

The Tuckshop Raiders!

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of School Life.

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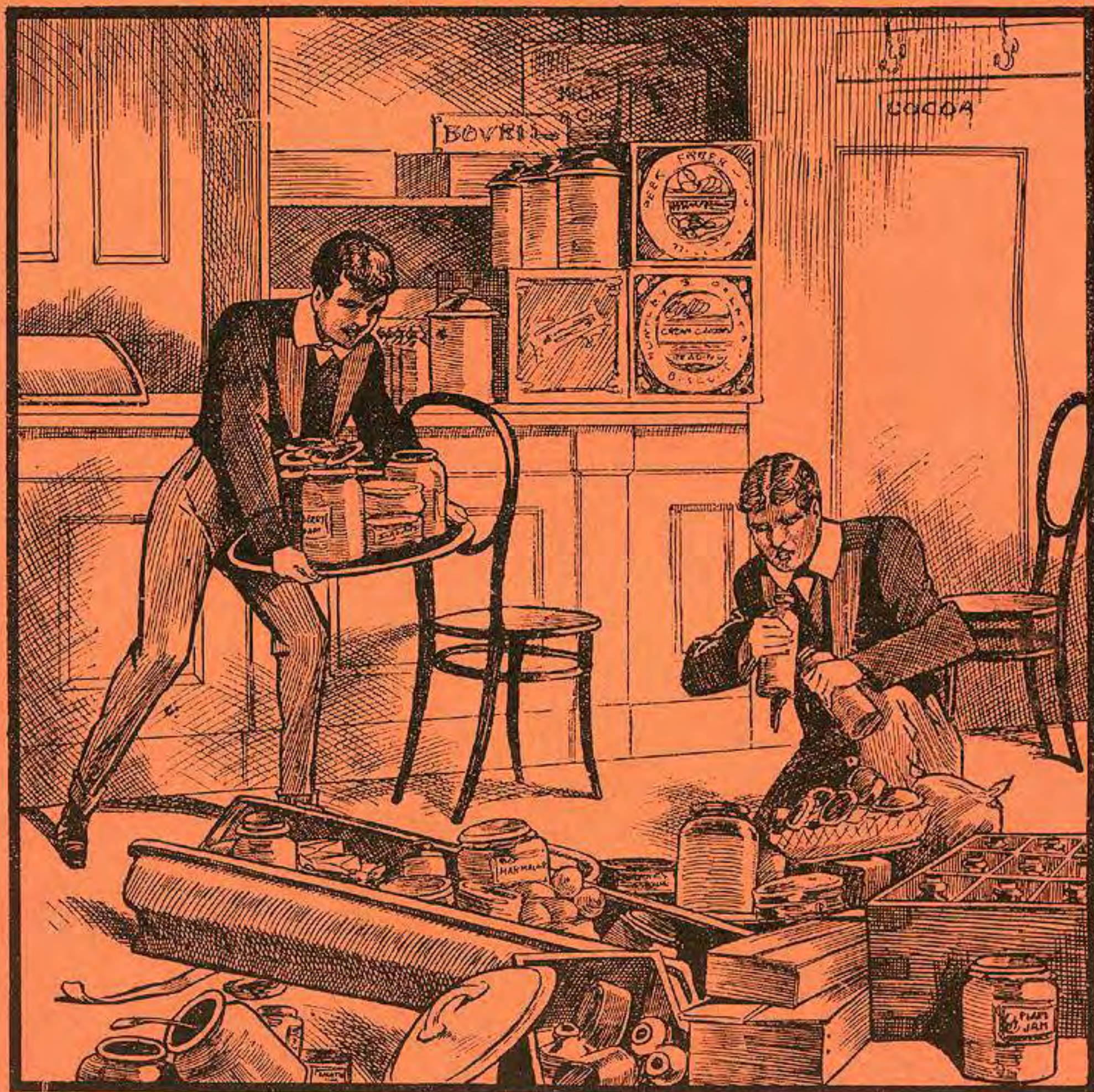
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No. 240.

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Vol. 6.



Vernon-Smith opened a large cricket-bag he had brought with him, and the raiders began to pack Mrs. Mimble's good things into it. Bags of tarts and puffs, jars of jam and marmalade, bottles of jolly and preserved fruits were rapidly packed. In spite of their caution, the raiders made some noise; but there was no alarm, and the bag was soon packed to overflowing. "I say, we sha'n't get that away very easily," muttered Stott. (See the Splendid Tale of School Life in this Issue.)

