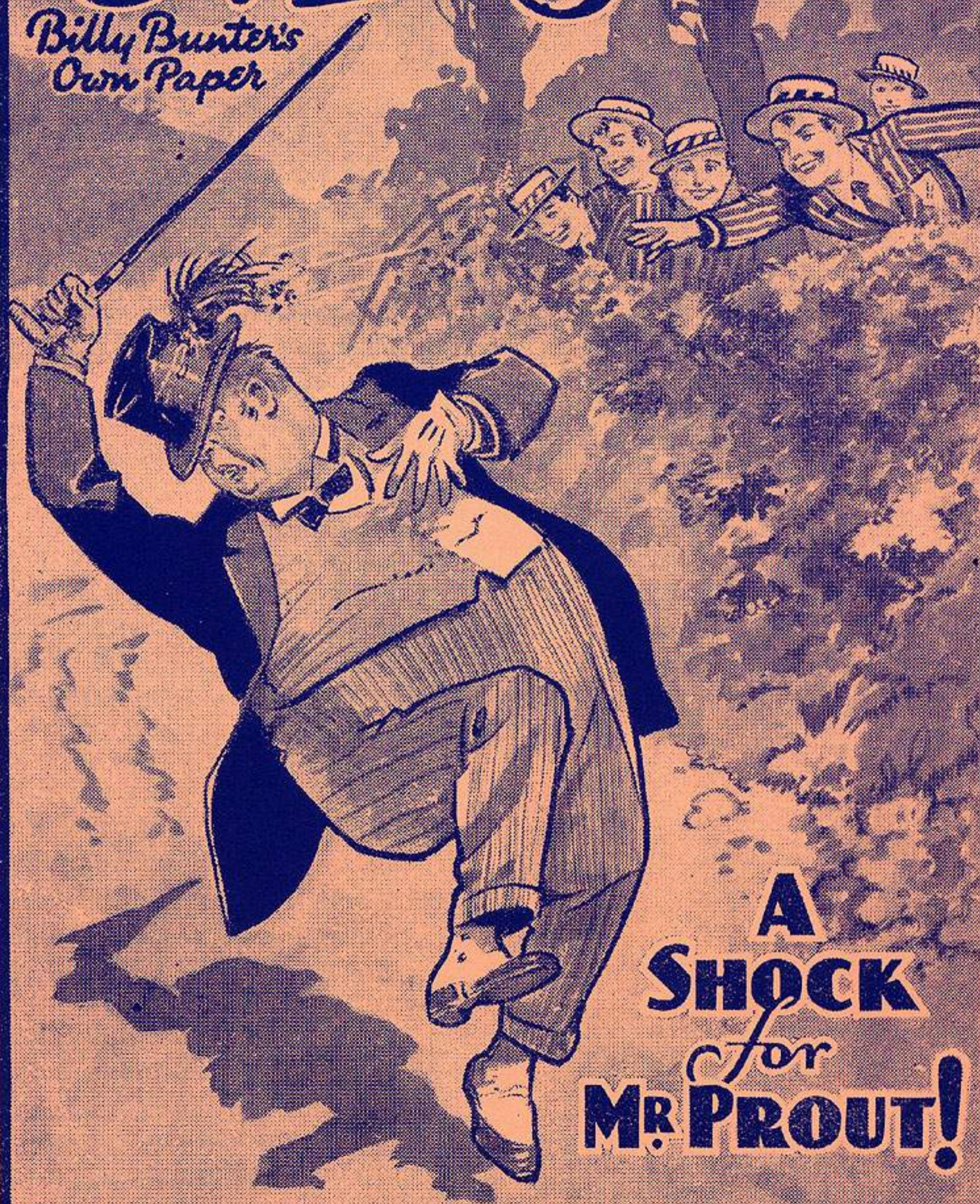


"UP FOR THE SACK!" Sensational School Story of Harry Wharton & Co.

The Magnet 2^D

Billy Bunter's
Own Paper



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We still have Five More "Hercules" Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other grand prizes to give away in the July contest—all for collecting the free "Armaments" Stamps being printed in The MAGNET every week. There are now five different kinds to be collected—BATTLESHIPS, TANKS, DESTROYERS, and so on. Cut them out and try to get as many others as you can—all those you have collected so far (except Bombers, Submarines and Searchlights which have been called in) should be kept for this month's contest.

There are sixteen more stamps on this page! Add them to your collection right away, and don't forget that you will find more of these stamps to swell your total in other papers like "Modern Boy" and "Gem." Why not get your pals interested, too? You can then swap stamps with them.

At the end of July we shall again ask you how many of one or more kinds of stamps you have collected. And then the remaining Five Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other prizes will be awarded to those readers with the biggest collections of stamps called for. All second-prize winners will be asked to choose their own gifts.

Don't send any stamps yet! We will tell you how and where when the time comes.

OVERSEAS READERS! You are in this great scheme also and special awards will be given for the best collections from overseas readers for whom there will be a special closing date.

(N.B.—You can also collect or swap "Armaments" Stamps with readers of "Gem," "Modern Boy," "Boy's Cinema," "Triumph," "Champion," "Sports Budget," "Detective Weekly," and "Thriller"—stamps can be cut from all those papers, but no reader may win more than one first prize, or share, of course.)

RULES—Five First Prizes of £4 7s. 6d. "Hercules" Cycles and at least 2,000 other prizes will be awarded in order of merit (as in previous months of the contest), i.e., to the readers declaring and sending the largest collections of the stamps called for. Cash value of any of the first prizes may be divided in case of a tie or ties for such prizes. Ties for any other prizes will be decided by the Editor.

All claims for prizes to be sent on the proper coupon (to be given later); no allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated, or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence. No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.



FIVE in the SOUP! Disregarding a master's authority is a serious enough offence at Greyfriars. But to be accused of ragging a prefect as well— It is, indeed, a very black outlook for the Famous Five, who find themselves faced with the dreaded penalty of the "sack!"

UP FOR THE SACK!



"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five stared at the inscription on the door of Wharton's study. "I say, you fellows, I wonder who did that?" chortled Billy Bunter. "Somebody knows you, what? He, he, he!"

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Reward of Wisdom!

REMAIN here!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"Yes, sir; but—"

"Your headmaster will deal with you."

"But, sir—"

"You need say nothing, Wharton!"

"But—"

"Kindly be silent, Cherry—"

"But—"

"You need not speak, Nugent. The matter is in the hands of your headmaster!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Dr. Locke will deal with you when he comes. You will remain here till then. That is all."

The Remove master turned to the door.

Five juniors in the Head's study at Greyfriars were not looking happy.

Their Form-master had shepherded them into that dreaded apartment. He was leaving them there for judgment. It was not a happy prospect.

Quelch's face, always severe, was grimmer than usual. He stepped out of the study, leaving the Famous Five of Greyfriars in a dismal group.

The door closed with a snap!

Quelch was gone.

"Blow!" said Bob Cherry.

"What rotten luck!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The rottenfulness is terrific!" mumbled Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Quelch is preposterously infuriated."

"Blessed if I quite make it out!" said Frank Nugent. "We cut gates this afternoon, but fellows have cut gates before and no bones broken. What's all this fearful fuss about?"

"And we were gated for nothing!" said Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Not much good telling the Head that!" he remarked. "Quelch fancied he had a reason for gating us, and the Big Beak will fancy the same."

Harry Wharton gave a grunt, and stepped to the window and looked out. Outside in the quad he could see a

Super School Story by Star Author, featuring **HARRY WHARTON & CO.**, the cheery chums of GREYFRIARS.

crowd of fellows—most of them with their gaze directed on that study window.

All Greyfriars knew that Harry Wharton & Co. were "up before the Beak," and most of the fellows seemed interested. The window was open, and the sound of voices floated in. Billy Bunter's fat squeak was audible.

"I say, you fellows, it's the sack!"

"It's the sack all right!" said Skinner.

"They can't sack the whole lot!" came Vernon-Smith's voice. "Not five fellows in a bunch! A bit too wholesale!"

"Wharton, anyway—"

"Oh, yes, Wharton; but the others may get off with a flogging."

Harry Wharton turned away from the study window again with knitted brows. Those remarks from Remove fellows in the quad were neither grateful nor comforting. He was quite unconscious of having done anything meriting so drastic a sentence as the "sack." But it was plain that the Removites had made up their minds on that subject.

"Sounds nice and pleasant, doesn't it?" remarked Bob, with a grimace.

"Silly asses!" said Wharton. "We've done nothing to be bunked for."

"They think we have," said Johnny Bull. "From what I can make out, Loder of the Sixth was ragged by somebody while we were out of gates. They think that we did it."

"Well, as we didn't, what does it matter what they think?"

"Lots, if the Head thinks the same," said Johnny.

"He won't. The Head's not an ass!"

"Quelch thinks so—"

"Oh, bother Quelch!"

"It's our own fault," said Johnny Bull. "We were gated for the afternoon, and we ought to have stayed in gates. I told you so at the time."

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"Oh, rats!"

"I suppose you haven't forgotten that I told you so?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Well, don't tell us again!" hooted the captain of the Remove.

It was quite true that Johnny had told his friends so. With the calm, solid common sense for which he was remarkable, Johnny had pointed out that as Quelch had gated them for the afternoon they ought to stay within gates. It was hard cheese and rough luck, but the course of school life, like the course of true love, never did run smooth, and a sensible fellow ought to take what came to him, and keep a stiff upper-lip.

Johnny was right. There was no doubt that he was right—as he generally was. But Johnny's pals sometimes found his rightness a little exasperating.

In the present circumstances they found it very exasperating indeed. Every fellow there wished, as he waited for the Head, that he had heeded Johnny's words of wisdom. But he hadn't, and that was that! And there was something very exasperating in "I told you so!" Johnny, perhaps, had more wisdom than tact.

"I'm not going to tell you again," said Johnny calmly. "It's too late now to be of any use; but if you'd listened at the time——"

"If 'ifs' and 'ands' were pots and pans," remarked Bob Cherry, "the tinkers would be on the dole."

"If you'd listened——" pursued Johnny.

"Give us a rest!"

"If you'd listened we shouldn't have got landed in this. They couldn't make out that we'd ragged that bully Loder on Courtfield Common, miles away, if we'd stayed in gates. Can't you see that?" asked Johnny Bull.

The Co. could see it only too well. They really did not need it pointed out to them. They glared at Johnny.

"If we'd been out of gates, in the ordinary way, on a half-holiday, it would be different," continued Johnny Bull. "But it was Loder got us gated, making out to Quelch that we were going ragging after Highcliffe cads. What's Quelch to think when he found out that we had cut gates, after all, and that something happened to Loder while we were out? Of course, he thinks that we went out after the brute."

"But we didn't!" roared Bob Cherry. "That swab, Loder, seems to have been ragged on the common, and we went up the river, nowhere near the common."

"Yes; but if we hadn't gone——"

"Ring off!"

"Chuck it!"

"Dry up!"

"Oh, all right!" said Johnny Bull. "But we've got landed, and we've only got ourselves to thank. If——"

"If you say 'if' again I'll buzz the Head's Euripides at you!" hissed Bob Cherry.

"Well, here we are, booked for a row," said Johnny. "We've asked for it, all round. Before we started I told you so—— Yaroooh!"

That "I told you so!" was the last straw.

Johnny Bull broke off with a yell as his exasperated chums collared him. They collared him on all sides, and Johnny was swept off his feet in the grasp of four pairs of hands.

"Oh! Ow! Leggo!" roared Johnny.

"Bump him!"

"Leggo! You jolly well know I told you so!" roared Johnny.

"Bump him for telling us so!" said Bob.

Bump!

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"You know I was right!" yelled Johnny.

"Bump him for being right!" said Nugent.

Bump!

"Yarooooop!" roared Johnny Bull, as he bumped on the Head's carpet. "Oh crikey! You silly asses! Yoo-hoop!"

Bump!

"Yoooooop!"

The study door opened.

"What——" ejaculated a startled voice.

"Oh crumbs!"

"The Head!"

Four fellows let go Johnny Bull, as if Johnny had suddenly become red-hot.

Johnny sat gasping, while his friends turned crimson faces towards the Head.

Dr. Locke gave them a look—quite an expressive look—as he came into the study.

Johnny scrambled breathlessly to his feet.

Really it was an unfortunate moment for the Head to enter. The juniors had rather forgotten that they were waiting for him.

Dr. Locke sat down at his writing-table, and five juniors, crimson and breathless, faced him in a state of considerable confusion.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

An Amazing Accusation!

DR. LOCKE sat for a moment or two, in silence, his eyes fixed on the flushed faces in front of him.

His face was very grave and stern.

The Famous Five of the Remove had plenty of nerve, but they could not help their hearts sinking under that stern and steady gaze. It was clear—very clear—that they were booked for bad trouble, though they could not understand as yet how it had come about.

Obviously, it was not merely because they had "cut gates" that afternoon that they were before their headmaster. Such a breach of discipline would have been dealt with by their Form-master, Mr. Quelch. They had done nothing else, but evidently the Head believed that they had; Quelch believed so; the crowd of fellows in the quad believed so. It was puzzling—indeed, bewildering—and it caused them to feel a deep mis-giving.

The Head broke the silence at last. He made no reference to the scene he had witnessed when he entered the study. Much more serious matters than that were on hand.

"I hardly know," said Dr. Locke, "how to deal with you. To expel five boys at once from the school is unheard of. And yet one is as guilty as another—unless you, Wharton, as leader, may be considered more guilty than the others!"

"What have we done, sir?" asked Harry Wharton, quietly and very respectfully.

"You must know to what I am alluding, Wharton!" said Dr. Locke, his tone growing sharper. "This afternoon you were ordered to remain within gates by your Form-master, acting on a report made to him by a prefect—Loder of the Sixth Form! You deliberately disobeyed this command——"

"I know, sir. But we've done nothing else."

"You do not deny, Wharton, that you left the school against orders to follow Loder when he went out; that you attacked him in a lonely spot on Courtfield Common; that you placed him

inside a sack and ducked him in the pond, and left him tied hand and foot to——"

The juniors fairly jumped.

From the talk of the Remove fellows, they knew that Gerald Loder had been ragged by somebody on the common that afternoon. But all this was news to them. From the Head's description, it must have been "some" rag!

"Had not Mr. Prout been taking a walk this afternoon, and had he not, fortunately, come upon Loder," said the Head, "Loder might have remained for hours in that situation——"

"We never touched him, sir!" exclaimed Harry.

"We never even saw him, sir!" said Frank Nugent.

"We had nothing whatever to do with it, sir!" said Bob Cherry. "We never knew anything had happened till we came in to calling-over at half-past five!"

"We shouldn't know now if we hadn't heard the fellows talking!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"We are terrifically innocent, honoured sir!" murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"You deny this charge?" exclaimed the Head, raising his eyebrows.

He did not seem to have expected that—why, the juniors could not understand. Naturally, they denied having done what they certainly had not done!

"Certainly we deny it!" said Harry Wharton hotly. "We did go out of gates, sir, and we know, of course, that we ought not to have done so. But we were gated for nothing——"

"Wharton!" said the Head in a deep voice.

"I do not mean that Mr. Quelch was unjust, sir. But Loder reported to him that we were going ragging after the Highcliffe fellows, and he was quite mistaken; we never meant anything of the kind. We were going over to Highcliffe to see our friends there—Courtenay and De Courcy. Mr. Quelch got quite a wrong impression——"

"That, if correct, is no excuse for disobedience to your Form-master, Wharton. But I am not dealing with a matter of Form discipline now. You waylaid Loder——"

"We did not, sir! As for following him, we went out before he did; I remember seeing him in the quad just before we went out."

"Possibly," said the Head. "But there is no doubt that you waylaid him on the common, Wharton, and acted as I have stated——"

"We certainly did not, sir! We walked by way of Oak Lane to the river and went up the towpath as far as Courtfield Bridge, where we hired a boat. We never went on the common at all, either going or coming back."

"Doesn't Loder know who ragged him, sir?" asked Bob Cherry. "I suppose he must have seen them; and if he did, he knows it wasn't us."

"Cherry, Loder has stated definitely that it was you five juniors!" said the Head sternly.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob.

"Loder said that?" gasped Harry Wharton blankly.

"Precisely!"

The juniors looked at the Head. They looked at one another. They felt rather as if their heads were turning round.

There was no love lost between them and the bully of the Sixth. They had had plenty of trouble with Loder. That very afternoon he had got them gated—whether by mistake or malice. They would have been, in point of fact, quite glad to give Gerald Loder the ragging of his life. But ragging a Sixth Form

prefect was not practical politics; it was one of those happy things that could be dreamed of, but not done. Certainly they had not done it. It was utterly amazing to hear that Loder declared that they had.

Loder was a bully; he was rather unscrupulous. But the fellow who disliked him most would not have suspected him of bringing a false accusation. That really was unthinkable. So this was dumbfounding.

Wharton found his voice.

"I can't understand it, sir; but Loder is mistaken. I don't know how he could make such a mistake, but he has. We never touched him."

"Loder's statement is absolutely definite, Wharton!" said the Head icily. "I am surprised at your denial."

Harry Wharton's eyes flashed.

"We deny what we haven't done, sir! If Loder says that he saw us, or one of us, when he was handled, he's telling lies! He couldn't suppose that other fellows were us—that's impossible! If he says he saw us on Courtfield Common this afternoon, it is false!"

The words came from the captain of the Remove in an angry torrent.

Yet, even as he uttered them, his heart misgave him. The Head certainly would not believe that one of his prefects had lied. But the fact was that Wharton could not believe it himself. There was some amazing and bewildering mistake in the matter. Loder, no doubt, was glad to believe his old enemies of the Remove guilty of an action meriting expulsion. But he would not have said so unless he believed it.

Dr. Locke's face hardened.

"You are well aware, Wharton, that Loder did not see you after the precautions you took to prevent him from doing so!" he rapped.

"I don't understand, sir!" stammered the captain of the Remove. "If Loder was collared by a mob of fellows, I suppose he must have seen them. He's not blind."

Dr. Locke gave him a very penetrating look. For the first time a spot of doubt seemed to creep into his mind.

"Loder's statement, Wharton, is that he walked across the common, taking the short cut by the pond, and as soon as he passed under the trees there, a sack was thrown over his head. He was seized at once, and was unable to remove the sack, and did not, therefore, see his assailants at all."

"Oh!" gasped the juniors.

"He has not, therefore, stated that he saw you, as, in the circumstances, it was impossible for him to do so!" said the Head sternly. "Had he not heard you speaking to one another while he was covered by the sack, he would not have known who attacked him."

Wharton compressed his lips.

"I understand now, sir," he said. "Loder jumped to it that we were there, and, as he did not see anybody, I dare say he fancied so. We were nowhere near the place."

"Loder was attacked by five boys: he is assured that he felt the grasp of five pairs of hands," said the Head. "And while he was struggling in the sack, he heard you address one another—by name."

"He heard nothing of the kind, sir, as we were not there," answered Harry Wharton quietly. "If he had his head in a sack, he might easily make mistakes about what he heard. He certainly could not have recognised voices."

There was a pause.

"I did not expect this denial," said the Head at last, "and I fear that it is based on the fact that you had taken care that Loder should not see who

assailed him. Doubtless you did not realise that he heard you speaking. Now, however, that you are aware that all is known—"

"Nothing is known, sir, so far as I can see," answered Harry. "Loder may have heard fellows speaking whose names are the same as ours—our Christian names are not very uncommon—"

"I will send for Loder!" said the Head. "I repeat that I did not expect this denial; but if you persist in it, the matter shall be gone into thoroughly in the presence of the prefect you attacked! Wait!"

Dr. Locke touched a bell, and Trotter, the page, was dispatched to call Loder of the Sixth, and the Famous Five waited in silence for his arrival.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Guilty Or Not Guilty?

GERALD LODER entered the Head's study in a very few minutes.

He did not look at the five juniors waiting there. His glance passed them to the headmaster.

"You sent for me, sir?"

"Yes, Loder," said Dr. Locke. "In view of the fact that those juniors deny having laid hands on you this afternoon—"

Loder glanced at the five then, with a contemptuous sneer on his face. Then he looked at the Head again.

"I am not surprised that they deny it, sir!" he said. "They took care that I should not recognise them. They meant to deny it afterwards."

The Head frowned slightly.

"We should not deny it if it were true, Loder!" said Harry Wharton. "We have already told Dr. Locke that we were not on Courtfield Common this afternoon, at all. Some other fellows must—"

"Loder, repeat what you have said to me with regard to the names you heard used," said Dr. Locke. "I need not warn you to be extremely careful in so serious a matter as this."

"I heard these juniors, sir, speaking to one another by name while I was stuck in the sack!" said Loder.

"You are not telling the Head that you recognised our voices through the sack?" asked Harry Wharton scornfully.

"I recognised the names I heard," said Loder. "Five fellows had hold of me, and they spoke to one another by name. One name was Bob, one was Harry, one was Johnny, and one was a surname—Wharton!"

The Famous Five stood dumb.

They were more bewildered than ever. Five fellows, not themselves, might have collared Loder—fellows often went out in parties on a half-holiday. Three of the five might imaginably have had such Christian names as Bob, Harry, and Johnny—though the coincidence would have been very singular. But that one of them also had the surname of Wharton was altogether too much for a coincidence. It was not a common name—there certainly was no other fellow at Greyfriars of that name, and Wharton had never heard of one in the neighbourhood at all.

No wonder the Head was convinced. If Loder had been ragged by five fellows, three of whom bore the names of members of the Famous Five—one an uncommon surname—the case was clear!

It was clear to the Head—and clear to Loder! They had "sacked" him to

prevent recognition of his assailants, and unconsciously and unintentionally given themselves away, after all, by speaking in his hearing, unthinkingly using the names they were accustomed to use.

But if it was clear to Loder and the Head, it was not, of course, clear to the fellows who had been at least a mile away when Loder was "sacked."

They were hopelessly bewildered.

If Loder was telling the truth, they had done it. But they had not done it! Therefore, Loder was not telling the truth! But to fancy that he was lying to get fellows bunked because he disliked them was too staggering! But if that was not the explanation, what was it?

The juniors could not speak. They could only stare! They almost wondered whether they were dreaming.

The Head waited; but they said nothing. He spoke at last.

"Have you anything further to say?"

"Yes," gasped Harry. "Yes! We never did it!"

"Are you persisting in denial, Wharton?"

"Certainly we are, as we never knew anything about it," exclaimed the captain of the Remove hotly. "Loder must be mistaken. He may have heard such names as Bob and Harry and Johnny—lots of fellows have such names. But—"

"I heard your surname, among the others!" said Loder grimly.

"You did not!" flamed out Wharton.

Loder shrugged his shoulders.

"Silence, Wharton!" exclaimed the Head. "Even the three Christian names would make the matter clear, especially in view of the fact that you were harbouring resentment against Loder, and had gone out of gates in defiance of your Form-master's order. I could not believe that Loder was attacked by five other boys, three of whom had the same names."

The juniors had to admit themselves that it "sounded steep."

"But the surname of Wharton makes the matter absolutely clear, and places it beyond doubt!" said the Head sternly.

"It does—if Loder heard it, sir!" said Harry. "Such a thing as that couldn't possibly be coincidence."

