to swallow that explanation. The inkpot in Coker's study might have been as dry as the Ogaden desert without Billy Bunter bothering about it.

"Well—" said Coker. "My hat! You lying little fat worm!"

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"I'll give you ink!" said Coker.

He advanced on Bunter, lunging with the poker. He had said that he would give Bunter ink, but that was only a figure of speech. What he gave him was poker!

"Oooogh!" gasped Bunter, as the business end of the poker poked in his fat ribs. "Gooogh!"

Poke, poke, poke!

"Oogh! Beast! Yooogh!" spluttered Bunter. "Gooogh! I say— Ooogh! I mean, scroooogh! Woogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker, greatly amused. "Have a few more! Take that—and that—and that!"

Bunter dodged wildly from the lunging poker. Coker headed him off from the door, and the fat Owl backed round the study table. Horace Coker followed him round, lunging.

Poke, poke, poke!

Bunter howled and yelled wildly. He felt as if he was punctured in five or six places.

"Ow! Beast! Keep off! Oooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

Poke, poke!

Bunter, getting round the table, followed by Coker, made a wild break for the door. After him went Coker, poking!

"Yaroo!" roared Bunter, as he got a lunge in his podgy back.

He staggered, and went on his fat hands and knees.

Crash! The jam-jar hit the floor in his fat hand.

Its contents shot out in a flood over Coker's carpet. Bunter's fat hands dabbled in a pool of ink.

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Coker. Really, Coker might have foreseen some such accident when he chased a fellow carrying a jar of ink with a lunging poker. But the sight of half a pint of ink streaming over his carpet—a gift from his Aunt Judy—infuriated Coker. "Why, I—I—I'll—"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. He bounded up, still clutching the jar in hand, and leaped wildly for the door. Coker's foot shot after him.

It was fortunate for Bunter that Coker's other foot slipped in the pool of ink.

With one foot in the air and the other slipping from beneath him, Horace Coker was left without any visible means of support.

Naturally, he sat down.

He sat in the ink!

Billy Bunter shot into the passage. In about the millionth part of a second Bunter whipped into the next study, closed the door, and turned the key.

That study was No. 4; it belonged to Warren, Hilton and Price of the Fifth. But they were all at the debate, so the coast was clear.

Inside Warren's study, Bunter listened at the door, with his fat heart palpitating. He guessed that Coker would pursue. He did not, indeed, need to be very bright to guess that one.

He heard a roar of wrath and tramping feet. Coker, with ink dripping from trousers, whirled into the passage.

Bunter grinned breathlessly as he heard the tramping feet go rushing down the passage towards the landing.

Coker, naturally, supposed that the fat Removeite had fled in the direction of the Remove studies. In that direction he pursued him. It did not dawn on Coker's powerful brain that Bunter had gone up the passage instead of down and dodged into a study.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

He was relieved of his fears now. Coker was welcome to search for him up and down the Remove studies as long as he liked.

Safe in that quarter, the Owl of the Remove remembered the business in hand. His first proceeding was to open the lower sash of the study window and peer out.

Was Loder still there? If he was, Bunter was prepared to carry on.

He was!

Blinking down through his big spectacles from above, Billy Bunter had a birdseye view of Loder of the Sixth, still leaning against the old stone buttress below Coker's window, perusing his paper. The fact was that the sportsman of the Sixth was perusing the page of the newspaper that was devoted to horse-racing, and he was keenly interested to know what Bobbin Badfellow had to say about the form of Nobbled Ned for the Cheatem Stakes.

Loder had a "quid" on Nobbled Ned with Mr. Banks at the Three Fishers, so the subject was one of intense interest to him, though his interest in such a subject would, perhaps, have surprised his headmaster.

Anyhow, there he was—still right under Coker's window. From the sill of Coker's window it would have been perfectly easy to tip a jar of ink over his head—easy as falling off a form.

Warren's window, however, was quite near Coker's, being that of the next study. It was not quite so convenient for Bunter's purpose; but it was available—and Coker's wasn't!

Bunter blinked round the study. He had lost his ink—Wharton had half of

it on his face, and Coker most of the other half on his trousers! But there was generally ink to be found in a study.

There was an inkpot on the table; fortunately full. Bunter tipped it into his jar. There was a bottle of gum on Price's desk. It followed the ink into the jar. It was hardly enough, but on the shelf was a bottle of embrocation, used for rubbing the damages sustained in football. Bunter poured it into the jar. He had enough fluid now!

He went back to the window.

His little round eyes gleamed through his big round spectacles at the unconscious head of Gerald Loder. There was the beast who had whopped him—at his mercy!

Instead of dropping the shower directly on Loder's head, as he might have done from Coker's window, Bunter had to sling it about six or seven feet to the left, from Warren's window. He calculated his aim with great care.

Swoooosh!

It flew!

It did not land on Loder's head! It landed in his right ear! Really, it was just as good. Loder got it!

Loder bounded.

Bunter popped back from the window.

A wild yell sounded below.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He had done it! Now he had to disappear before he was discovered. He pitched the empty jar into the study wastepaper-basket, whipped to the door, unlocked it, and dashed into the passage.

There was a roar in the passage.

Coker, coming back unappeased from a fruitless hunt in the Remove, was just in time to behold Billy Bunter whipping out of Warren's study.

"Oh!" roared Coker. "There you are!"

"Oh lor'!" panted Bunter. "Oh, scissors! Oh!"

Up the passage went Bunter, as if he were on the cinder-path. After him went Horace Coker, covering the ground in great style. Both of them disappeared round the corner at the upper end of the Fifth Form passage, both going strong!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bend Over, Warren!

JIM WARREN came into the study and threw the door shut.

The "debate" was still going on in the games study at the lower end of the passage. But Warren of the Fifth had, perhaps, had enough to go on with. The Fifth were solemnly debating the serious question "Whether the British Empire could survive without the Public School System?" Most of them doubted it!

But Jim, as it happened, had other matters on his mind, of a more personal kind, and he felt, perhaps, that he could safely leave the British Empire to struggle on for a bit on its own. He had something to think out, and he wanted to be alone to think it out.

He took a letter from his pocket.

It was addressed to James Warren, at Greyfriars School Kent, England, and bore the postmark of Hong Kong.

It was still unopened.

A good many fellows had noticed that letter in the rack that morning. Letters did not often come to the school from far-off China. Indeed, only Wun Lung of the Remove, as a rule, had correspondence from that distant land.

But most of the fellows knew that Sir Arthur Warren, Baronet, had taken up a diplomatic post in China, so there was

no doubt that this particular letter came from him to his son at Greyfriars.

Sir Arthur had started on his journey to China just before the term began at Greyfriars. Apparently he was now at, or near, his destination.

It did not surprise anybody that a letter should come to Warren of the Fifth from the baronet in China. But it would have surprised them very much had they known that it was still unopened.

Warren did not open it now.

He stood turning it over in his hands, with a puzzled, perplexed, and disturbed expression on his handsome face.

The fact was, that he could not open that letter, because, although it was addressed to James Warren at Greyfriars School, it was not intended for him.

His name was James Warren, though he was never called anything but "Jim" by people who knew him. His cousin, of the same name, was always called "James."

Harry Wharton knew, and some of his friends knew, that Jim Warren, of the Fifth Form, was not—as he was supposed to be at the school—the son of Sir Arthur.

They knew that a certain hulking, unpleasant, bullying fellow, now staying with a rowdy party at Popper Court, a few miles from Greyfriars, was the genuine James.

Why Jim had come to the school in the place of James, and, above all, why James was letting him carry on with it, they did not know—and could not guess.

But they were keeping the secret, though it made them feel rather uncomfortable at times. They had taken Jim's word for it that there was no wrongdoing on his part.

That Jim Warren was "straight," as the chums of the Remove believed, was fairly clear, from his behaviour now. An unscrupulous impostor could have dealt with the letter easily enough.

It would have been easy to drop it into the study fire and have done with it.

Jim was not thinking of anything of the kind.

The letter was not his property. It was written to the fellow whose place he had taken at Greyfriars. It had to go to the fellow to whom it was addressed.

But he was uncertain and undecided how to deal with the matter. He did not want to see James, with whom he was on the worst of terms. He could never see James without wanting to punch his head—which, indeed, had happened more than once. But he realised that he had to see James.

James had to have the letter. And Jim wanted to know whether he was going to answer it.

It was not likely that James would take the trouble. James, an unpleasant specimen in every imaginable way, was a disrespectful and ungrateful son to a rather foolishly indulgent father. Two to one he would not even read the letter. Ten to one he would not answer it. But the fellow in a borrowed name did not want to be left in doubt on the point.

He laid the letter on the table and paced to and fro in the study, thinking it over. He noticed, but without heeding, that an empty gum-bottle and an empty embrocation bottle lay on the table, and that some ink was spilt. He was not aware that the inkpot was empty, neither did he observe an empty inky jam-jar reposing in the wastepaper-basket. He was thinking about James, and that letter for James, and was glad that Hilton and Price were at the

debate, leaving him alone to do his thinking.

But he was interrupted. There were tramping feet in the Fifth Form passage, and a loud and angry voice—the voice of Loder of the Sixth. That angry voice penetrated through the closed door of Study No. 4.

"I tell you it was from a Fifth Form window—I believe Warren's! I saw that Warren's window was open. The others were shut—"

"But it's utter rot!" That was the voice of Wingate of the Sixth, captain of Greyfriars. "As if a senior would play such a silly trick—"

"Look at me! Can't you see I've been smothered?"

"Yes, but—"

"I'm certain it came from Warren's window—"

"Oh, you're here?" exclaimed Wingate, looking in over Loder's shoulder, while Loder gave the Fifth Former an inky and deadly glare.

"Yes, I'm here," said Jim. "Why shouldn't I be here, in my own study?"

"You rotten hound!" roared Loder.

"What the dickens—"

"By gad, I'll make you pay for it! I'll make you understand you can't rag a prefect like this, you sneaking rotter!" bawled Loder.

Warren's eyes gleamed.

"Prefect or not, you'll speak more civilly in this study!" he snapped.

"What have I done, you bawling ass? Or, rather, what do you fancy I have done? Have you come here to rag me again because Wingate's picked me out to play for the first eleven? I've heard enough about that from you!"

was glaring round the study for evidence, and it was easy to find. "Look!"

He kicked over the wastepaper-basket, and an empty jam-jar rolled out, dripping ink as it rolled.

Wingate stared at it. So did Warren.

"And look here!" yelled Loder.

He rushed to the open window and pointed at the sill. On the stone sill was a splash of spilt ink.

"Well, my hat!" gasped Wingate.

"Warren, you utter ass, what made you play such a potty trick?"

Jim Warren stared at those evidences of guilt like a fellow in a dream. He was as astonished as Wingate, or rather more so.

"I—I didn't!" he gasped. "I—I never—I haven't the faintest idea



"Yaroooooh! Beast! Keep off!" As Coker advanced with the poker, Bunter made a wild break for the door. A lunge in his podgy back sent him staggering, and he went down on his fat hands and knees. Crash! The jam-jar hit the floor, and its contents shot out over Coker's carpet. "Why, you—you—you—" gasped Coker.

"Oh, you're always girding at Warren! Why not Price's, or Hilton's? It's their study, too!" growled Wingate.

"I'm going to see!"

"Oh, see if you like, but I believe all the Fifth Form men are at their debate—"

The door of Study No. 4 was hurled open.

Warren stood and stared. He forgot the problem on his mind and the letter lying on the table, as he stared at Gerald Loder.

Loder of the Sixth presented quite a remarkable aspect. One side of his face was drenched with ink, mixed with other fluids. The mixture had run down inside and outside his collar. Evidently a big splash of ink had caught him on one side of the head. The contrast between the two sides of Loder's face was quite startling. On one side he was a white man, on the other an Ethiopian—quite a startling study in black and white!

"What the thump—" exclaimed the amazed Warren.

"You chucked this ink over me!" raved Loder.

"I did?" gasped Warren.

"You know you did!"

"I know I didn't!" Warren burst into a laugh. "You howling ass! If you weren't a prefect I should have punched your head, more than once! You've asked for it often enough. But I shouldn't be likely to play silly fag tricks on you or anybody else, I hope."

"It's all rot, Loder!" said Wingate.

"Warren wouldn't—"

"He did!" roared Loder. "It came from his window—the only open window in the Fifth! It's still open! He's here alone—I knew he'd be here! Why, look here—" Loder pointed to the gum-bottle and the embrocation bottle, on the table. "There's gum and embrocation mixed in that muck he chucked over me. Look!"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Wingate, staring at the empty bottles in astonishment. "Warren, did you—"

"And look here!" roared Loder. He

— I—I suppose somebody's been here—"

"Yes, you've been here!" roared Loder. "You sneaked away while all the other fellows were at the debate—I suppose you noticed me standing down there on the path, reading the news from Abyssinia. Now, you cheeky rotter, bend over!"

Loder had his ashplant with him. He gripped it, and brandished it.

"Bend over!" he roared.

Warren fairly gasped.

"B-b-bend over!" he stuttered.

"Yes, you dad! Yes, you rotter! Senior or not, I'm going to whop you!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Bagging Bunter!

"BEND over!"

Loder fairly roared.

Jim Warren gazed at him. He did not bend over. He had not the slightest intention of bending over. He could hardly believe

that Loder was in earnest. Certainly he looked as if he was. The side of his face that was not black with ink was red with fury.

"Do you hear me?" bawled Loder.

"I'm not deaf! I think you can be heard all over Greyfriars!" said Jim Warren contemptuously.

"I've told you to bend over!"

"You can tell me till you're black in the face—black on both sides of your face, I should say!"

"Will you bend over?"

"No, I won't!"

In theory, at least, any fellow who was not a prefect was subject to a "whopping" from the official ashplant at Greyfriars School. In practice, Fifth Form seniors never did the "bend-over" like juniors. The idea of Blundell, the captain of that Form, bending over like a fag, would have made all Greyfriars gasp. Jim Warren was aware of the rule, which was honoured in the breach, but not in the observance. He had no intention whatever of making history at Greyfriars as the only Fifth Form senior who had ever taken "six on the bags" from a prefect's ashplant.

"Hold on!" Wingate interposed. "Warren, you must have been mad to do such a thing. I know Loder's been rather a brute to you, with his fat-headed idea that you've got his place in the first eleven. But—"

"Are you as big a fool as Loder?" snapped Warren. His own temper was fast rising. "Do you think I should chuck ink over a fellow's head? Have a little sense!"

Wingate knitted his brows.

"Don't talk rot!" he snapped. "I thought you were at the debate, and told Loder so. I find you here, with a jar that's been full of ink—spilt ink on your window-sill where it was chucked out over Loder. What the thump do you mean?"

"I mean that I know nothing about it!" roared Warren. "And if you can't take my word about that, you can do the other thing!"

The Greyfriars captain looked grim.

He liked Warren—and he did not like Loder. There had been trouble between the two ever since Jim had been picked for the first eleven and Loder left off. Loder was to blame for that. But he had to back up a fellow-prefect—and this case seemed clear.

"That will do, Warren," said Wingate curtly. "You're a new man here, but you've been here long enough to know that you can't shout at a prefect—or mop ink over a prefect's head. It's perfectly plain what you've done—"

"Rubbish!" snapped Warren.

"You're getting some of his cheek now, Wingate!" sneered Loder. "I hope you like it. I've had enough of it."

"You've asked for it!" snapped Wingate. "Making out that he had your place in the eleven—as if any fellow was entitled to a place, except on his Soccer form! And you've raked up that silly old story about the chap making out that he's somebody else and not himself. But that's no excuse for the silly ass mopping a jar of ink over your head—"

"I've told you!" hooted Warren.

"You've told lies!" roared Loder.

"You're telling lies when you call yourself Warren, which isn't your name, as that young rotter, Wharton, knows, if he chose to speak. You're—"

"Stop that, you dummy!" snapped Wingate. "We've not come here for that. Now, look here, Warren, after what you've done—"

"After what he's done I'm going to whop him!" said Loder, between his teeth. "If a Fifth Form man chooses to act like a fag he can be treated like a fag. You'll bend over, Warren, here and now!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind!" said Jim Warren. "And if you touch me with that cane, Loder, I'll knock you spinning!"

Loder swished the cane. But he did not touch Warren with it.

The Fifth Former's hands were clenched, his

eyes gleaming. One lick of the cane and Gerald Loder would have been knocked out of the study, heels over head. Certainly, a fellow might, and probably would have been "sacked" for knocking down a Sixth Form prefect. All the same, Loder's nerve failed at the test.

Wingate broke in.

"Warren, I've got to back Loder up in this. I know Loder's been to blame in the rows you've had; but there's a limit, and you've jolly well passed it! As head prefect and captain of the school, I order you to bend over and take six!"

Warren panted.

Loder's eyes glittered with triumph. He was going to have his way—and for once, at least, he had the support of the captain of Greyfriars. Defiance of the head prefect meant one thing, and one thing only—a brief visit to the Head and catching the next train for home! Loder would have been glad enough to see Warren defiant.

"Wingate!" breathed Warren. "I tell you—"

"Bend over!" said Wingate tersely.

"Yaroooooh!" came a roar from the passage.

"You young rotter!" came another roar.

"Yoop! Leggo! Wow!"

The two prefects and Warren stared into the passage—at the surprising sight of Billy Bunter, of the Remove, with the grip of Horace Coker, of the Fifth, on the back of his fat neck.

"I'll teach you!" roared Coker. "I'll give you a tip! I've sat in that ink! My bags are soaked! My carpet's ruined! I'll teach you, you fat young scoundrel! I'm going to rub that ink off my carpet with your face! See?"

"Ow! Wow! Yoop! Leggo!"

"I'll give you mopping ink over Fifth Form studies! I'll give you ink! This way, you cheeky fat sweep!"

"What the thump are you up to, Coker?" gasped Wingate.

"Eh?" Coker stared round into No. 4. "Oh, you there, Warren? Has this young rotter been up to anything in your study? I spotted him coming out of it, and got after him—"

"Oh!" gasped Warren.

He saw light now!

"I didn't—I never!" gasped Bunter. "Ow! I haven't done anything in your study, Warren—not a thing! I only dodged in because that beast Coker was after me—leggo!"

"You needn't barge in, Wingate!" said Coker. "I'm dealing with that fat little scoundrel! I tell you he had a jar of ink and upset it in my study, and I sat in it—"

"Oh!" gasped Wingate.

"I'm going to rub it off my carpet with his face!" roared Coker. "See? I sat in the ink! And he dodged into Warren's study when I went to the Remove to look for him. I spotted him as I was coming back. And—"

"Don't talk so much, Coker!" said Wingate. "Warren, old man, I'm sorry! Loder, it's pretty clear now who mopped that ink over you from Warren's window. Coker, you can leave Bunter to me."

"I'm going to rub up that ink with his face—"

"Yaroooooh!"

"I'm going—"

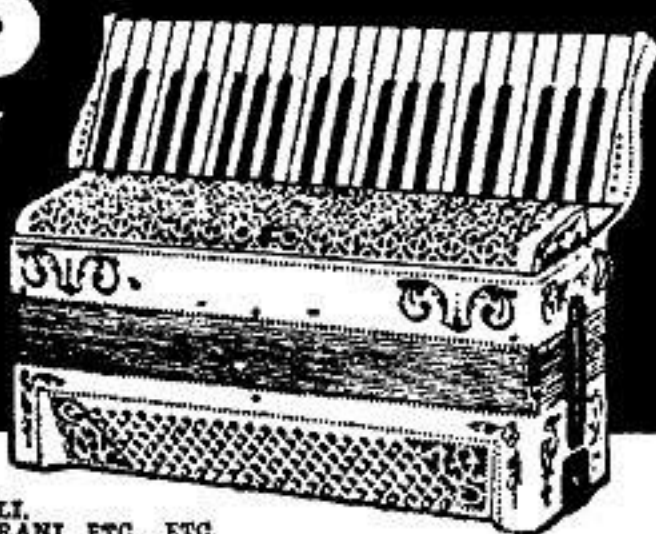
"You're going to shut up!" said Wingate. "Leave Bunter to me, and clear! And sharp!"