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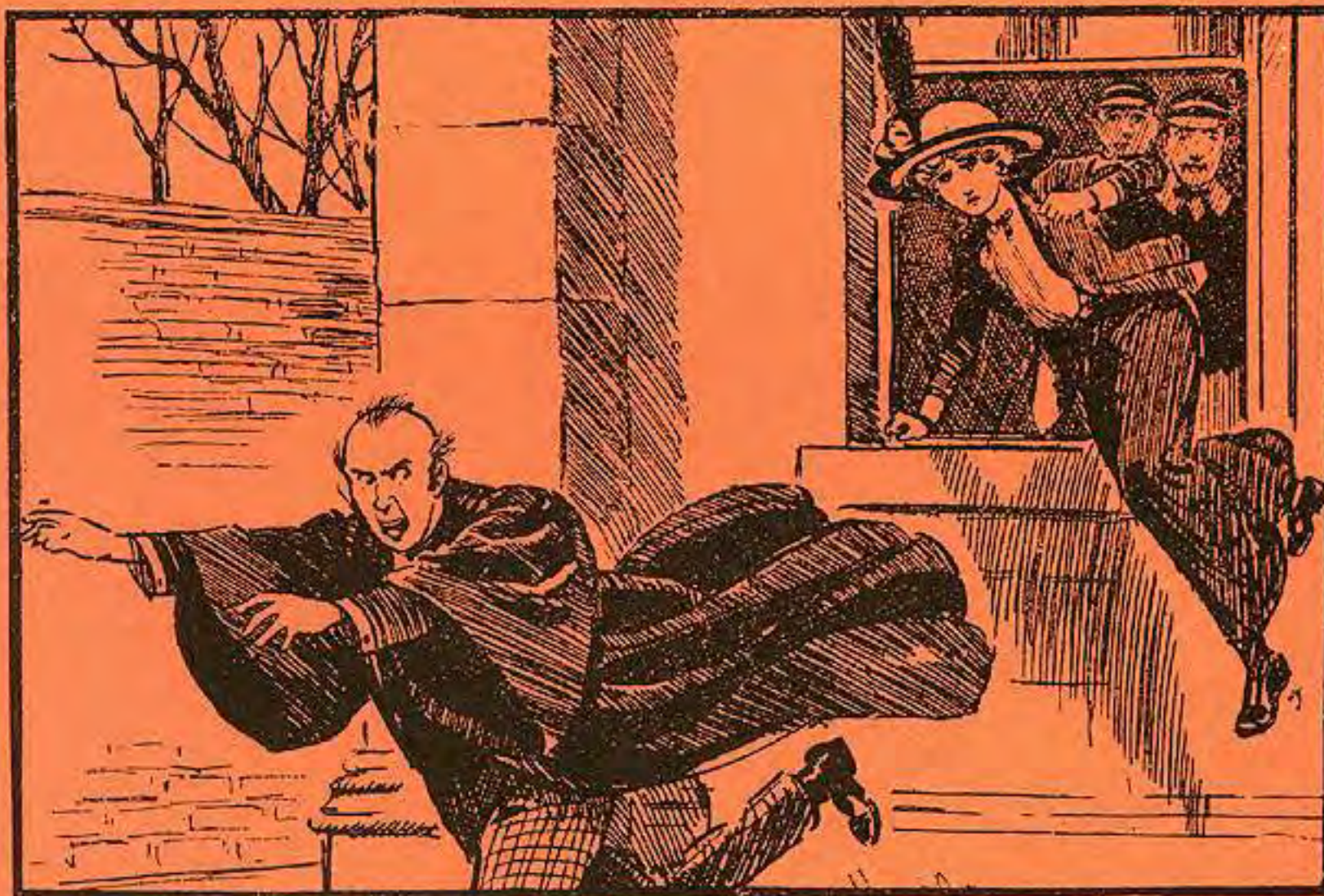
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ROUGH ON RATCLIFF!

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NEXT
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"COKER MINOR, SIXTH-FORMER!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.



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The Tuck Shop Raiders

A Splendid, New, Long,
Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at
—— Greyfriars. ——

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Something Like!

"JAM-TARTS!"
"Ginger-beer!"
"Doughnuts!"
"I say, you fellows, make room for a chap——"
"Don't shove!"
"Jam-tarts—twopenny ones!"
"Hurrah!"