"Then you confess—"

"No, sir. We never went near the pond on the common this afternoon. We hired a boat at Courtfield Bridge, and the man there will tell you so, if you inquire."

"That is immaterial!" said Dr. Locke. His voice grew deeper and his brow sterner. "I trust that you will not persist in a futile and untruthful denial of what has now been proved beyond doubt—"

"We shall deny what we have not done, sir!" answered Harry Wharton steadily.

Dr. Locke set his lips.

"Can you expect me to believe for one moment, Wharton, that Loder was attacked by five boys, two of whom had the same Christian names as your companions, and one the same surname as yourself?"

The captain of the Remove breathed hard.

"No, sir," he answered slowly. "That's impossible—or very nearly impossible. Nobody could believe that."

"Then what do you mean?"

"I mean that Loder never heard any such name!" said Harry. "He may have fancied that he did. But he did not."

"Nonsense!"

"I've no doubt," said Wharton, with

a bitter look at the bully of the Sixth, "that as Loder didn't see who had collared him, he fancied it was us. He would think so, at once! I suppose he imagined the rest."

"Nonsense!" repeated the Head sharply. "Such absurd suggestions as that, Wharton—"

"If he did not fancy it, sir, he is not speaking the truth!" said Harry Wharton coolly and quietly.

"Wharton!"

"He is not speaking the truth!" repeated the captain of the Remove. "He never heard my name spoken while he was in the sack. I was not there, and my friends were not there, so he could not have heard my name."

Loder crimsoned. "Am I to listen to this, sir?" he exclaimed, in a choking voice. "Is this junior permitted to call a prefect a liar to his face?"

"Silence, Wharton!" exclaimed the Head. "How dare you make any such suggestion? How dare you?"

Wharton's eyes blazed. "I've told you the truth, sir. Loder has not! Either he is making a silly mistake or else he is speaking falsely. Not one of us was anywhere near the place! Loder is not telling the truth."

Loder's hands clenched convulsively. Even in the presence of the Head he could hardly restrain his rage.

Dr. Locke rose to his feet. His brow was like thunder.

To the accused juniors it was obvious that Loder was either making some bewildering mistake, or else was speaking untruthfully. To the Head, there seemed no possibility of a mistake, and he knew that Loder was not, and could not, be making a false accusation. His anger was intense.

"Say no more, Wharton! Not another word! Not another syllable, unless it is to confess to what you have done."

"We've nothing to confess, sir!"

"Nothing!" said Johnny Bull.

"Silence! I shall consider my judgment in this matter, and make it known later. Leave my study!"

In silence the five juniors left the study, leaving Loder with the Head.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Up Against It!

"I SAY, you fellows, here they are!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"What's the verdict?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Sacked?" asked Peter Todd.

"Bunked?" asked Skinner.

"Not the lot of you, surely!" exclaimed Hazeldene. "Five at a swoop—my hat!"

The Famous Five came into the Rag, after leaving the Head. They found a crowd of the Remove there. Every fellow was anxious to hear the verdict. Few doubted that it was the "sack"—the only question being whether all the famous Co. were booked for the "long jump" or only some of them.

An eager crowd surrounded them. The Five were looking gloomy enough. The Head had said that he would "consider his judgment," but that did not mean that he entertained any doubt of their delinquency. It only meant that the chopper was delayed in coming down, the number of the delinquents placing the headmaster in a difficult position. Five expulsions in one day was a wholesale order. Yet how to choose among five culprits equally guilty was not an easy matter. That, they had no doubt, was the only cause of delay.

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"Cough it up!" said the Bounder. "What's happened?"

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Loder's made a false statement to the Head, and the Head believes him!" he answered, in a cool, clear voice that was heard throughout the Rag. "It looks as if we're going to be sacked—or some of us. That's the lot, so far."

"Not sacked yet?" asked Skinner.

"Sorry—no!" answered Wharton, with sarcastic politeness.

"Well, dash it all, you jolly well asked for it!" said Bolsover major. "Every man here would like to rag a bully like Loder, and duck him—but there's a limit. A fellow can't!"

"Oh, quite!" agreed Wharton. "We'd like it as much as anybody! But as it means the sack, we never did it—only it pleases Loder to make out that we did."

"Draw it mild, old man!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"I say that we never did it!" he said. "Any man here who doesn't believe me had better not speak to me again. I shall punch his head if he does!"

"Big order, punching thirty heads one after another!" said Skinner.

Some of the fellows laughed; and Harry Wharton turned on the cad of the Remove, with his hands clenched.

"All serene—I wasn't speaking to you," said Skinner. "I was speaking to Smithy! I suppose I can speak to Smithy if I like!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't you be a worm, Skinner, old bean!" suggested Lord Mauleverer. "You know well enough that if Wharton says he never did it, he never did."

"Pity the Head doesn't think so!" remarked Skinner.

"Loder's taken him in!" said Harry. Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"The Head's a wise old bird!" he said. "Loder couldn't take him in, even if he wanted to."

"He has, you fathead! The Head believes that we ragged that brute on the common this afternoon. Loder's told him so."

"Yaas! He thinks so, or he wouldn't say so! Don't be an ass, Wharton! Loder's rather a beast, and I loathe him; but he wouldn't tell lies about a fellow, any more than you or I would."

Wharton opened his lips for an angry reply; but he closed them again. Mauly's words found an echo, as it were, in his own heart. Loder, with all his faults, and their name was legion, was not the fellow to make false statements in a report to the headmaster. And yet, what other explanation could there be?

"Are you actually telling us that you never did it, you fellows?" asked Vernon-Smith, staring at the Famous Five.

"Yes, fathead!" said Bob Cherry. "We'd have liked to, as most fellows here would—but we never did."

"The neverfulness is terrific, my esteemed Smithy!"

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

"Well, that beats it!" said Smithy. "Everybody knows—"

He broke off with a shrug of the shoulders as Wharton's eyes gleamed at him. "Keep your temper, old bean—no need to row with us; I'd be jolly glad to see you come through all right."

"It's some idiotic mistake!" said Johnny Bull. "Some gang collared Loder, and he thinks it was us—"

"Five of them!" remarked Skinner. "Not you—another five!"

"I don't see how Loder could be so sure of the number, if he was headed

up in a sack, and never saw any of them!" said Frank Nugent. "Where were you and Snoop and Stott, Skinner?"

Skinner laughed.

"Might have been any fellows, if it really happened!" said Harry Wharton. "All the Lower School would like to rag Loder. But I don't know whether it really happened! If Loder's told a pack of lies, he may have invented the whole thing."

"He, he, he! You should have seen him when he came in!" giggled Bunter.

"Lots of fellows saw Loder come in," said Vernon-Smith. "I was at the cricket, but I've heard from a dozen fellows what he looked like—smothered with filthy dust from a sack, and up to the knees in mud from being sat in the pond. He was a real picture."

"He was, and no mistake!" said Skinner. "I saw him! Half the school saw him, Wharton, if you're in any doubt about it!" And Skinner chuckled. He did not think that the captain of the Remove was in much doubt!

Harry Wharton bit his lip. He realised that his suspicions of the bully of the Sixth were carrying him a little too far. Whether Loder had lied or not, he certainly had not invented the whole occurrence.

"Draw it mild, you know," grinned Hazel.

"Well, we never did it!" said Bob. "Goodness knows who did—we didn't!"

The Bounder laughed.

"Stick to that, and you may get away with it," he said. "Best of luck!"

"If you think we'd tell lies, like you would, Smithy—" bawled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, not at all!" grinned the Bounder. "Some fellows have a nerve, though! Still, I hope you'll pull through."

"Don't be an ass, Smithy!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "Where were you fellows this afternoon?"

"Up the river, Mauly!"

"You were rather asses to cut gates," said his lordship, shaking his head.

"I told them so—" began Johnny Bull.

"Shut up!" roared his four friends.

"But look here," said Mauly. "Loder seems to have trotted off by the short cut across the common. It's a solitary sort of place—"

"Just the place for an ambush!" grinned Skinner.

"Yaas! But Sixth Form prefects don't usually mention to Lower Fourth juniors where they're goin' on a half-holiday!" said Mauleverer. "How the dooce could these chaps know that Loder was goin' that way at all, and lay a giddy ambush for him? Didn't you point out to the Head, you fellows, that you couldn't possibly have known where Loder was this afternoon?"

"But they did know!" chuckled Vernon-Smith. "You see, I heard Loder tell another Sixth Form man that he was going by the short cut by the pond, and I told these fellows! I thought it was a good chance for them to get back on him—of course, I never dreamed they'd be fools enough to get copped at it!"

"Oh gad!" said Mauly. "Then you fellows knew that Loder would be there?"

"Yes, we knew!" answered Harry. "We'd forgotten all about what Smithy told us—but he did tell us, and we knew if we'd thought about it at all."

His lordship whistled.

"So it's your word against Loder's!" he said.



"Yarooooooop!" roared Johnny Bull, as he bumped on the Head's carpet. "Oh crikey! You silly asses—yooo-hoop!" Bump! "Yooooooop!" The study door opened suddenly, and Dr. Locke looked in. "Boys!" he ejaculated, in a startled voice. "What does this mean?"

"Just that! Our word's better than his, if the Head knew it!" answered the captain of the Remove. "We've told the truth—Loder hasn't!"

"Beats me!" said Mauly. "Dear old Mauly!" grinned Vernon-Smith. "He can't believe that any fellow would tell a lie—and yet he knows Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—" squeaked the fat Owl. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked round at the crowd of faces in the Rag. Not a fellow there believed them, with the exception of Lord Mauleverer, who was hopelessly puzzled. Even fellows who liked and trusted them could not believe them now—in the face of evidence that seemed irrefutable, and that had satisfied the headmaster and their own Form-master.

Nobody liked Loder—nobody trusted him—but the idea of a Sixth Form prefect making a deliberately false accusation was unthinkable. Loder had stated that he had heard the fellows who had "sacked" him speak to one another by name—and he could not have been mistaken, and he was not lying. So what were the fellows to believe?

"Let's get out of this, you fellows!" said Wharton.

And the Famous Five left the Rag—leaving the crowd there in an excited buzz. There was no doubt about what the Famous Five had done—the only doubt was, how many of them would get "bunked" for it!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
A Highcliffe Rag!

PROUT!" said Bob Cherry suddenly. After "divvors," as the juniors called divinity, the next morning, the Famous Five walked out for a "Sunday walk."

They were not in their usual happy spirits; and they were rather glad to get away from the rest of the Remove, in the troublous circumstances.

The Head's judgment was not yet pronounced; no doubt he was cogitating over it over the week-end; anyhow, he was not likely to pronounce punishments on Sunday. The delay was welcome, in one way—while there was life there was hope, as it were. In another way, it was very irksome—like the sword of Damocles suspended over the five unfortunate heads.

Mr. Quelch's manner to those five members of his Form was like ice; his mind was obviously made up. The Remove were generally sympathetic; but did not believe a word of the culprits' denial, which was extremely disagreeable. Altogether, things were cloudy; and even Bob Cherry was not, at the moment, enjoying life.

As they sauntered along the road to the common, a portly figure came into view ahead; that of Mr. Prout, the master of the Greyfriars Fifth, also taking a Sunday morning walk. His silk hat gleamed from afar.

"Prout!" repeated Bob. "Look here, let's speak to Prout."

"What on earth for?" asked Harry Wharton. He was in no mood for conversation with "Old Pompous."

"It was Prout found Loder on the common yesterday, and got him loose!" said Bob. "We've heard the whole yarn now. They were rolling Loder along, tied up in the sack, and all of a sudden they left him and bolted, and a few minutes later Prout found him. Well, that looks as if they saw Prout coming."

"Most likely! What about it?" "Well, if they saw Prout, mightn't Prout have seen them?" "If he had, he would have told the Head!" "Um! Yes! He couldn't have seen

who they were, or he would have told the Head it wasn't us! Still, he may have seen something of them. In fact, he must! Let's ask him what he saw, anyhow. If we could find out who really did it, it would help, wouldn't it?"

"Ask him, if you like."

The juniors quickened their pace a little, to overtake Mr. Prout. They were drawing near to that portly gentleman, when quite a startling thing happened. Mr. Prout's silk hat, which had been reflecting the brightness of the summer sunshine, suddenly toppled off his head and dropped into the road.

Mr. Prout gave a startled jump, like a kangaroo.

He stared round him, his portly face red with anger. Then he picked up the hat, dusted it with his handkerchief, and set it on his head again.

The next moment it toppled off once more!

Prout's angry snort reached the ears of the Remove fellows.

They could not help smiling.

Obviously, some person or persons unknown, from the wayside bushes, had "buzzed" missiles at Prout's hat, knocking it off.

Prout picked up his hat again, and, holding it in one hand, grasped his walking-stick, and glared at the thickets by the road.

"Rascal!" boomed Prout. "Impudent rascal!"

The next moment he gave a roar. A dusty clod of earth flew from the thicket and landed on his extensive waistcoat. He staggered.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Bob Cherry. "Who the dickens— Can't be Greyfriars men ragging Prout?"

"Some of the Courtfield kids—or Highcliffe fellows!" said Harry Wharton. "Look here, they're not going to rag a Greyfriars beak! Come on!"

Prout, spluttering wrath, looked round, as he heard the footsteps of the Famous Five. As he did so, another clod, and another, flew from the thicket, spluttering him with dust.

"This way!" muttered Bob, and he turned from the road into the trees.

His comrades followed him.

As they disappeared from the road, another and another clod landed on the spluttering master of the Fifth. They heard Prout's roar of wrath.

He brandished his walking-stick at his unseen assailants. But he could not possibly get at them, whoever they were; there was a high steep bank beside the road, with thickets at the top, and Prout was too stout to negotiate that steep bank. From the cover of the thickets the hidden young rascals pelted him with impunity.

But it was a different matter with the Famous Five. They scrambled up the bank, into the trees, still at a little distance, and then threaded their way along through the thickets, to get at the ambushed raggers. In a few minutes they reached the spot—behind the ambush.

Then they had a back view of five fellows, who were looking down into the road from cover, and chuckling as they looked. One of them had hooked up a large clod to hurl.

"Drop that, Ponsonby!" rapped Harry Wharton.

"Oh gad!" gasped Ponsonby.

The five fellows spun round, as if moved by the same spring. They had not spotted the Remove fellows on the road, and were taken quite by surprise.

As Wharton already suspected, they were Highcliffe fellows—Ponsonby, Gadsby, Monson, Drury, and Vavasour, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe School.

Greyfriars fellows, as a rule, barred ragging on a Sunday; but Pon & Co. were not so particular. They had spotted the portly Prout on the road, and had been unable to resist the temptation.

"Rascals!" came Prout's boom from below. "Impudent, audacious rascals! If I could reach you—"

"Highcliffe cads!" said Johnny Bull, with a snort of contempt. "Pitch them down into the road, you fellows!"

"Mind your own bizney!" snarled Pon. "What the dooce does it matter to you if we pelt the old donkey?"

"Only a lark!" said Gadsby.

"We'll chuck it, if you like!" said Drury.

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

"We'll do nothin' of the kind, you funky cads!" snarled Ponsonby, and he turned to fling the clod down into the road at the spluttering Prout.

Bob Cherry made a jump forward.

Pon flung the clod—he was not in time to stop that, and a roar from Prout told that it had landed. But the next moment Bob's boot landed on Pon's elegant trousers, and he went over in the bushes, sprawling.

"Ow! Wow! You rotter!" gasped Pon as he went. "Oh gad!"

"Look here, you Greyfriars cads—"

began Monson.

"Boot the rotters!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Chuck 'em down to Prout!" suggested Bob.

"Oh gad!" gasped Gadsby; and he jumped away, and cut off through the trees, away from the road.

Monson and Drury and Vavasour rushed after him. The bare idea of being "chucked down" to Prout, after they had pelted that portly and majestic gentleman, was terrifying.

The four Highcliffians ran like rabbits.

Ponsonby, scrambling to his feet, grabbed up his hat, which had fallen off. He gave the Greyfriars fellows a glare of rage, and started after his friends.

Bang!

Squash!

There was a frantic yell from Pon, as Bob Cherry smote the summit of his straw hat. It crunched down over Pon's ears.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pon, breathing fury, rushed on, with a hat like a concertina on his head. He disappeared after his friends. And the Famous Five, grinning, descended the bank to the road, where they found Prout still spluttering.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. "capped" the master of the Fifth very politely.

Prout gasped for breath, and dusted his garments, and brushed his hat with his sleeve.

That outrageous rag had very much disturbed Prout's dignity, which was his most precious and prominent possession. Really, he could hardly believe that any young rascals had had the cheek to pelt him from cover.

But they had—and Prout realised that the Remove fellows had attacked the enemy and driven them off. Ponsonby's wild yelling had not been displeasing to his majestic ears.

"Thank you, my boys!" gasped Prout. "I am much obliged to you. Some set of hooligans—upon my word! If I could have reached them with my walking-stick, I would have punished them severely!"

"They're gone, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"I am obliged to you!" said Prout majestically; and he evidently expected that gracious remark to terminate the interview, and to see the juniors proceed on their way.

But they did not so proceed. It was worth while to ask Prout about what had happened on the common the previous afternoon; there was a sporting chance that he might have noticed something that would give him a clue to the identity of Loder's assailants. And the service they had just rendered might be expected to propitiate Prout in their favour.

"If you please, sir," said Bob, "we wanted to ask you—"

"Eh? What—what?" said Mr. Prout.

"—if you saw anything of the fellows who ragged Loder of the Sixth yesterday?" said Bob.

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Prout.

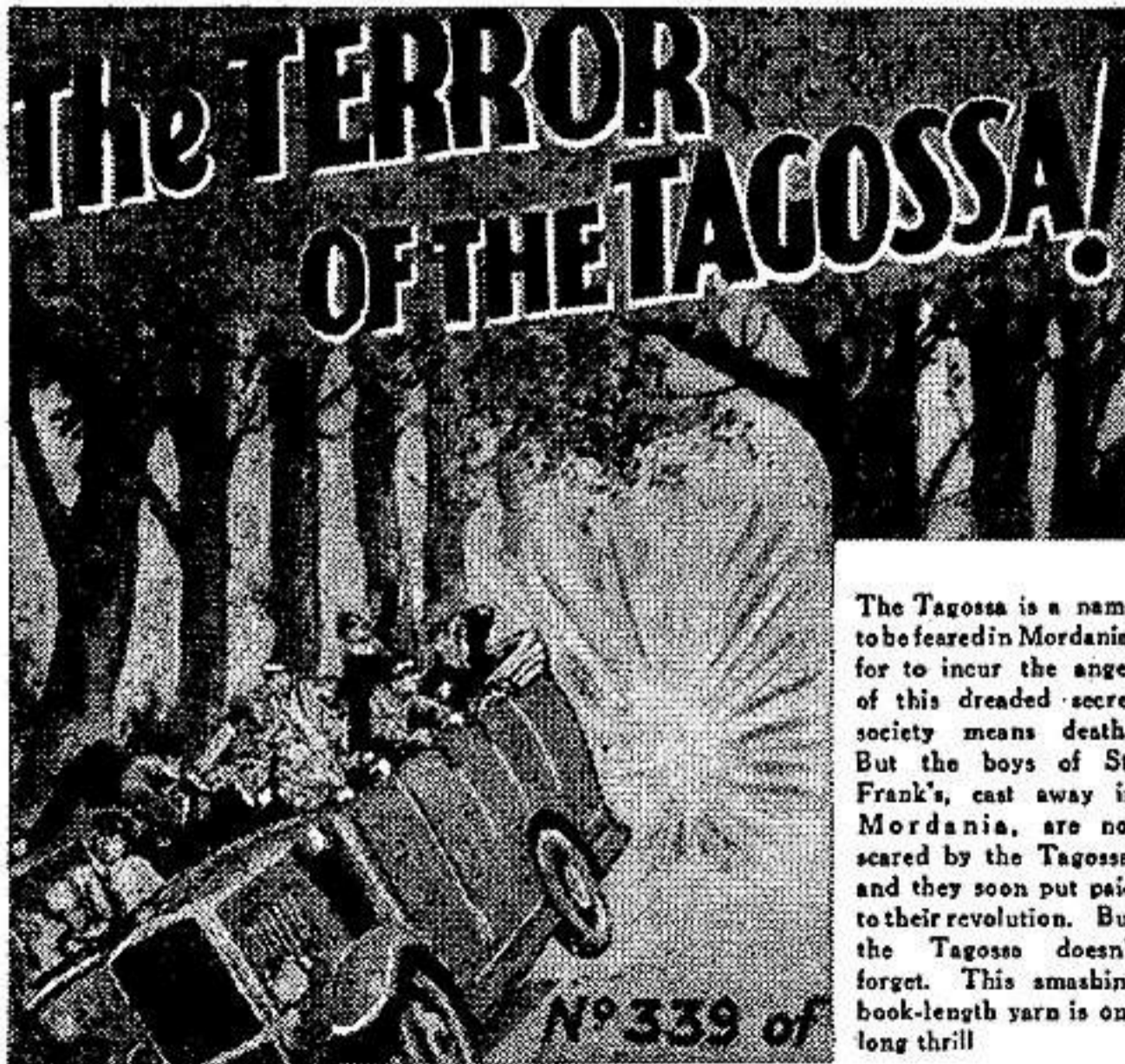
He had been regarding the juniors quite benevolently—obliged to them, as he had said, for their intervention. Now, however, his face became very cold and severe. Bob's question reminded him of the fact that the five were in disgrace.

"What do you mean, Cherry?" he asked testily. "I saw you running off, after leaving Loder on the ground, if that is what you mean."

"You did not see us, sir!" said Harry Wharton. "You don't mean that you thought you recognised us?"

"What—what? No!" snapped Prout. "Certainly I did not recognise you, or I should have stated as much to Dr. Locke, when he referred to me on the subject."

The juniors exchanged a quick glance. The Head had spoken to Prout on the



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subject—which looked as if he wanted more information, if he could get it. That, again, looked as if a doubt might have crept into his mind.

"You could not have recognised us, sir, for we were not the fellows you saw," said Harry. "We were miles away from the place at the time."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Prout, very dryly.

"If you noticed the fellows at all, sir—"

"Naturally, I did nothing of the kind!" snapped Mr. Prout. "Had I known what you were doing, of course—"

"We were not there, sir!"

Snort, from Prout. He knew the evidence, and he was as completely convinced by it as the rest of Greyfriars.

"Well, well, it has nothing to do with me," he said. "I am not your Form-master. You need say nothing to me on the subject."

"If you noticed the fellows at all, sir—we want, if we can, to find out who they were—and if you noticed anything—"

"I did not!" said Mr. Prout curtly.

"I was walking on the common, when I suddenly saw five boys running, in the distance. I saw only their backs, and at a distance, and they were running very fast. All I could see of them was that they were schoolboys—junior schoolboys—five of them, and evidently about your own ages and sizes. But they might have been any boys in the Remove or the Fourth Form, so far as I noticed. I did not know who they were until Loder told me."

"Loder fancied it was us, sir—"

"He certainly did!" said Mr. Prout grimly.

"You did not see them before they started to run, sir?"