"I tell you—" roared the indignant Horace.

"And I tell you that if you don't shut up I'll give you six!" rapped Wingate. "Get out of it!"

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Horace Coker gave the captain of Greyfriars one glare of indignant, speechless wrath, and got out of it.

Billy Bunter would have been glad to get out of it, also. But there was no getting out of it for Bunter. Wingate grasped him by a fat shoulder and hooked him into Warren's study. And as his eyes, and spectacles, fell on Loder there, with his mixed complexion of black and white, the Owl of the Remove gave a yelp of apprehension.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

No Luck for Loder!

GERALD LODER set his teeth. The look on his inky face made Bunter fairly cringe.

But for that ass Coker, the fat Owl would have got clear, and his visit to the Fifth would have remained undiscovered. That that would have led to unpleasant results for another fellow, Bunter had not reflected—reflection was not in Bunter's line. Certainly, he had not thought of getting anybody in Study No. 4 into a row. He had not, in fact, thought of anything, except mopping the ink over Loder and getting clear himself. Thinking was not William George Bunter's long suit.

"So you did it, you mad young ass!" said the Greyfriars captain. "Do you know that Warren was supposed to have done it?"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "How could Warren have done it, when he wasn't here?"

"I must have come in only a few minutes after you left, you young duffer," said Warren. "Why the thump did you pick my study?"

"I didn't!" gasped Bunter. "I was going into Coker's study, but he was there, you see—I thought he was at the debate, but he was there—"

"Thank goodness we've got the right man!" said Wingate. It was a great relief to him.

It was a still greater relief to Jim Warren. How the matter would have ended, he could hardly imagine.

It was no relief to Loder! He wanted the guilty man—if it was Warren! But he wanted Warren, anyhow, guilty or not! Giving his football rival six with the ashplant would have been sheer joy to Loder. He was feeling like a cat whose mouse had got away at the last moment.

"I—I—I say, it wasn't me, you know!" said Bunter uneasily. "I—I was quite surprised to see Loder all inky! I never had any ink! I never thought of mopping it over Loder because he whopped me the other day! You can ask Wharton and Nugent! I told them!"

"You told them you were going to mop that ink over Loder?"

"Oh! No! I told them I wasn't—I—I mean, I never told them anything at all! I haven't been to their study. I never went there to ask them for some more ink, and Wharton never tried to stop me, and—"

"That will do!"

"All right, Wingate! C-c-can I go now?"

"Hardly!"

"But I—I say, I never did it! I never knew Loder was sticking under Coker's window reading the racing news—"

"I was reading the war news!" said Loder, between his teeth.

"Oh crikey! I—I mean the war news! I—I saw Loder looking at the—the news from Abyssinia—not the sporting news at all!" gasped Bunter.

"Then you did not see him there?"

"Oh, no! I haven't seen Loder all day! I—I'd almost forgotten there was such a chap at Greyfriars!" gasped Bunter.

"Well, my hat!" said Wingate.

"I—I can't imagine how Loder got that ink over him," groaned Bunter. "It—it's a mystery to me! Perhaps Coker did it!"

"Coker?" gasped Wingate.

"Well, he loathes Loder, you know, like everybody else—you should have heard him talking about Loder hacking Warren, and crocking him for the St. Jim's match. Pip-pip—perhaps that's why he did it!"

"It seems," said Wingate, "that that potty young ass was going to use Coker's window, and used Warren's instead, because Coker was there."

"The young ass!" said Warren.

"I—I say—I never did it!" groaned Bunter. "It's all a mystery to me—an absolute mystery—"

"Bunter says he never did it!" broke in Loder. "I don't see that it's proved that he did, either."

Bunter jumped.

His eyes almost popped through his spectacles as he blinked at the bully of the Sixth.

Loder was the last fellow whom he would have expected to put in a word for him.

It did not dawn on his fat brain that Loder was keen on "getting" Warren, and willing to let the guilty man escape for that purpose.

"I—I—I say, Wingate," gasped the fat Owl, "you hear what Loder says. Loder knows I never did it."

Wingate fixed his eyes on Gerald Loder with a look of cold contempt.

"You know it was Bunter!" he said.

"Are you still trying to make out that it was Warren because you've got a down on the chap? Is that your idea of a prefect's duty?"

"You know perfectly well how the matter stands, Loder!" said Jim Warren quietly. "You know that that young ass did it!"

Loder gritted his teeth.

"Well, if he did, you had a hand in it!" he snarled. "You let him use your study window—"

"Did Warren know anything about it, Bunter?" asked Wingate curtly.

"Eh? No! He wasn't here," stammered Bunter. "There was nobody in the study. Not that I was here, you know! I don't mean that! I—I never came into the study at all! I—I wouldn't!"

"Coker saw you leaving it, you young ass!"

"Well, you know what a fool Coker is!" groaned Bunter. "He—he fancied it, you know! I haven't been in the Fifth Form passage at all. I—I wasn't in Coker's study when I upset the ink there—"

"I think that will do," said Wingate.

"Bunter, you will come to my study, and I'll try to teach you that you mustn't mop ink over a prefect's head."

"Oh lor'!"

"You can leave him to me, Wingate!" said Loder, setting his teeth. "I will deal with Bunter!" Warren being out of his reach, the bully of the Sixth had to be satisfied with making Bunter suffer for his sins—and at the prospect, Bunter gave a yell of apprehension.

"I—I say, Wingate—"

Wingate shook his head.

"You can leave Bunter to me," he said coolly. "You've just said that you're not satisfied that he did it. I'm quite satisfied that he did, and so I will deal with him. Follow me, Bunter!"

He left the study, and Bunter promptly followed. He was not going to enjoy that visit to Wingate's study. But

a whopping from Wingate was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine, compared with a whopping from Loder in his present mood.

Loder stood, inky and furious. He glared after Wingate and Bunter—and then glared at Warren.

Jim smiled.

"Mind getting out of my study, Loder?" he asked politely.

"You rotter!" Loder choked. "I'll get you yet! You've crawled out of it this time, but—"

"Shut the door after you!"

"You rotter! You impostor! I'll make that young scoundrel Wharton tell me what he knows about you!" Loder, in his rage and disappointment, had completely lost control of his temper. "You've got my place in the eleven—and you ought to be kicked out of the school—a fellow in a false name, and—"

"Are you wound up?"

"Calling yourself James Warren!" Loder pointed to the letter on the table. "There's a letter for James Warren, from Hong Kong—and it's not been opened. It's another fellow's letter, and you dare not open it!"

Jim started. Thus reminded of the letter from Hong Kong, he picked it up quickly and slipped it into his pocket. Loder gave a savage, scoffing laugh.

"Get it out of sight!" he jeered. "That letter's for James Warren, the fellow whose name you are using here. By gad, I'll show you up yet! I'll show you up to all Greyfriars, as—"

"As a fellow who's picked to play for the school?" asked Warren coolly.

"That's what's worrying you, isn't it?"

"You rotter! You—"

"Get out of my study!"

Jim Warren made a stride forward. Loder gripped his ashplant hard. But he did not lift it. He backed into the passage.

"Just wait a little!" he breathed. "Wait till I show you up in your true colours—"

Slam!

The slamming door cut short Loder's flow of eloquence. He tramped away down the passage—and went down the stairs, greeted on all sides by smiles from fellows who stared at his mixed complexion.

He went to his study to get a very necessary wash—and as he passed Wingate's door he had the consolation of hearing wild howls from within. In Wingate's study Billy Bunter was suffering for his sins—though certainly not so severely as he would have suffered in Loder's study.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bait for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

It was a thrilling whisper. Harry Wharton & Co. looked round, quite startled.

It was the following morning, in break. The Famous Five of the Remove, walking by the leafless old elms in the quad, were talking football—an almost perpetual topic at Greyfriars just then.

That sudden, thrilling whisper came from behind one of the massive trees, and as they glanced round they beheld a fat form, blotted out of the general view behind the tree.

They gazed at Bunter.

He blinked at them through his big spectacles, with an uneasy blink.

"What the dickens—?" began Harry Wharton.

"I say, you fellows! Is that beast Loder coming?" gasped Bunter.

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"Loder?" said Bob Cherry. "He's in the quad!"

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

"You fat Owl!" said Johnny Bull. "Even Loder doesn't bite!"

"The bitefulness is not terrific, my esteemed idiotic Bunter!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"He's after me!" groaned Bunter.

"I say, he called to me in the quad a few minutes ago. I'm dodging the beast. I say, I jolly well know he's going to whop me!" moaned Bunter.

"He's waxy about getting that ink yesterday—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Wingate gave me six for that, and Loder's no right to give me any more!" groaned Bunter. "But I know he's jolly well going to. I could see it in his eye!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at the uneasy Owl dubiously. That Loder was "waxy" about getting a swamp of ink on his nut was probable—indeed, it was rather natural, and to be expected. Even a good-tempered fellow might have been waxy about it! Likely enough, he would have preferred to take the punishment of the fat Owl into his own hands.

Still, as Bunter had been "whopped" for his misdeeds by the captain of the school, even Loder could hardly rake it up again. Loder, undoubtedly, was a bully, and took the utmost advantage of his position as a prefect. But even Loder had to have a pretext.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Hero he comes!" murmured Bob.

Loder came along the path by the elms, looking about him. No doubt he was looking for William George Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, don't let him know I'm here!" gasped Bunter.

Loder, coming up, glanced at the Famous Five. He stopped short of the elm, so he did not see that there was anyone behind it. Billy Bunter hugged the gnarled old trunk in deep trepidation.

"Is Bunter about here?" asked Loder.

"Bunter?" repeated Bob Cherry. "I

can't see him, Loder." Which was perfectly true, as Bob was standing with his back to the fat Owl.

"He came this way!" snapped Loder.

"We didn't see him coming!" said Frank Nugent. Which again was perfectly true, as the juniors had seen nothing of Bunter till he whispered from behind the tree.

Loder gave an angry grunt.

Had he taken a few more steps he would have had a view of the farther side of the thick old elm—and Bunter! But it did not seem to occur to him that the fat junior had hunted cover.

He turned round, and looked across the quad. Plenty of fellows were in sight, in morning break—fellows of all Forms. But he did not spot the fat figure of the Owl of the Remove among them.

Harry Wharton & Co. suppressed their smiles. It was rather comic, from their point of view, for Loder to be standing within a few feet of the fellow he wanted without suspecting that he was there. In a casual sort of way, they recommenced the topic Bunter's thrilling whisper had interrupted—the coming football match with Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood.

Loder frowned angrily. He was about to walk away, when a whisper came from behind the elm:

"I say, you fellows! Is that beast Loder gone?"

Loder jumped.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

Loder gave the elms of the Remove a glare, pushed roughly through them, and stared round the elm.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, Loder, I—I'm not here!"

"You young ass!" said Loder. "Why are you skulking behind that tree?"

"I—I wasn't dodging you, Loder! I—I—I was—was—was—I was looking for—for caterpillars!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five. They did not expect Loder to swallow that explanation.

"Go to my study, Bunter—"

"Oh lor'!"

"And fetch the newspaper you'll find on the table."

"Eh?"

"And buck up, you young ass!" said Loder.

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. The Famous Five chuckled. That, apparently, was all Loder wanted.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Was—was—was that all you wanted, when you called me in the quad, Loder? I—I say, I—I'll go with—with pleasure."

"Cut off, you young ass!"

Billy Bunter rolled off to the House quite cheerfully. Lazy as the fat Owl was, he did not mind obliging Loder by fetching a newspaper from his study. He was deeply glad that it was nothing worse.

He rolled into the Sixth Form passage, and into Loder's study.

On the table lay a newspaper, opened at a map of Abyssinia. Beside it, lay an open box of caramels.

Bunter stretched out a fat hand to the newspaper—and paused. His eyes, and his spectacles fixed on the caramels.

Bunter liked caramels! He liked anything that was sweet and sticky. But he loved caramels with a deep and abiding affection. His fat fingers dipped into the box.

There were a dozen caramels. Billy Bunter felt that one would not be missed out of a dozen.

Unfortunately, one proved so nice that Bunter had another to follow it. He hoped that two would not be missed out of a dozen.

Still more unfortunately, he did not stop at two. Almost before he was aware of it, a third followed, then a fourth. The fact was, that the caramels were irresistible.

When Bunter was eating, he forgot lesser things. Those caramels were delicious. They weren't his, it was true—but they were rapidly becoming his. Six of them vanished—and then Bunter realised that the most unsuspecting owner of caramels would be bound to miss six out of twelve. On the principle that a fellow might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, Bunter finished the lot!

Then he grabbed up the newspaper, to leave the study, hoping—a rather faint hope—that Loder would not suspect him of having bagged the caramels.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, as he turned to the door. The figure of Loder of the Sixth was framed in the doorway.

Loder stepped into the study, an unpleasant smile on his face.

"Pilfering again!" he said genially.

"Oh scissors! I—I say, Loder, I never touched your caramels!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, I—I think it was the cat—"

"You mopped a jar of ink over me yesterday, Bunter!" said Loder, taking up his ashplant. "You've been caned for that, and, of course, the matter is at an end. Pilfering in a study is a much more serious matter! I shall have to give you six!"

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

"Bend over that chair!" said Loder.

Bunter blinked at him. Even Bunter could understand how his fat leg had been pulled. Loder could not cane him again for the affair of the ink. He had sent him to the study—baiting his trap with caramels. He knew what would happen when Bunter was left alone with sticky sweetstuffs. The hapless Owl had fallen blindly into the trap; the fat fish had taken the bait!

"I—I say, Loder, I—I'll pay for the caramels!" groaned Bunter. "I say, I'll get you a new box! I'm expecting a postal order—"

"Bend over that chair!"

"Oh lor'!"

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Bunter entered Loder's study, and his eyes fixed on the caramels on the table. Next moment, his fat fingers dipped into the box. Unbeknown to the fat junior, the figure of Loder was framed in the doorway!

In the lowest of spirits, Billy Bunter bent over the chair. Loder took aim with the ashplant and laid on the six with scientific skill. Each whop elicited a terrific howl from Bunter.

By the time Loder had finished, the fat Owl of the Remove was fairly doubled up.

Loder laid down the cane, grinning. "You can cut, Bunter!" he said, quite genially. "I advise you to think twice before you handle jars of ink again—I mean, before you pilfer in a Sixth Form study!"

"Ow! Yow! Wow!"

Billy Bunter went down the passage in a series of extraordinary contortions, as if he were trying to tie himself up in sailor's knots.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Just Like James!

"THAT rotter!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The esteemed and disgusting James!" remarked Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"Steer clear of the brute!" said Harry Wharton. "We don't want a row with Warren's cousin."

The chums of the Remove were sauntering along the Courtfield road towards the common. On the road was a gate that gave access to a bridle-path through Popper Court Woods. On the gate sat a beefy, ungainly fellow smoking a cigarette. It was James Warren.

He gave the Greyfriars juniors an inimical look. James' dislike of those five cheery juniors was fully reciprocated by them. They would have been quite pleased to jerk James off the gate and bump him in the grass if only in return for his scowl. But he was Warren's cousin, and they liked Warren of

the Fifth. On Jim's account they preferred to avoid another row with the unpleasant James.

So they would have walked on, elaborately taking no notice of the son and heir of Sir Arthur Warren, of Warren Croft. But James' jeering, disagreeable voice hailed them.

"Here, young Wharton!"

The juniors stopped. James had a riding-whip under his arm and he slipped it down into his hand. Wharton's eyes gleamed at him. If James had any idea of handling that riding-whip, James was booked for something in the nature of trouble.

"Well?" said Harry curtly. "Want anything?"

"You can tell that cad of a cousin of mine—"

"Carry your own messages!" interrupted Wharton. "I want nothing to do with you!"

James slipped down from the gate and tossed away the stump of his cigarette.

"I came to the school to see the cad last week," he said. "He had the cheek to go out and leave me to wait for him. Tell him—"

"I shall tell him nothing!" answered Harry coolly.

"You young rotter!" said James. "You know all about the game he's playing at your school, and so does your nigger pal! You saw me at Warren Croft in the holidays and you've known all this term that that cad isn't the fellow he makes himself out to be."

"Warren of the Fifth isn't a cad," said Harry. "and I'm sorry I can't say the same of his cousin."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Cherry. "You've not given him away," went on James, scowling. "Precious young rascal and no mistake. If your headmaster knew—"

"There's nothing to prevent you from going to Dr. Locke!" said Harry. "I don't know what your game is, James Warren, but it suits you, somehow, to let this go on or you'd jolly soon stop it. It's no business of mine. And you're not fit to clean Jim Warren's boots, anyhow!"

James gripped his riding-whip.

"I fancied you young rotters might be hanging about on a half-holiday," he said. "That's why I brought this whip out with me."

Harry Wharton laughed contemptuously.

"You'd better keep it to yourself, you hooligan!" he answered. "You've tackled us before and did not get the best of it."

James did not answer. No doubt he considered that, with the riding-whip in his hand, he was going to get the best of it this time. He made a rush at the juniors, slashing recklessly.

There was a roar! The slashing whip caught Wharton across the shoulders, and then Bob Cherry across the face.

James had no time for more.

Probably he expected the juniors to break into flight and pictured himself in chase, lashing as they ran.

If that was James' idea he had to wake up, as it were!

The Famous Five did not flee. They jumped at James and grabbed him on all sides.

Johnny Bull got hold of the whip and wrenched it away. Four fellows grasped James and jammed him down in the grass.

James struggled and roared. Bob rubbed his cheek where a red mark was left by the whip. His blue eyes were glinting.

"Stick that rotter across the gate!" he said. "He's started this and he can have all he wants, and a little more!"

He's going to learn not to be so handy with a riding-whip!"

"Yes, rather!" said Harry Wharton, between his teeth. "Sling him over the gate, and give me that whip, Johnny!"

James was a hefty and beefy fellow. He was rather hard to hold. But the juniors held him, dragged him to the gate, and slammed him over it face down. Head and shoulders hanging down on the inner side of the gate, long legs wriggling on the outer side, James was favourably placed for an application of his own riding-whip!

He kicked wildly! Frank Nugent captured one leg, Bob Cherry the other, and held. Harry Wharton swished the whip!

Swish!
The whip came down on James' riding breeches with a crack that rang like a pistol-shot through Popper Court Woods. Louder still rang the roar of James.

Swish, swish, swish, swish!
James bellowed.

Harry Wharton & Co. had wanted to pass on their way without trouble with Warren's cousin. James had insisted on trouble! Now he was getting it—more than he had bargained for!

Swish, swish, swish!
"Go it!" chuckled Bob. "That rotter's wanted teaching manners for a long time! This is the first lesson, James!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You young rotters!" yelled James. "I—I—I'll—yaroooh! Leave off! I'll smash the lot of you! I'll—whooooop!"

Swish, swish!
There was a sound of running feet in the road. A breathless voice shouted to the juniors.

"Stop! Stop that! Stop it at once!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's Warren!" ejaculated Bob.

Harry Wharton paused, riding-whip in hand. The juniors looked round. Jim Warren came running breathlessly to the spot. Apparently he had been coming that way and had sighted the startling scene from a distance.

He panted up.
"You young sweeps! What are you up to?" he exclaimed. "Drop that whip, Wharton! Let my cousin go!"

Wharton paused a moment. Then he nodded and threw the riding-whip into the grass. The other fellows released James, leaving him sprawling over the gate, roaring.

"All serene, Warren, old scout!" said Bob Cherry amicably. "The dear boy asked for it—didn't you, James?"

"Begged for it!" said Johnny Bull.
"The begfulness was terrific, my esteemed Warren!" grinned the nabob of Bhanipur.

James sprawled off the gate, spluttering and gasping with fury.

"Cut off, you young sweeps!" said Warren.

"Not our fault, Warren!" said Harry quietly. "But I dare say you know that as well as we do. Come on, you men!"

Warren of the Fifth made no answer. He was well aware of the nature of the brute, so to speak, and could have no doubt that James had asked for all that he had received. But he waved the juniors impatiently away, and they walked on towards Courtfield Common.