The Greyfriars tuckshop was crammed. Seldom, or never, had that little establishment behind the elms in a corner of the old Close at Greyfriars been so crowded before. Mrs. Mimble, behind the counter, was serving as fast as she could, with flushed face and busy hands. Juniors stood up in ranks at the counter, and sat upon everything that offered the slightest seating accommodation, and, in fact, filled up every available inch of space.

Outside the tuckshop there were crowds more, waiting their turn. There was not much chance for Billy Bunter,

the fattest fellow in the Remove, to push his way in; but he tried it. It was the biggest feed that had ever been stood at Greyfriars, and Billy Bunter did not mean to be left out if he could help it.

Prominent among the big crowd in the tuckshop were the Famous Four—Harry Wharton, Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Bob Cherry. They were the founders of the feast, and they were honoured accordingly. The Famous Four were in wonderful funds, and they were celebrating that circumstance by standing refreshments—solid and liquid—to every fellow who cared to walk up. And, needless to say, every fellow walked up who could possibly squeeze himself into the tuckshop.

Remove fellows were in the majority, as Harry Wharton & Co. belonged to the Remove. But Tubb and Paget, of the Third, were there with a crowd of their Form, and Nugent minor had brought along a swarm of the Second. There were Fourth-Formers and Shell fellows, and Coker & Co., of the Fifth, had condescended to join in the celebration.

Only the Sixth were left out; but the Sixth Form, of course, were far too great and lofty to take part in a junior feed.

There was a buzz of voices, a tramping of feet, and an incessant munching. The musical sound of gurgling lemonade mingled with the popping of corks. Orders were simply rained upon Mrs. Mumble, quite bewildering that good lady.

"Jam-tarts!"

"Ginger-beer!"

"Buck up with those doughnuts, please!"

"Where's my veal-pie?"

"Yes, young gentleman; all in good time, young gentlemen!" gasped Mrs. Mumble. "Dear me! Yes, Master Coker! In a minute, Master Hobson! Certainly, Master Temple!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Keep back there, Bunter!"

"Shove him out!"

"Oh, really, you know!" said Billy Bunter indignantly. "I'm on in this scene, you know. You might make room for a fellow!"

"Rats! Buzz out!"

"Kick him out!"

Bolsover, of the Remove, gently insinuated his boot against Billy Bunter's ribs, and Bunter disappeared. There was a roar of laughter.

"Order, gentlemen!" said Harry Wharton. "There's lots of time, and lots of tuck!"

"Hurrah!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "This is really ripping of you fellows! I hope you haven't forgotten to bring your cheque-book!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lots of tin!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully, taking a five-pound note out of his pocket and fluttering it on the counter. "We're rolling in money like Vernon-Smith now, so I don't see why we shouldn't swank a bit. Behold!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was there. He scowled at Bob Cherry's remark.

Vernon-Smith was the son of a millionaire, and he never allowed anybody at Greyfriars to lose sight of that impressive fact. He had a way of pulling banknotes out of his pocket along with old letters, as it were, carelessly. But Vernon-Smith was completely outdone—in fact, quite obliterated—by the chums of the Remove on this special occasion. Vernon-Smith had plenty of banknotes, but he never expended them in standing big feeds to a whole Form at a time. But the Famous Four were determined that all Greyfriars should share their good luck—and all Greyfriars shared it, with much pleasure.

"Behold a fiver!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is it a good one?" asked Vernon-Smith, with a sniff.

"Good as gold," said Bob Cherry, "and quite honestly come by! It's the first time I've ever had a fiver of my own, so I think I'm entitled to swank."

"Hear, hear!"

"A fiver won't cover this giddy feed!" grinned Tom Brown.

"Plenty more!" said Bob Cherry. "Heaps! Mountains! You need not look at me like a giddy gargoyle, Smithy! You're done this time! I could cover all your quids with fivers this time, and have some left. So could Wharton. So could Franky. So could Johnny Bull. Gentlemen, we are the giddy millionaires, and the Bounder will have to hide his diminished head for once!"

"Oh, rats!" growled Vernon-Smith. "Blessed if I want any of your rotten feed, either!"

"Well, if you don't want any, make room for a chap who does," said Penfold, from behind. "I do! Thanks!"

And Dick Penfold jerked the Bounder away from the counter, and cheerfully took his place.

The Bounder turned upon him with a snarl.