"I did not! I gave them no attention whatever!" said Mr. Prout. "I had no idea who they were, or why they were running away, till a few minutes later I found Loder—drawn to the spot by the noise he made struggling in the sack. I released him, and he told me your names—but you were out of sight before that."

"Not us, sir!" said Harry patiently.

Grunt!

"Which way did they go, sir?" asked Bob.

"They!" snorted Mr. Prout. "I suppose you know which way you ran, Cherry!"

Bob breathed hard.

"Will you answer my question, sir?"

"Oh, certainly!" snorted Mr. Prout. "The five boys ran off across the common, in a direction which would take them to Courtfield. As, I presume, you can remember perfectly well."

Evidently it was fixed in Prout's mind that the fleeing figures he had seen were those of the juniors to whom he was now speaking.

"You noticed nothing about them, sir—" began Nugent.

"They were too far away for me to notice any details," answered Mr. Prout. "I saw nothing but five boys, at a distance, running, with their backs to me! No doubt you saw me before I saw you, and ran off at once."

With that, Mr. Prout walked on up the road; having clearly had enough of the chums of the Remove. He was glad that they had come to his rescue, and obliged to them for the same; but that did not alter the fact that they were in disgrace for an outrageous action which Mr. Prout most emphatically condemned.

"So that's that!" said Bob, as the

partly Prout disappeared up the road. "The old donkey never noticed anything of any use. Nothing doing!"

"Well, you can bet they cut off fast enough when they saw him coming!" said Nugent. "They must have been scared when they spotted him—with Loder on their hands, headed up in a sack!"

"But who the dickens—" said Johnny Bull.

"Might have been any fellow in the Remove or the Fourth, Prout says!" said Harry Wharton. "Or in the Shell, either, for that matter! Everybody loathes Loder—and it might have been anybody. Loder jumped to it that it was us, and either fancied he heard our names spoken, or pretended so. But he never did, of course."

"He couldn't have fancied it!" said Johnny Bull.

"Then he's lying!" said Harry.

"I can't make that out, either. I suppose he must be—and yet—" Johnny shook his head thoughtfully.

"One or the other!" said Harry. "But he's sticking to it, and the Head believes him—and Prout's no use—he's got it fixed in his head that we are the fellows he saw! Whoever they were, they must be frightful roiters to keep inum and leave it on us."

The Famous Five walked on, slowly, in troubled thought. They had had a faint hope that Prout might have noticed something about the unknown five which would have given a clue to their identity. But that hope was washed-out now.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's some of the Courtfield chaps!" said Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five had reached the common; and three fellows came in sight.

They were Dick Trumper, Willy Wickers, and Solly Lazarus, of Courtfield School.

At sight of the Greyfriars fellows, Trumper & Co. came up at a run.

"Seen any Highcliffe chaps about?" asked Trumper.

"Yes—Pon and his crowd," answered Bob Cherry.

"Oh, good! Where?" asked Wickers.

"In the wood along the road! They were running when we last saw them," said Bob, with a grin. "What do you want them for?"

"Oh, just for a friendly word!" said Trumper. "They've been ragging old Solly, and one good turn deserves another."

"Yeth, rather!" said Solly. "Yeth-terday, you know, and last Thursday, as well—and I had to run for it! You thee, I was out taking photographs, on my own, and they were too many for me. And they might have damaged my camera, you thee! Tho now we're looking for them!"

"Come on!" said Trumper.

"There's five of them!" said Bob.

"That's all right," said Solly cheerily, "we could handle thix! We're good for two each of those thilly athes!"

And the three cut off, at a rapid run, down the road, leaving the Greyfriars fellows to continue their walk.

The Famous Five were too bothered about their own concerns to be much interested in the row between the Courtfielders and the Highcliffians. In fact, in a few minutes they forgot all about them, as they discussed the probable coming down of the "chopper" on the morrow.

They were reminded of them about half an hour later when they sighted five figures in the distance crossing the common at a rapid run. In the rear

were three other figures, also running! Pon & Co. seemed to be in a hurry to get home—and the Famous Five chuckled as they watched the chaso disappear in the distance.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Suggests An Alibi!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!" It was not a polite reply. But the Famous Five were "shirty," as was not surprising in the troubled and peculiar circumstances.

It was "break" on Monday morning; and the "chopper" had not yet come down. The sword of Damocles was still suspended over five uneasy heads!

Harry Wharton & Co. had gone into Form as usual that morning. Mr. Quelch gave them grim looks, but no other special attention. The Head had not sent for them. The suspense was growing painful—and none the less so, because the rest of the Removites debated how many of the five were going to be "bunked," and how many were going to get off with a flogging! Indecision on that point, so far as the juniors could see, was the only possible cause of the delay in the falling of the "chopper."

Billy Bunter was always superfluous—and he was doubly so now! The Famous Five did not want to hear from Bunter—and they made that fact plain! But that did not worry the fat Owl of the Remove. He did not shut up! Shutting up was not really in Bunter's line.

"But I say—" he persisted.

"Buzz off, bluebottle!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Hook it, fathead!" said Harry Wharton.

"If that's how you thank a chap for trying to help you out of a scrape, I can only say—keep off, you beast!" Bunter jumped out of reach of a boot. "I can only say you're an ungrateful lot! I say, you fellows, the Head hasn't bunked you yet, but, of course, he's going to! Well, suppose I can help!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Nugent.

However, the Famous Five stopped, to let the Owl of the Remove have his say. Certainly they did not expect to get any help from Bunter in this extremity; it did not seem possible to get help from anywhere. But if the fat Owl was concerned about other fellows' troubles, it was rather a new departure for Bunter, and one that deserved to be encouraged.

"I've been thinking it over, you chaps," went on Bunter, blinking at the five through his big spectacles. "I fancy I can help! What about an alibi?"

"A whatter?"

"I suppose you know what an alibi is?" said Bunter. "When a fellow's in one place, he proves that he was in another place, you know."

"Oh crikey!"

"I mean to say, you were at the pond on the common when you ragged Loder on Saturday," pursued Bunter. "Well, suppose you can prove that you were somewhere else all the time."

"We weren't at the pond, and we never ragged Loder, you fat ass!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, keep that for the Head, old chap," said Bunter. "No good telling me whoppers, is it? You ragged Loder

all right; but if you can prove that you didn't, you pull through. See?"

"You benighted ass," said Harry. "If we did, how could we expect to prove that we didn't?"

"All you want is evidence!" explained Bunter. "The Head has to go by evidence, like a judge. That's how they do in the law-courts, you know—the lawyers on both sides tell a lot of lies, and the one that tells most lies gets away with it. Well, I'm not the fellow to tell lies myself—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"It's not the sort of thing I could do," said Bunter. "But you fellows ain't so particular. Besides, you can stretch a point—any fellow would, when he was up for the sack! You've told some already—making out that you never ragged Loder when everybody knows you did!"

"Oh, boot him!"

"One or two more won't hurt," said Bunter. "I couldn't do it myself, but you fellows could. Now, look here, what you've got to prove is that you never were at that pond on Saturday afternoon—and I know how."

"Well, how, fathead?" asked Bob.

"Where did you go, if you didn't go there?" asked Bunter. "I mean, if you're asked, what yarn have you got to tell?"

"Only the truth, you blinking, burbling, benighted handersnatch!" answered Bob. "We went up the river."

Bunter shook his head.

"That's not much good," he said. "The boatkeeper can witness that you never had a boat out. Think of something better than that, for goodness' sake!"

"You howling chump!" said Harry Wharton. "We did go up the river. We kept away from this part because we were out without leave and didn't want to be spotted. We walked by Oak Lane and the towpath to Courtfield Bridge, and hired a boat there."

"That's not much use, either, unless the man would say that you hired the boat," objected Bunter.

"You burbling blitherer, we did hire the boat—and old Tomlin would say so at once if he was asked."

"Oh!" Bunter seemed convinced at last of that much. "What time did you hire the boat?"

"Soon after half-past two."

"And what time did you take it back?"

"About five."

"Oh," said Bunter thoughtfully. "I see! You went up the river in the boat, and left it there while you walked across the common and waited for Loder at the place Smithy told you about."

"We were in the boat all the time, ass!"

"Eh? How could you have been, when you got Loder at the pond on the common?" asked Bunter. "Talk sense, you know."

"You gabbling, babbling, blithering chump, we never got Loder! We never left the boat till we took it back to the boathouse at the bridge."

Bunter winked.

"Anybody see you in the boat," he asked—"any Greyfriars man?"

"How could they, ass, when we were miles up the river, specially keeping out of the way, because we'd cut gates?" said Harry. "No Greyfriars man was about between Courtfield Bridge and Highcliffe. Other people were about; we saw people on the towpath—a dozen or more."

"Anybody you know, that could be called as a witness?" grinned Bunter.

"No, ass. We never even looked at them—people passing on the towpath. Why should we?"

"Well, look here, that's all right so far," said Bunter. "But if you tell the Head that, he will know that you left the boat on the Sark while you went after Loder—"

"He will think so, fathead! But it wasn't so!"

"Loder was bagged about four o'clock," said Bunter. "Now, if you're going to prove an alibi you'll have to produce a witness who saw you somewhere at that time. Say you were in that boat, and somebody you know on the bank saw you. What about that?"

"But nobody we know did see us!" said Bob Cherry, staring at the fat Owl blankly.

"I know that!" said Bunter irritably. "But don't I keep on telling you that nothing but an alibi can save your bacon? You have to make up the evidence the same as lawyers do."

"Oh crikey!"

"I'd do it for you myself," said Bunter generously, "only a lot of fellows know that I never went out of gates; so if I went to the Head and said I saw you miles away from the school he mightn't believe me, you know, if it came out that I was in gates all the time—"

"He mightn't!" gasped Bob Cherry. "No, I think very likely he mightn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! You fellows are for it if you don't prove an alibi. What about those pals of yours at Highcliffe—Courtenay and Caterpillar?"

"Well, what about them, ass?"

"Suppose they'd had a boat out from Highcliffe that afternoon and met you on the river?" suggested Bunter.

"But they didn't!" said Bob.

"You're wandering from the point, old chap! I know they didn't, as you were on the common, ragging Loder. But, being pals, they might stretch a point and say they did. See? That would be a jolly good alibi."

"You potty porpoise!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Do you think we could go to Courtenay and De Courcy and ask them to tell a pack of lies? And do you think they would if we asked them?"

"Well, I'd do more than that for a pal," said Bunter. "What about that old chap who lets out the boats, then—old Tomlin? Suppose he was on the river about four o'clock—he might have been, you know—and saw you—"

"He wasn't—and didn't!"

"I know that. But he might see you through if you asked him. I mean to say, you can't prove an alibi without a witness," explained Bunter. "That old bean's got a good character, and he would be a jolly good witness—better than your Highcliffe pals, really."

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter. They refrained from booting him. Apparently the fat Owl had given this matter a great deal of thought for their benefit. His vast intellectual powers had evolved this wonderful scheme—not a scheme that was likely to recommend itself to the Famous Five.

As they did not answer, Billy Bunter seemed to take silence for consent.

"That's it!" he said. "That will work! An alibi's the thing; you fellows prove an alibi and you're all right. They can't get over an alibi. Suppose you committed a burglary, frinstance, and—"

"Oh crikey!"

"All you'd have to do would be to prove that you were somewhere else when you did it. See? They can't get round an alibi," said Bunter confidently. "Of course, you fellows would never have thought of that; you're not very bright. I've thought of it for you to help you out. I'm not asking for anything, you know, for this advice. I'm offering it to you out of pure friendship. Still, one good turn deserves another. If you get off by proving an alibi you stand a study supper. That's fair!"

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

Bunter evidently was on the make, after all. Really the Famous Five might have guessed that one.

"You potty, piffing, pernicious porpoise!" said the captain of the Remove. "Turn round!"

"Eh? What do you want me to turn round for?" asked Bunter in surprise.

"I'm going to kick you across the quad!"

"Eh? What? Why, you ungrateful beast!" gasped Bunter. "I'm trying to save your bacon out of pure friendship and that's how you thank a fellow! Talk about a serpent's child being sharper than a thankless tooth! I can jolly well say— Yaroooooh! Leggo, you beast!"

"Bump him!"

"Yoo-hooooop!"

Bump!

"Ow! Beast! I jolly well hope you'll get bunked!" roared Bunter. "I say— Yaroooooop!"

Bump!

"Oh crumbs! Oooooooogh! I jolly well hope you'll get a flogging before you're bunked—"

Bump!

"Oooooooogh!" spluttered Bunter. "Oooogh! Woogh!"

The Famous Five walked off and left him spluttering.

Bunter did not know why, but it was clear that they had no use for his brilliant suggestion of an alibi.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Maully Thinks It Out!

MR. QUELCH raised his eyebrows.

Having dismissed his Form after third school, Mr. Quelch expected to see them all march out of the Form-room—which as a rule they were glad to do.

On this occasion, however, one member of the Form remained behind, and as the rest cleared off he came towards Quelch's desk.

"What is it, Mauleverer?" asked Mr. Quelch somewhat sharply.

Lord Mauleverer was not in his Form-master's good graces that morning. His lordship had been in a very thoughtful mood all through the morning, but his thoughts did not appear to have been bestowed upon his lessons.

Several times the Remove master had called him to order for inattention. Once he had awarded him fifty lines for having made a random answer. This kind of thing did not gratify Quelch, who had the belief—common to schoolmasters—that fellows came to school to learn.

"May I speak to you, sir?" asked Mauleverer respectfully.

"Yes. Be brief."

"It's about Wharton and his friends, sir."

Mr. Quelch stared.

"There is no occasion for you to

“speak to me on that subject, Mauleverer!” he snapped. “You had better leave the Form-room.”

“It’s rather urgent, sir, if you don’t mind!” said Lord Mauleverer. “It looks as if some of the fellows may be bunked—I mean, expelled—and I’m sure you wouldn’t like that, sir, especially as they’ve done, nothin’. It’s rather a disgrace for the Form, sir.”

“I do not understand you, Mauleverer! You do not mean to say that you know anything about the affair of Saturday afternoon?”

“Yaas.”

“Then why have you not said so before?” exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

“I’ve been thinkin’ it out, sir!” explained Mauleverer. “I’ve been puzzled, awfully puzzled, sir; but I think I’ve got it clearer now. All I know for certain is, that Wharton and his friends were not on the spot when Loder of the Sixth was put in that sack, sir.”

Mr. Quelch gazed at him.

“You say that you know this, Mauleverer?”

“Yaas, sir.”

“And how do you know?”

“They’ve told me so, sir!” answered Lord Mauleverer innocently.

Mr. Quelch drew a deep breath.

“They’re fellows whose word can be taken, sir,” went on Mauleverer. “But, of course, you know that! You’d never have made Wharton head boy in the Remove, if you hadn’t known he was to be trusted.”

Mr. Quelch did not speak. He just gazed at Mauleverer.

“Now I’ve thought it out, sir, I thought I’d mention it, and perhaps you’d speak to the Head, before the chopper comes down—I mean, before he calls them on the carpet to take their gruel, sir.”

Mr. Quelch glanced at his cane. However, he did not pick it up.

“If you have anything to say, Mauleverer, that will let in a new light on this matter, I will hear you,” he said. “Be brief.”

“Yaas, sir. It’s very perplexin’, about Loder hearin’ those fellows’ names spoken, when he was in the sack, and they weren’t there!” said Lord Mauleverer. “That quite beat me, sir, in thinkin’ it over! It looks to them rather as if Loder is tellin’ fibs—”

“Mauleverer!”

“But, of course, he isn’t!” went on Mauleverer, imperturbably. “Neither are those fellows! I think I’ve put my finger on the spot.”

“If you have anything to tell me, Mauleverer—”

“Yaas, sir! Loder never saw the fellows who had him in the sack! So they could have called one another anythin’ they jolly well liked, without Loder bein’ any the wiser! Might have called one another Mauleverer, and Smithy, or Coker, or Potter, or Greene, or any old name, sir, and Loder wouldn’t have known it was spoof.”

“Wha-a-t?”

Mr. Quelch almost jumped.

“You see, sir, they were awfully particular not to let Loder know who they were,” said Mauleverer. “That’s why they got the sack over his head from behind. Well, suppose a chap named Jones was doin’ it—he might tip his pals to call him Smith instead! Then Loder, hearin’ it, would never dream of lookin’ for Jones—he’d be after a Smith.”

“Upon my word!” ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

“I think, sir, that that’s how it was!” said Lord Mauleverer placidly.

“Knowin’ that Wharton and his friends weren’t there, I knew that the fellows Loder heard couldn’t have had the names they used. Either Loder was lyin’, and never heard the names at all, or else they were usin’ other fellows’ names, especially for him to hear, to cover up their tracks.”

“Bless my soul!” said Mr. Quelch.

This was quite a new idea to him.

It gave him food for thought.

Mauleverer’s theory was founded entirely upon the fact that he believed the word of the Famous Five. Taking it that they were telling the truth, that theory was a very plausible one. But that was, of course, in the peculiar circumstances, taking a great deal for granted.

Nevertheless, Mr. Quelch was impressed.

He was, like most schoolmasters, a pretty good judge of boyish character. He knew that Harry Wharton & Co. were truthful. He had supposed that they had departed from the truth, because they were faced with the dreaded penalty of the “sack.” But he would have been very glad to believe that that was not the case, and still more glad, to avoid so disgraceful an occurrence as an expulsion in his Form.

“Bless my soul!” he repeated. “I am glad that you have mentioned this, Mauleverer! There is certainly a possibility, at least—”

He paused.

“But do you not see to what this leads, Mauleverer?” he asked. “You are suggesting that there are five boys in the school, so base and unscrupulous, as to plan deliberately to place the blame of their action on innocent boys. It is scarcely possible to believe such a thing.”

“I know, sir! It sounds horrid,” admitted Lord Mauleverer. “But as Wharton and his friends didn’t do it, sir, other fellows must have done it, and used their names to put Loder on the wrong track.”

Mr. Quelch smiled faintly.

“The possibility, at all events, may be admitted!” he said. “Thank you for having made this suggestion, Mauleverer. You may go, my boy.”

“Yaas, sir.”

Lord Mauleverer ambled out of the Form-room.

Mr. Quelch sat, for some minutes, at his desk, in deep thought. Was it, he was wondering, possible? Loder had seen nothing of his assailants—he did not claim to have recognised voices, through the thickness of the sack. All he knew was that the ragers had used those familiar names.

It was difficult to believe that there could be five fellows so cunning, and so unscrupulous, as to adopt such a treacherous device to cover up their own identity. But it was possible! Obviously, it was possible.

When Mr. Quelch left the Remove room, he proceeded to the Head’s study.

came across the captain of the Remove in the quad. He gave him the blackest and the bitterest of looks, as he spoke.

“Thanks, no!” answered Harry politely.

It was a puzzle to all the fellows, as well as Loder, that the “chopper” had not come down yet. The Famous Five were still at Greyfriars—though found guilty of man-handling a prefect. That the Head was reluctant to expel five fellows in a bunch, was easy to understand. But it was time, high time, for his judgment, whatever it was, to be pronounced. Yet nothing, so far, had been said or done.

The Famous Five were as puzzled as the other fellows. It was true that they had not done that of which they were accused, but as they had been condemned on Loder’s evidence, they expected the natural result to follow.

After class, every fellow who saw them was surprised to see them still there, and the Famous Five themselves were surprised.

Loder was angry, as well as surprised. He could understand it no more than anyone else, and he was bitterly exasperated. He had been headed up in a sack, ducked in a muddy pond, left tied up like a turkey, forced to walk back to the school smothered with mud and dust—and there were the fellows who had done it, carrying on as if nothing had happened!

“You’re not gone yet!” he repeated. “You young rascal, what is the Head letting you hang on like this for?”

“Better ask him!” suggested Wharton.

“He knows you did it—”

“He doesn’t!” answered Harry coolly. “He seems to think so, but he can’t know what’s not true.”

“You lying rascal—” hooted Loder.

“There’s a lying rascal here!” said Harry. “One of us two, Loder—but it’s not I.” His eyes gleamed at the bully of the Sixth. “If you had a rag of decency, Loder, you’d go to the Head and own up that you’ve been telling lies.”

“What?” roared Loder.

“Getting deaf?”

“You—you—you dare to say—” gasped Loder.

“Why not? Either you’re mistaken, or you’re telling lies! I don’t see how you could be mistaken.”

Loder had his official ashplant under his arm. He slipped it into his hand, his face crimson.

“Bend over and touch your toes!” he rapped.

“I shall do nothing of the kind!” answered the captain of the Remove; and he turned and walked away, leaving Loder of the Sixth staring, the ashplant in his hand.

A dozen fellows had witnessed that little scene.

“By gum! You’re goin’ it, old bean!” grinned Vernon-Smith, as Harry Wharton passed him, going towards the House.

(Continued on next page.)

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Asking For It!

“SO you’re not gone yet!” snarled Loder.

Harry Wharton looked round at him.

It was after class that day, and Loder of the Sixth



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"Asking for it, and no mistake!" chuckled Skinner. "Wingate's got his eye on you, Wharton."

"All the Sixth can have their eyes on me, for all I care!" answered the captain of the Remove. "If a fellow tells lies about me, I suppose I'm entitled to say so, even if he happens to be a prefect."

"Shut up, you ass!" breathed the Bounder. "Wingate can hear you!"

"I don't mind Wingate hearing me! I dare say he knows that Loder is a liar, as well as I do."

Wharton's voice was quite loud and clear, and it reached plenty of ears.

Wingate of the Sixth, with a frowning brow, came across to him.

"Go into the prefects' room, Wharton!" he snapped.

"Yes, Wingate."

Wharton went into the House, leaving a crowd of fellows in an excited buzz.

Wingate and Loder followed him in. Orders from the captain of the school were not to be disregarded, and Wharton went into the prefects' room, where some of the Sixth, who were there, stared at him.

"Now, you cheeky young sweep!" said Wingate grimly. "What do you mean? You're up for the sack for an assault on a prefect, and I can't understand why you haven't been turfed out yet. Now I hear you calling a prefect a liar in the quad, with fifty fellows to hear you. What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I said!" answered Harry. "Loder told the Head that I and my friends ragged him on Saturday. As it wasn't true, what else was it?"

"It was true, you young rascal! Loder heard your name—"

"It was not true, and Loder never heard my name, Wingate! If he fancied he did, he is a fool! If he didn't fancy so, he is a liar!"

Gerald Loder almost choked. There was a buzz from the Sixth Form men in the prefects' room. No junior had ever been heard to talk like this in that apartment before.

"By gum!" said Walker of the Sixth. "That young sweep had a prefects' beating last week. Better give him another before he's booted out."

Wharton's eyes flashed at him.

"I'm not booted out yet!" he retorted. "And as the Head hasn't sent for me again, it looks as if he's beginning to see that Loder was lying."

"By gad," said Wingate, "that's the limit!" He pushed back Loder, who was making a furious stride towards the captain of the Remove. "Leave this to me, Loder. Hand me that ash, Gwynno!"

Wingate took the ashplant in hand.

"Now, Wharton," he said, "I've nothing to do with what happened on Saturday, as that's been judged by the Head. But whether you're sacked or not, so long as you're at Greyfriars you've got to learn not to call a Sixth Form prefect a liar—"

"Why, if he is one?" asked Wharton.