James grabbed up the riding-whip and made one stride after them; but he stopped—which was rather fortunate for James! He leaned, panting, on the gate, scowling at his cousin, and Harry Wharton & Co. disappeared up the road.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Cousins!

JIM WARREN watched the juniors out of sight. Then he turned to James, taking no heed of his scowl. He spoke quietly.

"I was coming up to Popper Court to see you, James."

"Like your cheek!" retorted James. "I haven't asked you to my friend's house, that I know of. Clarence Cook has rather a nobby party staying with him, and I don't care to introduce my poor relations there."

Jim compressed his lips. It was hard to tolerate the young blackguard's insolence, but he was very careful to keep his temper.

"I had to see you, James," he said, very quietly.

"You could have seen me at the school the other day, if you'd cared to stay in. You went out on purpose to avoid me!" snarled James.

"I didn't care to see you, and I don't now. But a letter has come from your father."

James stared and burst into a laugh.

"Oh, I see! Well, you've got my name at Greyfriars—you can have my letters, too. I don't want them."

"Sir Arthur has reached Hong Kong, it seems—"

"I'm not interested."

James, still wriggling from the swipes of the riding-whip, grinned as he wriggled. He seemed amused.

"You've planted yourself at Greyfriars in my name," he sneered. "You can deal with my correspondence. What would you have done with the letter if I hadn't happened to be staying here with Cook's gang? You never expected to find me near the school, I suppose, when you went to Greyfriars at the beginning of the term?"

"No. I suppose I should have sent the letter to Warren Croft." Jim wrinkled his brow in perplexity. "I never thought—"

"You should think before you borrow another fellow's name!" jeered James. "Did you expect to get by without any trouble? From what I can make out, half a dozen young rotters at the school know you're not the fellow you pretend to be. I don't know why they haven't told the wide world about it. Serve you right if they did."

"Never mind all that!" said Jim curtly. "As it happens, you're here, and I can hand you the letter. Here it is."

He took the letter from his pocket. James shrugged his thick shoulders. It was plain that he was not in the least interested in the letter from the old baronet in China.

"Don't you want it?" asked Jim.

"No," answered James coolly. "I don't! Keep it—along with my name. Think I don't know what's in it? The old bean hopes I'm getting on better at my new school than at my last. He hopes my kind masters have found me a good little boy, a dear good chap, instead of the troublesome fellow at Oakshott! He would like to get a letter from me, saying how my kind teachers love me. Well, he won't get it!"

Jim stood looking at the fellow. Sir Arthur Warren, perhaps, had a little forgotten the duties of a father in his devotion to his more or less serious diplomatic duties. Most of his time had been spent abroad, and he had seen little of James. But if he had not given James much in the way of time and attention, he had, at least, been an indulgent parent. So far as money went, at least, James had always had as much as he wanted, and much more than was good for him.

His disgraceful career at Oakshott had been a blow to the old baronet. James had come very near expulsion there, and though he had not actually been expelled, he had had to leave at the end of the previous term.

Jim knew that if James had come to Greyfriars he would have been sacked before the term was half through. And he knew how such news would have affected the old baronet, thousands of miles away, and hoping for the best for his scapegrace son.

James did not give a single thought to that. He did not want to continue his school career at all, and he bitterly resented his father's determination to send him to Greyfriars after he had to leave Oakshott.

How any fellow, even a brute like James, could be so indifferent to his father's feelings and wishes, was a puzzle to Jim Warren. He stood silent, looking at the fellow in perplexity.

The letter from China was still in his hand. James made no motion to take it. Jim's hand dropped to his side.

"Keep it!" jeered James. "Answer it, if you like. You're using my name; you may as well imitate my fist!"

"You rotter, cur!" breathed Jim, his face reddening.

"Why not?" grinned James. "The old bean would like a dutiful letter from you. He won't get one from me. Can't you see, you fool, that I can't answer the letter? Am I going to tell the pater that I haven't gone to Greyfriars at all? Don't be an ass!"

"You ought to have gone to Greyfriars, you rotter!" muttered Jim. "You know you ought to have done as your father wanted."

"As you did!" grinned James.

"Yes, as I did!" snapped Jim. "If you'd done the right thing I should never have got landed in this. You've taunted me a hundred times with being at the school in your name. Well, I'm fed-up with it, and I'm thinking of chucking it instead of holding on to the end of the term. You can have the place you've taunted me with borrowing from you."

James looked alarmed.

"Don't be a silly idiot!" he yapped. "I'm not asking you to leave, am I? No reason why you shouldn't carry on."

"You're making it as hard as you can for me to carry on. Your barging into the school keeps the fellows wondering and talking. Owing to some of the juniors knowing you by sight—a thing that couldn't be foreseen—there has been talk—rumours that I'm not the real James Warren at all. Now you've drawn everybody's attention to the fact that I've got a cousin of the same name as myself. How long do you think it will be before somebody jumps to it that you're the real man?"

"Some of them know already, but you seem to have squared them to keep it dark!" grinned James.

"They're my friends. But I've got enemies, too!" growled Warren. "There's one fellow—a prefect—who would be jolly glad to get on to the facts—not from a sense of duty, but because the silly ass thinks I've bagged his place in the first eleven. If he put two and two together—"

James chuckled.

"What a show-up for you!" he grinned. "So you're in the first eleven, are you? And high up in class, too, I've no doubt."

"Yes."

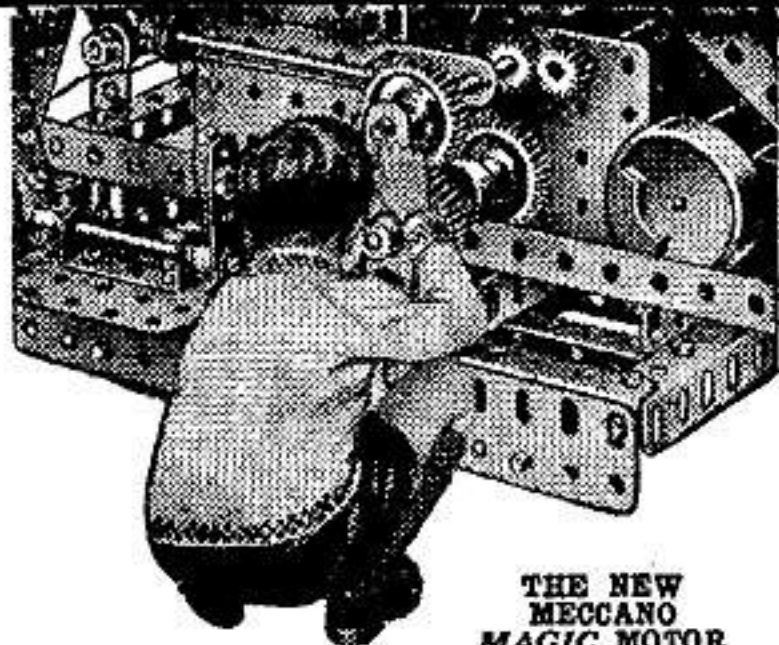
"You're getting me a good reputation!" chortled James.

"Oh, shut up!" exclaimed Warren savagely. "Look here, here's your letter. Will you take it and read it?"

(Continued on page 12.)

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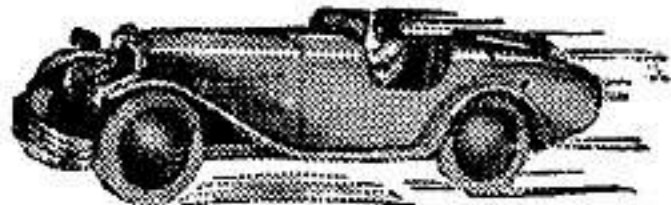
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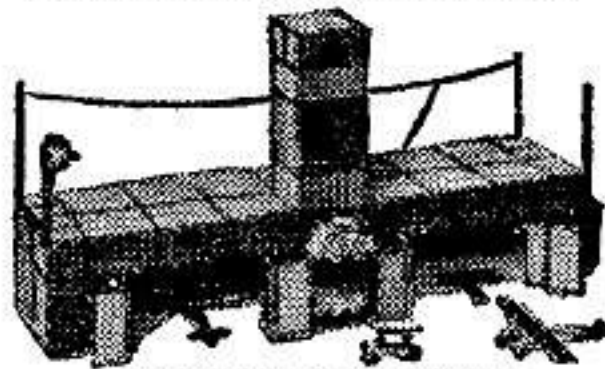
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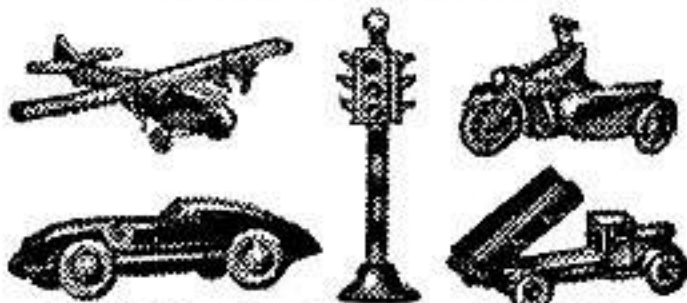
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"Yards of it, I expect," said James. "No, I won't. You can read it to me, if you like, while I have a smoke."

"I don't want to read your letter."

"Chuck it away, then!"

James resumed his seat on the gate and lighted a cigarette. Warren stood with the letter in his hand, undecided. Certainly he could not "chuck" it away, as James suggested. But it was clear that James was not going to read it.

"I'll read it to you, if you like," he said, at last.

"Go it; I don't mind!" grinned James.

"Open it, then."

"Can't you open it?"

"No," said Warren, between his teeth. "And if you don't open your own letter from your own father I'll knock you off that gate!"

James gave him a truculent look, but the gleam in Warren's eyes daunted him. He shrugged his shoulders, took the letter, tore open the envelope, and tossed it back to Warren.

"Keep your wool on, you fool!" he said. "There it is! You're more particular about a fellow's letter than a fellow's name, it seems!"

Warren, without answering, unfolded the letter and read it aloud, James smoking and yawning the while.

It was not a brief letter. Sir Arthur had not learned brevity in his diplomatic career.

It was, in fact, an extremely long-winded epistle.

Certainly, James, if he had taken the trouble to look at it at all, would not have read half of it.

But he had to hear it all now, from beginning to end.

The gist of it was that Sir Arthur entertained great hopes of hearing better things of James at his new school. Five or six times over he repeated what a blow it would be to him if James came to disaster at Greyfriars, as he had at Oakshott.

It was easy to see that the old baronet dreaded that the next news he would receive of his son was that he had been expelled from school.

James yawned, and smoked, and grinned occasionally. The letter came to an end at last.

Warren held it out to his cousin.

"Oh, chuck it away!" said James.

"Take it, I tell you," said Warren, in so tense a tone that James stretched out his hand to the letter and took it.

With a grin of defiance on his face, he crumpled it in his hand and tossed it away among the trees.

"That's that!" he sneered.

"You rotter!" breathed Warren.

"Oh, cut it out!" said James. "I never wanted the letter. I'm not going to answer it. I couldn't, in the circumstances, if I wanted to. You know that. You've bagged my place at Greyfriars. Keep it. You mean to, anyhow. Your poverty-stricken father can't afford your school fees. You're glad enough to get a term at school for nothing. Every man to his taste. All I want is to keep away from the rotten show. They'd have sacked me before this if I'd gone there—I'd have made them, if you come to that. Get on with your 'Yes, sir,' and 'Oh, sir!' and 'Please, sir,' and 'No, sir!'" James chuckled. "I don't want any of it. I'm not going to give you away—unless it suits me."

"Unless it suits you!" repeated Jim.

"Exactly! It doesn't suit me, at present! If it ever does, look out for squalls, you beggar-on-horseback! I—ooogh!"

Jim Warren had been very patient. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,450.

Now his temper flashed out. He reached at the hulking, jeering blackguard on the gate, seized him by the collar, and shook him like a terrier shaking a rat.

"Oooogh!" spluttered James. "Urrgggh!"

He yelled as he tumbled headlong off the gate. Warren let go his collar, and he sprawled there, roaring, in the grass by the road.

Jim gave him a glare of angry scorn, turned on his heel, and walked away.

James staggered to his feet. He shook his fist after his cousin, panting with rage. Then he fumbled in his pocket for his cigarettes.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Loder Wants to Know!

"PRICEY, old man!"

"Trot in!" said Price.

He was alone in Study No. 4 in the Fifth.

Loder, glancing round, ascertained that fact before he entered.

Loder came in and closed the door.

"Where's Warren?" he asked.

"Gone out, I believe."

"With Hilton?" asked Loder, with a sneer.

Hilton had been Price's pal before Warren came into the Fifth Form at Greyfriars. Since then Hilton had taken up football and dropped "gee-gees" and smokes, and had much less to do with Price.

"Hilton's at games practice, with some of the Fifth, I believe," answered Price.

He did not seem to notice Loder's sneer.

"And Warren's cutting games practice, is he—though he's picked out to play Highcliffe in the first eleven?"

"I believe he's gone out of gates. You haven't come here to talk about Warren, I suppose?" said Price.

"As a matter of fact, I have," answered Loder.

Price shifted uneasily in the arm-chair.

It was not very long since he had been Jim Warren's enemy, and had tried to interest Loder in his belief that Jim was passing in another fellow's name at Greyfriars.

Now it was not merely a belief—he knew it for a fact. But he no longer wanted to interest Loder, or anybody else, in it. Warren had done him a good turn, and they were more or less friends now—at all events, they were no longer foes. Since the day that Jim had saved Price from being knocked out by James, Price had said no word against him.

Loder, of course, knew nothing of that. In his own bitter enmity for his rival, he expected to find a keen ally in Price of the Fifth.

"You spun me a yarn about that fellow Warren," he went on. "I never thought there was much in it at the time. But I've been thinking over it since—"

"Oh, wash it out!" said Price uneasily. "Warren's not a bad chap."

"You told me that you actually heard young Wharton of the Remove tell him to his face that he wasn't the James Warren he saw at Warren Croft in the holidays—"

"And you said it was all rot!" said Price.

"Perhaps I did; but since—"

"Look here—let Warren alone," said Price. "We're pretty good friends in this study now, and I don't want any trouble with the chap."

"It's a bit late to change your tune like that, after accusing the fellow of being an impostor!" sneered Loder.

"Just shut up for a minute, and listen to me, Pricey! A lot of things have happened since to make me believe there's something in it—"

"Warren's up to play Highcliffe, for instance!" said Price.

Loder stared at him and scowled.

"That's got nothing to do with it, of course," he said.

"I fancy it has—a lot!" answered Price.

"Oh, shut up! According to the yarn you spread, there's a James Warren somewhere, and that fellow is here in his name. It sounds steep, I know; but I believe there's something in it!"

"You mean, you hope there is?" sneered Price.

"Perhaps I do! I'd like to give the fellow a fall!" said Loder viciously.

"Anyhow, I'm a Sixth Form prefect, and I'm going to get at the facts. I admit I laughed at it when you told me—"

"Leave it at that then," said Price.

"But some things have happened since. Warren happened to be out of gates when an Oakshott fellow came here once—I know that. Looks as if he dodged a meeting. Now it turns out that he's got a cousin named James Warren—a fellow who's been staying with that rowdy gang at Popper Court. The fellow has barged into the school twice, and made himself conspicuous—and he seems to treat Warren in a pretty contemptuous way. Well, I've been wondering—"

Price sat silent.

He knew what Loder was beginning to suspect; but he did not intend to help the bully of the Sixth.

"I've been wondering," went on Loder, "whether that James Warren, at Popper Court, may be the same James Warren whose name that fellow is using here. There can't be an army of James Warrens about. You had a potty idea that the fellow had been got out of the way somehow—the sort of idea you might have got from the films. I knew that was all rot. But it may have suited a chap to make some sort of an arrangement—"

"Sounds likely, doesn't it?" said Price.

"No, it doesn't; but it would account for the fellow keeping away, and letting that rotter carry on in his name. He looks a pretty thorough blackguard—and I've heard him address Warren as a poor relation. I've no doubt he'd rather be with that rowdy crew at Popper Court than toeing the line at school. Look here, Pricey—do you know whether that outsider at Popper Court is the real James Warren or not?"

Loder asked that question point-blank.

Price did not answer it.

"Well?" rapped Loder.

"I'm going to say nothing about Warren," said Price stubbornly. "I treated him badly, and he did me a jolly good turn—and that's that! I don't care who or what he is—I'm saying nothing against him!"

"Will you answer my question?"

"Ask Warren himself."

"I'm asking you!"

"Well, I've got nothing to say."

Loder of the Sixth stood staring at Price. This was a quite unexpected check.

Price yawned and opened his racing paper again.

For a long minute Loder stood staring at him. Then he tramped out of the study and slammed the door after him.

Price grinned, and gave his attention to "gee-gees."

Loder went slowly down the stairs. Jim Warren had wondered whether



Head and shoulders hanging down on the inner side of the gate, long legs wriggling on the outer side, James was favourably placed for an application of his own riding-whip. Swish! The whip came down on James' riding-breeches with a crack that rang like a pistol shot. "Whooooooop!" yelled James. "Yaroooh!"

any Greyfriars fellow would "put two and two together." Loder, spurred on by enmity, had done so—and arrived at the right conclusion. But getting proof of what he was now sure of was another matter.

Loder walked down to the bike-shed at last. His face was set, as he wheeled his machine out into the road.

Popper Court was only a few miles away. A fellow named James Warren was staying there—known to be a relative of Warren of the Fifth. Was he the fellow whom Warren was personating at the school? He was—if he was the son of Sir Arthur Warren, baronet. But was he the son of the baronet of Warren Croft?

More than once Loder had seen the big, beefy, ungainly fellow loafing about, sometimes with a gun under his arm, in Popper Court Woods, once or twice on a horse, once on the Sark towpath in talk with Jim, twice at the school.

He knew him well enough by sight. Now the idea was in his mind of cycling round about Popper Court and its vicinity—with an eye open for that beefy fellow with the square jaw. If he could get into talk with the fellow there was a chance of learning what he wanted to know, and it seemed a good chance.

Loder pedalled away up the Court-field road.

He was some distance from the school, when he gave a sudden start at the sight of a sturdy, athletic figure in the road ahead of him.

It was Warren of the Fifth! Jim did not turn his head; but Loder knew him well enough, and his eyes glinted at his rival's back.

He slowed down. He wondered whether Jim's destination was the same as his own. He might be walking to Courtfield, but it

was quite likely that he was going to Popper Court to see that cousin of his. He had cut games practice to go out of gates, which looked as if he had a special reason.

Loder stepped off his machine, drew it into the trees by the roadside, and parked it there. He had decided at once to keep his eye on Warren. And Loder had no objection to playing the spy, if there was a chance of serving his ends thereby.

He kept close to the wayside trees, walking on the grass. If Warren had looked back, he would probably have spotted him. But the Fifth Form fellow did not look back.

Suddenly he broke into a run and disappeared up the road at great speed. Loder stared after him. He had vanished past a bend in the road.

Had Warren guessed that he was followed, and bolted? It was not that. Puzzled, Loder kept on his way. He reached the bend and, keeping back out of view, scanned the road ahead.

To his surprise, he saw Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove walking away towards Courtfield, and Warren standing near the gate of the Popper Court bridle-path, and the other Warren leaning on the gate.

Gerald Loder's eyes gleamed. He saw Warren talking to the fellow on the gate. He saw him take a letter from his pocket. Was it the letter he had seen on the table in Study No. 4—the unopened letter from Hong Kong? He was sure of it!

If he could only have seen the inside of that letter! If he could only have heard what they were saying!

That was impossible. But he did all he could. Opposite the Popper Court gate, on the other side of the road, was a fence, enclosing a meadow. Leaving the road, Loder cut

along the meadow side of the fence at a run.

He reached the spot opposite the bridle-path gate. Through the palings he watched the two cousins.

But the width of a broad country road was between them, and he could not catch a single word that was uttered.

It was in vain that he strained his ears! Not even the murmur of a voice reached him.