"You cad, Penfold——"

"Order!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Shut up, Smithy!"

"Get out!"

"Order!"

Vernon-Smith subsided. The crowd in the tuckshop were not disposed to have the harmony of the feed interrupted by the Bounder's bad temper. The unusual wealth of the Famous Four, and the way they were expending it, made them extremely popular, and it was no time for the Bounder to back up against the leaders of the Remove.

Vernon-Smith squeezed his way out of the tuckshop, and Billy Bunter squeezed his way in. He got half-way to the counter, and there he stuck fast in the crowd, panting for breath. He was simply wedged in.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I'm suffocating!"

"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "Suffocate quietly, there's a good chap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Don't you shove me, Bunter," roared Ogilvy, who had a glass of lemonade in his right hand and two jam-tarts in his left. "Gerrout!"

"Oh, really——"

"Sit on that fat bounder and keep him quiet!" said Bulstrode.

"I—I say, you fellows! You might make room!" said Billy Bunter pathetically. "I—I'm suffocating, I tell you!"

But nobody was likely to make room for Bunter. In the crowd it was every fellow for himself, and nobody for Billy Bunter. But the Owl of the Remove was equal to the occasion. He slid to the floor, groaning.

"Help!" he moaned. "I'm fainting! Air—air!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Give him room!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, forcing his way towards Billy Bunter. "He's fainting!"

"Rats!" said Ogilvy. "It's only spoof!"

Bunter moaned.

"Are you fainting, Bunt?" asked Bob Cherry, signing to Harry Wharton to hand him a syphon of soda-water from the counter.

"Ow! Yes!" moaned Bunter. "Water! Ah!"

"Good!" said Bob Cherry, taking the syphon. "Stand back, you chaps, while I revive Bunter. We can't let a chap expire under our eyes."

Fiz-z-z-z-z-z-z!

Bunter's low moaning was changed all of a sudden into a furious yell.

The soda-water was fizzing into his face, and it tore in a torrent over the fat features of the Owl of the Remove.

"Yar-o-oh! Oh! Stop! Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter leaped up as if he had been electrified. Bob Cherry shut off the soda-water. Bunter was streaming with it, and he blinked furiously over his dripping spectacles and shook his fists at Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Groo! Beast! Yah! Oh!"

Bob Cherry looked astonished.

"Well, I call that ungrateful!" he exclaimed. "Here, I've revived the fat bounder, and perhaps saved his life, and instead of thanking me——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Beast! Ow!"

"It's hysterics!" grinned Bulstrode. "He needs the open air! Shove him out into the Close!"

"Good egg!"

"Yow!" roared Bunter. "I—I'm all right! I don't need air! I don't—yaroop!"

Whether Bunter needed air or not, he had to have it. A dozen feet helped him out of the crammed tuckshop into the open air, and he rolled among the waiting crowd outside. And the juniors, yelling with laughter, closed up to prevent the Owl of the Remove from coming in again; and the feed went on with great enjoyment.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Little for Loder.

LODER of the Sixth stopped outside the school shop and stared at the crowd there. Loder, the prefect, was the least popular of the Greyfriars prefects, and juniors generally avoided him when they could. Although it was a rule at Greyfriars that nobody above the Third Form should be fagged, Loder frequently fagged Removites and Fourth-Formers, and even the Shell. His authority as prefect enabled him to administer canings, or to impose lines; and so the juniors found it more prudent to fag for him