"I—I—I'll—"

"Bend over that table!" roared Wingate. He flourished the ash.

Wharton hesitated for a moment. He would have disregarded such an order from Loder, prefect as he was, in the circumstances. But it was a different matter with any other prefect—especially Wingate.

"Very well, Wingate," he said, with

a deep breath, and he bent over the table.

"Old Wingate" did not often lay in on hard, but this time he laid it on very hard indeed. It was a full "six," and every one a swipe.

Harry Wharton set his teeth to bear the infliction in silence. No sound came from him. But his face was a little pale as he stood up after the caning.

"There!" said Wingate, as he lowered the cane. "That's a tip! You're a young rascal, Wharton!"

"Is that all?" asked Harry. "Or do you want me to believe that Loder is telling the truth when he's telling lies?"

"Better give him a few more," said Walker.

Wingate stared at the junior.

"Haven't you had enough yet?" he demanded.

Wharton's lips set.

"If you take my skin off, you won't get me to call Loder anything but a liar, when he has told Dr. Locke lies to get me sacked!" he answered.

Loder made a move again, and again Wingate pushed him back. The captain of Greyfriars seemed puzzled.

"You're asking for it," he said; "but no fellow's going to have more than six. Look here, Wharton!" He paused. "I suppose it may be within the bounds of possibility that Loder made a mistake on Saturday. But you ought to know that he was not telling lies. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

Wharton did not answer.

"Get out!" added Wingate; and there was a tone of contempt in his voice that brought a flush to Harry Wharton's cheek.

He walked out of the prefects' room in silence.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Trouble In The Remove!

"PRETTY rotten, I call it!" remarked Skinner.

That remark was directed at the Famous Five.

They had come up to tea—Harry Wharton rather pale and quiet after the six in the prefects' room. They found a crowd of fellows on the Remove landing, and the general attention was turned upon them as they appeared.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's pretty rotten, Skinner, old bean? Your latest trip to the Three Fishers?"

Some of the juniors grinned, and Skinner scowled.

"You jolly well ought to own up, and you know it!" retorted Skinner. "Some other fellows may get landed for it now."

"You can't let it be put on other chaps, you know," said Sidney James Snoop argumentatively.

"If it's put on other chaps, they may be the right chaps," grunted Johnny Bull. "We've told you we know nothing about it."

"Keep it up!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

Harry Wharton gave the Bounder a look.

"We're keeping that up, Smithy, because it's true," he said quietly.

The Bounder laughed.

"Oh, chuck it!" exclaimed Skinner. "Blessed if I know how you've been able to stuff the Head, but it looks as if you have. Every fellow in the

Lower School is being asked where he was on Saturday."

"Awkward for some chaps," grinned Hazeldene. "Where were you, Skinner?"

"Might have been awkward for me, if I hadn't been playing cricket," remarked the Bounder. "Glad I was."

"All the Remove and Shell and Fourth—questions, right and left," said Skinner. "Every chap—"

"Why not?" asked Harry Wharton contemptuously. "A fellow can explain what he did on a half-holiday, unless it was something shady."

"Such as ragging a prefect," grinned Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If they get hold of the wrong man, you will have to own up," said Bols-over major.

"I say, you fellows, I jolly well would!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Play the game, you know—like me!"

"Like you!" said Bob. "Oh, my only summer straw!"

"I hope they will get hold of the right men," said the captain of the Remove. "They ought to have spoken out before now, with us up for it."

"Oh, can it!"

"Chuck it!"

"Draw it mild!"

Not a man in the crowd on the Remove landing believed that the Famous Five had not "done it." And the matter was taking a disagreeable, and to some fellows alarming, turn.

Since class that day a sort of general inquiry had been set on foot, which was not agreeable to fellows like Skinner, who had dingy secrets to keep.

The Famous Five, on the other hand, were glad to hear of it. Naturally they wanted the truth to come to light. And the fact that inquiry was being made, seemed to indicate that there was a doubt in the headmaster's mind.

Harry Wharton looked round at the crowd of faces with a gleam in his eyes. The position of suspense in which the chums of the Remove found themselves, was worrying and unpleasant, and did not improve tempers.

Neither was it agreeable to be set down as prevaricators. Vernon-Smith had no scruple whatever in lying to masters or prefects, though he would not have done so in the Remove. Harry Wharton did not like being tarred with the same brush as the Bounder.

"I tell you," said Harry, and his voice rose a little, "that we had nothing to do with it, and don't know who had—"

"Gammon!"

"We'd have been glad enough to rag a bully like Loder, and he deserved all he got, but if we'd done it, we shouldn't tell lies about it," said the captain of the Remove.

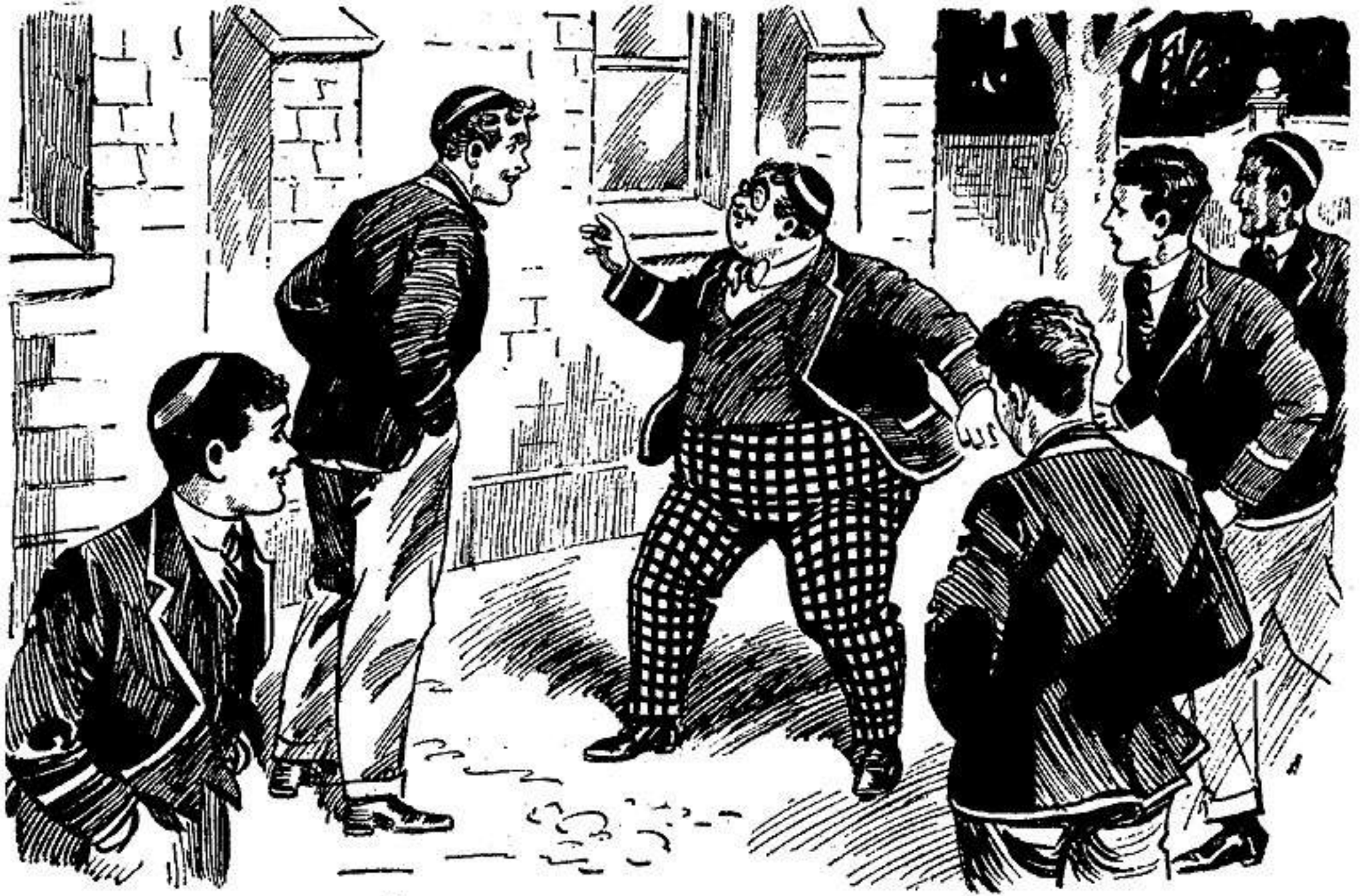
"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "What about those you've told the Head and Quelch? He, he, he!"

"You're not worth kicking, you fat ass!" snapped Wharton. "Shut up! I can't make out who did it; but I'll say this, whoever they were, they're a set of rotten cads not to speak out, now it's put on us."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob.

"By gad! You're goin' it, now you've started!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"Now we've started—what?" bawled Johnny Bull, with a truculent glare at the grinning Bounder.



"An alibi's the thing—you fellows prove an alibi, and you're all right!" said Billy Bunter. "Suppose you committed a burglary, f'instance——" "What!" gasped Bob Cherry. "All you'd have to do," continued Bunter, "would be to prove that you were somewhere else when you did it!"

"The noble game of gammon," answered Vernon-Smith coolly. "Keep it up, old beans! I hope you'll get by with it. But look here, Wharton, draw it mild."

"What do you mean, you cheeky fool?"

"Hoity-toity!" grinned the Bounder. "I mean what I say. If you can pull the Head's leg to the extent of gettin' off, more power to your giddy elbow! But don't make out to us that you're injured innocents. What's the good?"

Harry Wharton laughed scornfully.

"You would stand up to a beak and roll out lies one after another, as fast as Bunter!" he said contemptuously. "Do you fancy that I'm a fellow of your sort?"

The Bounder flushed with anger.

"Why, you cheeky cad!" he shouted. "What are you doing now but rolling out lies? The whole mob of you. Bunter's a fool to you, and— Hands off, you rotter!"

A punch interrupted the Bounder. He punched back at once, and the next moment a fight was raging on the Remove landing.

"Go it, Smithy!" chirruped Skinner.

"Hold on, Wharton!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's no good scrapping with the silly ass!"

"Chuck it, Smithy!" exclaimed Tom Redwing.

But neither of the combatants heeded. Both were excited and angry, and both were punching hard.

"He, he, he!" chortled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows— Yaroooooh!"

A hefty drive from the captain of the Remove sent the Bounder spinning back, and he crashed into Bunter.

Billy Bunter's fat chortle stopped all of a sudden. He gave a wild howl and went over on his back. Over him

sprawled the Bounder, landing heavily on Bunter's extensive waistcoat.

"Oooooogh!" gurgled Bunter, as the wind was driven out of him. "Woough! Gooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooogh! I say—gurrghh!"

The Bounder scrambled furiously to his feet. Billy Bunter remained where he was, gurgling spasmodically.

Vernon-Smith rushed on again, and the captain of the Remove met him with left and right. A buzzing crowd of excited juniors surrounded them.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

Punch, punch, punch!

"Cave!" called out Ogilvy, who was near the banisters. "Here comes Quelch!"

"Chuck it——"

"Stop it——"

"Beak, you duffers!"

But the warning voices passed unheeded. Mr. Quelch came whisking up the Remove staircase, and rustled on the landing, with a brow of thunder.

"What is this uproar?" he exclaimed. "Wharton—Vernon-Smith—cease at once! How dare you! Do you hear me?"

The two excited juniors separated at their Form-master's voice. They stood flushed and panting.

"How dare you?" repeated Mr. Quelch sternly. "Wharton, you should know better than this, as head boy of your Form! I shall give you an imposition of five hundred lines!"

Harry Wharton panted, but he checked the angry reply that leaped to his lips. But Smithy weighed in at once.

"My fault, sir," said the Bounder. "I was chipping Wharton, and he lost his temper!"

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch. He stared

at Vernon-Smith. "You should not have lost your temper, Wharton; but in view of what Vernon-Smith says, I shall not give you an imposition. You will take a hundred lines, Vernon-Smith. Let there be no more of this."

Harry Wharton looked rather uncertainly at the Bounder when the Remove master was gone.

Smithy gave him a mocking look in response.

"Goin' on with it?" he asked. "Quelch won't hear us if we go along the passage."

"Oh, don't be a fool!" said Harry.

And he went along to his study, his friends following him.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Mauly The Detective!

LORD MAULEVERER tapped at the door of Study No. 1, opened it, and glanced in.

Five fellows were in that study.

They had finished tea, and were engaged in a rather dismal discussion.

Matters were not "set fair" for the Famous Five of Greyfriars, and the faces in the study were clouded—Wharton's most of all. Every now and then he dabbed his nose with his handkerchief. Though fortunately interrupted, the scrap on the Remove landing had done damage on both sides.

"You fellows busy?" asked Mauleverer.

"Not fearfully," answered Bob Cherry. "Trot in, old bean!"

Lord Mauleverer trotted in. He took a seat on the corner of the

(Continued on page 16.)

UP FOR THE SACK!



(Continued from page 13.)

study table, and regarded the chums of the Remove thoughtfully.

They gave him inquiring looks.

"I hope," said Mauly slowly, "that you won't think it a cheek for me to barge into the bizney? Generally I'm a fellow to mind my own affairs, you know. But I don't like seein' you fellows under the weather like this."

"This suspense is killing me, as the coloured gentleman remarked when they hauged him," said Bob Cherry. "I wish the Beak would make up his mind, one way or the other."

"Can't make out why he hasn't," said Harry Wharton. "The thing's plain enough, if he believes Loder—and he does."

"Something must have turned up," said Nugent. "We should have been up for judgment before this."

"Yaas, I think somethin's turned up," assented Lord Mauleverer.

"What, then?" asked Harry. "Do you think the Head's found out that Loder was telling him lies?"

"No; Loder wasn't," said Mauleverer quietly.

Harry Wharton coloured.

"Either Loder was, or we were," he said. "What do you mean, Mauleverer? You're not hunting for a scrap like Smithy, I suppose?"

"Not at all! Too much trouble to scrap in this dashed hot weather," yawned his lordship. "Besides, I've dropped in as a friend, if you could manage to keep your temper for a little while, old bean."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said the captain of the Remove gruffly. "If you're going to say the same as Smithy, you'd better keep your mouth shut on it. Nobody's going to call me a liar without getting his head punched."

"How lucky that I'm not goin' to call you one, then!" remarked Lord Mauleverer placidly. "You shouldn't be in a hurry to do it, either, old chap. I heard what you said to Loder in the quad, and it didn't make me think any the better of you."

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"Keep your temper!" implored Mauleverer. "What's the good of rowin'? I hear that you got six for what you said to Loder, and I'm bound to remark that it served you right. Don't you think so?"

"You silly ass—"

"What on earth are you driving at, Mauly?" growled Johnny Bull. "We're not in fearfully good tempers, if you've come here to rag—"

"No, you look as if you weren't," agreed Mauleverer. "Still, it was a bit thick to accuse a Sixth Form prefect of lying. Sort of thing that isn't done, you know."

"He was lying!" said Wharton savagely.

"He was not, old chap; and you shouldn't say such things, or think them, either. Wash it out!"

"Are you potty, you silly ass?" howled the captain of the Remove.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1.536.

"Loder told the Head that he heard the fellows who were ragging him on Saturday call one another by our names. It was false."

"It was true!" said Mauleverer calmly. "Loder wouldn't have told the Head so if it wasn't. He's rather a blighter and a beast, and all sorts of a toad in a lot of ways, but he's got his limit. He told the Beak exactly what he heard when his head was in the sack."

Harry Wharton rose to his feet.

"That's enough!" he said. "I—"

"Shut up, old man!" said Bob Cherry. He pushed Wharton back into his chair. "Let Mauly get it off his chest. If he's going to tell us that we told the Head whoppers, I'm going to put his head in the coal-box. Are you, Mauly?"

"Not at all! You told the Head the truth, same as Loder did!"

"Mad, I suppose!" snapped Wharton. "We told the Head one thing, and Loder told him exactly the opposite."

"Yaas."

"Well, both couldn't be true, could they?" yelled the captain of the Remove.

"Yaas."

"Well, you blithering ass!" said Frank Nugent.

"Let a man speak!" urged Lord Mauleverer. "Quelch listened to a chap without callin' him fancy names. I think that's why the chopper hasn't come down on you fellows yet. You see, I put it to Quelch—"

"What on earth did you put to him?" demanded Wharton.

"Loder heard those names, just as he said. Chaps who were raggin' him did it on purpose to put him on a false scent," explained Mauleverer.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great pip!"

"Quelch thought there might be somethin' in it," drawled Mauleverer. "He went to the Head. Since then there's been a lot of inquiry—hookin' out fellows who were out of gates on Saturday, and askin' them questions. See?"

"Oh crumbs!" said Bob.

The Famous Five stared at Lord Mauleverer blankly. Mauly was popularly supposed, in the Greyfriars Remove, to be an ass! But Mauly had thought out this clue to the mystery, and no other fellow had!

"By gum!" said Harry Wharton, with a deep breath. "It's possible—by gum! I never thought of it—never dreamed of anything of the kind—"

"You might have, old bean, if you'd put in some cogitation, instead of jumpin' to it that Loder was lyin'!" said his lordship mildly. "You see, I started from the idea that nobody at all was lyin', and that put my finger on it."

Wharton coloured. It was Mauly's own charitable nature, his disinclination to think evil of anyone if he could help it, that had given him the clue.

"Rub it in, Mauly!" said Wharton quietly. "You're a better chap than I am, old fellow, I know that."

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know!" said Mauleverer. "Loder's a frightful swab, anyhow, and who's goin' to blame you if you let your temper rip? But that's how the matter stands. Quelch must have put it to the Big Beak, and his nibs has decided to go slow. But—"

His lordship paused.

"Is the buifulness terrific, my esteemed Mauly?" asked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, as Mauleverer was silent.

Mauly grinned.

"Yaas," he answered. "They've

been rootin' all over the school, and they don't seem to have had much luck. Looks as if they can't find five chaps who were out of gates on Saturday afternoon without bein' able to account for their jolly old occupations. I never thought they would."

"But somebody did it!" said Bob. "Loder didn't imagine that he was sacked and ducked. We didn't—so somebody else did! That's logic."

"Yaas. But—" His lordship paused again. "I know it sounds surprisin', but I think it wasn't Greyfriars men at all who ragged Loder!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Well, look at it!" said Mauleverer. "We've got black sheep in the flock here, but a bunch of five fellows mean enough to use other fellows' names and leave them to stand the racket would want a lot of lookin' for."

"That's been puzzling me," said Harry. "But why should anybody outside the school want to rag Loder? He's a beastly bully here, but—"

"Might have made himself unpleasant outside, as well as inside!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Anyhow, the beaks don't seem to be able to find any such bunch of fellows who can't account for their time out of gates on Saturday. 'Tain't as if it was one or two, or three—but five in a bunch, you know!" Mauly shook his head. "I've been givin' the old nut a lot of exercise, and I've thought it out—and I'm bankin' on it that Loder hit trouble outside the school."

His lordship smiled.

"Facts are facts!" he said. "Either it was you fellows, or it wasn't Greyfriars men at all. It wasn't you—you've said so! Therefore, my beloved 'earers, it was some gang outside. That's what I trickled in to tell you."

"But who—" gasped Nugent.

"Not knowin', can't say! You fellows ought to be able to guess."

"How the dickens—" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"The howfulness is terrific!"

"Give us the clue, Mister Sherlock Holmes!" said Frank Nugent, grinning. "Get going, Mauly, and give us the jolly old clue."

"Oh, all right!" yawned Mauleverer. "Look at it! You men never ragged Loder. No other Greyfriars men did, so it was outsiders. They used your names, so they're fellows who know you pretty well. If they know you, you know them. They used your names—not my name, or Smithy's name, or Bunter's name, or Hobby's, or Temple's, or anybody else's. That means that they've got their knife into you. They're fellows you've rubbed the wrong way. They must have had a reason for pickin' out your name specially, with dozens to choose from. That means that they don't like you, nice chaps as you are. Got all that?"

The Famous Five could only stare.

Lord Mauleverer had evidently been giving his noble "nut" quite a lot of exercise on this mysterious subject.

"What you've got to do," resumed Mauleverer, "is to look outside the school and pick out a bunch of fellows who know you pretty well and dislike you a whole lot—and who had trouble with dear old Loder! When you've spotted them you've spotted that raggin' gang! I leave it to you, partners!"

And with that, the schoolboy earl slipped off the study table, nodded cheerfully to the Famous Five, and ambled out of the study.

He left Harry Wharton & Co. staring at one another in amazed silence.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Loder Loses His Temper!

"GET out!" snapped Loder.
 "I've come here—"
 "Hand me that ash,
 Walker, old man!"

Harry Wharton breathed hard. It was about an hour after the talk with Mauly when the captain of the Remove arrived at the Sixth Form studies and tapped at Loder's door.

Loder and Walker and Carne were in the study, and when the junior opened the door there was a perceptible scent of cigarette smoke, though the cigarettes had vanished promptly from sight.

That was no business of Wharton's, and he affected to notice nothing. He was not at Greyfriars to bring up the Sixth in the way they should go! But the Sixth Form sportsmen were annoyed—and the sight of Wharton was, to Loder, rather like that of a red rag to a bull.

Walker tossed the ashplant across the table, and Loder caught it. He was more than willing to give the junior "six" on the slightest pretext.

"Will you let me speak, Loder?" asked Harry, as patiently as he could. "I want to tell you that I'm sorry for what I said in the quad to-day, and afterwards in the prefects' room."

Loder stared at him in astonishment. "Oh!" he ejaculated. "A thrashing seems to have done you good, you cheeky young sweep!"

Wharton coloured. "Wingate's six made no difference whatever," he answered quietly. "If I still thought as I did then I should say so. But now I know better. I can see that I was wrong, and I'm sorry."

"Well, my hat!" said Walker. "Leave that ash alone, Loder. It's decent of the kid to come and say so, after what he got."

"Well, he would get plenty more of the same, if he kept it up!" growled Loder. "I can't understand why he's still at Greyfriars. Why the dickens he's not turfed out yet beats me!"

"Beats me, too!" said Carne. "The Reak is a long time making up his mind about it. Well, get out, Wharton, now you've said what you've come to say."

Wharton did not get out. "There's something else," he explained.

Loder grasped the ash. "You've been told to cut!" he said. "If you ask for it, you'll get it—with all your gammon about being sorry for your check."

Wharton's lip curled. After what Mauleverer had said, and the change of view that had inevitably followed, he had realised that he was in the wrong, and that he was bound to admit it. But Loder was not a pleasant fellow to whom to offer an apology. It was like Loder to look upon that apology as "gammon," and caused only by the whopping administered by Wingate.

"I've got something to ask you, Loder," said Harry. "You're bound to listen to me as a prefect. If you won't, I shall have to go to Wingate, and ask him to speak to you."

"What the thump do you mean?" grunted Loder. "If you've got anything to say you can say it, I suppose. Cut it short!"

"I know now that I was wrong, and I'm sorry," said Harry. "You believed every word you said to the Head. I understand that now. But it was a mistake, Loder."

"Oh, gad! Have you come here to try to pull my leg?" Loder laughed. "Not much good, you young ass!"