But he saw Warren hand the letter to James, and saw James crumple it and toss it away in the trees.

He grimed as he watched the sudden termination of the interview—Warren shaking James like a rat, and leaving him sprawling by the gate. He watched Jim Warren stride away towards the school—James brandishing a savage fist after him. Then James, leaning on the gate, lighted a fresh cigarette.

It was Loder's chance to speak to him, if he wanted to, and he swung himself over the fence and crossed the road.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Loder Tries It On!

JAMES WARREN stayed at Loder as he came up, with a far from amiable look. He did not know him; but he could see that he was a Greyfriars man—and James' feelings were hostile towards Greyfriars School and all that dwelt therein.

Had the newcomer been a junior, James would probably have wreaked his evil temper by kicking him hard. Loder was a senior, and a fairly big fellow, though not so hefty as James.

James ran a hostile eye over him,

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(Continued from page 13.)

calculating whether it would be safe to punch him. He would have punched Jim Warren for shaking him had it been safe to do so. He was yearning to punch somebody—preferably somebody belonging to Greyfriars.

"Who the dickens are you, and what the thump do you want?" growled James ungraciously. He blew out a little cloud of cigarette-smoke.

"I've been looking for a chance to speak to you," said Loder. "I saw you when you came to Greyfriars the other day."

Grunt, from James. "I understand you're Warren's cousin," remarked Loder.

"No business of yours!" said James. "Isn't it the case?"

"Find out!" This did not look very promising in the way of gaining information. Loder was very much inclined to handle the sulky, ill-tempered fellow as he had seen Warren do. But he kept his temper. He contrived to smile.

"I've been rather interested to meet you," he remarked casually. "You see, your father's rather a celebrated johnny."

James stared at him. "Everybody's heard of Sir Arthur Warren, the famous diplomat!" said Loder agreeably. "I hear that he's taken up a post in China."

James took the cigarette out of his mouth. "Try again!" he sneered.

"Eh! What do you mean?" asked Loder, taken aback.

"I mean what I say!" retorted James. "You're trying to pump me. Well, try again, and see what luck you have!"

Loder breathed hard! It was not, after all, very easy to draw from James information that he did not want to impart.

"Isn't Sir Arthur your father?" he asked at length.

"Hadn't you better write to China and ask him, if you feel inquisitive about it?" queried James.

Loder reddened. "Look here, you cheeky, sulky cad!" he said, with a sudden change of manner. "I saw Warren of the Fifth shaking you like a rat a few minutes ago, and if you're not jolly civil, I'll do the same—see?"

James eyed him, a good deal like a bulldog.

"Will you?" he said. "Well, Jim was able to do it and get away with it. And I'll make him squirm for it some time, too! But I don't fancy you could! Try it on, if you like!"

"That fellow who's just shaken you like a rat is called James Warren at Greyfriars," said Loder, between his teeth. "You know whether that's his name or not, and you're going to tell me!"

"That's his name!" grinned James.

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"Same as mine, as it happens! Anything more you want to know that's not your business, Paul Pry?"

"He makes out at Greyfriars that he's Sir Arthur Warren's son."

"Does he?"

"You know he does!" snarled Loder.

"Well, if I know, you needn't take the trouble to tell me!" said James.

"Why not save your breath, Peeping Tom?"

"I believe you're the right man, and that you're letting that cad carry on in your name, for some reason or other!" said Loder.

James yawned in his face.

"I want you to tell me," said Loder quietly. "I dare say you can guess that I'm down on the fellow. I should imagine you're down on him, too, from the way he handled you. I want to know the facts, to lay them before my headmaster."

"Go on wanting!" jeered James.

"Will you tell me?"

For answer, James blew out another torrent of smoke—this time into Loder's face. Loder was rather used to cigarette-smoke, but the sudden gust of it made him cough and splutter.

"Urrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared James.

Loder clenched his hands. Evidently James was on his guard, and there was nothing to be got from him by questioning. But, remembering how Warren had handled him, Loder fancied there might be other methods. He came a stride nearer James, who backed against the gate, watching him.

"Now, you rotten cur," said Loder, "you're going to answer my questions, or I'm going to thrash you—see? I mean that!"

James dropped his half-smoked cigarette.

"Come on!" he said.

And, without waiting for Loder to come on, James started in. He led off with his right, which jolted forcibly on Loder's nose.

Loder, gritting his teeth, closed in on him, hitting out fiercely.

But the beefy James stood up to him, hitting out quite as fiercely, with all his savage ill-temper behind the blows.

It was Loder who backed away first.

Loder had made rather a mistake.

Having seen Warren shake the hulking fellow like a rat, and leave him sprawling, the bully of the Sixth supposed that James was a fellow who could be bullied with impunity; and bullying methods suited Loder. But James had learned, in more than one tough tussle, that Jim was more than a match for him. He had yet to learn whether Loder was.

And, in point of fact, Loder was not.

James was rather younger than the Greyfriars prefect; but he was quite as big, and a good deal heavier. So far from letting Loder have it all his own way, James was quite ready for trouble—in fact, his savage, aggressive temper made him quite keen on it. A whopping with his own riding-whip from the Remove fellows, and a shaking from Warren of the Fifth, made James eager to "take it out" of somebody, and Loder, unintentionally, had offered himself as a victim.

Loder backed, and James came on, slogging.

He grinned savagely as he slogged.

"Thrash me, will you, you spying rotter!" said James. "Get on with it, you prying hound! Get to it, my pippin!"

Loder backed right across the road. James followed him up till they reached the fence on the other side.

There Loder had to stop, with his back to the fence.

By that time Loder realised that he had bitten off more than he could masticate, and was sincerely repentant that he had picked trouble with Warren's cousin. But it was rather too late for that.

"Look here! Keep off, you ruffian!" panted Loder. "I—I don't want a row with you!"

"Changed your mind?" grinned James, punching.

"Ow! Oh! Keep off, you hooligan!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared James.

He was feeling better. In fact, he was quite enjoying himself. Loder had given him a few knocks; but he was knocking Loder right and left.

"I give you best!" panted Loder desperately.

"I'm not finished yet," grinned James. "Take that, and that!"

Loder went over, headlong, in a bed of nettles at the foot of the fence. He sprawled there, panting.

James stood and roared with laughter.

"Getting up?" he asked.

"Ow! No!" panted Loder.

"I'll fetch my whip!" roared James.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

He cut across the road to the gate where he had left the riding-whip lying. Loder leaped to his feet. He had had enough of James—more than enough. He was not seeking more information from James, either by peaceful methods or warlike. He wanted to see the last of James—quick! He did not wait till James got back with his riding-whip. He clambered and scrambled over the fence, and cut across the meadow.

Looking back from the other side of the meadow, he was thankful that the truculent James was not pursuing. He had come out that afternoon in search of James; but he had seen altogether too much of James!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Catspaws Wanted!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"How did Bunter know we had a tin of toffees?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry"—Bunter in the doorway of Study No. 1 in the Remove, blinked a reproachful blink through his big spectacles—"I never knew anything of the sort! It's a bit thick that a fellow can't look into a study without being supposed to be after tuck! Still, I'll have some of the toffees, old chap!"

And Bunter had some.

He jammed as many into his capacious mouth as that large receptacle could conveniently hold. He took a further supply in his fat paws, lest they should all be gone before he had disposed of the first lot.

"Leave us a few," said Johnny Bull, with deep sarcasm.

"He has—just a few," grinned Bob.

"The fewfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurreo Jamsot Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter's voice came a little muffled through the toffees. "I say, this ain't bad toffee! Not like our chef makes for me when I'm at home at Bunter Court, of course. But quite—Grooogh! Oooogh! Ooch!"

"Quite what?" asked Bob.

"Yooogh!" Some of the toffees seemed to have gone down the wrong way. It was a case of more haste and less speed. "Wooogh!"

"Is that Italian or Ethiopian?" asked Bob.

"Wurrgh! Gurrgh!"

Bunter, for a minute or two, was busy. He coughed, he gasped, and he spluttered. The Famous Five, eating toffees at a more moderate rate of speed, watched the performance with smiling interest.

"I say—googh—I say—woogh—I say, you fellows"—Bunter got going again at last—"I say, that beast Loder—"

"Oh, blow Loder!" said Bob Cherry. "Give us a rest about Loder!"

"That's all very well," said Bunter warmly. "The beast hasn't been whopping you—"

"I haven't been pinching his caramels, or mopping ink over his napper," chuckled Bob. "You can't expect prefects to like these things."

"I say, he would have let me off about the ink if he could have got Warren!" said Bunter. "He'd rather have whopped Warren. Just because he couldn't get Warren, he's taking it out of me. Treacherous beast, you know! He couldn't whop me for the ink, because Wingate did, so he made out that I'd snaffled his caramels in his study. I told you fellows—"

"And didn't you?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Certainly not! I hope I can be trusted in a study with a few miserable caramels. Besides, he left them there on purpose—that's why he sent me to the study. It was a plant."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I was only going to take one; but they all went, somehow. Not that I touched them," added Bunter hastily. "I don't mean that. The fact is, I never saw them there at all."

"Oh crumbs!"

"He gave me six," went on Bunter. "Caramels?"

"No, you ass—whops! Six fearful whops on the bags!" said Bunter. "Making out I'd had his caramels! I'd have gone to Quelch about it, but—but—"

"You fat ass!" roared Bob. "You did pinch the caramels, and it served you jolly well right to get whopped for it. Loder laid a trap for you, but it was your own fault you got caught in it. Why can't you leave other fellows' tuck alone?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Keep your esteemed hands from the pickfulness and the stealfulness, my absurd Bunter!" advised Hurree Jamset Ram, Singh.

"If that's all you've got to say to a Remove chap, bullied by a beast like Loder, I can only say— Got any more toffee?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at now, you fatheads? Cackle, cackle!" said Bunter. "Rather mean of you, I think, to finish the toffee while a fellow's talking. Well, I'm going to make Loder sit up for it. The worm will turn!" said Billy Bunter darkly.

"Well, you're rather a worm, old fat man!" agreed Bob. "How are you going to turn?"

"Beast! I mean, I want you fellows to help—"

"I fancied that was coming," grinned Bob. "What's the programme, old fat bean? Are we to boil Loder in oil, or strew the hungry churchyard with his bones?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bunter irritably. "What about a rag in his study? Smashing it up right and left."

"Yes; I can see this party smashing up a Sixth Form study right and left," said Frank Nugent, laughing.

"I've thought it out," said Bunter. "You know what happens next

Wednesday—the first eleven match with Highcliffe. If Loder wedges into the team, he will be playing, and safe off the spot."

"Loder won't, fathead! That's why he's so wild with Warren, because he fancies that Fifth Form chap has bagged his place."

"Well, you know what he did before the St. Jim's match—hacked the chap, and crooked him," said Bunter. "He might do that again."

"A bit too palpable, if he did," said Bob, with a chuckle. "I don't fancy Wingate would reward him with Warren's place if he knocked the chap out."

"Well, if he isn't playing, he's sure to be watching the game," said Bunter. "All the school turns up for the first eleven matches. He won't be anywhere near the House. Everybody will be out of doors, and it will be perfectly safe for you fellows to get into his study."

"We shall be watching the match, too."

"You can cut that out," said Bunter. "I'll watch it, if you like, and tell you about it afterwards."

"Oh scissors!"

"Besides, it won't take you long—five of you," argued Bunter. "You get into Loder's study while everybody's on the football ground."

"Do we?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Yes, old chap. In ten minutes or so you can make a wreck of the place. Take a chopper—"

"A—a—what?" gasped Bob.

"Chopper! I'll sneak that chopper from Gosling's wood-shed and have it ready for you. I'm ready to do my part. Take the chopper and bang everything to bits right and left—"

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter. Evidently the fat Owl was in a fierce and warlike mood. Loder, no doubt,

(Continued on next page.)

—1—

When first to Greyfriars School there came

A small Celestial toff

Who answered, when we asked his name,

"Hop Hi!"—we said, "Hop off!"

Perhaps we kicked him for his cheek

Before we understood

That even Chinamen can speak

The truth when it is good.

—2—

To Greyfriars ears it sounds absurd.

Hop Hi! Wun Lung! My hat!

But in the Flowery Land, I've heard

They all have names like that!

If Greyfriars were in China, then

'Twould be a jolly rag,

With Quelch as Mr. Tan Yung Men,

And Prout as Chin Me Wag!



—4—

To Britons this sounds rather queer,

But let us not condemn;

When Chinamen are over here

We're just as quaint to them!

For people's ways in every land

Are proper in their sight,

And foreigners must understand

Whatever is, is right!



—5—

Hop Hi regards the British Isles

As "velly nicee spot!"

But thinks his own great Land of Smiles

The best of all the lot!

And that's the proper attitude,

We all agree with that;

If you knew one who didn't, you'd

Consider him a rat!

—7—

"You say your grandfather!" I cried,

"Would whack your pater—eh?"

He nodded calmly and replied:

"Me plenty muchee say!

Glandfather Wun keep biggee stick,

If father no legard,

Glandfather catchee plentees quick

And whackee muchee hard!



—9—

If we were Chinamen, I fear

We'd think it very odd

If Quelch's father should appear

And chase him round the quad.

However, we shall all agree

That Chinamen are sage

To make their aristocracy

The honoured one of age.



GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

"A change is all to the good!" remarked the Greyfriars Rhymester, when he was ordered to hop off and interview

HOP HI

the Chinese junior in the Second Form.

—3—

Hop Hi—or Wun Hop Hi to put

The surname on his name—

Is Wun Lung's younger brother, but

His mother's not the same

For in the custom of the East

One bridegroom there may take

A dozen brides to grace the feast

And cut the wedding cake!

—6—

For once I didn't have to plead

To get my interview,

Hop Hi said: "Me velly pleased indeed

To tellee things to you!

Me velly well blought up," said he,

"My father muchee glim!

Supposee he no whackee me,

Glandfather whackee him!"

—8—

"Glandfather always velly gleat,

The household evely day

Go in to visit him in state

To listen what he say!

Supposee glandfather feel closs,

If velly badee time!"

(And here I'm somewhat at a loss—

I cannot find a rhyme!)

had whopped him not wisely, but too well. But this really was startling!

"I can see us banging a Sixth Form study to bits with Gosling's wood-chopper," gasped Bob. "Sounds sort of likely and probable."

"The bangfulness to esteemed bits will not be terrific."

"I hope you fellows aren't going to be funky. It's absolutely safe," urged Bunter. "I'll keep watch for Loder, in case he comes near the House while you're at it. I say, is it a go?"

"Is it?" gasped Wharton. "Not quite! No!"

"Well, look here, you men," said Bob Cherry, with a wink at his comrades, "it's no end of a stunt! Looks safe, too—as Bunter says—"

"Safe as houses!" said Bunter eagerly.

"No danger at all—"

"Not a bit, old chap!"

"Well, then, what about it?" said Bob. "Being so perfectly safe, Bunter can do the chopper business in Loder's study, and we'll keep watch while he does it. That all right, Bunter?"

The eager expression faded from Billy Bunter's fat countenance. It did not, somehow, seem all right.

"Good egg!" said Frank Nugent heartily. "And when Bunter's sacked for it, we'll see him off from Greyfriars—with pleasure!"

"The pleasurefulness will be terrific!"

"You silly idiots!" gasped Bunter. "I didn't mean that! I—I don't exactly want to chop up Loder's study myself—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What I mean is—"

"We know exactly what you mean, old fat man!" chuckled Bob. "You mean you want some catspaw to pull your jolly old chestnuts out of the fire! Look in some other study!"

"I mean—"

"Bow-wow!"

"You fellows are a rotten lot of funks," said Bunter scornfully. "I suppose you're afraid of Loder. I'm jolly well not! Who's Loder? A rotten, sneaking, bullying beast! The worst cad at Greyfriars! And I've got the pluck to tell Loder so to his face, if you fellows haven't! I—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as there was a footstep in the passage. "Is that Loder?"

Bunter jumped.

"Oh crikey! Oh lor! I—I say, you fellows, do you think he heard me? I—I say, don't tell him I'm here! Oh, scissors!"

Bunter nose-dived under the table, palpitating.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Famous Five.

The footsteps passed the doorway. It was not Loder. It was Vernon-Smith of the Remove who passed. The Bouncer paused, and glanced in at the open doorway.

"What's the jolly old joke?" he asked.

"Bunter!" answered Bob. "He was just telling us the names he was going to call Loder, and he seems to have fancied that Loder might have heard him—"

"Is—is—isn't that Loder?" gasped Bunter. He blinked out from under the table at the grinning Bouncer in the doorway. "Oh, you beast! Pulling my leg! Beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter crawled out from under the table. He gave the chums of the

Remove a devastating blink through his spectacles and rolled out of Study No. 1, leaving them roaring.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

In the Hollow of His Hand!

JIM WARREN came out of the changing-room with a ruddy, cheerful face. He had been changing, after games-practice with the first eleven.

Warren's place in the Greyfriars First was now definitely settled, and he was selected to play in the team against Highcliffe School, the next big fixture on the list.

Good as Warren was in class, winning golden opinions from his Form-master, Mr. Prout, Warren was very keen on games, and he was looking forward with happy anticipation to the Highcliffe match. When he was thinking of Soccer, he was able to dismiss his troubles and worries from his mind—and he had more than usually felt to the lot of a Fifth Form fellow at Greyfriars.

Loder followed him out.

Loder had been at the practice, too, and he was still showing the uncommonly good form he had developed of late. He was not in the same street with Warren, but the Greyfriars captain had been very pleased by the improvement in him, and still more by the keenness he showed. Loder was a reserve—if a reserve was wanted. There was little doubt that, had not Jim Warren been available, Loder would have been chosen. And it was in Loder's mind now that Jim was not going to be available.

He tapped Warren on the elbow.

"Come along to my study, will you?" he asked.

"I'd rather not, thanks," answered Warren. He spoke civilly enough; he did not want rows with Loder. Indeed, having seen the efforts the slacker of the Sixth was making to pull up, Warren felt a certain amount of sympathy for him.

"I want a few words with you," said Loder quietly. "You'd better come. I don't want to shout it out."

Warren's face set.

"If you've got anything to say to me, all Greyfriars can hear it," he answered.

"I hardly think you'd say so if you knew what it was!" grinned Loder.

"Oh, chuck it!" snapped Warren impatiently. "What's the good of keeping up this fathomed feud, Loder? You're making a fool of yourself. It's for Wingate to pick out the men for the eleven—I couldn't refuse what he offered me if I wanted to."

"You could stand out if you liked."

"Well, I certainly don't like!" said Warren, laughing. "I'm as keen on Soccer as you are—rather more, I think. From what I've heard, you've generally been a bit of a slacker at games."

"I should be in the first eleven now if you weren't standing in my light."

"Possibly. The same applies to any other man in the team, I suppose. Why don't you ask Blundell, or Potter, or Gwynne, or Sykes, to stand out and make room for you?"

"That's an easy one," said Loder, in a low, cool voice. "I haven't got Blundell or Potter, or Gwynne or Sykes, under my thumb."

"Nor me, I suppose?" said Warren, staring.

"That's where you are mistaken. Will you come to my study and talk it over?" asked Loder.

"No," answered Warren; "I won't! What is there to talk over? Have you

got on some new scheme for crocking me for the game? If you had, I suppose you wouldn't warn me first."

Loder's cheeks flushed.

Two or three fellows, passing, glanced at them rather curiously. Loder was silent. He had something to say to Warren, and was going to say it; but he did not want other ears to hear.

"You'd better keep clear of me," added Warren. "I repeat that you're making a fool of yourself. Only the other day a silly fag swamped ink over you, and you tried to make yourself believe that I'd done it. You really ought to have a little more sense, Loder."

"I've got something to tell you—"

"Rot!"

"Will you come to my study?"

"No!"

Loder set his lips.

"I'll tell you here, then, and you can take your chance of others hearing." But he sank his voice low as he went on: "I've suspected for a good time now that Price's yarn about you had something in it. I've got on to the facts now—I saw you yesterday when you met that cousin of yours at the bridle-path at Popper Court."