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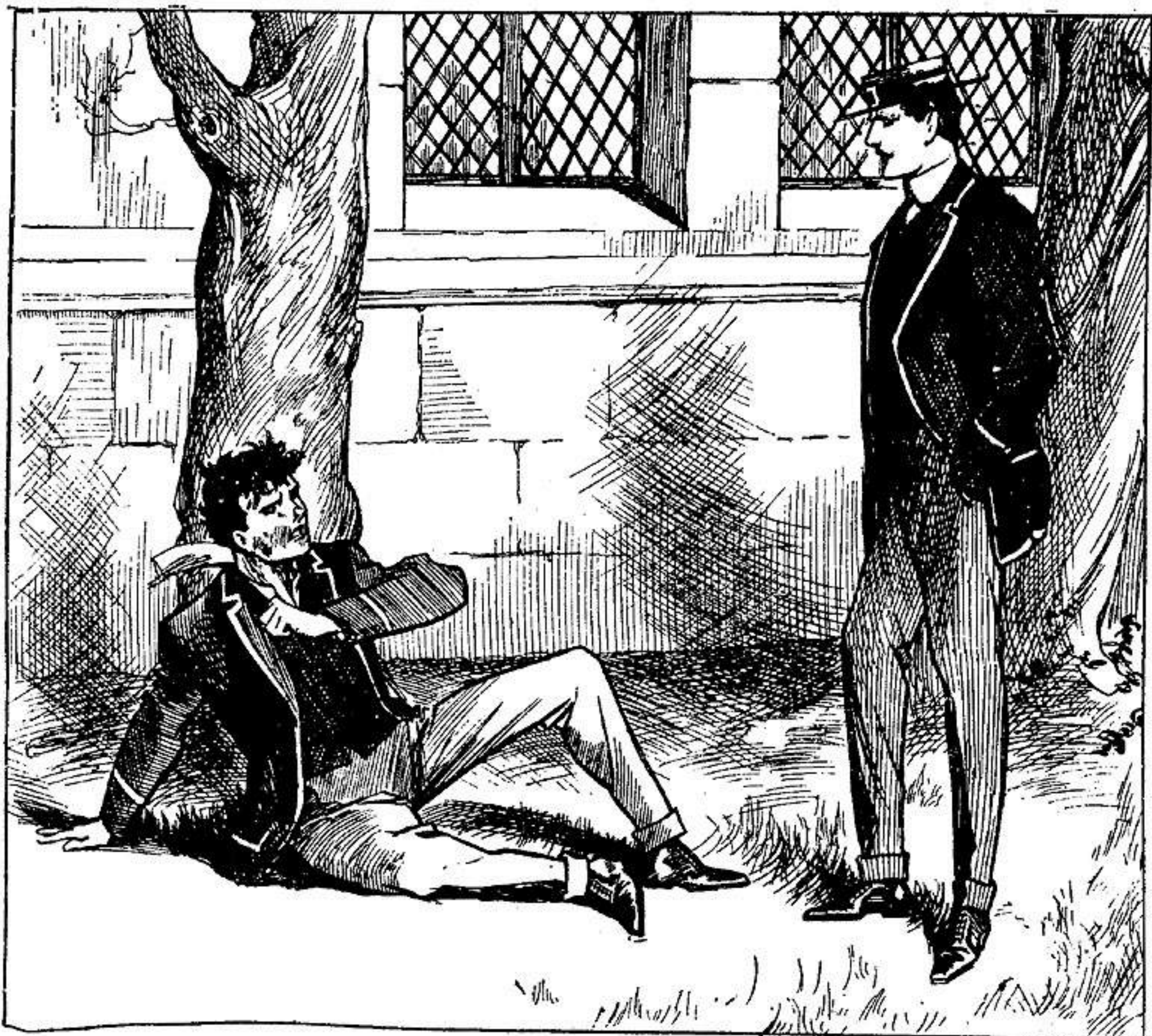
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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 240.

A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers:

"ROUGH ON RATCLIFF!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this Thursday's
number of "THE GEM" LIBRARY. One Penny.



Loder was rolled out of the tuckshop on to the grass in the Close. He sat up rubbing treacle and jam from his eyes. "Groooooh!" he gasped. "Who's that?" gasped Wingate, as he stopped and stared in amazement at the figure on the grass. (See Chapter 2.)

sometimes than to stand upon their rights. Harry Wharton & Co., however, had never given in; and, as a consequence, Loder was very much "down" on the Famous Four. He stopped and stared at the crowd, and listened to the uproar that was proceeding from the tuckshop, and then pushed his way through to the door. In the excitement then reigning, even Loder was not made way for with much alacrity. Voices demanded to know whom he was shoving, and several feet were put out for him to stumble over.

Loder glared into the tuckshop.

"What's all this confounded row about?" he demanded.

"It's all right," said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "We're in funds, and we're standing a feed. Will you have some jam-tarts, Loder?"

"Or some ginger-beer?" said Johnny Bull hospitably.

Loder scowled. The offer of jam-tarts and ginger-beer did not tempt a prefect of the Sixth Form.

"I'll have less row!" he exclaimed.

"Well, buzz off, and you won't hear it," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Good advice!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Take your chivvy away with you, Loder. It worries us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder forced his way into the tuckshop. It was not an easy thing to do, for the fellows could hardly make room if they wanted to. There was a yell from Tom Brown as Loder jolted his arm and upset his lemonade.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 240.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"COKER MINOR SIXTH-FORMER!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

"Careful, you ass!" roared the New Zealand junior.