"No. You heard one of those fellows

on Saturday use my name. You heard them using the names of my friends. They meant you to!" said Harry. "You never saw them, and they could have used any names they liked. They meant you to think that it was us—"

"So that's the dodge you've thought out, is it?" said Loder contemptuously. "It's taken you rather a long time to think of it. Do you think it will wash?"

"I hope so!" said Harry quietly. "I'm sure that that's the reason why the Head hasn't sent for us yet."

Walker laughed. "That's why they've been rooting about after fags who were out of gates on Saturday, Gerald," he said. "After all, it's barely possible."

"Don't be a silly ass, Jimmy! It's the thinnest yarn I've ever heard," snarled Loder. "They never knew I heard them speaking to one another, with that sack over my head. I dare say they'd like to land it on another gang of fags, if they could."

"Do let me speak!" said Harry. "We don't believe that it was Greyfriars fellows at all who got you on Saturday, Loder. We think it was some gang outside the school."

Loder stared blankly. "That's what I want to ask you," said Harry. "If that's the truth, you know best whether there's a set of fellows outside the school who might like—"

"By gad!" said Loder. "Is that your game? You've come here to ask me questions, to help you out, after what you did to me—"

"We did nothing! We want to find out who did!" said Harry. "If four or five fellows set on you last Saturday they must have had some reason for doing it—they must be fellows you've upset somehow. You must know whether you've had any trouble lately with a mob of fellows outside Greyfriars. If so, they're the fellows who did it."

The three Sixth Formers stared at Wharton. Walker and Carne laughed; Loder scowled.

"You've got the check to come here and talk that rot to me!" said Gerald Loder, with a deep breath.

"I don't call it check! We're up for the sack, if the truth doesn't come out," answered Harry. "As a prefect, you're bound to want to set the matter right."

"The truth is pretty well known, I think," said Loder, "and I don't want you to teach me a prefect's duties. I'm going to lick you for your check."

"Hold on a minute, Gerald," said Walker. "Why shouldn't you tell the kid what he asks? It's possible—"

"Don't be a fool, Jimmy Walker!"

"Well, look here," said Walker, "you did have a row a week ago with some young sweeps. You told me about one of them bugging a stone at your head; you had a bruise for days afterwards, and—"

"Don't be a silly ass!"

"You told me you thrashed him—"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Loder. "What about it? Those young scoundrels in the Remove ragged me on Saturday, and you know it as well as I do. The Head knows it, and he's going to sack them for it. Think I'm going to help them squirm out of it by landing it on some other gang! Don't be a fool!"

"But look here—"

"Shut up, I tell you!" snarled Loder. He rose from his chair and swished the ash.

"Wharton, bend over that table! I'm going to give you six for your check. Now then, sharp!"

Harry Wharton did not bend over the

table. He gave the bully of the Sixth a quiet, steady look. What Walker had said had convinced him that Mauly was on the right track.

"I'm waiting for your answer, Loder," he said.

"I'm waiting for you to bend over, you cheeky cub!" roared Loder.

"Will you answer me, or shall I go to Wingate?"

"By gum!"

Gerald Loder made a stride across the study to the junior at the door. His face was red with rage.

Harry Wharton made a backward step, and Loder made a forward jump and caught him by the collar with his left hand. With his right he swished the cane.

"Now—" he said between his teeth. Harry Wharton's eyes blazed. Before the ash could descend he gave the bully of the Sixth a savage shove, putting all his force into it.

Loder staggered and let go his collar. He staggered two or three paces, and then the back of his knees coming into contact with a chair, he stumbled over and landed on his back on his study carpet.

Bump!

"Oh!" gasped Loder. He sprawled on his back, spluttering.

Walker and Carne stared at the scene. For a moment Loder sprawled; then he scrambled up, with a face of fury.

But that moment was enough for the captain of the Remove. He stepped quickly out of the study and cut along the passage.

"Stop!" roared Loder.

He rushed into the passage after the junior. He was in time to see Harry Wharton tap at Wingate's door and open it. Wharton disappeared into that study, and Loder, breathing fury, rushed in pursuit.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Cough It Up!

GEORGE WINGATE jumped.

"You young ass!" he hooted. Wingate of the Sixth was sitting at his study table, putting the finishing touches to a Greek paper for the Head.

Wingate was better at cricket than at Greek, and he had missed some of those accents which grammarians have invented for the puzzlement of students. He was putting them in, with a wrinkled, concentrated brow, when his study door suddenly opened, and a junior came breathlessly in—his sudden entrance startling Wingate and causing him to drop a little rain of blots, thus putting in more accents than the most exacting grammarian would have required.

"Oh, sorry!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"I—"

"You thumping little idiot! Look—What the dickens!" howled Wingate, as Loder appeared in the study doorway, ash in hand.

Harry Wharton backed round Wingate's table, with a wary eye on the bully of the Sixth.

Wingate rose to his feet, with a knitted brow.

"What's this game?" he snapped.

"That young sweep!" Loder panted. "He pushed me over in my study and cut! I'm going—"

"Loder had me by the neck, Wingate," said Harry. "He was going to whop me for asking a civil question. And I want you to make him answer it."

"Wha-a-t?"

"I've come to you as head prefect," said the captain of the Remove coolly.

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"I shall go to the Head if necessary. I'm not going to be bunked out of Greyfriars to please Loder!"

Wingate stared from one to the other. Loder made a stride towards Harry Wharton, and Wharton picked up the inkpot from the table.

"Keep off, you bully!" he said. "You touch me with that cane and I'll buzz this inkpot right in your face! I mean that!"

It was quite plain that he meant it, and Loder paused. He was fairly yearning to lay on the ash, but he did not want that inkpot in the middle of his countenance. Very much indeed he did not.

"You hear him, Wingate?" he panted. "You hear that!"

"I hear it," said Wingate, "and unless Wharton can explain himself I shall take him to the Head for a flogging. Put down that inkpot, Wharton; and you stand back, Loder, and give the kid a chance to speak."

Wharton put down the inkpot at once. Gerald Loder eyed him almost wolfishly, but he stood back and lowered the cane.

"Now cough it up!" snapped Wingate. "Sharp!"

Harry Wharton explained, coolly and quietly.

Since that talk with Lord Maulverer in Study No. 1 the Famous Five had discussed the matter and decided on their course of action. Wharton was quite determined to get on with it; and Loder's outbreak of temper made no difference whatever. He was, as he had said, prepared to go to the headmaster if necessary.

Wingate listened to him, impatiently at first, and then with growing attention.

His look was very dubious. No more than anyone else had he doubted that the Famous Five of the Remove had been guilty of that unexampled rag on a Sixth Form prefect. But "old Wingate" was the man to give any fellow a chance.

"So that was what you asked Loder," he grunted, when Wharton had explained.

"Yes."

"Why couldn't you answer the kid, Loder?"

"Oh, don't talk rot!" snarled Loder. "Those young scoundrels got me in a sack and ducked me, and you know it as well as I do. They've thought of this dodge for trying to squeeze out of it."

"No reason why you shouldn't answer him, all the same!" said the captain of Greyfriars. "And no reason at all why you should whop him for asking you. You may have your whopping privs taken away, Loder, if you're too handy with that ash."

Loder opened his lips—and shut them again.

He did not dare answer the captain of the school as he would have liked to do. Whopping privileges could be taken away, and a word from the head prefect to the headmaster would have been enough. Loder would have missed his whopping privs sorely.

"Now," went on Wingate, "this seems to me rather fanciful, but if there's a sporting chance that these kids were not the fellows concerned in that rag on Saturday they ought to have every chance to prove it."

"You know as well as I do——" Loder choked.

"Never mind that! If you don't choose to answer a junior, answer me," said Wingate. "Is there some mob of fellows outside the school that you've had some trouble with and who might have handled you on Saturday?"

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"Of course not!" snarled Loder.

"You're sure?"

"Of course I am!"

Loder was sure enough, so far as that went. He did not suppose, for a single moment, that the Highcliffe junior, whom he had thrashed more than a week ago for flinging a stone at his head was concerned in the ragging. He had almost forgotten the existence of Pon & Co. of Highcliffe.

"You hear that, Wharton," said Wingate. "I suppose you're satisfied now."

"No!" said Harry.

"What more do you want, then?" asked Wingate gruffly.

"I want to know whether Loder has had any row this term with any set of fellows outside the school," said Harry.

"I know that he has, from something that Walker said in his study."

Wingate's brow darkened.

"If you're accusing Loder again——" he began.

"I'm not!" said Harry calmly. "I've told him I'm sorry for having doubted his word, now that I know how the matter stands. Loder doesn't choose to think that the fellows he rowed with may have ragged him. He can please himself about that—but I want to know who they were. Why shouldn't he tell me?"

"If there was anybody at all, Loder——" Wingate looked hard at the prefect's sullen, angry face. "Look here, about a week ago, I remember you had a bruise on your head, and there was some talk——"

"That's got nothing to do with it!" snarled Loder. "A cheeky young cad slung a stone at my head, and I thrashed him. That's all."

"Well, who was he?"

"What the dickens does it matter?"

"Probably nothing. But there's no reason why you shouldn't say! For goodness' sake, say who it was, and let's have done with it!" said the Greyfriars captain impatiently.

Loder set his lips.

"I'm not going to help those young rotters land what they did on somebody else!" he retorted. "They'd like to set a story going that it was done by somebody outside the school! I can see the game!"

"Never mind that——"

"Well, I do mind!" sneered Loder.

"I'm not lending a hand in setting up a pack of lies to save their skins!"

"Will you answer the question, or not?"

"No!" snapped Loder. "I won't!"

Harry Wharton's face set.

"If you will not answer Wingate, you will answer the Head!" he said. "I'm going to Dr. Locke."

"That will do, Wharton!" said Wingate quietly. "Loder, you've got to answer. Tell me at once who was the boy who threw a stone at you, and whom you thrashed for it, or I shall go to the Head and place the matter before him."

Loder seemed on the point of choking. "It was a Highcliffe kid!" he breathed. "It has nothing to do with this matter—I've never seen him since."

"His name?"

"Ponsonby!" snarled Loder.

"Ponsonby!" repeated Harry Wharton. "That cad! Now I know!"

The name of the dandy of Highcliffe was like a flood of light to him. If Ponsonby & Co., of Highcliffe, had any cause for revengeful feeling against Loder, that made it clear enough to Wharton. And if Loder had thrashed the lofty Pon, there was the cause!

"Is that all you want to know, Wharton?" demanded Wingate.

"That's all, Wingate!"

"Then you can get out!"

Loder's eyes glittered at Wharton as he crossed to the door.

"You stay here a few minutes, Loder!" added Wingate. "I want to talk to you."

Harry Wharton left the study. Loder remained there—and when he left, a few minutes later, he did not look as if he had enjoyed his talk with the Greyfriars captain. And he carried his ash back to his study with him, unused!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Begs For It!

"H A, ha, ha!" It was a roar of laughter in the Remove passage.

A dozen fellows were laughing when the Famous Five came up to prep, and the merriment redoubled as they arrived.

From which, without being Sherlock Holmeses, they were able to deduce that that outburst of hilarity was not unconnected with themselves.

Harry Wharton frowned; Johnny Bull looked indifferent; Nugent and Hurree Singh glanced round inquiringly, and Bob Cherry grinned cheerfully.

The chums of the Remove had been discussing the information elicited, or rather screwed, from Loder of the Sixth, and laying plans for acting on the same. Prep intervened, and they dismissed the matter for the present, and came up to prep—to be greeted by a howl of laughter.

Outside Study No. 1 ten or twelve of the Remove had gathered, all, apparently, in a very hilarious state, and all of them looked at the Famous Five and roared.

"He, he, he!" came Billy Bunter's squeak. "I say, you fellows—— He, he, he! I say, I wonder who did it? He, he, he!"

"I wonder!" chortled the Boulder.

And there was another roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry. "You men enjoying life?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the joke?" asked Frank Nugent.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Is the jokefulness terrific, my esteemed idiotic friends?" inquired Hurree Janset Ram Singh amiably.

"Let a fellow pass!" said Harry Wharton curtly.

With so many fellows crowded outside his study, it was not easy to reach the same.

"Room for his Highness!" called out Skinner. "Make way for his Magnificence, you common mortals!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

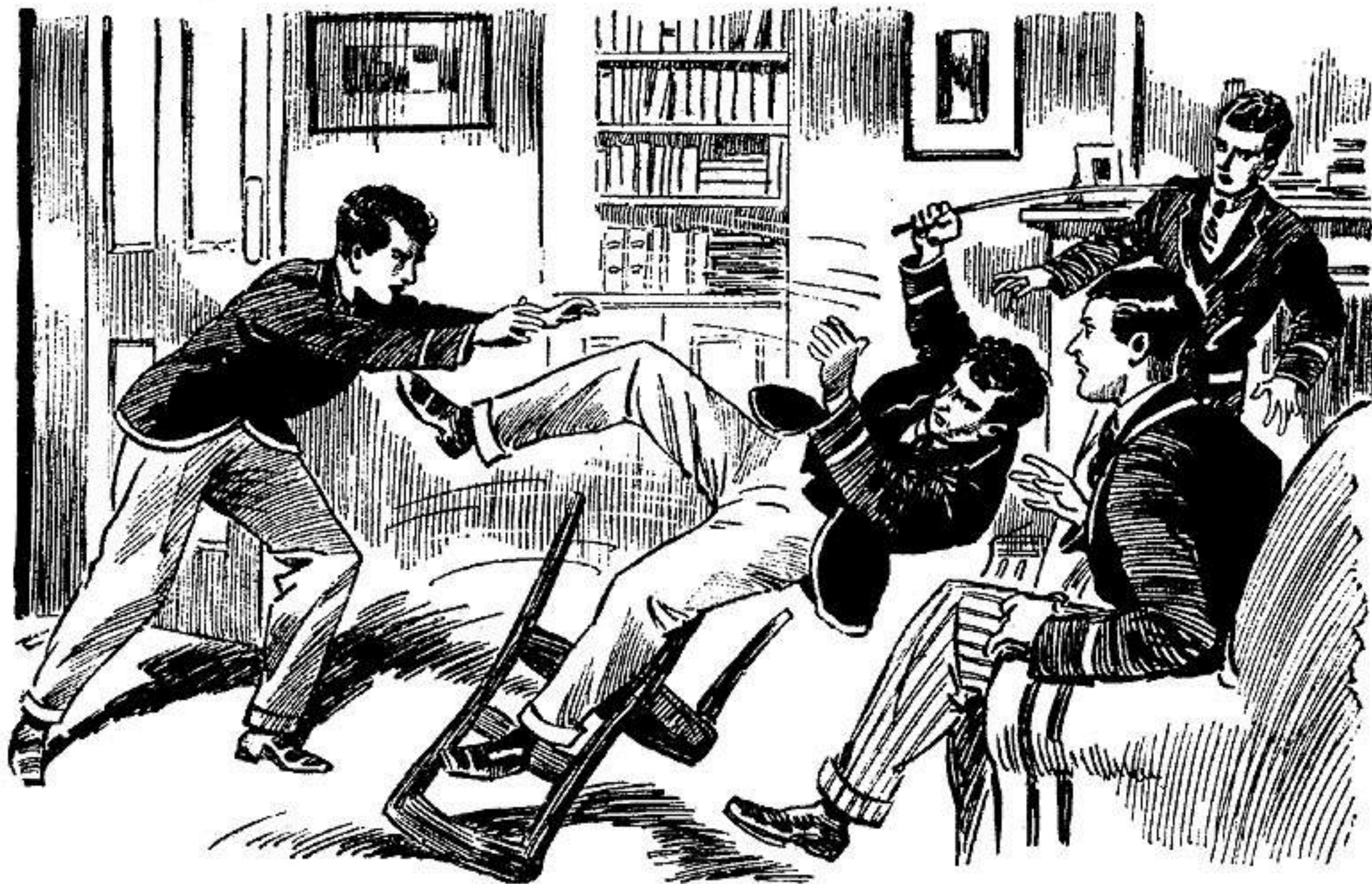
The juniors could see, from a little distance, that something had been chalked on the door of Study No. 1. They pushed through the chuckling, chortling mob of Removites. Billy Bunter seemed the most entertained of all—his fat face was pink with merriment, and his little round eyes twinkling at a great rate behind his big round spectacles. He chuckled, he chortled, and he cackled. Bunter, clearly, was fearfully amused.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, as the five arrived at the study door.

"Great pip!"

"The great-pipfulness is terrific!"

There was an inscription on the door of Wharton's study, in large capital



Before the ash could descend, Wharton gave Loder a savage shove. The bully of the Sixth staggered two or three paces, and then, the back of his knees coming into contact with a chair, he stumbled over. "Oh!" he gasped, as he fell.

letters, in chalk. It was quite a striking inscription, calculated to evoke merriment from any fellow who saw it. It ran:

"WHO TELLS LIZE?"

There were, sad to relate, many fellows in the Remove who believed, during the past few days, that the Famous Five had departed from the straight and narrow path of veracity. The Bounder had expressed his opinion on the subject that afternoon so unpleasantly that it had come to nose-punching. Skinner & Co. indulged in many sneers on the subject of fellows who made themselves out to be little tin angels, and yet, when it came to the point, rolled out "crammers" as readily as Billy Bunter.

But it was none of these who had put up that inscription on the study door. The remarkable spelling was an infallible clue to the author thereof.

The Famous Five gazed at it.

"I say, you fellows, I wonder who did that?" chortled Bunter. "Somebody who knows you, what? He, he, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the fellows in the passage.

It was the fact that Bunter did not know that he had left a clue behind him, that made him yell. Every fellow who saw those words chalked on Harry Wharton's door knew at once who had chalked them there. Bunter was happily ignorant of that circumstance. He was unaware that there was anything specially remarkable about the spelling.

"You cheeky fat chump!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Rub it off with his silly nose!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, it wasn't me, you know!" said Bunter, in alarm. "I

never did it! I think it serves you right. You make out that a fellow's untruthful—and look at you! Bob Cherry said the other day that I never tell the truth except by accident—you jolly well know you did, Cherry—"

"Guilty!" grinned Bob.

"And Wharton said that I hardly ever had such an accident—you know you did, Wharton—"

"You fat idiot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And now look at you!" said Bunter warmly. "Rolling out whoppers all over the shop, the lot of you! You make out that I tell fibs—a thing I wouldn't do! I'm more particular than some chaps, I hope! And all the while you roll them out by the dozen! Rotten, I call it! Making out you never ragged Loder, when everybody knows you did!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Skinner.

"Not that I chalked that on your door, you know," added Bunter. "It serves you right, of course—shows you up, sec? But I never did it! I—I was just wondering who did."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You blithering, barbling bletherer!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Do you think there's any other man in the Remove who spells like that?"

"Eh? Like what?" asked Bunter. "What's the matter with the spelling?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fancy I can spell as well as you can, Bob Cherry, and chance it! Not that I chalked that up on Wharton's door. I haven't any chalk; and if Toddy had a stick of chalk in his desk I never saw it there, and I never borrowed it. You can ask Toddy—he knows! He asked me what I wanted it for, didn't you, Toddy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Removites.

"I haven't the faintest idea who did it!" declared Bunter. "You can take

my word about that, Wharton—I don't tell whoppers like you do! If you think it was me I can only say—wurrroooooogh! Leggo my neck, you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, make him leggo!" gurgled Bunter, as the captain of the Remove, grasping a fat neck, propelled him to the study door. "I say, I never—groogh—I didn't—ooogh—I wasn't—woogh! Oh, you beast! Googh!"

Billy Bunter gurgled, and spluttered, and roared, and yelled, as his fat little nose was rubbed on the study door. He struggled, and squirmed, and wriggled, and writhed.

But it booted not! There was an iron grip on the back of his fat neck, and his unfortunate nose rubbed on the chalk, till it was rubbed into an indecipherable smudge.

"Oooogh! Beast!" roared Bunter, when that awful ordeal was over, and he clasped two fat hands to a fat nose in anguish. "Oooogh! My nose! Wow! My boko! You've nearly rubbed my nose off—ooooogh! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites roared. But Billy Bunter was no longer chortling or chuckling, or cackling. Billy Bunter, clasping his suffering nose, yelled with woe. He tottered away to Study No. 7, still yelling.

During prep that evening, the fat Owl of the Remove devoted more attention to his nose than to prep!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wisdom Not Wanted!

"THAT cad!"

"That worm!"

"That cur!"

"That terrific rotter!"

"That Highcliffe swab!"

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Lord Mauleverer smiled.

The Famous Five were in rather excited discussion, after third school the next day, when his lordship bore down on them in the quad.

"Anythin' turned up, old beans?" he asked. "I sort of gather from your remarks that somethin' has!"

"Oh, it's all right now!" said Bob Cherry. "We know who it was, Mauly, and we're jolly well going to prove it, somehow."

"The howfulness will not be easy!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"You're right, Mauly!" said Harry Wharton. "I've got no doubt that Loder was ragged by Ponsonby and his gang. I should have thought of them, very likely; but, of course, I never knew they had any trouble with Loder—he has nothing to do with Highcliffe—but it turns out that he had a row with them about a week ago, and walloped Pon—"

"It explains the whole thing!" said Frank Nugent. "That cad Ponsonby is as vicious as a badger—it seems that he chucked a stone at Loder, and Loder thrashed him—we've got that out of Loder himself. He doesn't believe that the Highcliffe cads got him on Saturday—but we do."

"Pon would, if he had a chance!" said Johnny Bull. "And the cad loathes us—he would like to land us in an awful row here! That's why they used our names, for that fool Loder to hear, and take him in."

Lord Mauleverer nodded thoughtfully.

"That fool, Loder, most likely had it in his silly head that it was us," said Harry. "He couldn't see the cads, with that sack on him—and there were five of them, and he'd just got us gated and jolly well knew that we'd like to make him sit up—I've no doubt he took it for granted that we had him—he may have said something that put the idea into Pon's head, for all we know. Anyhow, I've no doubt at all that it was Pon and his gang, since we've found that Loder thrashed that Highcliffe cad. Only—we've got to fix it on him, somehow."

"The cad!" said Bob.

"The cur!" said Johnny Bull.

"The terrific toad!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"All that, and more!" said Lord Mauleverer, with a cheery grin. "But how are you goin' to fix it? That fellow Ponsonby is a bad hat. He will roll out all the lies he can think of. It would be pretty serious for him, at his school, if it came out that he had handled a Greyfriars prefect."

"That's why they got the sack over Loder's head from behind, of course," said Harry. "They dared not let him see them. Then they made it all safe by letting the silly ass hear them use our names."

"Yaas, it looks probable!" agreed Lord Mauleverer. "But it's not much use mentionin' it to Quelch, or the Head, unless you've got somethin' to go on."

"I know that, of course!" admitted the captain of the Remove. "We feel certain about it, but that's not proof. We had it from Prout that the five fellows he saw cutting off were heading for Courtfield. That's Pon's way home to Highcliffe. You see, it all sticks together."

"Yaas! But—"

"And we know that Ponsonby was out hunting for trouble last Saturday, too," added Harry. "The Saturday before we had a row with him, on Courtfield Common—he was going to push that fat

ass, Bunter, into a lot of thorns, and we pushed Pon in instead! I expect that was the day he had his row with Loder—I know Loder was on the common that day, and in a jolly bad temper."