Warren's lip curled.

"Spying?" he asked contemptuously.

"I saw you hand him a letter—which I jolly well guessed was the letter you had from Hong Kong and dared not open because it wasn't yours!"

"You can guess what you like!" Warren smiled a little as he scanned Loder's face. "I'd noticed that you looked a bit damaged—did you pick a row with my cousin? He's rather a hard hitter when his temper's up!"

"Never mind that," muttered Loder. "That letter from Sir Arthur Warren at Hong Kong is enough—more than enough—to give away your game here. Your hooligan cousin chucked it away—do you remember?"

Warren started a little.

"I remember!" he said, in a low voice.

"I went back later and looked for it," said Loder, his eyes gleaming. "I waited till that ruffian was clear and went back—"

Jim Warren caught his breath. He could guess what was coming now.

"I had about an hour's search for it," went on Loder, "but I found it! I've got it!"

"You've read it?"

"In the circumstances I felt entitled to read it—"

"You mean that you are an unscrupulous, prying spy!" said Warren contemptuously. "Well, you've read the letter! What next?"

"What next?" sneered Loder. "What do you expect next? You get a letter addressed to James Warren—the name you use here—and instead of opening it, you take it to another James Warren and give it to him. What does that look like?"

"Is that all?"

"It looks," said Loder deliberately, "as if that hooligan Warren at Popper Court is the Warren that was coming to Greyfriars this term; the son of Sir Arthur Warren. The fellow in whose name you are here."

He paused.

"That fellow's in the game," he said. "He won't own up to it, and you won't. No good going to the Head with that. But I've got the letter! The letter's a proof. You know what's in it?"

Warren did not speak.

"That letter," said Loder, in low, concentrated tones, "is proof that you're not the fellow you make yourself out to be. Every line in it shows



"Look here, keep off, you ruffian!" panted Loder desperately. "I give you best!" "I'm not finished yet," grinned James. "Take that, and that!" Loder went over in a bed of nettles, sprawling and panting.

that it's written to a different sort of chap. The old bean mentions half a dozen disgraceful rows his son's been in. Does that look like you—the model of the Fifth Form?" grinned Loder.

Warren still stood silent. Perhaps he was trying to think how to counter this utterly unexpected blow. But his handsome face expressed nothing.

"He mentions, over and over again, his wish that his son would take up games," went on Loder. "He particularly mentions how it pained him when he heard from Oakshott, that his son had been punished for dodging games and going out smoking. Does that look like you—keen as mustard on games from the day you came, and in the first eleven?"

Warren made no sign.

"He says, three or four times over, that he hopes you have given up the bad habit of smoking, and how shocked he was, in the holidays, to see that your teeth were discoloured by tobacco. Yours?" grinned Loder. "You've got teeth like milk, and so you had the day you came here. Teeth black with baccy on the last day of the hols—white as milk on the first day of term. Think that will wash?"

He chuckled.

"There's a lot more," he said. "I won't recite it all, you know what's in the letter. But every line, nearly every word, proves that the letter is written to a chap unlike you—utterly unlike, in looks, and manners, and thoughts, and actions. In every single thing! As soon as Dr. Locke sees that letter he will know that you're no more James Warren, Sir Arthur's son, than you're Christopher Columbus!"

Jim did not need Loder to tell him that. He knew that the letter from Sir Arthur Warren was enough, more than enough, to reveal to the least suspicious headmaster that it was not written to him, but to a fellow unlike him in every way.

If the headmaster of Greyfriars saw that letter—

He drew a deep, deep breath.

"Well?" grinned Loder.

"Well!" said Jim quietly. "I'm not defending myself to you, Loder. If I go up to the Head I may have something to say. Certainly I shall not say it to you. You're a prefect, and if you think it your duty to place that letter before your headmaster, I can hardly ask you to stop. Only I can't see why you've told me about it first."

"You're fairly simple and innocent for a spoofing impostor," said Loder, with a sneer. "I've got the letter in a safe place. Don't fancy you can handle me and get it in a quiet spot. I'm not carrying it in my pocket. I've got it, and I'm keeping it, safe! I'm in no hurry to show it to the Head."

Warren looked at him, a mute question.

"I've got you," said Loder, slowly and deliberately, "in the hollow of my hand. I can get you kicked out of the school as a lying impostor any minute I choose. I'm going to make you too the line, Jim Warren—if your name's Jim Warren. I'm keeping that letter over your head. I've had plenty of cheek from you, now you're going to dance to my tune."

"That sort of thing is called blackmail!" said Jim Warren, in a low voice.

Loder laughed.

"Call it what you like, I'm not particular in dealing with an impostor! The first thing you're going to do is to resign from the first eleven."

"So that's it!"

"That's it!" said Loder. "Think it over!"

He left it at that, and walked away whistling. Warren stood quite still for some moments staring after him. He was at his enemy's mercy, and held in the hollow of his hand!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

More for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER grinned. He rolled into the Rag after prep with that wide grin expanding his already expansive mouth, till the same stretched almost from one fat ear to the other.

Bunter seemed amused.

"I say, you fellows!" he squeaked. "I say—he, he, he! Loder—he, he, he!" "What's the latest?" yawned Bob Cherry.

"I fancy Loder will be fearfully waxy soon!" grinned Bunter. "I say, you fellows, keep it dark. I say, you're funky of that beast Loder. You wouldn't have the nerve to call him a beastly bully."

"Well, I should guard with my left if I did!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Don't tell us you've been calling Loder fancy names like that!"

"I jolly well have!" chuckled Bunter. "You've called Loder of the Sixth a beastly bully!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather! Those very words!" Quite a number of fellows stared at the grinning Owl. It was the general opinion in the Remove that Gerald Loder was a beastly bully. But few, if any, thought of telling him so.

Lower Fourth fellows really could not tell Sixth Form prefects such things as that.

And nobody was likely to believe that Bunter had. If he had, it was extremely improbable that he would have been grinning afterwards.

"Gammon!" said Skinner.

"Rot!" said Peter Todd. "Tell us another!"

"And an easier one!" suggested Hazeldene.

"I didn't exactly call him a beastly bully to his face, you know!" explained

Bunter. "But I've done it, all the same! I've just been to his study—" "And said it when Loder wasn't there?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I've written it down!" said Bunter. "See? Loder had a Latin exercise on the table! I've written across it 'Beastly Bully!'"

"You howling ass!" exclaimed Peter Todd, in alarm. "Think Loder won't know your scrawl?"

"He, he, he! I did it in print letters!" grinned Bunter. "Big capitals! How will he know who did that?"

"What a jolly old strategist!" said Vernon-Smith, staring at the fat Owl. "Bunter's getting quite bright!"

"I fancy I'm all there!" said Bunter complacently. "I'm pretty wide, you know!"

"The widefulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! You wouldn't have the nerve to go to Loder's study and call him a beastly bully, Jinky!" said Bunter disdainfully. "You wouldn't, Smithy! I'm the fellow to take risks! I watched the brute go into Walker's study, and then nipped in and did it! I say, you fellows, fancy Loder's face when he goes back to his study and finds his Latin exercise spoiled, and 'Beastly Bully' written across it in big letters! He, he, he!"

There was a laugh in the Rag.

No doubt it was rather a jest on Loder of the Sixth. There was no doubt at all that he would be waxy. He was certain to be deeply infuriated by such an act of cheeky impertinence. It was certain, too, that he would leave no stone unturned to discover who had done it. And if he made the discovery, it would be no jest for Bunter!

"Keep it dark, of course," said Bunter. "If Loder comes and asks questions, you jolly well keep it dark. If he asks about me, you can tell him that I was here, with all you fellows, when I was in his study. You can tell him, Wharton, that I came down from prep with you, and haven't been out of the Rag since—"

"Can I?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, old chap. I'll do as much for you another time."

"You blithing owl—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Temple of the Fourth came into the Rag. He glanced round over the crowd of juniors there.

"Bunter here?" he asked. "Oh, here you are, Bunter! Loder's looking for you!"

Bunter jumped.

"L-L-L-Loder!" he ejaculated.

"Yes. He looks rather wild," said Temple. "What the dooce have you been doin' to Loder? Droppin' ink on his napper again?"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

The grin vanished from his fat face. It was replaced by an expression of utter dismay.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, d-d-do you think Loder suspects that I did it?" gasped Bunter.

"Looks like it!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Of course, he might be looking for you because you're such a nice chap, and he wants some good company!"

"The mightfulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But, I say, how could he know?" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "I tell you I did it in capital letters, and the beast was in Walker's study, and the door shut! Oh lor'!"

"Lucky you're not funky of Loder, old

man!" chuckled the Bounder. "You'll need all that nerve you were talking about just now."

"Oh crikey!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!"

Loder of the Sixth appeared in the doorway of the Rag. He looked "waxy." On that point there was no shadow of doubt. He looked fearfully waxy!

He had his ashplant under one arm, as Bunter noted with dismay. In one hand he carried a written sheet of paper.

No doubt that was the Latin exercise, across which Bunter had written his opinion of the bully of the Sixth. Loder, no doubt, did not like being termed a beastly bully! Still less did he like having an exercise spoiled. He had to show that paper up in the Sixth Form Room on the morrow. He was not likely to do so with Bunter's inscription written across it. That meant a job of re-writing for Loder.

"Where's Bunter?" hooted the Sixth Former, as he tramped angrily into the Rag. "Is he here?"

"Ow! No!" gasped Bunter.

"You cheeky young scoundrel—"

"Oh, really, Loder! I—I never did it!" gasped Bunter. "It wasn't me, Loder!"

"What wasn't you?" asked Loder grimly.

"Oh! Nothing," gasped Bunter. He realised that he was giving himself away by too prompt a denial before he was accused. "I—I—I mean, I don't know what I've done—I mean, what's been done. But whatever it was, I never did it! I've been here all the time—"

"You wrote this!" roared Loder.

He held up the Latin paper. All eyes fixed on it. Some of the fellows had wondered how Loder had jumped to it so quickly that Bunter had left that message in his study. But as soon as they looked at the spoiled exercise, they knew. Across it, in sprawling capitals, was written:

"BEESTLY BOOLEY!"

There was a yell in the Rag. The matter was serious—for Bunter. But really, the fellows could not help it. They roared!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fat and fatuous Owl had, after all, left a clue behind him—in his remarkable spelling. Billy Bunter was the only fellow at Greyfriars who spelt quite like that. Even Coker of the Fifth, though he ran Bunter close in the spelling line, was only an also ran, as it were. "Beestly booley" had been written by Bunter or nobody!

"I—I—I say. I—I didn't do that, Loder!" groaned Bunter. "I don't see why you should pick on me. I—I don't think you're a beastly bully, Loder! I mean, I know you can't help it! I haven't been in your study since prep. You ask all these fellows. They know I was here when I was there—I mean when I wasn't there—"

"I shall have to write this paper again," said Loder. "I'll teach you to muck up a Sixth Form man's Latin papers, you young rascal! Bend over!"

"Oh lor'!"

The laughter died away in the Rag. What followed was no laughing matter—especially for Bunter!

Loder laid on "six" as if he were beating carpet.

Then, scowling, he tucked his ashplant under his arm and walked out of the Rag, leaving Billy Bunter exceeding the greatest efforts of the celebrated Bull of Bashan, that was famed for its roaring!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

No Surrender!

"WARREN, of course!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney of the Fourth.

"Best of the bunch!" remarked Hobson of the Shell.

"Jolly good man, anyhow!" said Harry Wharton. "He put up a great game against Rookwood, and he will make Highcliffe sit up and take notice!"

"What-ho!" said Bob.

In break, on Wednesday morning, a crowd had gathered to look at the notice-board. Or, rather, at one special paper on the board. That paper was in Wingate's hand, and gave the list of men for the Highcliffe match.

Everybody knew that "J. Warren" would appear there. Still, everybody was pleased to see it there. Jim Warren was popular all through the school, and his success as a footballer pleased everybody.

There was only one exception. Loder of the Sixth came along to look, and his face darkened at what he saw.

Since his talk with Warren on the subject of the letter from Hong Kong, Loder had not spoken to him, or sought him out in any way. He had no doubt that his threat would be sufficient, and he left it at that.

Nothing had been heard of Warren's resignation from the first eleven; but Loder had no doubt that he would stand out, because, in the circumstances, he would not dare to keep in.

If he did—

Loder breathed hard at that thought. Every time he had seen Warren since, he had looked at him, but had been able to read nothing in his face. He had an uncomfortable feeling that the fellow despised him, and disregarded him and his threats. Yet, surely, that was not possible. Under Loder's thumb, he had to dance to his tune!

Now it was the morning of the Highcliffe fixture; and here was the name of J. Warren in the football list. If Warren was leaving it late before he stepped out, he was leaving it very late indeed.

The comments of the crowd, seniors and juniors, gathered before the notice-board, fell disagreeably on Loder's ears. The fellow was some sort of an impostor—at all events, he was under false colours at the school, though even Loder could not think or say that he had done any harm there. Even Loder had to admit that, but for that one chink in his armour, Jim Warren was a fellow of whom any school might have been proud. Still, he was not the fellow he made himself out to be. Loder had proof of that now, safely locked up in a drawer of the desk in his study. Yet, impostor as he was, everybody seemed to like him, and rejoice in his good luck. Few liked Loder—if any!

There were fellows in all Forms in that little crowd—Sixth and Fifth seniors; Shell and Fourth, and Remove; fags of the Third and Second—and they all talked in the same strain. Fellows who had hardly spoken a word to Warren since he came seemed to like him. And they all agreed cordially that he was the man Wingate wanted for the first eleven. Quite a flattering endorsement of the Greyfriars captain's judgment.

Warren's name was there. Loder read it with his own eyes. He had said nothing to Wingate, so far, about standing out, that was clear! Yet he knew that he had to stand out—at Loder's order! Why was the fellow leaving it so late?

Hilton, Price, and Warren came

along together, to look at the board. Loder glanced at his rival and enemy. Jim did not seem to see him—at all events, he paid him no heed.

"Gratters, old bean!" said Hilton. "There's your name! Of course, everybody knew that Wingate couldn't leave you out!"

"Jolly glad, Warren!" said Price, with one eye on Loder. He knew how glad Loder would be feeling!

"Thanks!" said Warren, with a cheery smile. "We've got a topping day for the game. I've heard that the Highcliffe men are in great form."

"We're coming along to cheer your goals, Warren!" said Bob Cherry.

Warren laughed. "Then I mustn't forget to put on my shooting-boots," he said. "I should hate to disappoint the Remove!"

He walked away with Hilton and Price, still without appearing to see Loder's frowning face.

Loder went out into the quad with set lips. The fellow spoke as if he was playing in the match. Did he mean it? He spoke as if he had forgotten Loder's threats—and, indeed, existence!

If that was the case, he would be reminded. If he played in the Highcliffe game it would be his last performance at Greyfriars school, at football or at anything else.

Loder vowed that, and he meant it. Warren could defy him if he liked—but would he dare?

Loder could not believe that he would. But he was feeling doubtful, and with his doubt, his bitterness intensified. It was an understood thing that if, at the last moment, a forward had to drop out of the eleven, Loder was to take his place. When he had "crooked" Warren for the St. Jim's game, some weeks since, the place had been given to Greene of the Fifth. But Loder had gone all out, since then, to pull up, and he knew that on his present form he would be the picked man, not Greene. All depended on Warren standing out. Would he dare to keep in?

Loder gave more thought to that question than to what his headmaster was saying, during third school in the Sixth Form Room that morning.

He looked for a chance of speaking to Warren after class. He wanted to know where he stood. He found him in the quad strolling with his hands in his pockets alone. There was a wrinkle of thought on Warren's brow. His face set, as Loder came up.

"I've seen your name in the list," said Loder abruptly.

"All Greyfriars has, I suppose!" answered Warren calmly.

"You've not spoken to Wingate yet?"

"About what?"

"About standing out!" said Loder, between his teeth. "Don't beat about the bush, you know what I mean."

"I'm not standing out."

"You're not?"

"No."

Jim Warren would have walked on, but Loder stepped into his path. His face was black and bitter.

"You haven't forgotten what I said to you the other day?" he asked.

"Hardly."

"I meant every word—and mean it now. I'll give you a chance—your last chance. You know what to expect if you don't toe the line."

Warren looked at him coolly, calmly, and disdainfully. Loder could not understand the calmness of the fellow who was at the school in false colours, and whose fate was in the hollow of his hand. False colours or not, there could be no doubt that Jim Warren had a clear conscience.

"You're a rotter, Loder!" said the Fifth Former quietly. "But I think, perhaps, you're not such a rotter as you fancy. No decent fellow would do what you've threatened to do, and—"

Loder laughed savagely.

"If you're banking on that, I warn you to wash it out. Play in the match this afternoon, and that letter from Hong Kong goes to the Head."

"Better think twice!" said Warren, with the same calmness. "You've got something at stake, as well as I."

"How do you make that out?"

"Do you think I don't know why you haven't put that letter before Dr. Locke already?" said Warren scornfully.

"You've got to let him know that you stole a letter and read it. Is that the way a headmaster expects his prefects to carry out their duties?"

Loder gave him a look of hate.

"So you're banking on that?" he said, between his teeth. "Well, I own I'm not keen to go to the Head with that letter. I'd just as soon keep you under my thumb and make you dance to my tune, as get you turfed out of the school. But don't you make any mistake, Warren. I'm willing to give you a chance—it will suit me as well as you, and I don't mind admitting that. But make no mistake—if you play in the match to-day, that letter goes to the Head, and you get the boot!"

"If you mean that—"

"Every word!" hissed Loder.

"Then there's no more to be said," said Jim Warren quietly. "Not to save my place here, or to save my life, should I think of knuckling under to threats. You will do as you think best, Loder; but I hope you're not such a rotter as you make yourself out to be."

With that the Fifth Former walked away. Loder stared after him, rather blankly.

Was the fellow a fool? Did he really believe that there was some rag of decency left in Loder, that would prevent him acting the part of a black-mailer? Was he the kind of fellow who, being thoroughly decent himself, found it impossible to believe in meanness and baseness in others? Did he really believe that Loder, at the last moment, would relent, change his mind, and forbear to use the weapon that was in his hands?

It looked like it.

If that was his belief, he would find out that he was mistaken. Loder told himself savagely.

He did not want to take that letter to the Head, if he could serve his purpose without doing so. But if he could not serve his purpose without doing so, his mind was made up. All Greyfriars was going to swarm round Big Side that afternoon,

and watch Warren getting goals for the school. If they did, they should have something else to watch soon afterwards—Warren of the Fifth turfed out of Greyfriars in disgrace as an impostor, under a false name.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter or Nobody!

"I've got it!" whispered Billy Bunter.

"What and which?" asked Bob Cherry.

"The chopper!"

"The whatter?"

"Chopper!" said Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co., after the school dinner, were thinking, naturally, of the first eleven match. Every man at Greyfriars was going to watch Wingate and his merry men dealing with Langley and his team from Highcliffe School. But even if they had not been thinking of the football match, they would hardly have been giving any thought to Bunter's egregious scheme for vengeance on the bully of the Sixth.