"None of your cheek!" growled Loder. "Stop this scene at once, you crowd of Bank-Holiday hooligans. Clear out!"

There was a yell of protest at once. If their headmaster had ordered them to stop that gorgeous feed, there would have been some hesitation in obeying. But to be ordered out of the tuckshop by the bully of the Sixth was, as Bob Cherry expressed it, a little too thick.

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Yah!"

Loder clenched his hands.

"I won't have this row!" he exclaimed. "Clear off at once!"

"Oh, draw it mild," said Harry Wharton scornfully. "We're not doing any harm here. We're allowed to feed in the tuckshop if we like."

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ran Singh, the Hindu junior. "My dear and esteemed Loder, you are talking out of your honourable hat!"

"Are you going?" demanded Loder.

"No!"

"Rather not!"

"Shut up!"

a grin. "If the fellows see you like this you'll be laughed to death."

And Loder, gritting his teeth, went to clean himself. It was not an easy task.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. A Surprising Invitation.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. left the tuckshop at last, and strolled towards the School House. The feed was still proceeding, and the Famous Four had given unlimited orders. Mrs. Mumble was still very busy, and the crowd in the little shop had not diminished in numbers. There were still fellows outside waiting for their turn.

Wharton and Nugent entered their study—No 1 in the Remove passage. Harry Wharton uttered an exclamation as he entered. Loder, of the Sixth, was there, sitting in the armchair, his face red and his hair damp from recent scrubbing.

"Look out!"

Wharton and Nugent clenched their fists. Their only thought was that the prefect was waiting for them on vengeance bent.

But they were mistaken. Loder rose to his feet, with a genial smile.

"Excuse my coming into your study in this way, Wharton," he said genially. "I wanted to speak to you."

"Eh?"

"It's all right," said Loder, smiling most agreeably. "I'm not going for you."

"Better not!" said Nugent, picking up a cricket-bat out of the corner of the study.

"I don't bear any malice for that—that little joke in the tuckshop," said Loder. "As a matter of fact, I was rather hasty."

The juniors stared at him blankly. Loder seemed to be in earnest; but it was certainly the first occasion upon which the bully of the Sixth had been known to admit himself in the wrong.

"You haven't gone off your dot suddenly, I suppose?" ventured Nugent.

Loder laughed.

"No; I'm sorry I interrupted your feed."

"Oh, good!" said Wharton. "It's all right. But—but what's the matter with you?"

"The fact is," said Loder, with an appearance of great candour, "I'm sorry. I was in the wrong, and I want to tell you so. I think there's been a lot of unnecessary trouble between the Sixth and the Remove. I'm going to change all that. I—I think it's better for juniors and seniors to try to pull together."

"Oh!"

"What chap was it said that the age of miracles was past?" murmured Nugent. "Whoever he was, he was an ass!"

"I want you two kids to come to tea in my study," said Loder. "That's what I wanted to see you about. We shall have rather a good feed, and I should be really glad if you would come."

"Eh?"

"Tea at half-past six," said Loder. "Can I depend on you?"

A invitation to tea to a junior from a Sixth-Former was something in the nature of a Royal invitation. It was not supposed to be refused. But the two juniors were so astounded by Loder's inexplicable change of front that they stood staring at him instead of replying.

"I should like you to come," said Loder.

"You—you're very good!" stammered Wharton.

"No larks?" said Nugent, suspiciously.

"No," said Loder, laughing; "no larks! Will you come?"

"Ye-es; with—with pleasure."

"Good!" said Loder. "I'll expect you at half-past six."

And with a friendly nod he quitted the study.

Harry Wharton and his chum looked at one another in silence for some moments. They were in a state of the greatest astonishment.

"What on earth does it mean?" demanded Frank at last.

"They say that a leopard can't change his skin—I mean an Ethiopian can't change his spots; but if Loder's genuine, he's changed his spots with a vengeance."

"Must be a dodge," said Harry thoughtfully. "I don't want to be suspicious, but I really can't help thinking it's a dodge. He wants to get us into his study to hammer us."

"Looks like it."

"Let's ask the fellows."

They went down the passage and found Bob Cherry and Mark Linley and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh in their study—No. 13.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Wherefore that worried look?"

"Loder's asked us to tea."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 240.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"COKER MINOR SIXTH-FORMER!"