"But how did you know he was out on the jolly old warpath last Saturday?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"We had that from the Courtfield chaps, as it happens—Trumper, and Wickers, and Solly Lazarus—we met them on Sunday morning!" explained Wharton. "They were looking for Pon & Co. because Pon had been ragging Lazarus—and Solly said it was on Saturday, and the Saturday before as well."

"Solly Lazarus!" repeated Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully. "That's the chap who walks round with a camera, ain't it?"

"Yes, he's a pretty good photographer; he takes snaps, and makes picture postcards that his father sells in the shop in the High Street!" answered Harry. "Local pictures, you know—they sell them to people who visit the place. That cad Pon would think nothing of damaging his camera—Solly told us he ran for it, in case they did—so he was looking for them with his pals when we met him on Sunday. From what he said, it's certain that Pon & Co. were out on Saturday looking for trouble."

"Yaas, that's a jolly old clue!" agreed Lord Mauleverer. "Ten to one that it was Pon and his gang—and twenty to one that he'll deny havin' even heard about it."

"Well, we're going over to Highcliffe, after class," said Harry. "We've got friends there, you know, and may pick up something from them. Courtenay and De Courcy may know something about it. They wouldn't stand for a dirty trick like this—using false names and landing fellows in a row with their headmaster."

"Pon all over!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I wonder we didn't think of Pon at once, as soon as we knew a dirty trick had been played."

"Yaas—he sort of leaps to the mind, in such a connection!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "Best of luck, old beans!"

His lordship ambled away—with a thoughtful expression on his face.

The Famous Five had little or no doubt on the subject, since that valuable information had been extracted from Loder of the Sixth; and Mauleverer had little or none. They were going over to Highcliffe, to see what could be done in the way of bringing Ponsonby to book—but the prospect did not seem very hopeful to Mauleverer.

And his lordship, as he ambled in the quad, was giving his noble "nut" some more exercise on the subject.

Loder of the Sixth passed the chums of the Remove as they stood in a group in the quad, and his eyes gleamed at them as he passed.

But he did not address them; he walked on, scowling. Wingate's talk to him, the previous evening, seemed to have done Loder good. At all events, he was leaving the culprits alone—though more and more irritated and exasperated by the Head's delay in pronouncing sentence.

That delay was causing all Greyfriars to wonder.

It was obvious that the headmaster considered that there must be a doubt in the matter now, and so long as there was even a shadow of a doubt, he would not take the risk of committing an act of injustice.

But that state of suspense could not last for ever, and with the "chopper" suspended over their heads like the

sword of ancient Damocles, the chums of the Remove were extremely keen to get the facts to light if they could.

"We'll cut over on the bikes, as soon as we come out of class!" said Bob Cherry. "Not a word about it, though—Highcliffe's not in bounds except on half-holidays, and it's not much good asking Quelch for leave."

"No good at all!" said Harry. "We're not likely to get leave, after cutting gates on Saturday. Keep it dark."

Johnny Bull gave a grunt.

"Better ask Quelch," he said. "The whole trouble was started by cutting gates on Saturday! If we'd been in gates, Loder couldn't have thought—"

"We've had that!" Bob Cherry pointed out.

"Yes, we've heard that one, 'old man!'" said Nugent. "For goodness' sake, don't tell us over again that you told us so."

"Well, I did tell you so—"

"Shut up!" roared Johnny's four friends.

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull. "We've landed into a fearful scrape, through playing the goat once. I don't see playing it over again. We may get leave from Quelch if we ask him—"

"Oh, let's!" said Harry Wharton sarcastically. "Quelch will want to know why we're going, and he's sure to give us leave when we tell him we're going over for a row with Ponsonby, and very likely a scrap!"

Johnny Bull shook his head.

"Leave it till to-morrow, then!" he said. "Wednesday's a half-holiday! We can go on a half-holiday if we like."

"You howling ass!" said Bob. "The chopper may come down any minute! We mayn't be at Greyfriars to-morrow, if the Head makes up his mind and decides against us."

"We're going to-day!" said Harry. "Do you think we can let it stand over another twenty-four hours, you fathead? No fear!"

"Well, I think—"

"You don't!" said Bob. "You can't, old man! Gammon!"

"I think—"

"The thinkfulness is not terrific."

"I think—" roared Johnny Bull.

"Ring off!"

"I think—"

"Give us a rest!"

"You can keep on interrupting me as long as you like, but I'm jolly well going to say what I think, all the same!" said Johnny Bull stolidly. "We've landed in this through cutting gates last Saturday. We shouldn't have done it! We're not reckless asses like Smithy, or silly fools like Bunter—we've got sense enough to know that a fellow has to toe the line at school—and breaking rules right and left is fat-headed, and will only lead to more trouble! Last time I told you so—"

"Shut up!"

"And now I tell you so again—"

"History repeats itself!" said Bob Cherry. "Last time, you told us so—and now you tell us so again! Last time we bumped you for it—and now we'll bump you again! See? Collar him."

"Good egg!"

"Here, I say—" roared Johnny Bull. "You silly chumps—you howling asses—you blithering cuckoos—you—yarcooooh!"

Bump!

"I tell you—"

Bump!

"Oh crumbs! Leggo! I—"

Bump!

Johnny Bull roared. His friends

strolled away and left him roaring. Johnny was right, as he generally was; he had uttered words of wisdom; but it was only too clear—painfully clear—that at the moment his friends had no use for Johnny's wisdom!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Breakers of Bounds!

LODER of the Sixth smiled—grimly.

It was after class; and Loder was walking towards Courtfield Common, when he turned his head at a whirl of bicycles on the road.

Five juniors were coming on from the direction of Greyfriars, at a good speed.

Hence Loder's grim smile.

He had caught those young rascals at last. They were not, at the moment, out of bounds. But it was perfectly clear, to Loder, that they were going out of bounds, and would be outside the limit in a few minutes more—for which reason Loder, with that grim smile on his face, stepped aside from the road, under the trees, and waited for them to pass.

On half-holidays, school bounds were extended, and the juniors were free to wander, if they liked, over the wide green spaces of Courtfield Common, as far as the river and the bridge. On other days, bounds extended only as far as the edge of the common, where it was bordered by Oak Lane.

That was where Loder stood, at the moment. And he did not suppose that the juniors intended to ride as far as the common and then turn back. He thought—and perhaps hoped—that they were riding on—out of bounds, under his eyes. The Head had not sacked them yet—Loder was beginning to wonder, savagely, whether he would ever make up his mind on the subject. They had, so far, got off scot-free—after ragging and ducking Loder, as he firmly believed. And Wingate had threatened to take away his "whopping privs" if he used the asphalt without cause. So it was a deep and genial satisfaction to Loder to spot the young rascals going out of bounds—and to order them back to report themselves to their Form-master.

After their disregard of authority on Saturday, they were breaking bounds again on Tuesday; and Loder was happily aware of the extremely stern and severe view Mr. Quelch would take of such a proceeding.

It might tip the balance against them, in the matter which was still in suspense. Stopping them and sending them back to take that whopping, was quite a happy prospect to Loder.

He stood under the trees, at the corner, and waited.

The five cyclists came swiftly on.

Johnny Bull was with his friends. It was often Johnny's fate to utter words of wisdom, which the less prudent friends passed by like the idle wind which they regarded not. But having "told them so," in vain, and having been bumped for the same, Johnny had joined up, as a matter of course, when they started. He thought it very likely that trouble would follow—which he was going to share with his pals, when it accrued.

Johnny was right, once more—trouble was, in fact, waiting for the breakers of bounds—in the shape of Gerald Loder, standing under the wayside trees, waiting for them to reach the spot.

"Bounds" did not apply to Sixth Form prefects; Loder was all right!

But as soon as the cyclists reached the spot where Loder stood, they were out of bounds—and it was within his right and his duty to order them back to the school to report themselves to Mr. Quelch. Which duty Loder was going to perform, with considerable zest.

"Stop!"

Loder rapped out that word as he stepped from the trees. And five cyclists jumped in their saddles.

"Loder!" breathed Harry Wharton.

"The execrable Loder!" murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"That rotter!" muttered Bob Cherry.

Loder stood in the way, waving his hand. They slowed down and stopped.

Harry Wharton's face set hard, and his eyes gleamed. He had started for Highcliffe, and he was going to Highcliffe, Loder or no Loder. However, he stopped, and dismounted at the order of the prefect.

"Out of bounds, what?" said Loder grimly. "You young rascals! You cut gates on Saturday—and I know why! Now you're at it again! Go back to the school this instant!"

The juniors stood by their machines, looking at Loder, and at one another.

Johnny Bull gave a grunt. He had been right—but he was not pleased by this demonstration of the fact. He would gladly have strewn Loder of the Sixth in the dust of the road over the common.

"Look here, Loder——" said Harry.

"You've not got leave out of bounds?" sneered Loder. "Got an exit?"

"No!"

"I thought not! Go back at once and report yourself to Quelch!"

The Famous Five looked grim and glum. After what had happened on Saturday, they knew what to expect from Mr. Quelch.

"Do you hear me?" rapped Loder, as they did not stir.

"We're not deaf, Loder!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Well, get back!"

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Look here, Loder, you can give us leave, as a prefect!" he said. "We want to go over to Highcliffe, for a particular reason. We want to find out who ragged you on Saturday."

Loder fairly gasped! He had caught the young sweeps—they were booked for "toco." The idea of getting them out of it by giving them leave rather took Loder's breath away.

"Well, that beats it!" he gasped.

"You cheeky young rascal! I can see myself giving you leave! Go back at once! This instant!"

Harry Wharton, breathing hard, put his leg over his machine. His chums eyed him very dubiously. Wharton had not turned the machine, and his intention was plain. He was going on.

"We're for it, anyhow, you fellows!" said Harry quietly. "Quelch will be as mad as a hatter; we may as well be hung for sheep as lambs! I'm going on! You fellows can please yourselves."

"Sink or swim together!" said Bob Cherry. "Nothing doing, Loder!"

"Stop!" roared Loder. He could scarcely believe his eyes, as the captain of the Remove set his machine in motion again, to ride past him. "Wharton—you young rascal—stop! I've told you to go back! Go back at once! By gad! Will you stop?" Loder fairly bawled.

Harry Wharton, without answering, drove at his pedals, circling round Loder to get past. Loder made a rush at him—thus unintentionally leaving the way clear for the other four, who pedalled onward.

"Stop!" yelled Loder,

He grabbed and missed, and Harry Wharton shot on.

Spluttering fury, Loder dashed after the bike. He raced, and clutched. But Harry Wharton shot on, out of reach of the clutch; and Loder, stumbling forward, just touched the white tail of the rear mudguard with his finger-tips—as he pitched over!

He pitched hard and heavy, quite losing his balance with the impetus of that clutch, and he landed on his features in the dust of the Courtfield road.

He yelled frantically as he landed. His nose hit the road, and seemed to drive into it like a nail! It hurt Loder's nose! His frantic yell announced the fact, waking the echoes of Courtfield Common.

He scrambled to his feet. He stood panting and gasping, dabbing a thin trickle of red from his nose. Far away across the green common five cyclists vanished in the direction of Courtfield. Loder, gurgling with rage, was left to gurggle, and to dab a handkerchief at that trickle of claret!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Visitors at Highcliffe!

"**C**OME on, Caterpillar!" called out Frank Courtenay, the captain of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe School.

Rupert de Courcy, whom his friends called the "Caterpillar," smiled. He was standing by the landing window near the Fourth Form studies at Highcliffe, his hands in the pockets of his elegant trousers, looking out into the quad, when his chum called to him.

Courtenay was in flannels, and had a bat under his arm—but the Caterpillar had not changed for cricket, and was not going to, if he could find an excuse for not so doing.

"Hold on, old bean!" said the Caterpillar. "I rather think we'd better give games practice a miss, just for the moment——"

"Slacker!"

"I'm fearfully keen, of course," said the Caterpillar. "I'm looking forward to baggin' no end of goals—I mean wickets—when we play those strenuous men at Greyfriars! But——"

"Well, come on!"

"But," said the Caterpillar gravely, "I think we shall have to cut practice for the moment, Franky. We've got visitors. And I think we ought to convoy them safe into the House, in case dear old Pon plays any of his endearin' tricks!"

"Eh?" Courtenay joined the Caterpillar at the window. Looking out, he discerned five Greyfriars juniors, who had left their bicycles at the porter's lodge, and were coming in. "Oh, those chaps! I suppose they're coming to see us. But what do you mean about Pon, Caterpillar? He wouldn't dare kick up a shindy with our friends here."

"I'm not so sure!" answered the Caterpillar. "I haven't seen those fellows lately, but I fancy Pon has! Dear old Pon's always huntin' for trouble, and I fancy he's found some lately. I'm sure his nose has been knockin' against somebody's knuckles. There he is," added De Courcy, "and you can see he's interested in our Greyfriars pals."

Courtenay frowned a little. Ponsonby and his friends were in the quad, and, at sight of the Greyfriars fellows, they looked round and grinned at one

another, and then moved across towards Harry Wharton & Co.

"Better go down?" said Courtenay abruptly, and he went down the stairs with the Caterpillar to meet the visitors.

Pon never lost a chance of making himself unpleasant to Courtenay's friends at Greyfriars; and if Pon had any idea of doing so, in the Highcliffe quad, the captain of the Fourth was prepared to intervene with a heavy hand.

As the two juniors emerged from the House, they found that the Famous Five had come to a halt; Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson having stepped in their path. But Pon's manner was not hostile; he was smiling genially as if pleased by the meeting. He was speaking as Courtenay and the Caterpillar came out.

"Fancy meetin' you fellows! Still at Greyfriars, then?"

"Did you suppose that we were not still at Greyfriars, Ponsonby?" asked Harry Wharton, very quietly.

"I heard that there was some trouble on!" explained Ponsonby airily. "I met a man named Skinner the other day—yesterday, in fact—and he mentioned that you men were up for the sack! I was sorry to hear it, of course."

"Yes," said Bob Cherry. "No need to mention that—we can guess just how sorry you were, Ponsonby."

"The sorrowfulness must have been truly terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, it's rough luck," said Ponsonby blandly. "Always sorry for a man who gets spotted and booted! What was it for—pub-hauntin'?"

"Nothing in your line!" said Johnny Bull.

Ponsonby laughed.

"You don't know what it was for, Ponsonby?" asked Frank Nugent, with a very curious look at the dandy of Highcliffe.

"Skinner never mentioned it," drawled Pon.

"You didn't know without Skinner mentioning it?" asked Harry Wharton, with a curl of the lip.

Ponsonby raised his eyebrows.

"Eh? How should I know?" he asked. "I'm not fearfully interested in news from Greyfriars—and I can't say I'm very well posted about what goes on in your school. I heard that you were up for the sack—quite a pleasant surprise to see that you're not gone yet."

"Oh, quite!" grinned Monson.

Harry Wharton & Co. passed the three, and joined Courtenay and De Courcy, and went into the House with them.

Pon and Monson were left grinning, and Gadsby frowning. Drury and Vavasour joined their friends—Drury grinning, and Vavasour looking a little worried.

"What do those fellows want here?" asked Vavasour, as the Greyfriars fellows disappeared into the House with Courtenay and the Caterpillar. "They can't have come over to jaw about cricket, in the cives."

"Can't make it out," said Ponsonby. "I thought they'd all got the boot by this time! Mum's the word, you fellows!"

"You bet!" said Monson.

"Oh, absolutely!" said Vavasour. "But I'd like to know what they've come over for! Think they smell a rat?"

"Oh, rot!" said Pon. "Not that it matters! We're all right!"

"It was a rotten game!" said Gadsby sulkily.

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"I've told you you're a fool, Gaddy!"

"And I've told you you're a rotter, Pon!" grunted Gadsby. "Ragging that brute Loder was all right; but stickin' it on those chaps—"

"Shut up, you ass!"

"Least said soonest mended!" remarked Drury. "They don't seem to have been sacked, after all. May have been able to prove where they were at the time—that would knock it on the head."

"Not from what Skinner told me," answered Pon. "They were out of gates on Saturday, as it turned out—cut gates, Skinner said. Fairly played into our hands, in fact."

"Into your hands, you mean!" growled Gadsby. "Dirty trick!"

"Oh, shut up, Gaddy! Skinner told me they were up for the sack, and everybody expected to see them bunked on Monday! Can't make out why they've not gone."

"Looks as if somethin' may come out!" said Gadsby. "Serve you jolly well right if it did, Pon."

Pon gave his pal an evil look.

"Nothin' could come out!" he said. "We're all right so long as we keep mum. If you're pinin' for a Head's floggin', Gaddy, you can shout it out. But you can have it all to yourself, old bean."

"Oh, rats!" grunted Gaddy. Gaddy's conscience was uneasy, but not to the extent of facing the music.

Ponsonby, as a matter of fact, was feeling a little uneasy. His conscience was not troubling him—it never did. But the evident fact that the Famous Five had not yet been under the "chopper" for Saturday's happenings, and their visit to Highcliffe, surprised and disquieted him a little. It looked as if there was some sort of a hitch in the programme somehow.

Nothing, it was certain, could have come out. Loder had been made to believe that the fellows who had him in the sack were the Famous Five. The fact that they had been out of gates without leave at the time put the finishing touch as it were to Pon's plotting. Even if they suspected anything, they could prove nothing.

No Greyfriars fellow had been anywhere near the spot when Pon & Co. had "got" Loder at the pond on the common on Saturday. Nobody at all had been in the vicinity except Solly Lazarus, whom they had chased away. So there were no witnesses; and Loder, though he had been allowed to hear, had seen nothing. So it was safe—all safe!

But a guilty conscience is never quite easy, and Pon was feeling a twinge of disquietude.

"It's all right!" said Monson. "Of course it's all right!"

"Right as rain!" said Ponsonby.

"I'm not so jolly sure!" grunted Gadsby. "That Jew kid saw us with the sack—"

"He never saw what we had in it!" said Drury.

"No; but—"

"He's not likely to meet those chaps, or to mention it if he did," said Ponsonby. "And it wouldn't matter, anyhow. We should deny it, of course. And do you think anybody would take his word against ours—the son of a dashed second-hand shopkeeper in Courtfield?"

"He never saw Loder—never knew that Loder was there at all," said Monson. "He only saw us draggin' a sack towards the pond. We chased him off before he could see anythin'. Why should he mention such a thing, even if

he saw the Greyfriars fellows? Don't be a fool, Gaddy!"

"No; but—"

"Is his word worth anythin', if he did?" sneered Ponsonby. "You're a nervy ass, Gaddy. If anythin's said we've only got to stick together and tell the same story. Don't let the cat out of the bag, that's all."

"Here comes Courtenay!" said Gadsby.

"Let him come!" said Pon, with a careless shrug of the shoulders.

The captain the Highcliffe Fourth came out of the House again. His face was very grave and set. He came directly towards the group of knuts.

"Will you fellows come up to my study?" he said abruptly.

"Askin' us to tea?" smiled Pon.

"No. The Greyfriars fellows are there, and they've told me something I want to look into."

"Sorry, old bean, but we don't care for the company of Greyfriars cads. Tell them we're rather particular about the company we keep!" drawled Pon.

Courtenay compressed his lips.

"Cut that out, Ponsonby! Will you come and hear what they have to say?"

"No, I won't!"

"I think you'd better," said Courtenay. "I can't believe there's anything in it; it sounds too awfully rotten. But it's got to be cleared up, and if you refuse I shall have to make you."

Pon's eyes glittered.

"Are you givin' me orders, you cheeky rotter?" he said, between his teeth.

"I'm asking you to come up to my study."

"Well, I won't come."

"Then I'm telling you to, and if you don't come I'll take you by your collar and run you there!" said Courtenay, his eyes gleaming and his hands clenched. "I happen to be your Form captain, Ponsonby, and I've got to look into this. Are you afraid to face those fellows?"

Pon breathed hard.

"I'll come if you like," he said.

"Come on, you men!"

And the Highcliffe knuts, some of them far from easy in their minds, followed Frank Courtenay into the House and up to the Fourth Form studies.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Cat Out of the Bag!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were waiting in Courtenay's study in the Fourth. The Caterpillar was with them, a faintly amused smile on his face.

The Famous Five had explained the object of their visit, and whatever opinion Courtenay had on the subject the Caterpillar had no doubts. He seemed to find a sardonic amusement in this latest sample of Pon's playful manners and customs. His sympathy, so far as that went, was with the victims of a particularly dirty trick, but he did not think that they were likely to get much change out of Cecil Ponsonby.

There was a tramp of feet, and Courtenay came in, followed by Pon & Co.

Harry Wharton scanned their faces as they came in. Pon was looking contemptuously indifferent, Monson stolid, Drury impudent, Vavasour uneasy, and Gadsby worried.

"Here they are!" said the captain of the Highcliffe Fourth.

"Yes, here we are!" drawled Ponsonby. "I hear that you fellows



Loder stood in the way of the Famous Five, waving his hands. "Out of bounds, what?" he said grimly. "Go back to the school at once and report yourselves to Mr. Quelch!" "Nothing doing, Loder!" said Bob Cherry. "Come on, you fellows! Sink or swim together!"

want to ask us somethin'. Glad to oblige, of course. But cut it short, will you? I hate to mention it, but we don't really care for such company."

Johnny Bull gave a grunt, and his face assumed an expression rather like that of a bulldog; but he said nothing. It was left for the captain of the Remove to speak.

"I think you know what we've got to say, Ponsonby," said Harry. "I believe it was you and your friends who headed up Loder in a sack on Saturday."

"Who's Loder?" asked Pon blandly. "Loder is the Sixth Form man of Greyfriars who thrashed you about a week ago for flinging a stone at his head," answered Wharton quietly.

Pon started a little. He had hardly supposed that that incident would come to the knowledge of the Famous Five.

He realised that they had something to go upon in suspecting him. They had found out his motive.

"Oh, that hooligan!" he drawled. "I remember havin' a scuffle with a hulking brute—I don't think I knew his name—"

"I think you did," said Harry. "But never mind that. On Saturday he was headed up in a sack by a gang, who got him from behind, and ducked him in a pond. He fancies that we did it—"

"Didn't you?" asked Pon. "No; we did not. He fancies so, because the fellows used our names in speaking to one another, and he heard them."

"Looks like a clear case to me, then," remarked Ponsonby. "But why are you tellin' us? We're not in the least interested in your Greyfriars shindies."

"We think you did it." "Dear me!" said Ponsonby. "What's put that extraordinary idea into your head, if a fellow may ask?"

"Do you deny it?"

"I don't take the trouble." "Yes' or no, Ponsonby!" snapped Courtenay, and the Caterpillar smiled. Even Pon "jibbed" at the lie direct.

"No," said Ponsonby savagely. "And if those cads fancy they can get out of the consequences of raggin' a prefect by puttin' it on us, they're mistaken."

Wharton's eyes glinted. "So you know that Loder's a prefect, though you don't remember his name!" he said caustically.

Ponsonby bit his lip. He had made a little slip, in his anger. The Caterpillar's smile widened.

"You deny it," went on Wharton. "Well, will you tell us where you were at about four o'clock on Saturday afternoon?"