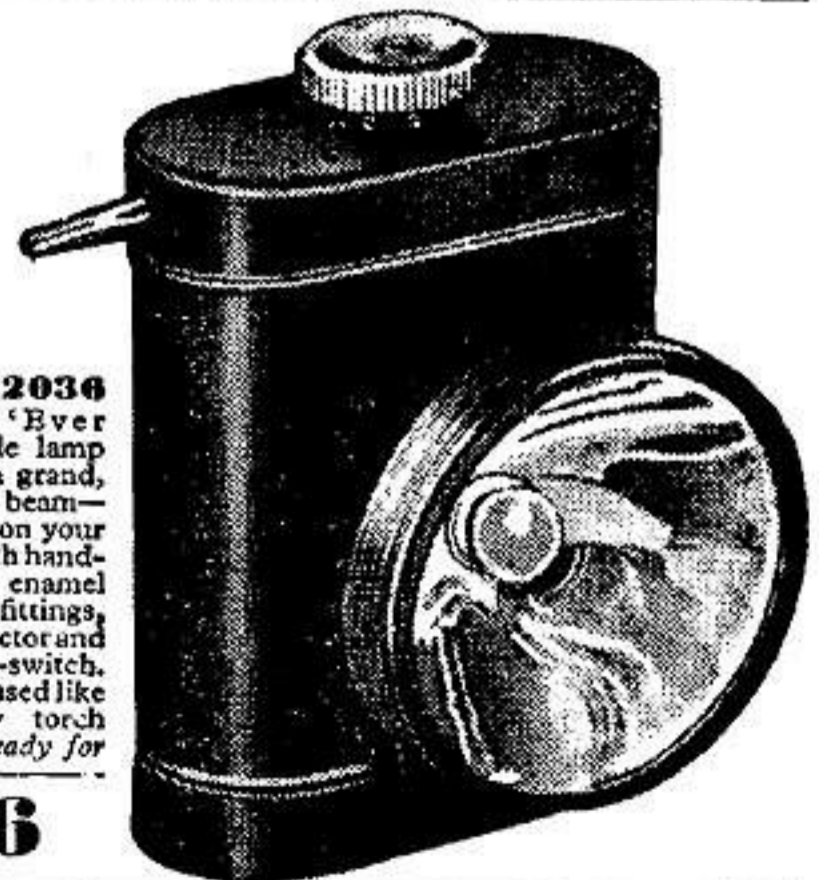
They had, in fact, forgotten Bunter's wonderful scheme for a record "rag" in the Sixth. And now that he reminded them, they stared at him blankly.

"You unspeakable idiot!" said Harry Wharton. "If you've bagged Gosling's chopper from the woodshed, you'd better take it back again—quick!"

"Loder won't be anywhere near his study this afternoon," said Bunter, with a cautious blink round to ascertain that no other ears were within hearing. "I heard him tell Walker he was going to see the kick-off. He's going down to Big Side with Walker."

(Continued on next page.)

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"My esteemed idiotic Bunter—" murmured Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh. Bunter gave a wriggle. He was still feeling twinges from the "six" in the Rag the previous evening. There was no doubt that Loder had laid on that six hard—very hard!

Possibly, had Bunter quite got over his latest "six," he might have got over his thirst for vengeance also. But so long as he felt those painful twinges, he was likely to feel vengeful.

"I say, you fellows, I've planned it all!" he urged. "All you fellows will have to do is to carry out the plans—"

"Is that all?" chuckled Bob.

"Yes, old chap! I've done all the brain work," said Bunter reproachfully. "You fellows only have to do the—the actual job. I mean, suppose I was a general, and you fellows were privates—see? I should lay all the plans at the base, and you fellows would go over the top. That's the way military operations are conducted. See?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

They did not quite "see" themselves as privates, carrying out the orders of General Bunter.

"There'll be hardly a man in the House," went on Bunter. "Even the beaks will be seeing the football. I know Quelch and Prout will be going. Nobody will hear you, if you smash Loder's study into little bits. And I've got the chopper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, stop cackling!" hooted Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I think you might stand by a pal. I've asked Toddy, and he only cackled, just like you fellows. I've asked Smithy, and the cheeky ass only sniggered. Look here, Bob Cherry, will you take it on?"

"Not a lot!" grinned Bob.

"What about you, Nugent?" asked Bunter persuasively. "After all, one fellow could do it. No need for a crowd, really. What about you? You've got some pluck."

"Lots!" agreed Frank, grinning.

"Then you'll do it?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"Ha, ha! No!"

"You're rather a funk, Nugent. I say, Bull, you're not a funk—you're a grumpy brute, but you're no funk. You'll do it, won't you?"

"Idiot!"

"Inky, old chap! I say, Inky, come to think of it, you're the very man," said Bunter. "Brave as a lion, and all that! What?"

"The bravfulness is terrific," agreed the Nabob of Bhanipur, with a chuckle. "But the begfulness to be excused is also great."

"I say, Harry, old fellow—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It's up to you, as captain of the Form!" urged Bunter. "And you've got plenty of pluck; you're not afraid of Loder."

"Not at all!" grinned the captain of the Remove.

"Then you'll do it?"

"Hardly!"

"Well, of all the rotten funks!" said Bunter, in disgust. "After I've planned the whole thing, to leave me in the lurch! You'll never get a chance like this for making Loder sit up! Think of his face when he sees his study wrecked!"

"You blithering owl!" said Harry. "Leave Loder's study alone! A fellow might be sacked for playing the goat like that!"

"I'm going to leave it alone; I want you fellows to do it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,450.

"I say, you fellows, don't walk off while a fellow's talking!" howled Bunter. "I say—"

But the Famous Five did walk off, and William George Bunter was left to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

He snorted with angry disgust. Having laid all his plans to the last detail for making Gerald Loder suffer for his sins, it was intensely annoying to Bunter to find nobody willing to carry out those plans.

He felt like a modern general who, having laid all his plans at the base, far away from such nasty things as guns and bayonets, learned that the Tommies on the line disliked guns and bayonets also. Such a state of funkiness disgusted Bunter.

Fellows were already going down to the football ground, but Billy Bunter did not join them.

He was not deeply interested in football. But he was very deeply interested indeed in "getting" back on Loder of the Sixth.

He almost made up his fat mind to carry on the campaign himself—but not quite.

True, it was safe—absolutely safe. But—but suppose somebody heard the row going on in Loder's study and looked in? There would be a bit of a row, certainly, when a fellow started in with a chopper on Loder's property.

Nearly everybody would be out of the House, but—

Bunter shook his head.

He had the qualities of a general—at least, he was sure that he had. But he lacked a certain something that was necessary to a private. He was prepared to lay plans to any extent, but the actual going "over the top" had no attractions for him.

Probably he would have abandoned the idea, in spite of reminiscent twinges of that "six." But, as he stood pondering, Loder of the Sixth came out with Walker.

Loder, passing Bunter, kicked him.

"Yoo-hoop!" roared Bunter.

Loder and Walker walked on, Billy Bunter glaring after the former with his eyes glittgning through his spectacles.

Probably the sight of Bunter had reminded Loder of the ink or of his spoiled Latin exercise. He was in a very bad temper, anyhow, with matters on his mind of which the fat Owl knew nothing.

Anyhow, he had given Bunter a kick in passing—which was perhaps a satisfaction to him, but no satisfaction whatever to Bunter.

"Ow!" Bunter wriggled. "Beast! Bully! Ow! Wow!"

At that moment the fat Owl's resolve was taken. With eyes gleaming behind his spectacles, he followed the two seniors, and saw them safe on the football ground.

Then he rolled back to the House. Loder was safe for a time; even if he did not see the game through, he was safe for some time, at least. The coast was clear for the avenger.

The team from Highcliffe arrived soon afterwards. The crowd on Big Side was thickening, fellows streaming there from all directions. The first eleven match occupied all minds but Bunter's.

He saw Mr. Quelch walk down to the ground with Mr. Prout. Mr. Capper and Mr. Hacker went soon afterwards. The House was emptying; it was almost empty. Not a man of the Sixth was indoors, and Loder's study was deserted in a row of deserted studies. Could anything be safer?

Nothing could!

But Bunter still waited, till a roar

from the football ground told that the ball had been kicked off. Here and there belated fellows were running to get down to the field.

Billy Bunter went up to the Remove passage to his study. He met no one on his way. The whole place was deserted.

He came out of his study, with Gosling's chopper hidden under his jacket. Cautiously he descended the stairs again.

No eye fell on him—which was rather fortunate for Bunter; for any eye falling on him would certainly have noticed that big bulge under his jacket.

He reached the Sixth Form passage. There his fat heart almost failed him. But the silence and desertion of the place reassured him.

He trod down the passage to Loder's study. He opened the door, entered, and immediately closed the door and locked it. Then, with great astuteness, he raised the lower sash of the window.

The locked door prevented immediate detection if anybody came. The open window provided a line of retreat. With everybody at the football, a fellow was not likely to be noticed dropping from a study window.

But as he took the chopper in hand to begin his destructive labours, his fat heart failed again. He stood in front of Loder's desk with the chopper uplifted. For quite a long time it remained like Mohammed's coffin, suspended between the heavens and the earth.

Then, with a great effort, Bunter screwed up his courage to the sticking-point, put all his beef into it, and brought the chopper down with a crash. 'Crash!

It seemed to the startled ears of the Owl of the Remove that that crash rang through the House like thunder.

It was really a terrific crash. It split the desk, that fell apart under the swipe. Papers and packets of cigarettes fluttered from a smashed drawer. Had Bunter continued, Loder's desk would certainly have been wrecked, according to plan.

But Bunter did not continue. That thunderous crash had frightened him almost out of his fat wits, and he stood with Gosling's chopper in his hand, his fat heart thumping, listening anxiously and trembling from head to foot. Billy Bunter was not such a bold, bad Bunter as he had fancied he was.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Too Late for Loder!

"WARREN!"

"Bravo!"

"Goal! Goal!"

"Good old Warren!"

It was first blood to Greyfriars. The swarm of fellows round the football field roared and cheered.

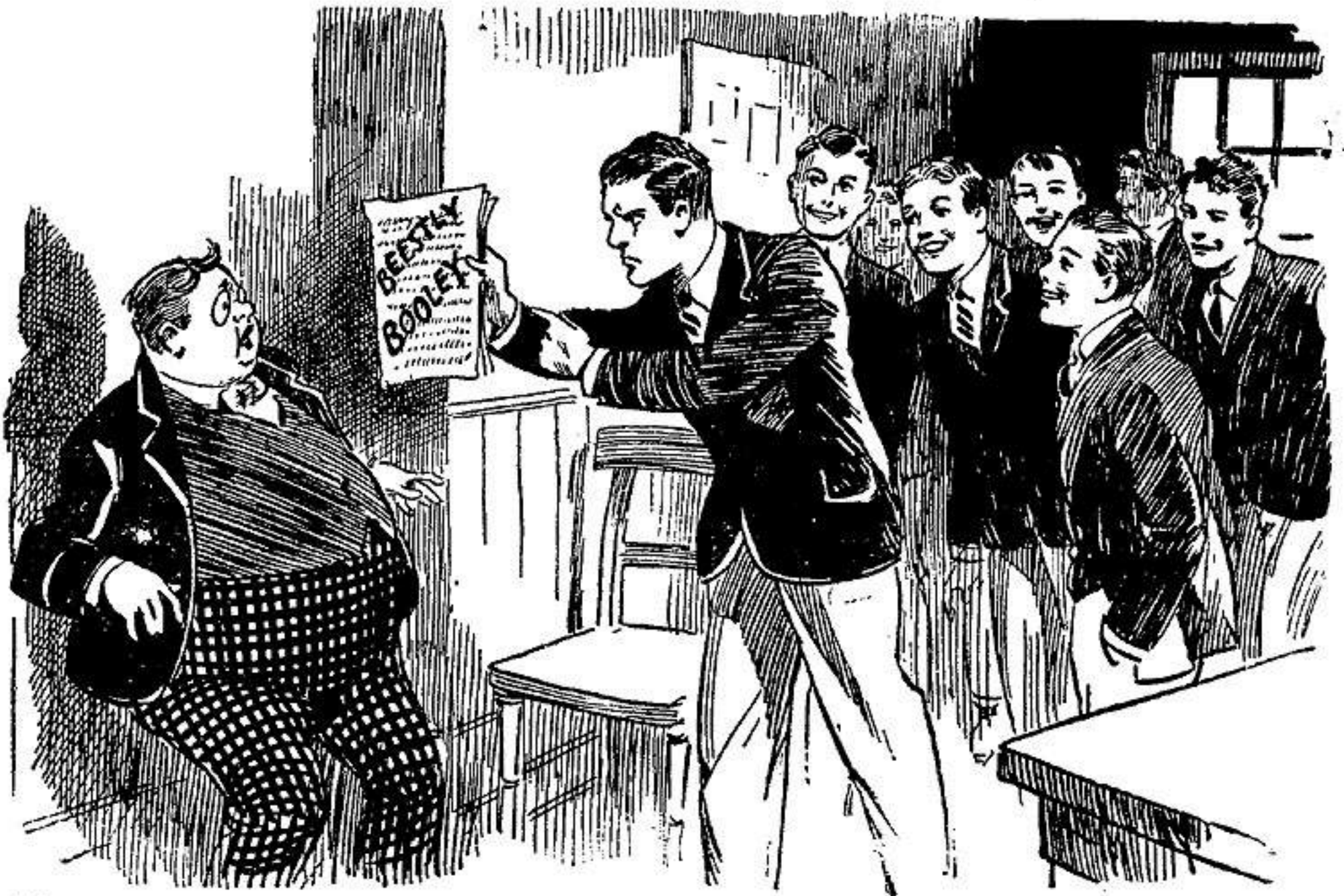
Both sides were going strong. But Greyfriars were going a little stronger than Highcliffe. Fifteen minutes had passed when Jim Warren put in the pill.

Nobody, watching Jim's handsome, flushed, cheery face, would have guessed that he had any weight on his mind. And, in point of fact, Warren had forgotten Loder and his threats in the keen excitement of the game. Perhaps, if the worst came to the worst, he had not so much to fear as Loder believed.

Anyhow, he was thinking, breathing, and living Soccer now, and did not even know that Loder was there in the crowd watching him.

Loder's brow was black.

The fellow had defied him, after all. Up to the very last moment, Loder had



"You wrote this, Bunter!" roared Loder, holding up the Latin paper across which was scrawled, in sprawling capitals, the words "BEESTLY BOOLEY." "Oh, really, Loder!" gasped Bunter. "I—I never did it!" The fat and fatuous Owl had left a clue behind him—in his remarkable spelling.

believed that he would weaken and find some excuse for standing out of the game.

Instead of which, he could see that Warren had dismissed him from mind as a trifle that did not matter.

Nevertheless, Loder's feelings were rather mixed. Warren had taken a magnificent goal and started the score for his side. Bully as he was, unscrupulous as he was, Loder was not wholly without sporting instincts. He came very near joining in the cheering, forgetful for a moment of his bitter enmity.

He heard a voice almost at his elbow—that of Hobson of the Shell.

"I say, that man's a goal-getter! Fancy that dud Loder thinking he had a chance against that man! Why—"

"Shurrup, you ass!" whispered Harry Wharton.

Hobson looked round, and coloured as he saw Loder.

"Oh, sorry, Loder!" he stammered.

Loder of the Sixth did not answer him. He moved away in the crowd and left the field.

If he had for a moment forgotten his enmity and envy, Hobby's remark had revived it. No doubt it would have revived anyhow. He would not remain there and witness the triumph of his successful rival.

"Not going?" called out Walker.

Loder did not even hear him. He went off the ground and tramped in the quadrangle, his hands driven deep in his pockets, his brows wrinkled in a savage scowl.

The fellow had defied him—treated him with contempt—treated him as if he was dirt. His eyes glittered at the thought. He would make him sorry for it. After all, he was an impostor—he had no right to the name he used—no right at Greyfriars at all! It was a

prefect's duty, if he discovered such a cheat, to show it up.

Duty had never had much appeal for Loder. And it was rather awkward to explain to his headmaster that he had carried out his duty by such very questionable means as taking a letter that did not belong to him and reading it. Still, that did not alter the fact that the letter from Hong Kong would give the fellow away, lock, stock, and barrel. The Head would have to take it up, whatever he thought of Loder's methods; he would know, at once, that that letter never was written to Warren of the Fifth—that the fellow was not the fellow he pretended to be.

In his heart, Loder knew that duty had nothing to do with it, only enmity and envy. But his mind was made up.

That letter was going to the Head. Warren would come off the football field with his blushing honours thick upon him—to be called immediately into Dr. Locke's study. Let the headmaster think what he liked of Loder and his peculiar methods. Warren of the Fifth would have to go.

Loder paced in the quad, thinking it over, deciding the matter in his mind. He went into the House at last.

It was half-time on the football field. Plenty of time to get that letter to the Head and have all in readiness for Warren when the whistle went at the finish. Loder's eyes gleamed at the thought of the fellow called before his headmaster in the very moment of his triumph. His hesitation was over now—his mind inflexibly made up.

He turned the handle of his study door, pushed at it, making a movement to enter at the same time—naturally expecting the door to open.

Instead of which, the door remained shut, and Loder gave a yelp of pain and surprise as his nose tapped on it.

The door was locked!

He rubbed his nose—breathing fury. Who had locked his study door—some trick of the fags while the House was deserted.

The key was not to be seen. Apparently, it was locked on the inside. Perhaps the trickster was still there. Loder hoped that he was.

"Open this door!" he hooted, thumping on the panels.

There was no answer from within.

Thump, thump, thump!

He could hear no sound from the study. Had the fellow, whoever he was, locked the door and taken away the key? Loder peered into the keyhole and discerned that the key was still on the inside of the lock.

That meant that the unknown visitor to his study had escaped by the window—which, in that case, would be left open. Loder, breathing hard and deep, left the House again and went round to his study window.

Nobody was to be seen in the quad. A roar came from the football field in the distance.

"Goal! Goal!"

Loder did not heed it. He clambered savagely in at his study window. Panting, he dropped within.

Nobody was there. Whoever had been there was long gone.

Loder's eyes fixed on his smashed desk. It was a "rag." Some young rascal, with a grudge against him, had been ragging his study!

That alone was enough to bring Loder to boiling-point. But that was not the worst. The carefully locked drawer in that desk, where he kept cigarettes and a certain valuable document, lay smashed. Cigarettes lay about the study—snapped in pieces. Loder did not heed the destruction of his "smokes." He pounced on the cracked

and broken desk, searching for the letter.

It was gone!

Other papers lay about. He sorted them out, one after another. But the one he wanted—the letter from Sir Arthur Warren at Hong Kong—had vanished!

He hunted and hunted—but he hunted in vain. Then, with feelings that could not have been expressed in words, Loder stood staring at the wreck of his desk.

The letter was gone! His power over Warren of the Fifth had broken like a reed in his hands.

Who had done this? Not Warren—he was playing football. Not those young rascals, Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove—they were watching the game; he had seen them all there. Who? Some enemy of Loder's—some friend of Warren's? That gave him nearly all Greyfriars to choose from!

Not that it mattered very much. Whether he discovered who had done this or not, it came to the same thing so far as that letter was concerned. He was never going to see that letter again—and Warren of the Fifth could laugh at his threats.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bagged by Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Hurrah!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I say—"

"Greyfriars wins! Hurrah!"

"But, I say—"

"Bravo! Hurrah! Hip-pip!"

Billy Bunter could not make his voice heard. Fellows were roaring and yelling. The football match was over—three to one for Greyfriars, and the

whole crowd let themselves go. Harry Wharton & Co. cheered the first eleven men with all the power of their lungs—which was considerable.

Mingled with the cheering rang the name of Warren. Jim was responsible for two goals out of the three. He came off the field mounted on the shoulders of Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth. Everybody roared.

Needless to say, nobody had any attention to waste on Bunter—eager as he was to make his voice heard.

But when the excited crowd streamed away towards the House at last, the Owl of the Remove got a hearing.

"I say, you fellows, do listen to a chap!" gasped Bunter. "I say, I've got something to tell you! It'll make you jump!"

"Three to one!" said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"And the Highcliffe men put up a jolly good game, too!" said Bob. "Not a jolly walk-over, you men! But that man Warren—"

"Good old Warren!"

"I say, you fellows, will you listen?" shrieked Bunter. "I say, I jolly well did it!"

"Eh? You did what?" asked Harry Wharton. Once more the chums of the Remove had forgotten Bunter's schemes of vengeance.

"I jolly well wrecked Loder's study while you fellows were wasting your time watching football!" said Bunter.

"Gammon!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, I jolly well did!" said Bunter.

"At least, I jolly well smashed up his desk! I—I thought I'd let him off with that!"

"You mean you got scared?"

"No, I don't!" roared Bunter.