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"Eh?"

"Loder's invited us to tea in his study."

"Oh, don't be funny!"

"Fact!" said Wharton. "Honour bright!"

"Then it's a dodge to get you trapped there!" said Bob Cherry emphatically. "Remember that chap who said he feared the Greeks when they came with gifts in their hands? You want to be careful of Loder when he's too good."

"Yes, rather!" said Mark Linley. And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked that the ratherfulness was terrific.

"Not going, are you?" asked Bob.

"Well, we've said we'd go," said Harry thoughtfully. "But—but I suppose it must be a dodge. We shall have to keep our eyes open."

"You'll need to," said Mark Linley. "You'd better be prepared for trouble. Loder will very likely have a lot of the Sixth there—all his pals—ready to jump on you."

"You could go armed," suggested Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Suppose you take a poker each—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It would look a little odd, going into a fellow's study to tea with a poker in one's fist," grinned Nugent.

"You could hide them," said Bob. "Slip them inside your bags, you know, and whisk 'em out if you want 'em!"

"Good egg!" exclaimed Nugent. "We'll do that!"

"The red-hot poker would be the ripping idea," suggested Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent. "I can see myself putting a red-hot poker inside my bags, you ass! Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll hang about in the Close, if you like," said Bob Cherry. "If there's trouble in the study, you can yell—or pitch something through the window, and we'll come to the rescue."

"That's a jolly good idea. Loder may mean fair play, though," said Harry Wharton. "You never know! We'll give him a chance."

"He won't give you much chance, I think."

"We'll take the pokers, anyway."

And when Harry Wharton and Nugent made their way to Gerald Loder's study at half-past six, each of them had a serviceable poker hidden inside his garments, ready for action if called upon.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Spider and the Flies.

GERALD LODER'S study presented quite a festive aspect when the chums of the Remove arrived there.

Tea was ready, and Loder's fag, an inky-fingered youngster of the Second Form, was making piles of toast. Gatty of the Second simply stared at the chums of the Remove. He was the only person in the study so far.

"What do you Remove chaps want?" he demanded.

"We've come to tea!" said Wharton.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Gatty incredulously. "You'd better cut before Loder comes back. He's only gone to fetch Carne and Walker."

"We've come to tea."

"You don't mean to say that you're the guests I'm making this giddy toast for?" demanded Gatty, in mingled surprise and indignation.

"Yes we do!"

"Well, what rot!" said Gatty. "What utter rot! Fagging for Remove kids! Yah!"

"Do you want a thick ear?" demanded Nugent wrathfully.

"Rats!"

Loder re-entered the study just in time to prevent trouble. He smiled genially at the chums of the Remove. Walker and Carne, two fellows very like Loder in his little ways, followed him in, and both of them were very polite to the Removites.

"Glad to see you," said Walker affably.

"Quite a pleasure!" said Carne.

Gatty of the Second was so much astonished, that he stood with his mouth wide open, staring blankly. Loder cuffed him, and he roared.

"Ow!"

"Finished that toast?" demanded Loder.

"Ow! Yes."

"Then you can clear off."

Gatty cleared off, slamming the door after him. Loder pulled out chairs for his guests, and handed up the tea from the grate. Nugent and Wharton stepped towards the table—a little stiffly, owing to the fact that neither of them could bend his right leg. The legs themselves would have bant in the usual way, but the pokers would not.

Loder started a little.

"You fellows hurt?" he asked.

"Hurt? No," said Wharton. "Why?"

"Gone lame?"

Wharton coloured.

"N-no! Oh, no!"

"I thought you were limping," said Loder.

"Oh, no! Not at all!"

Loder, Carne, and Walker stared at them as they moved to the table. Their left legs were full of action, but their right legs remained stiff as they moved, and the result was very curious to see. The chums of the Remove looked rather red as they sat down.

Clump!

The end of Nugent's poker escaped from the trouser-leg, and clumped on the floor under the table with a loud concussion. Nugent made a clutch at his leg to save the poker from sliding out.

"Wh-what on earth's that?" ejaculated Walker.

"N-nothing!" stammered Nugent.

The juniors sat at the table with their right legs stretched out stiffly under it. The seniors sat round, and kicked their feet against the outstretched legs. Walker stooped and looked under the table to ascertain what it was he was kicking his boots against.

"My hat!" he said rather coarsely. "You might gather your hoofs in a bit, you kids. You don't want all the room, I suppose?"