"Is this a cross-examination?" sneered Ponsonby.

"Will you answer me?" "Oh, yes, I don't mind!" drawled Pon. "If you're schemin' to land a row on us, the sooner you find out that it won't work, the better. As it happens, we went over to Lantham on Saturday afternoon. Monson was keen to see Lantham Ramblers play the county, so we went."

"We caught the two-fifteen at Court-field," said Monson solemnly. "We all went together." "Absolutely!" murmured Vavasour. "Shouldn't wonder if the ticket clerk remembers us, if you ask him!" grinned Drury.

Gadsby said nothing. Gaddy was a little more particular than his friends. He was sullenly silent.

"Five fellows collared Loder," said Harry Wharton, "and you admit that you five were out together."

"Yes; sittin' round watchin' the county match at Lantham."

"Do you say the same, Gadsby?"

"I'm not sayin' anythin'!" grunted Gadsby. "I don't see that you've any right to question me, and I shan't answer."

"I think I can guess why," said Harry. "And I don't think you had a hand in mentioning our names for Loder to hear, either. That was Ponsonby all over."

Gadsby flushed, and Ponsonby laughed.

"Is that the lot?" he asked. "No. You say you watched the county match at Lantham. When did you leave?"

"We left in time to catch the train back to get in before call-over," said Pon.

"The six-ten," said Monson.

"Was the match over when you left?" Ponsonby paused. He knew that Saturday had been the third day of the county match at Lantham. But he was not interested in such matters, and he could not have said, for the life of him, whether the game had ended at, or before, or after six on Saturday, as he had been nowhere near Lantham on that day.

"Just endin' when we left," said Monson, taking a risk, as it were. "We had just time to stay for the last wicket."

"The last wicket fell before five o'clock," said Harry. He was rather better posted in cricket news than the Highcliffe knuts.

"Then we must have left a little earlier than we thought," remarked Ponsonby casually. "I remember we strolled round a bit before catchin' our train."

"And which side won the match?" asked Harry.

Ponsonby & Co. stood silent. They were so utterly uninterested in cricket

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that they never followed the news unless they happened to have a bet on a match. Not one of the five knew how Saturday's match had ended at Lantham.

Courtenay's face hardened. The Caterpillar gave him a wink, at which he frowned.

The Famous Five looked grim. Their suspicions had amounted to practical certainty already; but now they were quite sure. Fellows who had watched a cricket match to a finish could hardly fail to know which side had pulled it off. But it was clear that Pon & Co. did not know.

"Take your time!" said Harry, with contemptuous sarcasm. "You say you were watching the Lantham game to a finish when Loder was ragged on Saturday afternoon. If you were, you never touched Loder; if you were not, you are lying. Tell us which side pulled off the game."

"County," said Monson, taking a risk again.

But the second risk did not come off so well as the first.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Lantham beat the county by 36 runs!" he said.

"Oh, my hat!" said Monson. "I mean—"

"That settles it!" said Bob Cherry. "Now, you rotters, you've as good as owned up that you were nowhere near Lantham; and we know where you were. Are you going to own up that you handled Loder?"

"Are they?" murmured the Caterpillar.

"You must do the decent thing, Ponsonby," said Courtenay quietly. "You'll get into a row with Dr. Voysey here, but it won't be the sack. These fellows are up for the sack if they can't prove that they never did it. You'll have to own up to what you did."

Ponsonby laughed.

"I can see myself askin' the Head for a floggin' to get these cads out of a row!" he jeered. "We never touched Loder; never saw the man at all. I'd forgotten that there was such a hooligan in the wide world. We were miles away from the pond on the common on

Saturday afternoon, as we've said. We're ready to go before Dr. Voysey and say so if necessary."

"Certainly!" said Monson.

"And you'll have time to look out a few particulars?" suggested the Caterpillar urbanely. "You'll make a note that Lantham won, so that you can mention it as proof that you were watchin' the match—what?"

"We shall tell the facts if we are asked," said Ponsonby coolly. "Those Greyfriars cads won't find it easy to stick on us what they did to their prefect."

"Hardly!" said Monson.

"Absolutely!" mumbled Vavasour.

"The fact is, this is pretty thick!" said Drury. "You rag your prefect and get found out, and then get the idea of putting it on fellows in another school. I can say it's jolly thick!"

Gadsby did not speak.

"That's all you've got to say?" asked Harry.

"That's the lot," assented Ponsonby.

"Very well. We know the truth now, and shall tell what we know at Greyfriars. I hope there will be an inquiry, and I don't believe you will get through with your lying," said Harry Wharton. "I'm going straight back to my school to tell my Form-master that we know who did it, and to give your names. If you choose to own up first, we'll give you time to do it."

"Thank you for nothin'!" Ponsonby glanced round the study with a sneering smile. "We seem to be through here; let's get out, you men."

Pon & Co. got out.

"I say, I'm awfully sorry about this, you fellows," said Courtenay. "It seems pretty clear now, though I couldn't believe it at first. I—I hope that those fellows will tell the truth about it."

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast," murmured the Caterpillar.

"Well, we know now, at any rate," said Bob.

Courtenay and the Caterpillar walked down to the gates with their Greyfriars friends and saw them off.

The Famous Five rode away in a

rather grim mood. They had to face a row at Greyfriars as soon as they arrived there, and, though they had now found out beyond doubt the identity of Loder's ragers, they could not feel sure what effect that communication would have at Greyfriars. If there was an inquiry, Pon would have polished up his alibi a little by that time and would have it in better trim. Prospects were very dubious.

As they rode through Courtfield they passed Lord Mauleverer in the High Street, and his lordship gave them a cheery nod and a grin. They rode on to Greyfriars in a mood of mingled hope and doubt.

It was said of old that great is truth, and it shall prevail—and the chums of the Remove could only hope that it would prevail on this occasion.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

What Solly Knew!

LORD MAULEVERER glanced after the Famous Five as they disappeared in the direction of Greyfriars on their bikes.

He had dismounted from his own machine, setting it up by the pavement opposite the doorway of Mr. Lazarus' second-hand establishment.

Maully was not, like the Famous Five, out of bounds; he had asked leave of his Form-master to cycle down to Courtfield after class—Maully was a thoughtful fellow, and particular about such things. He stood looking in a reflective sort of way after the five till they were out of sight; then, leaving his machine on the kerb, he strolled across the pavement and entered Mr. Lazarus' shop.

Mr. Lazarus greeted him with an oily smile of welcome, rubbing his hands.

But Maully had not come in as a customer.

"Vat can I do for your lordship?" asked Mr. Lazarus.

"The fact is, I've looked in to speak to your son, sir," said Mauleverer. "Is young Solly about?"

"Yeth. And I am sure he will be very pleathed to see you," said Mr. Lazarus, beaming. "Pleathe come thith way. Tholly is busy with his photographs. Thith way, my lord."

Mr. Lazarus opened a flap in the counter, and then a back parlour door. He showed Lord Mauleverer in with great politeness.

"Tholly, thith young gentleman wishes to thpeak to you," he said, and shut the door on Mauleverer.

Solly Lazarus was busy at a table, on which were rolls of films. He was cutting films when Maully came in, and he stood with the scissors in his hand and gave Maully a genial grin—quite pleased to see the noble youth, but evidently puzzled to see him there.

"I hope I'm not interruptin'—"

said Mauleverer. "That's all right," said Solly. "Here's a chair. Thquat down. You interethed in photography, Mauleverer?"

"Not fearfully," said Maully, as he sat down. "Haven't the brains for it, old man. You must be a fearfully brainy chap."

"I take some pretty good pictures," admitted Solly. "We thell them as picture potherds of the neighbourhood, you know. Most holidays I'm out with the camera, except when Trumper wants me for cricket. We

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This fascinating new card game will soon make you forget your 'blues'!

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Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

SEE THE FILM - PLAY THE GAME

Pepys Series

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Every good Stationer and where sells "SNOW WHITE." Published by Cassell Bros., Ltd., London and Glasgow.

only get Thursdays, you know, at our school."

"Yaas, I've heard about your trotting round with a camera on Saturdays," said Lord Mauleverer; "and sometimes you've hit up against a spot of trouble on such occasions with some Highcliffe chaps, I believe."

"Yeth. They rag a chap," said Solly. "Thilly athes! Thumthing better to do if they had the thense to take up photography, instead of haugin' about doing nothing!"

"I've heard it mentioned that they were ragging last Saturday."

"Yeth," said Solly.

"That's why I've dropped in."

"Yeth?" repeated Solly in astonishment.

"Somethin' happened on Courtfield common last Saturday afternoon, and I fancy Ponsonby and his gang were mixed up in it," said Mauleverer. "Hearin' that you had some trouble with them that very day, I rather thought that you might have seen somethin' of their movements."

"Yeth, rather!" said Solly. "I had to cut; you see, they were five to one—"

"Five?" said Mauly, with a glimmer in his eyes.

"Ponthonby and four of his pals," said Solly. "I fanthy I could have handled any two of them; but five was too many, you thee, and I was afraid they might damage the camera—they're thilly athes enough! Tho I cut."

"Did you see them anywhere near the pond on the common?"

"Jutht there."

Lord Mauleverer smiled genially. While the Famous Five were in search of the facts his lordship was in search of a witness to the facts. It looked as if he had exercised his noble "nut" to some purpose.

"But what's the trouble?" asked Solly.

"I'll tell you. Five fellows in my Form at Greyfriars are up for bad trouble—chaps you play at cricket—Wharton and his friends. They're accused of ragging Loder of the Sixth on Saturday at that pond on the common. I know they weren't there; they've told me so. But five fellows were—and I want to spot them. See? It happened about four o'clock."

"It was striking four when I was walking towards the pond," said Solly. "I heard it from Courtfield church. I never thaw any Greyfriars fellows about, except that fellow Loder—but I thaw Pon and his friends."

"At the pond?"

"Yeth. You thee," explained Solly, "I was keeping clear of Loder; he thmacked my head last week, tho when I thaw him I sheered off—he's an ill-tempered beatht. I was going to the pond to take a snap, but I gave him time to get away first. Ho went through those thickets near the pond."

"Did you see him again?"

"No."

"But you saw the Highcliffe men there. When?"

"About ten minutes afterwards. I didn't know they were there; they were keeping out of thight," explained Solly. "So after I thought Loder was clear I went on to the pond and thaw them—and they chased me off."

Lord Mauleverer rubbed his noble nose.

"That's odd!" he said. "That must have been the very time they collapsed Loder, from what I can make out. But you never saw him?"

"No, I never thaw him," said Solly. "But I don't get you, old then. If

anybody collared Loder, I thuppose he thaw who it was. He's not blind."

"They got a sack over his head from behind, and he saw nobody—"

Solly Lazarus jumped.

"A thack!" he yelled.

"Yes, a big sack—"

"Oh thissors! Oh, my only Aunt Thelina!" ejaculated Solly. "Tho that was what they had in the thack!"

Lord Mauleverer jumped in his turn.

"You saw them with a sack!" he exclaimed.

"Yeth; they were dragging a sack to the pond. There was thumthing in it, though I could not thee what. I never thaw Loder," grinned Solly. "If those fellows had Loder, they had him in the thack." Ho chuckled. "No wonder they chased me off, if they had that chap in the thack."

Mauly's eyes danced.

"If you saw that gang handling a sack at the pond on the common at four o'clock on Saturday, that settles it," ho said. "They're cads enough to deny it; but your word's as good as theirs, at least—"

"They couldn't deny it," grinned Solly. "You thee, I was taking a snap of the pond, when they came dragging that thack out of the bushes, and they barged right into the picture. They rather thpoiled the picture—" Solly sorted over the photographs on the table. "Look at this!"

Lord Mauleverer looked.

It was a photograph of the pond on the common, surrounded by shady trees. Five figures was clearly depicted, and the faces were plainly recognisable—those of Ponsonby, Gadsby, Monson, Drury and Vavasour of the Highcliffe Fourth. The five were dragging a large rough sack along the ground from the bushes towards the pond, and the clicking camera had caught them in the act. Nothing was revealed of the contents of the sack—the thick grass and ferns hid Loder's feet protruding from the end. But there were the five Highcliffians, dragging the sack to the pond!

"By gad!" said Lord Mauleverer, taking the print in his hand, and gazing at it. "Old bean Solomon, in all his glory, hadn't a thing on you! If those cads had known you'd got that negative in your camera, I fancy you wouldn't have got off with it. Solly, old tulip, could you find time for a run on a bike with me, with that picture in your pocket?"

"Thertainly!" said Solly. "If those fellows are in a row, that picture will thee them through."

"Come on, then!" said Mauly.

Solly slipped the photograph into his pocket, snatched up a cap, and went to wheel out his bike. In the street he turned his machine in the direction of Greyfriars; but Mauleverer headed in the opposite direction.

"This way, old bean!" said Mauly.

"Aren't you going back to your school?" asked Solly, puzzled.

"No. Highcliffe."

And Solly, puzzled, whirled round his jigger, and rode away to Highcliffe with Lord Mauleverer.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

For It!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, Wingate!"
The captain of Greyfriars called to the juniors as they came into the House. Ho gave them an exceedingly grim look.

"Go to your Form-master's study at once!" he rapped curtly.

"Very well, Wingate."

The five juniors had expected that—and they went.

Herbert Vernon-Smith stopped them at the corner of the passage. His face was grave. The day before, Smithy and Wharton had been punching one another's heads; but the Bounder had forgotten that now.

"You men been out of bounds?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Harry.

"Well, you must be asses to ask for it like this. Loder came in raging, and went to Quelch, and he sent word to Wingate to send you in as soon as you came, so I guessed—" The Bounder stared at them. "Take my tip, and be wary how you talk to Quelch; he's fearfully ratty."

Harry Wharton nodded, and walked on with his friends to the Remove master's study. The Bounder's "tip" was meant good-naturedly, but the Famous Five hardly needed it. They could guess at Quelch's frame of mind after he had heard Loder's report.

They were not in happy spirits as they arrived at Quelch's door, and Johnny Bull, mercifully, refrained from telling his friends that he had "told them so."

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet as they entered. They had seldom seen his face so intensely angry.

"You have returned," he said fixing his gimlet eyes on them. "Where have you been?"

"Highcliffe, sir," answered Harry.

"You have been several miles out of school bounds in defiance of the authority of a prefect, who met you and ordered you to return?"

"Yes, sir. But—"

Mr. Quelch raised his hand.

"You need say nothing, Wharton. I will listen to no excuse. A few days ago you disregarded my order to remain within gates. Now you have broken bounds, and defied a prefect who ordered you to return. Loder sustained some injuries in seeking to stop you. He fell on his hands and damaged them. You can hardly imagine that this kind of thing will be allowed to continue."

"If you'll let me speak, sir—"

"Silence, Wharton! Hitherto," said Mr. Quelch, "I have entertained a doubt—a very faint one, it is true—as to your being guilty of the outrageous attack on Loder on Saturday afternoon. I have represented to your headmaster that a doubt exists, and he has suspended judgment for that reason. After this occurrence I can say nothing more in your favour."

The juniors stood silent.

"Such reckless disregard of rule and authority," said Mr. Quelch, "makes it extremely improbable that there is any doubt in the matter. Loder not only had a right, but it was his duty to order you back to the school when he found you out of bounds. You have absolutely no excuse."

It was true enough. The unfortunate five had not a leg to stand on. Their reasons had seemed good—to themselves—but they could understand how the matter looked to Mr. Quelch.

"May I speak, sir?" asked Harry, with crimson cheeks. "We went over to Highcliffe for a very special reason—"

"No doubt," said Mr. Quelch sarcastically. "A quarrel with the Highcliffe boys, I presume, which was prevented on Saturday."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,586.

"No, sir. We've found out who it really was who ragged Loder on the common on Saturday, and we went there to make sure."

Mr. Quelch started, and stared at him.

"Nonsense!" he rapped. "What do you mean, Wharton?"

"You know already, sir, that the fellows used our names to give Loder a wrong impression—"

"I know that it was suggested, and that I regarded it as a bare possibility!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"We know now for certain, sir. It was a set of Highcliffe fellows who handled Loder. I know we shouldn't have gone over to Highcliffe without leave. But that's why we went, and we've got the truth about it."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch. "Am I to understand that you accuse some Highcliffe boys of having attacked a Greyfriars prefect of whom they probably know nothing whatever?"

"They know Loder, sir. He thrashed Ponsonby for chucking a stone at him, and that's why—"

"Has Ponsonby admitted it?"

"Oh, no!"

"He denies it?"

"Yes, sir."

"And his friends—"

"Yes, sir."

"Then what proof do you offer?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"We can't prove it, sir; but Ponsonby gave himself away, and if the Head asked for an inquiry, I believe the truth would come out," said Harry steadily. "I can give you the names of the five fellows—Ponsonby, Gadsby, Monson, Drury and Vava-sour—"

"You need do nothing of the kind," said Mr. Quelch. "I regard such a thing as very unlikely, and you offer no proof of any sort. The boys you have named are boys with whom you have constantly quarrelled and disputed. Is not that so?"

"Yes, sir. But—"

"That will do, Wharton. You may, if you please, repeat this story to your headmaster when you come before him. I do not suppose for one moment that he will take the slightest notice of it. Certainly I shall not do so. You have denied the attack on Loder—and I should have been very glad to place faith in you. But you have followed up one reckless act of insubordination with another. I have nothing more to say to you. After tea you will go to Dr. Locke's study. It is for your headmaster to deal with you, and I feel assured that he will pronounce the sentence which, while a doubt remained, was postponed. That is all. Leave my study!"

"But, sir—"

"Leave my study!" said Mr. Quelch, raising his voice a little.

And the hapless juniors left it.

They went, slowly and dismally, up to the Remove.

Johnny Bull looked at his friends several times expressively. But even Johnny realised that it was no moment to remind them of his words of wisdom so unfortunately unheeded.

A crowd of fellows on the Remove landing eyed them curiously.

"I say, you fellows, seen Quelch?" asked Billy Bunter. "I say, have you been ragging Loder again? He came in all dusty, with a bloated boko—"

"Some fellows ask for it, and no mistake!" said Skinner.

"Chopper come down at last?" asked Hazel. "I say, you must have been awful asses to handle Loder again! If you had a chance of getting off, that knocks it right on the head!"

Harry Wharton & Co. went in silence into Study No. 1. They sat down to tea in that apartment, quite unconscious of the fact Hazel pointed out that their chance was knocked on the head. It was not a cheery tea.

They had found out the facts, but they had made matters worse instead of better. Quelch had nothing more to say for them, and it was Quelch who had held back the sentence of the headmaster. They could have little doubt, if any, that when they went before Dr. Locke it would be to hear that sentence passed. They were "for it."

There was only one spot of silver lining to the cloud. Johnny Bull, with unusual tact, did not mention to his friends that he had told them so!

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Quite A Surprise!

"PONSONBY!" said Dr. Locke.

He gazed over his glasses at the Highcliffe junior who had been shown into his study.

"Yes, sir!" said Ponsonby.

"And what—" asked Dr. Locke, puzzled.

Dr. Locke was not the only person puzzled by Pon's unexpected visit to Greyfriars. Dozens of fellows had seen him come in in company with Lord Mauloverer, and wondered what the dickens he wanted there.

He did not, as a matter of fact, want anything—except to keep away if he dared. But he dared not—after seeing the photograph that Solly Lazarus had taken on Courtfield Common.

The Famous Five's visit to Highcliffe had left the lofty Pon fairly cool and unconcerned. But Lord Mauloverer's visit, in company with Solly, had produced quite a different effect.

That staggering, overwhelming proof of what had really happened had knocked Pon & Co. into a cocked hat. Pon had one choice—to own up or be shown up—and he jumped at the chance that the good-natured Mauly gave him, leaving his friends waiting in terror for his return, while he cut across to Greyfriars to make the best of it.

It was not easy for Pon to choke down his rage and disappointment and fear; but he managed to do so, and his manner was meek and respectful as he stood before the headmaster of Greyfriars.

"I hope I'm not wastin' your time, sir," said Pon smoothly; "but there's somethin' I feel bound to tell you—about what happened on Courtfield Common last Saturday."

"Indeed!" said the Head, peering at him. "If you have anything to tell me about that occurrence, Ponsonby—"

"I'm awfully sorry, sir; but hearing that some fellows here were suspected of having done it, I felt bound to come over and let you know," said Ponsonby. "It was some of us who ragged that Greyfriars prefect, sir."

"Wha-at?"

"That chap Loder, sir! Last week he pitched into me, and I was feeling rather sore about it," said Ponsonby. "Seein' him on the common on Saturday, we thought we'd give him tit for

tat, and we headed him up in an old sack—"

"You—you did!" gasped Dr. Locke.

"And sat him in the pond," said Ponsonby. "It was only a lark, really, sir. But—but when we got him in the sack we—we got rather scared, and that was why we let him hear some names that weren't our own, just—just to put him on a false scent, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke.

"Of course, we never meant those fellows to be nailed for it," said Ponsonby. "We just used the first Greyfriars names that came into our heads—to make Loder think it was fellows from his own school who had bagged him, and keep him from complaining to our headmaster."

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head. "You—you confess this— Bless my soul! One moment's reflection, Ponsonby, should have warned you that Loder would have no doubt that he was in the hands of the boys whose names you used."

"Yes, sir," said Pon artlessly; "and we've been feelin' very uncomfortable about it since. And when Wharton came over to Highcliffe this afternoon and we heard how matters stood, I'd better come and own up about it."

"Oh!" said the Head.

"From what we heard, Wharton and his friends are supposed to have done it," said Ponsonby. "It's our fault entirely, and—and, of—of course, we can't let that go on. So we talked it over, and—and I came here to tell you, sir."

Dr. Locke gave him a very keen, scrutinising look.

Pon met it calmly.

Only Lord Mauloverer at Greyfriars knew why he had come, because he had no choice in the matter, and the Head knew nothing whatever of Mauly's connection with the affair. So Pon was able to tell what tale he liked—so long as he owned up.

"This is a very serious matter, Ponsonby!" said Dr. Locke at last.

"I know, sir!" said Pon humbly. "It means a flogging for me when you report it to my headmaster! But I had to come, sir. I—I couldn't let those fellows suffer for what I'd done."

"That is very right and proper, Ponsonby," said Dr. Locke slowly. "Certainly, had the matter come to my knowledge by any other means, I should have placed it before Dr. Voysey and demanded very severe punishment. But—"

The Head paused.

Pon's heart beat faster. But the young rascal had calculated well. To all appearances, he had owned up in time to save other fellows from an unjust punishment. That could not fail to make a good impression on the headmaster of Greyfriars.

"But—" said the Head. He paused again. "The matter is extremely serious. But, in view of your confession, Ponsonby, which has cleared boys of this school from an unjust suspicion, I hardly feel that I can report you to your headmaster for punishment."

"Oh, sir!" murmured Pon.

He had calculated on it. Still, he could hardly believe in his good luck.

"The matter will end here," said Dr. Locke at last, "and—"

There was a tap at the door.

It opened, and five juniors entered. They almost jumped at the sight of

(Continued on page 28.)

FALL IN, YOU FELLOWS, AND FOLLOW—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE



THE DAILY ROUND 8.45 p.m. BED.