"You howling ass!" said Harry Wharton. "If you've really smashed

up anything in Loder's study, you'd better keep it dark! You'll be had up before the Head—"

"Who's going to know?" grinned Bunter. "I told you fellows it was safe—and it was! I locked the door and got away from the window, leaving the door locked. He, he, he! I haven't seen Loder, but I bet he's wild. He, he, he! I say, there was a locked drawer in the desk, and it was smashed, and I found a lot of cigarettes—in a prefect's study, you know! He, he, he! I smashed 'em all up!"

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "You bold, bad, blithering bandersnatch!"

"But that isn't all," went on Bunter. "I say, you fellows, it's jolly queer! How did Loder get hold of a letter for Warren, you chaps?"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"A letter for Warren?" repeated Harry Wharton blankly.

"Just that!" grinned Bunter. "You see, there were some papers in the drawer as well as cigarettes. I glanced at them—"

"You prying worm—"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Kick him!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, no larks, you know! I say, there was a letter for Warren among Loder's papers. It began 'Dear James.' And you can bet that made me jump; Loder's name ain't James, you know. And when I read it—"

"You read it?"

"Well, glanced at it, you know. You see, I—I wondered what it was doing locked up in Loder's desk. He must have pinched it—pinched Warren's letter, you know, like Price of the Fifth did once—"

"What utter rot!" said Harry Wharton.

"I tell you it was there, and it was from Warren's pater; the old bean wrote from Hong Kong," said Bunter. "You fellows know he's gone to China; some diplomatic jaw job, or something. Well, that letter was from the old scout to his son at Greyfriars; a jolly long letter—and jolly queer, too! It sounds all through as if it was written to a quite different sort of chap. I say, Warren must have been a bit of a blighter at his last school, to judge by what it says in that letter. You'd hardly think he was the same chap."

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at Bunter.

They were aware that Warren of the Fifth was not the "same chap"—though Bunter was, fortunately, unaware of it. But how a letter from Sir Arthur Warren came to be locked up in a desk in Loder's study was an utter mystery to them.

"Bit thick, pinching a chap's letter—what?" said Bunter. "Fancy Loder—a prefect, too! I jolly well bagged it! He, he, he!"

"You bagged it?"

"Of course I jolly well did!" said Bunter. "Warren's a good sort; he chipped in once when that beast Loder was whopping me! I wasn't going to leave his letter there! No fear!"

"If that fat idiot is telling the truth, by some remarkable accident," said Bob Cherry, "Warren ought to have that letter back. But—"

"I've got it here!" grinned Bunter.

He gave a cautious blink round through his big spectacles, and fished a crumpled letter of several pages from his pocket.

"Look!" grinned Bunter. "You fellows can read it if you like. It will surprise you. Warren's changed a lot (Continued on page 28.)"

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by

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Dan of the Dogger Bank!

By David Goodwin



A Bid for Freedom!

KENNETH GRAHAM, son of a millionaire shipowner, is rescued off the Dogger Bank by the Lowestoft fishing trawler, Grey Seal.

His past life blotted from his brain, the youngster is given the name of "Dogger Dan," and signed on as fifth hand under Skipper Atheling, Finn Macoul, Wat Griffiths and Buck Atheling.

Aware of his nephew's fate, and knowing that he will be heir to the shipowner's money when his brother dies, Dudley Graham promises to pay Jake Rebow, commander of the Black Squadron, a fleet manned by men whom no honest trawler would take on board, £1,000 to get Kenneth out of the way for ever.

With a good load of fish aboard the Grey Seal, Skipper Atheling makes for Amsterdam to sell his catch. Here Dan and Buck Atheling go ashore, where they are neatly trapped in an underground cellar by one of Rebow's confederates.

Lighting a candle, the two boys are horrified to see the cellar fast filling with water.

"We're done for!" groans Buck. "We're cornered like rats in a trap!"

Dan held the guttering candle above his head, out of reach of the water, as he paddled desperately round. To die in the dark, choked by that rank water, was awful.

Both the boys' heads were nearly touching the ceiling as they swam, and still the water rose. In another two minutes it would fill the cellar to its roof and jam them against the plaster. And then—

Buck suddenly whipped out his jack-knife as he floated under the trapdoor. The trapdoor was bolted from the outside, but he began to hack savagely at the wood.

A flash of hope rose in Dan's breast as he watched. His brain, till then almost deadened by the foul air and the cold, grew alert and swift to think.

"Not there!" he cried. "You can't cut through the wood! Swim over to

the right; the ceiling's lighter there—see?" He struck it with his knuckles. "It's only laths and plaster. They've never let the water in as high as this before. Cut here!"

Gasping and panting, Buck struck furiously at the ceiling with his knife. Big lumps of plaster came away, and then the knife struck wood.

"Farther this way!" said Dan. "We must be under the wall of the passage. The cellar's much wider than that; it runs under the rooms on each side. That's it! Hack away! I'll hold the light for you!"

"It's giving!" panted Buck. "There's a big hole already! The water's still rising, though!"

"Work for your life!" returned Dan grimly.

"Here she comes!" cried Buck, as plaster and laths came away under his knife, showing a couple of deep joist-beams, set edgewise, with planking on their upper sides.

"That gives us another foot of head-room, anyway," said Dan, paddling swiftly to keep under the hole. "Ah!"

The candle-end slipped from his fingers, and hissed as it fell in the water. Blank darkness fell upon the boys once more, and there was silence. Then Dan caught sight of a wide chink in the planking, through which shone a very faint yellow light.

"A light!" he cried, pointing to it. "Look!"

"Hist!" returned Buck, warmed into alertness again. "Don't make a row! We're not out of this den yet!"

He pushed the point of his knife against the floorboard above the beams, and it sank in easily.

"Rotten as pears!" he said in an undertone. "These waterside dens often are. The planks are like touchwood. I've made a hole big enough to get my head through already."

He tried to peer through the hole. There was evidently a light of some sort in the room above, but no sound of life.

"We must risk it, Dan," he said. "I can break a hole in this planking, and we must take our chance of being grabbed before we get out! Here goes!"

He got a purchase with his feet against a beam, gripped the edge of the cut planking, and wrenched with all his might. It was not easy, for he was still half-swimming; and he heard Dan, who was fast becoming exhausted, breathing short and hard in the darkness. The rotten wood broke away in his grasp, and the end of the plank cracked and severed. He flung it outwards and seized the next plank. It gave way just as the other had done, and Buck hoisted himself through the opening.

Dan's wrists were thrust upwards through the hole as his feet touched the floor, and Buck seized them, and pulled his chum up after him.

The boys' first sensation was one of alarm lest the rotten floor might give way and send them hurtling back again. But the planking, resting on the joists, was firm enough to stand a heavy weight from above.

"Thank Heaven we're out of that vile death-trap!" said Dan, drawing a long breath. "I thought we were done for that time! Let's get clear of this nest of thieves as quick as we can!"

The two chums glanced round to make sure of their road. They were in a large, low room, with a broad window on one side, and a door that evidently led into the outer passage. Three or four rough oaken chairs stood round the walls, and on a ledge by the window stood a cheap oil lamp.

"Come on!" whispered Buck, striding quickly across the room.

Before he could reach the door, however, it was flung open, and the villainous-looking lascar who owned the place entered. His evil, brown face looked scared and angry as he stared at the boys. Never before had any victim of his, or his customers of the Black Squadron, escaped from that deadly trap to carry its secret away, and he did not intend that these boys should break that record.

With a muttered oath he drew his knife and dashed at Buck.

The boys were desperate now, and, having escaped a far more horrible death, they had little intention of letting a lascar with a knife stand in the way of their liberty.

Dan flung his arms round the man, collaring him low, like a Rugby half-back. The brown ruffian toppled down head foremost, and Buck struck the knife out of his hand.

But the lascar was as agile as a cat. Regaining his feet again before the boys could pin him down, he hurled Dan aside and snatched up the knife.

Buck sprang back to get fighting room, and the lascar, his lips drawn back over his teeth, bent double and rushed at him.

There was a yell and a plunge. The lascar, tripping over the planks that Buck had torn from the floor, fell head-first through the hole, and disappeared in the black water.

A scuffling, choking noise came from the flooded cellar. The brown man's head did not reappear. But the noise of the fall had aroused the house, and five or six of the lascar's rascally confederates came pouring into the room before the boys could get away.

"The window, Dan!" shouted Buck. "Smash the window in!"

The mob of ruffians, asking no questions, rushed at the boys.

Buck, springing back, snatched up one of the oak chairs and hurled it at the attackers. It struck the foremost man full in the face and brought him down sprawling, and the others, tripping over him in their blind rush, fell on the floor in a heap. The crash of glass filled the room as Dan dashed a heavy chair against the window. A second blow, and the flimsy sashes and frames gave way altogether, leaving the window space empty.

The two boys sprang through the opening and out into the street before the attackers were on their feet again.

"Put the pace on!" said Buck, as they scudded off down the slum. "They'll be after us in two ticks! They know it's all up with them if we get away!"

The rapid footfalls of the pursuers soon rang upon the cobblestones, and the boys sprinted along at their best speed. They heard the hoarse oaths of the ruffians behind them, and knew they would get short shrift if they were caught. Few live to tell the tale who learn the secrets of the darker parts of Amsterdam.

The chase swept on through slum

after slum, till it neared the most civilised streets of the city.

"We're gaining!" cried Buck, throwing a glance over his shoulder. "There's only two following us now!"

The two chums swept round a corner into a wider street, the two pursuers in full chase.

A moment later Buck and Dan let out a cry of triumph, for not fifty yards ahead, strolling up the roadway arm-in-arm, came the crew of the Grey Seal!

Atheling Means Business!

THE two chums stopped short, and the pursuers, rushing on, ran right into the arms of the Seal's crew, who took in the situation at a glance.

"Now, you pair of wharf rats," said Buck, "it's our turn! Hold him, dad!"

The first of the pursuers had doubled back like a hare on seeing that the tables were turned; but the bigger one ran right into John Atheling, who gripped him by the collar and held him tight.

"Yo Dutch lubber!" roared the skipper of the Grey Seal, shaking the man like a rat. "What are ye chasing my lads for?"

With a yell of terror the man twisted like an eel in the big smacksman's grasp, threw back his arms behind him, and darted forward, leaving his coat in Atheling's grip. In the twinkling of an eye he was round the corner and out of sight.

Dan sprang after him, but when he reached the corner there was no sign of the man. He came back and joined his comrades.

Buck had just finished telling of the trick that had been played on them, putting it in a few words, and Atheling's brow grew dark. He strode forward along the road, calling on the boys to follow.

Wat Griffiths and Macoul, the Finn, anxious to avenge the insult to the crew of the Seal, brought up the rear.

"Lead us to the place, lads!" said Atheling. "We'll destroy the hornets' nest an' bring their house down about their ears! Step out; show us where they brought ye!"

"This way," returned Dan.

The party set off at a sharp pace. The faces of the men of the Seal were grim and set. Things were looking black for Jake Rebow's confederates.

In a few minutes the leaders were at fault. Buck and Dan had had little time to notice the way they had come, when they were running for their lives, and they soon lost their way amid the maze of dirty passages by the wharves.

The Seal's crew saw that the boys were at a loss, and Atheling called a halt. He looked searchingly at the two youngsters, but at heart he never doubted their story.

He knew that, full of mischief and devilment as the boys were, there was one thing they never did. They would skylark and fight, and they earned many a well-deserved rope's-end, but they would not lie.

"Well," said the skipper of the Grey Seal, "where is the house?"

Dan and Buck looked about them in despair. Then the former, casting a keen glance around him, went forward with a shout.

"Round to your left!" he cried. "I thought I couldn't have mistaken it. We passed that broken barrel there just after we quitted the place."

Away they went, and Buck slapped Dan on the back as he recognised the alley into which they had come. A few doors down was the house with the wrecked window, the door of which stood wide open.

"Ah!" said Atheling. "I've seen this kind of den before. You youngsters may thank your lucky stars you got out of it alive! Go slow, now, and mind where you walk! Macoul and I will go ahead. In through the window; it's safer than the door. We'll take that light with us."

They climbed in through the window, and the Finn picked up the little oil-lamp and held it above his head. The room was empty, but for the broken chairs that lay on the floor. The gaping hole in the floor showed the foul sea-water from which the boys had escaped, and it gleamed in the feeble glow, quiet and scummy and dark.

"Mein gootness!" exclaimed the Finn, beneath his breath. "Der captain says true! Dot was a sluice-cellar, and it was joost a miracle dot you get out!"

"On, on!" cried Atheling fiercely. "Let's corner the rats who did this job!"

They marched through the door, two by two, the leaders feeling their way. The door on the other side of the passage was locked. Atheling put his giant shoulders to it, and burst it from its hinges.

The room was empty.

"The birds have flown!" said Atheling. "Let's search upstairs. Buck and Macoul, you stay and guard the passage. It may be an ambush. Come on, you others!"

They mounted the rickety staircase that led up from the passage, and found another locked door at the top. Atheling opened it by the same simple process as he had opened the other, and, with Dan and Griffiths behind him, he entered a long, dusty room.

At an oak table, littered with dirty papers, sat a huddled-up figure—a hunchback, barely four feet high, with parchment-coloured features and small, black, ferret eyes.

"Ah!" said Atheling. "Are you the owner of this shebang?"

The creature cringed and gibbered unintelligibly in Dutch.

"Are you the only chap left here?" snapped Atheling, staring at the dwarf in disgust. "Is there nobody to answer to me for what's been done to my crew?"

The dwarf gibbered again, his restless eyes roving from one to another of the intruders. He seemed on the verge of hysterics with sheer fright. Plainly there was nothing to be done with such a creature.

"Look, captain!" cried Dan. "There's the wheel that raises the sluices in the cellar, and that's the rod running up through the floor."

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"You're right, lad!" exclaimed Atheling, striding forward and seizing the wheel. "The sluices are open now. Well, they shan't be shut again. The water will soon rot the floors out, an' the next flood'll swamp the house; so here goes!"

Putting forth all his huge strength, the big smacksman bent the rod down and then up again until it broke at the bend. Then he sent the broken rod and wheel crashing through the window. The gear was ruined!

As soon as the dwarf saw what Atheling was about, his demeanour changed, and an evil light shone in his eyes. Thrusting his claw-like hand into a drawer of the table, he snatched out a revolver. But Dan, who had been watching, darted forward and wrenched the weapon from the dwarf's hand.

The pistol went off with a vicious crack, and a ball buried itself in the ceiling.

Griffiths pinned the hunchback down in his chair, where he lay foaming and chattering. First withdrawing the cartridges from the revolver, Atheling, with a strong wrench and an upward twist, broke the weapon across at the lock-action, and sent it flying after the wrecked sluice-rod.

"You viper!" he said to the dwarf, who lay trembling and whimpering in the chair. "If you were a man, I'd break every bone in your body! Thank your lucky stars you're an insect, an' that I keep my hands off you! When those frightened mates o' yours come back, tell them from me that it'll take better men than Amsterdam holds to tackle the crew o' the Grey Seal!"

With a grunt of disgust, John Atheling then led his men clear of the house of death, and back to where the Seal lay peacefully reposing against her wharf.

The captain had left a couple of burly Dutch friends of his in charge, and all was well aboard the trawler.

"Gosh!" commented Buck, when Dan told him what had happened in the upper room. "It was that little beast that opened the sluices. By Rebow's orders o' course."

"Yes," said Dan; "but you couldn't set about such a creature as that—it would be like hitting a woman. I asked the skipper if he was going to the police about it, but he only pulled my ear."

"Of course he did," said Buck. "Dad don't go to the police. He says the Seal can look after her own rights an' wrongs, without any landmen puttin' their oar in!"

"All the same, Rebow came near getting to windward of us this time. I thought it was all up when that filthy water was jamming us against the ceiling. D'you see how clever the brute is? He keeps out of the thick of the mess every time; always has some cat's-paw to do the dangerous part o' the work, an' never burns his own fingers. If this last move had wiped us out he'd never have been caught!"

Next morning an agent came down with a good offer for the Grey Seal's fish. But it was a genuine deal this time, and Atheling accepted it. Jubilation reigned that night.

"It's the best fortnight's work the old Seal's ever done!" said the skipper. "There's no doubt you're the luckiest mascot ever a vessel carried, Dan. What are ye grinning at, Macoul? Ain't it true?"

"Ja!" chuckled Finn. "Quite dru! But it was very fenny, all der same. Dogger Dan, he could buy dot haul of

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

HERE'S a little paragraph concerning THE SNAKE CINEMA FAN.

I wonder what would happen if the audience at one of our home cinemas suddenly saw a six-foot snake crawling over the seats towards the screen? I guess there'd be a bit of a stampede. In other countries such interruptions are quite frequent. Just recently, in Darwin, Australia, a snake was seen calmly crawling over the seats. But the audience didn't get alarmed. One woman calmly pointed out the snake to an attendant, who grabbed the reptile by its tail.

The snake turned to strike, but the cinema attendant was too quick for it. Slamming its head down violently on the back of a seat he broke the snake's back. The trespasser was then thrown through the window, and the show proceeded. It's rather dangerous for snakes to "gate-crash" cinemas in Australia—for the snakes, at any rate!

The next query concerns

SEEING STARS IN THE DAYTIME!

Of course, if anyone comes up against Bob Cherry's right, they'll see stars in the daytime all right. But this reader wants to know if it is possible to see stars in the daytime without going to that rather uncomfortable length? Yes. If my reader was at the bottom of a very deep shaft—such as a mine shaft—and looked upward, he would see the

feesh a hondred time over, and der old Seal and all of us thrown in."

"What are you driving at, Macoul?" put in Griffiths, and Dan himself looked puzzled. "D'ye think he's John D. Rockefeller? Where's all this money, Dan?"

"Gold, gold, gold!" said the Finn, his eyes twinkling strangely. "Wagon-loads of gold! I can see it all around him. He can roll in it eef he like!"

"This is a queer go," said Griffiths. "They say you've got the second sight, Macoul, an' by what I've seen of you I believe you have. But I've never heard of a London steamboat tripper rollin' in gold. Come, Dan, set that damaged thinker of yours to werk. Didn't ye fall out of the Woolwich Belle the night we picked ye up?"

"Ye-es, I suppose so," said Dan, knitting his brows. "It was a big steamer, I think. She made a lot of noise—"

He stopped, and made an effort to search his lost memory, but the part of his brain that held that knowledge seemed locked up and sealed.

"O' course," said Griffiths sleepily, "that's the Woolwich Belle right enough! She went up just before we rounded the Gunfleet head. I reckon you're off the track this time, Macoul."

The Finn smiled quietly to himself and said no more.

Under the shadow of the spires of Amsterdam, as the mellow twilight drowsed upon the city, the Grey Seal glided eastwards along the waterways. The giant figure of Atheling stood at the helm, and Buck and Dan, lying on

stars quite clearly. The only reason why we cannot see stars from the surface of the earth during the daytime is because we are surrounded by light, just as the daytime stars are themselves.

There is one curious case of a man who could see stars in the daytime without descending a deep shaft. He was a German who was abducted during infancy and locked in solitary confinement in a dark cell for eighteen years! When eventually the man was released, his eyes had been so affected, that he was able to see the stars clearly, although they were invisible to anyone else!

Ever thought of

MAKING A HOME-MADE HOUSE?

You'll be able to do so before long. The latest idea is to supply houses all complete in sections, together with key plans and full instructions. Each section dovetails into the outer structure, and it is claimed that, in a remarkably short space of time, anyone can make a home-made house, whether they have any previous building knowledge or not. At present the scheme is confined to cottages and bungalows made of wood, but it is hoped to supply houses of steel and concrete before long.

These standardised houses have been known in America for a long time, but are a new idea over here. It remains to be seen whether the idea will "catch on."

One thing that certainly will "catch on," however, is:

"BUNTER SPILLS THE BEANS!"

By Frank Richards,

next week's yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. which winds up our series dealing with Jim Warren. And what a topping tale it is, too!

The "Greyfriars Herald," as bright and sparkling as ever, together with further chapters of our stirring sea story and the Greyfriars Rhymester's contribution, will complete this bumper issue of the MAGNET. Be sure and order your copy early, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

the fore-deck and gazing through the velvet dusk, were filled with a great content.