(1)

Now we have to "hit the hay,"
As our American cousins say;
So we go upstairs by numbers,
All the fellows in a buzz.
And old Wingate at our head
Waits and sees us into bed.
Then he leaves us to our slumbers—
Or, at least, he thinks he does!

(2)

But these slumbers, I'm afraid,
Are occasionally delayed
By such things as midnight orgies,
Or perhaps a pillow-fight.
Yes, we sometimes make a noise,
For they say boys will be boys,
And we're not Good Little Georgies
When we go to bed at night.

(3)

So we laugh and talk and lark,
And there's joking in the dark;
For with spirits undiminished
We enjoy a bit of fun.
But the talk drops more and more,
Then comes Bunter's hefty snore,
And another task is finished,
And another day is done!



AFTER SCHOOL HOURS The Courtfield Cinema

The Courtfield Super-Cinedrome
Is almost like a home from home.
For ninepence you can have a treat
And sit in a luxurious seat
To watch incredible events,
And thrill and shiver with suspense
As guys and various other stiff's
Fall headlong over beetling cliffs.
I'll tell a man this film has got
A lot of anything but plot:
The Sheriff's daughter, it appears,
Is being chased by maddened steers,
And pretty soon we'll see Miss Emma
Upon the horns of a dilemma!
But suddenly there comes a shout,
A single rifle-shot rings out.
The steers all crumple up and fall,
For that one shot has killed 'em all!

A handsome horseman lifts his lid,
And Emma sees—the Outlaw Kid,
The very hombre that her Pop's
Now searching for in Cactus Copse.
"Gee, sister," draws this handsome
bird,
"I didn't hone to plug the herd!"
"Sez you!" the lovely girl replies.
But what is brooding in her eyes?
She ought to take this outlaw mutt
And hand him to her Popper; but—
Well, yes, you've guessed the secret
right,
She loves the handsome youth on sight!
A cloud of dust upon the plain,
Her Popper's coming back again.
He shoots, and— Gee, we gotta go!
And now, alas, we'll never know
What lifted Emma from her fix,
For Call-over's at half-past six!

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET

TOM REDWING,
the Sailorman's Son of the Remove

R is for REDWING—and he
Reminds us at once of the sea.
His father's an honest old salt,
The kind we are proud to exalt,
As true sons of Britain, who stand
For all that is best in the land.
A fisherman, owning his ship,



He'll give you a hearty strong grip,
And cheerily take you inside
The cottage he looks on with pride.
And Tom is the same sort of chap,
For money he cares not a scrap,
Provided a fellow's true blue
Tom asks nothing more—he will do!
Long may he live well in the breeze,
The thrash and the roar of the seas!

ANSWER to PUZZLE

He married the sister first.



A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER

GREYFRIARS GRINS

Squiff, our Australian, is so proud of his country's Test Team that he recently bowled several no-balls in a match.

There was some doubt who had purloined Wingate's parcel from the tuck-shop; but in a masterly speech for the defence, Bunter succeeded in proving that he was the guilty party.

Playing for the Fifth in a practice match yesterday, Fitzgerald and Coker put on 28 for the last wicket. Of this total, Fitzgerald's share was 28.

Tubb of the Third was severely whopped by Walker yesterday. There is some talk of reporting the matter to the R.S.P.C.A.

As an additional Air Raid Precaution, Bolsover major has been requested to hang his face out of the window to frighten enemy aircraft.

PUZZLE PAR

In a recent story, one of the characters was said to have married his WIDOW'S sister. Yet it was possible. How?

Answer at foot of col. 2.

By the way, Bolsover is so annoyed at my remarks about his face, that I understand my pater threatens to lose a very promising son.

A notice on the board reads: "A notebook containing details of horses and betting investments has been picked up in the school. Owner can have same by applying to the headmaster." I hear that several fellows were injured in the rush.

Loder, Walker, and Carne, out on the river yesterday, caught a fine succession of crabs. Skinner has already named them "The Three Fishers."

Says a magazine article: "A boy's greatest insurance for the future is a bag full of exercise-books."

And his greatest insurance for the present is his bags full of exercise-books.

Ponsonby in the Head's study. They fairly blinked at the Highcliffe fellow.

"That cad——" breathed Bob Cherry. Harry Wharton's eyes flashed. What Ponsonby was doing there he could not begin to guess; he had not seen him arrive, and was amazed to find him with Dr. Locke. But he was glad to see him there, in view of what he had to say to his headmaster.

"Ponsonby!" exclaimed Wharton. "Dr. Locke, that is the fellow who ragged Loder on Saturday—he and his friends——"

"I am aware of it, Wharton!" said Dr. Locke. "Ponsonby has just told me so."

Harry Wharton fairly staggered. "He—he—he's told you so, sir!" he gasped.

The Co looked at Pon, wondering whether they were dreaming.

"He has just confessed the whole matter," said Dr. Locke.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry. The Famous Five had arrived in the Head's study, in full expectation of the chopper. Evidently, however, the chopper was not coming down! But that it was Per who had aviered it was simply amazing.

They blinked at him. "Ponsonby," said Dr. Locke, "I must thank you for having come here and told me this, and I shall say no more about the matter."

"Thank you, sir!" said Pon meekly. And he left the study, and did not scowl until he had shut the door.

The Famous Five stood, in an astonished and bewildered group, before their headmaster. They could hardly believe, as yet, in this sudden and extraordinary change in the position of affairs.

Dr. Locke fixed his eyes on them. "In the matter of the attack made on Loder last Saturday," he said, "you are now cleared, through the confession of that Highcliffe boy. I am glad of it—very glad! The matter closes here, but I will point out to you that you have only yourselves to blame for having fallen under suspicion. Had you paid due heed to your Form-master's commands that day no such suspicion could have arisen. I trust that this will be a warning to you. You may now go!"

The Famous Five went—in quite a dazed frame of mind.

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER

All Clear!

MAULY, you old ass——
"Yaas!"
"How did you work it?"
"Which?" asked Lord Mauleverer lazily.

His lordship was reclining on his study sofa, taking a much-needed rest, after his exertions on his jigger, when the door was hurled open and five juniors crowded in.

Behind them, the Remove passage was in a buzz.

The news was known far and wide now, and most of the fellows were glad to hear it.

"We've found out that Ponsonby came in with you," said Harry Wharton. "He owned up to the Head. How did you do it?"

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.

"PLEASE tell Mr. Frank Richards we want some more stories dealing with William Wibley," says Frank Clarke, of Rishton, near Blackburn, who writes on behalf of himself and his chums.

No sooner said than done, Frank! Your old favourite Wibley, the school-boy impersonator, is the star turn in

"PUNISHING PONSONBY!"

next week's super school story of Harry Wharton & Co. Ponsonby, as related in this week's yarn, had a hand in a rascally affair that very nearly turned out serious for the Famous Five. Thanks to William Wibley, the cad of Highcliffe receives a lesson next week that will last him for some time to come. That you will be highly amused over this yarn goes without saying. Perhaps my chum Frank Clarke will write and let me know what he and his chums think of the yarn. Frank also sent me the following verses, which I consider so good that I really must publish them. Here they are:

"GOSLING'S DILEMMA."

*Lo Gosling in the woodshed,
With bright and ruddy nose,
That like a blazing beacon,
Athwart his features glows:
But when he finds that Skinner
Outside has turned the key,
His nose glows even brighter,
"Wot's this 'ere game?" quoth he.*

Lord Mauleverer grinned. "He's owned up all right?" he asked. "Oh, yes."

"And you're all clear?" "Quite!"

"Gratters, old beans!" said his lordship. "Feel obliged to the fellow who got you out of the scrape?"

"Yes, rather!" "The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Pon never owned up of his own accord," said Harry. "I know that cad too well. How did you make him do it, Mauly?"

"I only helped," yawned his lordship. "If you're feelin' fearfully obliged to the man who worked the giddy oracle you——"

"Yes, ase! What——"

"Then next time you're in Courtfield drop in at old Lazarus' shop and buy a lot of those picture postcards!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I rather like that chap, Solly, and he ought to be encouraged in his camera work."

"Eh? How—why——"

"He was wanderin' around last Saturday, takin' snaps, and, among the others, he snapped Pon & Co.—handlin' a sack, by the pond!" explained Lord Mauleverer.

"Oh, great pip!"

*But Skinner, nimbly fleeting,
Has vanished from the scene,
With Gosling left a prisoner,
To show where he has been,
While Gosling, loudly wailing,
With howls of rage and woe,
Is vowing to report all
Who do not let him go.*

*"Wot I says is this 'ere,"
Forth came old Gossy's roar,
"Some rip 'as been an' locked me
Within me own shed door;
An' if he don't release me,
Or let me come houtside,
I'll go an' tell the 'Ead to
Tan 'ard 'is bloomin' 'ide!"*

*The chaps return to classes,
Like sheep into the fold,
Where Quelch tells of the Romans,
And Prout of exploits bold,
When through the windows stealing,
Come sounds of distant wrath,
From Gosling, in the woodshed,
Beyond the Cloister path.*

*The chaps strive not to titter,
As masters look around,
For Prout is loudly bawling:
"Can Gosling not be found?"
And Coker unto Potter,
Confides a secret dread——
"Those young sweeps in the Remove"
That's just what COKER said!*

*But, meanwhile, axe and lever
Have manfully been plied,
And Gosling stands there tottering,
The woodshed door swings wide,
The Head begins to question,
Then Prout begins to roar——
"It ain't unparalleled," Gosling said,
"I've been locked in before!"*

Jolly good, Frank!

No room for more this week, chums. All the best!

YOUR EDITOR.

"He never knew it mattered—till I put him wise," grinned Mauly. "That was my little bit. I hiked him off to Highcliffe, and as soon as Pon saw that picture he knew his game was up! Hence that noble and frank confession, so like Pon! That's the lot! Shut the door after you!"

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at Mauleverer.

"So that was how——" said Harry. "Yaas!"

"You're not such an ass as you look, old chap!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yaas. I'd say the same of you, old bean, if I wasn't so jolly truthful!" yawned Mauly. Now go away, and let a fellow rest. I'm tired! Shut the door after you!"

And his noble lordship was left to his well-earned repose. And at a council of war, held in Study No. 1, it was decided unanimously that Pon should be made to suffer for his sins as a warning to mend his ways—though whether Pon was likely to mend the same was quite another matter.

THE END.

(Special for next week, chums: "PUNISHING PONSONBY!" Don't miss it!)

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THE BEAKS HIT BACK!

Another Powerful Instalment of Our "Striking" Serial: "MUTINY AMONG THE MASTERS!"

By DICKY NUGENT

The morning after the blacklegs had thrown out the stay-in strikers of St. Sam's, Doctor Birchomall summoned a General Assembly in Big Hall.

Mr. Caddish and his hired booties were present in full force, armed with fearsome canes, and the crool, gloating grins on their ugly faces made the St. Sam's fellows' blood run cold. Woo betide the unforchunit wretches who incurred the wrath of these merciless scoundrells, they reflected!

Doctor Birchomall russed on to the platform amid a solemn hush.

"Boys!" he cried, with a leer. "It is my plezzant task to-day to introduce you to

your new Form-masters. The previous masters, by going on strike, have fourtested my confidence; so I have brought in six blacklegs."

"Shame!" "Shame be blowed!" snorted Doctor Birchomall. "My own opinion is that it's a good riddance to bad rubbish. The old ones have gone, anyway; and I've replaced them with masters I can trust." He smiled sardonically. "You will find them to be men of a different calibre from the old gang, I assure you!"

"They look it!" cried Jack Jolly, scornfully. "And their looks do not belie them, either," grinned the Head. "You will find them

stern and ruthless—even brootal, perhaps! Such men, however, are very necessary at St. Sam's to-day, when disciplin has gone to pieces because of the bad example of the masters' strike!"

There was a rebellious member from the school, but a fierce skowl from the Head silenced it. "Boys!" he cried. "I have given the new masters strict orders to restore disciplin by using their canes as hard and as often as they like!"

"Oh, crums!" "Undisciplined upstarts may well quake

at that," grinned Doctor Birchomall. "On the other hand, those who are ready to bow the knee to orthority need have no fear. So long as they cringe and crawl sufficiently, they will be spared!"

"Shame!" "With these few words I will hand you over to the tender mercies of your new instructors," said the Head, with a meaning wink at Mr. Caddish and his raskally blacklegs. "You will now go to your Form-rooms!"

The school then dismissed and there was a wild rush for the doors.

While this was going on in the School House, a meeting of a very different carrickter was taking place in a room over the school tuckshop.

In this secret roudyvo, the St. Sam's strikers had assembled to discuss their next move—in addition to platefuls of jam-tarts from the tuckshop dame's plentiful stock!

Mr. Lickham was the chairman of the meeting. There was a look of grim determination on his face, as he rose to address his tense, expectant comrades.

"Gentlemen!" he cried. "The Head says that our strike is over—that we have gone under. But we can give him inside information that we are coming out on top!"

"Hear, hear!" "Well spoken, by Jove!"

"The Head has elbowed us out—but we shall refuse to knuckle under!" cried the master of the Fourth in ringing tones. "Gentlemen! If we only stand up for our rights and refuse to take unjustiss lying down, I am sure it will not be long before we make the Head sit up!"

"True enuff!" broke in Mr. Swishingham, a triffe critically. "But what we want now, Lickham, is deeds, not words. Unless we take decisive action against the Head soon, I'm afraid your theory will not hold water."

Mr. Lickham turned pail. "There is something in that, Swishingham. I must admit," he said. "The trouble is to know what to do. If we kidnap the Head, the perlice will be drawn into it and we shall probably all finish up in chokey. As for taking action against the Head's hired booties, we have already found out what they are like—to our sorrow!"

And Mr. Lickham rubbed the seat of his trousers rewfully. Mr. Swishingham chuckled. "They gave us a

proper talkhouse, admittedly," he said. "But you must remember that they took us on one at a time. Supposing we take them on one at a time, there may be a very difident story to tell!"

"What the big idea, old chad!" asked Mr. Justiss, his pompass way, "the other masters are in with a corus of scurridgement."

"Spill the beans, Swishy!"

"Coff it up, old sport!"

Mr. Swishingham grinned. "My idea," he said, "is to carry out a raid on each of the Form-rooms this morning and give the blessed blacklegs something to remember by! If we tie them on to their stools and invite the boys to throw ink pellets at them—"

"It'll take the rotters a peg or two and make the Head realise that he hasn't finished with us yet by a long chalk!" chuckled Mr. Swishingham. "What do you think about it, chaps?"

The strikers looked at each other with gleeming eyes. "There was a regular buzz of approval. "Good for you Swishy!"

LAST WEEK AT GREYFRIARS

Bob Gray smashed three tomato frames in the kitchen garden when scoring the boundaries from Little Side. The solution seems to be either to move the tomato frames or to move Little Side!

One of the big elm trees in the quads was struck by lightning during a sharp thunderstorm on Thursday afternoon and had to be cut down on the following day. Fortunately, there are plenty left!

"Topping wheeze, old scout!" "Ripping, by Jove!" "I declare the proposition carried unanimously!" grinned Mr. Lickham. "I suggest we get bizzy right away."

The master of the Fourth, pausing only to cram the remainder of his jam-tarts into his mouth, rose and led the way downstairs. The rest of the strikers gleefully followed him, as excited as Second-Form fags at the idea of

They next went to the Third Form Room and treated Mr. Slaughter-boys in like fashion. Then, fairly chortling at their success, they proceeded to the Fourth.

A grim scene met their gaze as they entered the celebrated Form-room. Jack Jolly was in the grip of Mr. Caddish, and the leader of the blacklegs was doing his utmost to wring shrieks of pain from the Fourth-Form skipper's lips, while Jolly tried just as hard not to



hitting back at the blacklegs!

After a brief visit to the woodshed for supplies of stout cord, the rebel beaks marched to the School House. They smiled grimly as their ears caught the furious swishing of canes and the frantick yelling of hopeless victims. It was easy to tell that the blacklegs had begun their rain of terror!

Grimming all over their faces, the strikers entered the School House and marched boldly into the Second Form Room—to find Mr. Makeham Howell, one of the new masters, lashing away at yung Midgett minor as if for a wager!

Mr. Makeham Howell had the serprize of his life when he felt himself seized by a duzen hands and whirled off his feet. He was still more serprized when the strikers gleefully roped him up to his stool and invited the Second to use him as a coconut shy!

The Second accepted that invitation with grato enthusiasm, and the strikers left the fags' Form-room in absolute pandemonium.

in with a vengenz! Exercise books, rulers, erasers, and all sorts of other objects descended on Mr. Caddish in an unending stream, and the raskally leader of the blacklegs uttered howl after howl of anguish.

"Yaroooooo! Ow-ow! Lem me alone! Wooooop!" "Pile in, boys!" cried Mr. Lickham. "Show the raskal no more mercy than he showed Jolly! Give him socks!"

The Fourth responded with a will, and while Mr. Caddish's yells became louder and louder, the masters became almost helpless with larfter.

Then came a dramatic interruption. The door opened suddenly and a white mistosh and a gleeming monocle showed themselves in the doorway.

"Grate gad!" came an exclamation in a refined and culchered voice. "Boys! Gentlemen! What are you doing of? What is the meaning of all this here?"

Amid a sudden silence that could be heard, the newcomer stalked into the Form-room. It was Sir Frederick Funguss, the chairman of the St. Sam's Guvvernors!

"The fat's in the fire now—and the question is, which way is Sir Frederick going to lean?" For the answer, read next week's instalment!

LOGIC—A LA BOLSOVER!

Bolsover major is one of those hearty chaps who invariably call you "old top."

In between times he has a habit of sending you spinning!

STOP PRESS NEWS

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THIS WILL BOWL YOU OVER!

Desmond has been temporarily warned off sports because he recently strained his neck.

The doctor evidently thinks that cricket will crick it!

YOUR EDITOR CALLING

A correspondent who humorously calls himself "Can't Help Laughing," asks: "Do you ever work at Greyfriars?" What prompts him to ask the question, he explains, is the fact that our class-work is hardly ever mentioned in the "Greyfriars' Herald." If our paper is any guide to the amount of school work we do, he concludes, then Greyfriars must be the schoolboys' paradise!

You're right off the mark, "Can't Help Laughing"! If you think that we Greyfriars chaps have an easier time than they have at other schools, you're getting the wrong idea entirely about us!

I admit that we do not, in the "Greyfriars Herald," devote much space to our Form-room activities; but the reason for this is a very simple one.

Most of our Form-room activities are not particularly interesting to write about—that's all!

Probably "Can't Help Laughing" would be the first to complain if he found column after column of our little paper devoted to vivid descriptions of Bunter's class construcs or "thrilling" accounts of Mark Linley's investigations in trigonometry. But the fact that we omit news items of this kind does not mean that such things are not happening. On the contrary, they are happening most days—and for the most part of the day, too!

Truth to tell, we're expected to do quite an uncomfortable amount of swot during the summer term in preparation for the exams which take place just before the long vac.—and that applies with particular force this term to the little band of us that went out to Texas earlier on! Most of us are quite willing to get down to it, too. The thought that Mr. Quelch is liable to detain those whose work is not up to the mark provides us with a very effective spur to hard work in class, I can assure you!

So when you read our cheery weekly news of fun and frolic, "Can't Help Laughing," don't forget that hard grind in the Form-room goes on just as regularly—even though, for editorial reasons, we do bury it in decent obscurity!

Au revoir, chums!
HARRY WHARTON.

Uncensored Letters

No. 3. From BOB CHERRY

Dear Pater,—When I woke up this morning, the first thing I thought was: "I'll write a nice long letter home to-day—just for a change!" Then I got up and had a cold bath and a sprint round the quad; and by the time I'd had a bit of net-practice and helped some other chaps to rag that ass Coker of the Fifth, the bell was ringing for brekker.

When afternoon school was dismissed, Wharton reminded me that we had to cycle over to Cliff House for tea with Hazel-dene's sister. I had to keep that date, naturally, and we were back again only just in time for locking-up. And now that I have finished prep, it's nearly time for the last collection.

So what it amomts to, pater, is that once more I haven't time to write you a real letter. But next week I'll do my best to tell you all about how I'm getting on and what I do with myself at Greyfriars. In great haste, and with love, from
BOB.

REMOVE GO NAP IN SWIMMING GALA!

Non-Stop Wins Draw Crowd's Cheers

The Greyfriars Swimming Gala on Wednesday opened with a Remove win and finished with a Remove win. And very appropriately, too, for the Remove managed to score three other victories besides, thus going two better than any other Form in the school!

This gratifying succession of successes has delighted the Remove and drawn unstinted praise from all quarters for them. It is all the more remarkable when you consider that four of the best swimmers in the Form—Wharton, Cherry, Bull, and Vernon-Smith—arrived back from the United States too late for adequate preparation.

The weather was hot and sunny and the whole school turned up at the Sark swimming-pool to cheer on the competitors. Quite a number of parents and relatives were also present, and the bunting and the ladies' dresses and the blazers combined to make the scene on the river bank very pleasantly colourful when the gala opened.

The first event was the Lower School 100-yards scratch race, contested by the swimmers and runners-up of four

heats which had been decided earlier in the week. The Upper Fourth had four men in the race against two Remove men and two Third Formers. But quality proved to be more important than quantity, and the Remove pair took both first and second places, Tom Brown winning the race by two lengths, with Morgan a similar distance ahead of Temple, who had to be content with third place.

This initial Remove success, which was loudly cheered, was a foretaste of what was to come.

Following on the senior 200-yards handicap race, narrowly won by Wingate after a thrilling duel with North, the Remove again came into the limelight when Tom Redwing scored against Fifth and Sixth Formers and bagged the quarter-mile.

Redwing's success was the most popular one of the afternoon. He was the youngest competitor in the race, and, powerful

swimmer though he is, most fellows thought he had bitten off more than he could chew in entering for an event really intended for seniors only. These doubts seemed

confirmed when Redwing, after a slow start, allowed himself to settle down quite a long way behind the rest. But when the race was three-fourths through, the lag-gard began to accelerate and the crowd saw that he had merely been reserving his strength.

Encouraged by continuous cheering, Redwing passed his rivals one by one, till only Walker of the Sixth and

Blundell of the Fifth were ahead of him. In the last lap, he challenged these two in irresistible style and forged ahead of them just on the winning-post to score a magnificent win. Bravo, Redwing!

Junior events followed in which Tubb and Nugent minor scored for the Third and Second respectively. Then the Shell came into the picture with a clever win by Stewart in a long-distance race, and the Fifth scored heavily in a relay race, the Remove, though runners-up, being sadly behind in this event.

After this, there was an extremely entertaining polo match, a combined Sixth and Remove team beating a mixture of Fifth and Shell men by 4 goals to 3. The high spot of this affair occurred when Bunter accidentally tripped over into the water while drinking a bottle of ginger-pop. Play had to be stopped for two minutes before Bunter was hauled out.

Wingate and Walker won the next two events for the Sixth, and the afternoon ended with the Remove demolishing the opposition in the All-ages 200-yards Handicap—Wharton, Smithy, and Cherry occupying first, second, and third places respectively.

Altogether a great day for everybody concerned—and certainly the greatest day of the term for the Remove!