Smugglers!

"BUCK, it's great to smell the sea wind again!" said Dan, peering down the long salt canal. "I'm sick of houses and pavements. I want to feel the kick of the Dogger swells."

"Wind's aft," said Buck, stretching himself luxuriously. "We shall fetch Ymuiden by ten. That's where the sea begins. Good old sea! Are we going through to-night, dad?"

"No," replied Atheling, from the helm. "We tie up at Ymuiden an' take in water in the mornin'. No Amsterdam water for me! The tanks are empty."

Three water-bugs to the tumbler is a fair allowance for Amsterdam, besides smaller fry, and as the tanks needed scouring out with boiling water after a supply of it, Atheling preferred to fill up on the coast. Dutchmen are less particular.

The Grey Seal slipped onward along the dark, silent reaches. The swing-bridges were manned till ten o'clock, and there was no delay. The lights of Ymuiden glittered ahead before the late flush of the after-glow had quite died out of the summer sky. The trawler passed the last bridge. The long piers stretched out to seaward, and the huge lock lay before them.

The Grey Seal glided alongside a high quay, and made her warps fast to a

BLACKMAIL!

(Continued from page 24.)

couple of old naval cannon driven muzzle downwards into the ground to serve as mooring-bollards. Warps were coiled down, and everything made snug. After supper the boys came on deck.

The moon was half full, and shed a diffused, silvery light over land and water. Beyond the jetties, along the lonely shore, the boys could hear the hoarse murmur of the sea.

"Dan," said Buck, "I feel as restless as a wild duck in autumn. Are you game for a moonlight flit along the sand-dunes? It's a queer, lonely spot at night, but I feel in the mood for it."

"Right you are!" said Dan. "I'm feeling a bit fidgety myself. It's getting to sea again, I reckon. We'd better slip off without saying anything."

The two chums shinned up the quay ladders without making any noise, and stepped out for the shore. Very soon they cleared the houses and reached the belt of tumbled yellow sandhills, knitted with strong, coarse grass, that front the low coast for two hundred miles without a break on the Dutch and Flemish seaboard. Below the sand-dunes stretched the long, flat beach, covered now, for the tide was high.

For a couple of miles the boys walked smartly, having met only one person—a revenue man—near the starting point.

"Go easy, now," said Buck. "We're a good way out, an' we've got to get back."

They lay down comfortably on the soft sand at the foot of the dunes, their hands behind their heads, and looked lazily at the silver sea. The moon was setting.

"There's a light flashing out there," said Dan suddenly, pointing to seaward. "There it is again! It's from a smack. It's standing in mighty close."

"An' there's the answer, by George!" exclaimed Buck, as a tiny light shone for the fraction of a second among the sand-dunes. "There's a keg or two of brandy to be run off, I reckon. Well, it's just the night for it."

"What, smuggling?" said Dan. "Why, that's done with, years ago. Do they run cargoes now?"

"No, not in the old style—lugger's crew, armed with cutlasses, an' all that. That's a thing of the past. Preventive service is too good. But over this side there's many an odd half-dozen o' kegs taken aboard from the dunes, for coupers, or for running into the Thames. They take it in on the quiet, for the English Customs agents know of all

stores of liquor bought in the ports abroad. These ports wire across to our ports to look for the vessel when she arrives."

"Look at her!" exclaimed Dan, in a low voice. "That's no Dutchman, anyway! I could pick that topsail out of a thousand! Buck, it's our old friend!"

The dark, swift-looking vessel came curtseying over the light swells, and lay-to close to the beach. Her rakish, red sails shook in the eye of the wind.

Buck's eyes searched her keenly. "Great flounders, you're right, Dan! It's the Adder! Lie flat against the sand, and let's watch!"

A hundred yards from where the boys lay three figures crept out from the dunes. Two boats put off from the smack—her regular boat and a small dinghy she launched from the deck. They were pulled swiftly and silently shorewards, and took the beach close to the three men. The wind was offshore, and there was no surf to speak of.

"That's Jake in the longboat!" whispered Buck as a giant figure waded ashore. "There must be several more, though. Five—six—seven men ashore, besides the three from the sandhills. There's only one left aboard, then."

"One?" repeated Dan excitedly.

"Keep quiet!" whispered Buck.

A keg was swiftly trundled down the sand and lifted into the dinghy. She lay five or six yards nearer the boys than did the longboat, and her crew left her and went up the sandhills for more. The longboat's crew were busy loading their own craft.

The men from the dinghy disappeared among the shadowy dunes. A heavy cloud blotted out the moon, shading sea and sky into inky darkness. The boys glanced at each other.

"No!" whispered Buck. "It'd be stark lunacy! The longboat would catch us in two shakes!"

"They're all palavering up in the dunes," said Dan, hot with excitement, "and the Black's flagship lies with only one man aboard. She's forfeit for contraband if we take her into Ymuiden. Come on!"

It was madness, as Buck had said; but the two chums raced over the sand, silent as hounds on a blind trail.

(Prepare yourselves for another feast of thrills in next week's chapters of this gripping adventure yarn, boys!)

since his pater saw him last, to judge by that letter. I shouldn't have guessed it was meant for Warren at all from what's in it, only it begins 'Dear James'; and it's signed by the old bean 'Arthur Warren.' That settles it, doesn't it?"

Harry Wharton & Co. could see that the letter began "Dear James," but they certainly had no intention of reading it; they were rather more particular than Bunter in these little matters.

"I'm going to take it to Warren," went on Bunter. "It's his, you know. That cad Loder had no right to Warren's letter, had he? I say, if you fellows want to read it—"

"You fat villain—"

"Kick him!"

Billy Bunter dodged back.

"I say, you fellows—"

"All kick together," said Bob Cherry, "when I say 'three!' Stand steady, Bunter. One, two—Hullo, hallo, hallo! Where are you going, Bunter?"

No answer from Bunter. He was gone!

Jim Warren had the surprise of his life when Billy Bunter rolled into his study later in the afternoon and presented him with a crumpled letter.

He stared at the letter, and stared at Bunter.

"It's yours," said Bunter in a mysterious whisper. "Don't mention to anybody that I gave it to you. I—I found it, you know. But—but if Loder happened to hear that I—I found it, he might fancy I was the chap who ragged his study. Of course, it wasn't me. I was watching the football all the time, you know, when I smashed Loder's desk—I mean when I didn't. But you know what a suspicious beast Loder is. He might think it was me; just as he did yesterday about that Latin exercise. He's low, you know. There's your letter, old chap—and mind you don't mention me."

And Bunter rolled out of the study, leaving Warren with the letter in his hand, speechless.

THE END.

(Now watch out for next week's MAGNET and the final yarn in this exciting series, entitled: "BUNTER SPILLS THE BEANS!" You'll vote it a smasher!)

PLAY BILLIARDS

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WHY NOT COMPULSORY PILLOW-FIGHTING?

Asks SQUIFF

If you'd suggested the idea of compulsory pillow-fighting on the lines of compulsory footer practice to any beak a week ago, you'd have been asking for a thick ear. But things have happened since then, my infants!

It was last Tuesday, right in the middle of the war that has been raging between Remove and Upper Fourth, when Dr. Locke put his foot down and promised a Head's swishing for the next man caught pillow-fighting.

We're a fairly law-abiding lot in the Remove, and in the ordinary way we should probably have packed up pillow-fighting for a time in the face of that threat. But, just as it happened, it couldn't be done. You see, the Fourth had won the last battle—and to have left matters like that would have meant giving them the chance to crow over us for the rest of the term!

So, ban or no ban, we had to send out a raiding party that night to settle the war in our favour. The idea was for a swift attack on the Fourth Form dorm. in the middle of the night when beaks were all in bed, and an equally swift retirement before any of them had time to wake up and find out what was on.

Wharton and Smithy and Bolsover major took it in turns to keep awake till one a.m.—zero hour. Then the rest were roused and we all set out.

Half-way there, we found that we were not the only people about. A shadowy figure turned the corner and bumped into us—and the first thing we noticed was that he carried a pillow over his shoulder.

"It's Temple!" gasped Wharton. "Sock him!"

And didn't we just sock him, too! A dozen pillows crashed on to him from all angles—and a dozen more a split second later! Then we realised that our victim was not Temple after all, but a fully grown man who wore a black mask over his face—and that the "pillow" was not a pillow but a sackload of swag!

Something glittered suddenly in the moonlight. "It's a gun!" yelled Wharton. "Look out!"

Thud!

It was Smithy's pillow that came down on the pistol! The Bounder, like the great chap he always is in an emergency, had stepped in like greased lightning and knocked the weapon right out of the crook's hand! An instant later the rest of us were piling into the marauder and rendering him *hors de combat*, and within a few seconds masters and prefects were on the scene and someone was phoning for the police!

So ended the pillow-fighting raid of last Tuesday night. So ended also, let's hope, the beaks' unreasonable hostility to the ancient sport of pillow-fighting! My idea about it is that this is our chance to suggest to the Head that compulsory pillow-fighting should form part of the school curriculum?

If some of you chaps will take on the job I'll hold your caps while you go in!

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle!

It was midday booming out from the old clock tower at St. Sam's; but the St. Sam's boys didn't hear it, and for a very good reason, too. The reason was that the entire skool was thousands of miles away, crossing the Alljeeran Desert on camels!

The skoolboy egg-splorers had left the good ship Saucy Sally far behind, and now they were in the middle of the desert. It was a hot and tiring journey, but they endeavored it with trew British pluck and fortitude—with the exception of Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth Form, who looked the picture of misery as he sat in front of Doctor Birchmell on one of the leading camels.

"Few! This heat is the giddy limit!" he groaned. "I've been feeling out of sorts ever since Jolly and his friends vanished on the boat, but now I've positively got the hump!"

"You mean you've got the NECK, don't you?" grinned the Head, who was riding on the highest part of the camel's back. "I'm the one who has got the hump! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, crums! You'll make me hotter than ever if you start cracking jokes!" groaned Mr. Lickham. "Where's something I can mop my forehead with?"

He grabbed something behind him, which he took to be a camel-cloth, and started mopping his perspiring brow. At the same time there was a wild howl from the Head.

"Ow-wow-ow! Leggo my beard, you fathead! Yaroo!"

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Mr.



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STUDY-DOORWAY HOCKEY'S THE GOODS

Declares HARRY WHARTON

It's a great game, is Study-Doorway Hockey! The players stand in their study doorways, armed with hockey-sticks, and just whack the ball whenever it comes their way. The goals are the two ends of the passage, and for the purpose of the game the passage is divided into two halves. There is no rushing about. If you take more than one step out of your doorway the other side gets a free hit. This keeps the play quiet and prevents beaks and prefects nosing in. But I can assure you it doesn't prevent the game from being the most exciting passage game yet invented!

Since Study-Doorway Hockey became the rage in the Remove, my team has played Johnny Bull's team nine times. Johnny's crowd have won four times and mine five, so there's not a lot in it up to now.

The one thing to remember is to post scouts at both ends of the passage, to give warning of incoming traffic. This is the little precaution we neglected to take—with disastrous results! Eventually, someone had to come up the stairs just when the ball was flying to goal. And, naturally, that "someone" had to be Mr. Quelch. Of course, the ball had to hit him right on the knee as he turned into the passage! Things wouldn't happen that way, would they?

After the bust-up that ensued, Study-Doorway Hockey is likely to decline in popularity in the Remove for a time. But it's a great game for all that.

Try it and see!

Fond of Mince-meat? Come round to the gym., then, and have a look at Bulstrode after I've finished with him! Invitation issued by BOLSOVER MAJOR, Study No. 10, Remove.

HOSKINS HAS A RIVAL DICK RAKE Says

Claude Hoskins, the Shell's star pianist and musical genius, has a rival! Hoskins had invited us to hear the latest additions to his unending symphony, and, as we drew near the Music Room we heard the crashing of piano keys.

"What on earth is it?" we asked. "Those chords!" Hoskins breathed. "Do you hear them? That daring originality of metre! Do you notice it?"

"Mean to say you actually like it?" I asked. Hoskins smiled. "Like it? Why, it's marvellous! Whoever he is, the chap at that piano is an artist of the first order! The music, too, is extraordinary. Probably his own composition."

Almost bursting with enthusiasm, Hoskins rushed to the door of the Music Room and flung it open. Then he stopped and gasped. It didn't take me long to find out why.

When I peered over his shoulder, it was to see that the sounds that had come from the piano were not from a human being at all, but from Gosling's mongrel dog, which had strayed into the House and, for reasons unknown, decided to do a little jumping exercise on the piano keys!

Hoskins hasn't had much to say about music since, and I can't say I blame him!

In the KLUTCHES of the SHEEK!



An "Eggsciting" Instalment of Dicky Nugent's Super Serial: "The Skoolboy Egg-splorers!"

Lickham, realising his mistake. But the damage had been done. The Head had overbalanced already, and before Mr. Lickham could say "Nife!" he felt the Head's bony body crash down on him like a sack of potatoes. "Woooooop! Get off my chest!"

"Yellooooo!" Yelling feendishly, Doctor Birchmell and Mr. Lickham pitched off the camel's back. As they went they klutched madly at the luggage that was hanging on to the side of the camel—but the only result was to bring the luggage crashing down with them!

Bang! Crash! Wallop! The two masters descended into the desert sand, with luggage raining all round them. And then a very strange thing happened.

The chief item of luggage that had fallen was a big packing-case belonging to Abdul, the sinnister Arab guide. As luck would have it, that packing-case landed on a hard lump of rock with such a wack that it burst open. A moment later, to the utter amazement of all the St. Sam's fellows, four familiar faces looked out from the shavings inside the case.

"Jack Jolly and his pals!" yelled Loyle of the Fourth. "Then they were in that packing-case all the time! Hip, hip, hooray!"

"HOORAY!" A deafening roar of cheering ran like wildfire along the procession of camels. It was a real tonic to the St. Sam's egg-splorers to see the choery faces of the Gmusquartette again. Follows slid down from their camels by the dozen and raced forward to help Jolly & Co. out of their uncomfortable quarters. Even Doctor Birchmell and Mr. Lickham forgot their injuries and joined in the rush.

"Jolly! Merry! Bright! Fearless!" cried the Head, dolitedly. "My dear boys, it's simply ripping to see you again! Aro you fit and well?"

"Not so bad, sir, considering we've been shut up in that case for a week!" answered Jolly, with a rawful grin. "I suppose we're in Alljeers now?"

"Yes, rather! But how the merry dickens did you get boxed up like that?"

Jack Jolly's face darkened. He pointed an akkusing finger at Abdul, the guide, who was skulking at the back of the crowd, skowling savvidgoly.

"There's the man who did it—that rotter Abdul!" he cried. "Sir, he's a traitor—a trecherous traitor and a villain of the deepest dye!"

"Bless my sole! I cannot possibly believe that!" eggs-claimed the Head. "Abdul is the Sheek's trusted servant, sent for the special purpose of guiding us safely into the Sheek's kingdom! He's an

awfully decent sort, aren't you, Abdul?"

Abdul stopped skowling and showed his beaming white teeth in a "eking grin."

"Ob, yes!" he said. "These boys, they mak' the ver' beeg mistake, isn't eet?" "Don't you believe him, sir!" cried Frank Fearless. "Do you know why he shut us up in that case? It's because we found out his secret! We heard him send a radio message to the Sheek that gave the whole show away. The fat is, sir, we're being led into a trap!"

"Wha-a-at!" "The Sheek duzzout want us for the purpose of seeing if we're fit companions for his son, sir! He wants us as prisoners!"

There was a buzz of eggscitement from the crowd. But Doctor Birchmell only larfed incredulously.

"I'm afra' you boys are suffering from the effects of your utfermost eggscperiences," he said, lightly. "When you've had something to eat and drink you'll forget all about it! Hero—help yourselves!"

The Head dived into his knapsack and brought out a bag of jam tarts and bottles of ginger-pop. And Jack Jolly & Co. were so famished that they gave up arguing any further and waded into the good things instead. In any case, it was too late now to do anything about it, for they were nearing the end of their journey. Soon after the camels had started off again the St. Sam's egg-splorers saw ahead of them an enormous palace in the middle of a wacking grate oasis.

"The palace of the Sheek of Alljeers!" yelled the Head, as eggscited as a Second Form fag. "Hooray! We're here at last, boys!"

Crowds of Arabs galloped up on horseback to meet the St. Sam's egg-splorers. They were grinning all over their swarthy faces as they rained in their steeds; some were even larfing fit to bust. The St. Sam's fellows, remembering what Frank Fearless had said, didn't feel very pleased to notiss this; but Doctor Birchmell saw nothing suspicious in it.

"How jolly pleased they all seem to see us!" he cried. "Lickham, old scout, I fancy we're going to have the time of our lives as guests of the Sheek!"

"I hoop you're right, sir," said Mr. Lickham, uneezily. "Personally, I'd give six months' saltery to be back in the Fourth Form Room at St. Sam's!"

"Thees way, doctaire!" leered Abdul, as they arrived in front of the Sheek's palace. "Com' an' meet Hees Highness the Sheek, jentlemen, and diskuss about hees son going to your skool. Har, har, har!"

"I wonder what makes him larf like that?" merrered Mr. Lickham, nervously.

The Fourth Form master didn't have to wonder much longer. No sooner had he followed the Head into the palace and taken one look at the face of the Sheek of Alljeers than he realised the worst. For, without a doubt, the Sheek had the most feendish face ever seen outside a nightmare or a chamber of horrors. Even Doctor Birchmell saw at a glance that Fearless had been right, but he mannigded to conceal his feelings as he went up to the Sheek's throne and eggstended his hand.

"Good evening, Sheek!" he cried. "It's a plezzure to meet you and—woooooop!"

For a moment Doctor Birchmell thought he had been stung by a moskeeter.

Then he realised that it was the bizziness end of a sword that was prodding his anattermy!

"What the thump!" he began; but he was interrupted by a terrifying snarl from the Sheek.

"Down on your nooze, dogs!" the Sheek roared. "Grovel on the ground, all of you, before I give my Chief Eggscoutioner orders to get bizzzy!"

"Oh crums!" The St. Sam's crowd fell down on their hands and knees and started boughing and seraping in front of the Sheek.



for all they were worth! Then the Head tried again to speak.

"Now, Sheek, if you're ready to let me take your lad back to St. Sam's—"

he began.

A peal of feendish laughter left the Sheek's lips.

"Har, har, har! So you beleeved it all, eh, dog? That ces ver' funny!"

"B-but isn't it trow, then?" phaltered Doctor Birchmell.

"Not likely!" leered the Sheek. "You zink I send my son to Engleesh skool when Engleesh skool can com' to me? No fear! You

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Tom Redwing loves the roar of the waves on a shingle beach. He spent a pouring-wet half-holiday walking along the coast near Pezz Bay, for pleasure. Redwing, secure in a waterproof, cares nothing for wind or weather. "Proof" of his love of the sea!

Aeroplanes on night manoeuvres, cruising over Greyfriars, kept some of the Removites awake, but not Bunter. Nothing could awaken Bunter. Even when the dormitory once caught fire, he only roused up in time to see Bob Cherry putting out the flames with an extinguisher!

Attempting to combine dancing with playing a xylophone in the Rag, Fisher T. Fish got out of step. When he finished playing his number, he was quite "played out." Stage-manager William Wibley "rang" down the curtains on Fishy's xylophone performance!

Tom Dutton declares he is by no means deaf. Yet, when the Removites turned out of their studies in force to repulse an Upper-Fourth raid, he did not appear till Temple & Co. had been thrown out. Then Dutton was furious because he had "heard" about it too late!

Herbert Vernon-Smith surprised the owner of a shooting range at the Courtfield Fair, when out of six shots, he hit four of the little balls bobbing on fountain jets. Smithy has a good eye—and his performance was a real "eye-opener" for the showman! Well shot, Smithy!

Bunter is continually telling Removites how he scored a "hat-trick" on Little Side the other day. Bunter certainly did score three goals—but only after the practise eleven had left the field, leaving him an empty net to shoot into! Bunter, the short-sighted, "lost sight" of them!