"N-no!" stammered Nugent.

"Well, move your giddy hoof, then."

Nugent moved his right foot, but he did not bend the knee, and the leg stuck out quite straight in another direction. Walker looked at him very strangely. He began to have a suspicion that Frank Nugent was not quite right in his head.

However, he made no further remark upon the peculiar conduct of the guests. It was evident that the bullies of the Sixth, for some mysterious and unknown reason, had made up their minds to be very nice to the heroes of the Remove.

Wharton and Nugent sat feeling very uncomfortable. Their right legs were beginning to feel rather stiff, but they could not move them without swinging them round at full length. And the pokers had slipped down as far as to allow their ends to rest upon the floor, so they were not very handy to get at in case of need. Both the juniors began to wish that Bob Cherry had not thought of that brilliant idea. They were afraid to move, almost, in case the pokers should fall out and crash on the floor. Such a contretemps at a tea-party would have been exceedingly awkward.

"You like your tea strong?" asked Loder, handling the teapot.

"Weak, please," said Wharton.

"Same here," said Nugent.

"Good! Help yourselves to sugar. Begin with these ham patties, they're good."

"Let me help you," said Carne.

"Thank you."

The juniors began to feel a little more at their ease as tea commenced. The three seniors were so exceedingly affable that the guests began to believe, amazing as it was, that they had misjudged Loder. The cad of the Sixth evidently had some good points, after all. And the feed was decidedly good.

"I hear that you've been painting the place red," said Walker. "Standing enormous feeds, and so on."

"We've stood feeds to the chaps," said Wharton. "It was something in the way of a celebration, you know."

"Rolling in money?" suggested Carne.

"Yes."

"Jolly nice to have heaps of tin," said Loder, pressing jam-tarts upon the juniors. "This won't seem much of a feed after what you've been having. But we do our best."

"Thanks; we're having a good time," said Nugent. "We don't get fags to make toast for us every day, you know."

"Ha, ha! I suppose not. I hear that you kids have made that money out of the steamer that went ashore the other day?"

"That's it," said Wharton.

"You young bouders have claimed salvage on it?"

"That's it," said Wharton. "It was right enough, you know. The steamer was a derelict, and we were first on board. There's a lot of ceremonies to go through yet, but we're certain to have a big whack in the money, my uncle says; and he's advanced us ten pound each off what we're going to get. That's how we're in such funds. The rest of the money, when it comes, is going to be invested for us by our people. But we wanted some of it to blow."

"Naturally!" said Loder affably. "Ten quid, each! That's an awful lot of money for juniors. And I suppose you could get some more by asking for it."

"Yes, I dare say we could."

"Well, I envy you. It's ripping to be rolling in money," said Loder. "Another cup of tea?"

"Thanks; yes."

Loder changed the conversation to football. That was a subject the Removites were more interested in than in money. Football was coming on at Greyfriars, and much thought was

being given to the approaching season. Loder asked many kind and interested questions about the prospects of the Remove eleven, and the fixtures they had already arranged for the football season. Wharton and Nugent never imagined that the bully of the Sixth could be so agreeable, and their consciences smote them a little for their liberality with the jam and treacle in the tuckshop.

The feed in Loder's study passed off very agreeably. When it was finished, Loder suggested a chat, and a further indulgence in lemon-squash, to which his guests cheerfully assented. Loder cleared the table himself, refusing to allow the juniors to lend a hand. Walker looked thoughtful.

"Pity to break up a cheerful party," he said. "What about a little game of nap to pass away an hour?"

Wharton and Nugent looked uneasy.

Cards were not allowed as an amusement at Greyfriars, and it was Loder's duty as a prefect to be very much down on anything of the kind. They were not there, of course, to teach Loder his duty. But they did not feel at all inclined to break a very serious rule of the college. It was an open secret that Loder and his friends played cards for money. But the chums of the Remove did not mean to be drawn into anything of the kind. An uncomfortable suspicion of Loder's real motive in inviting them into his study was dawning upon their minds at last.

"Would you care for a game, you kids?" asked Loder affably.

"I—I think not," said Wharton.

"We'll watch you play," said Nugent politely.

Loder bit his lip for a moment.

Perhaps he thought the sight of cards would tempt the juniors. He nodded assent, and the three seniors, after locking the door, began to play nap. Loder solemnly brought out a bag of counters to play for.

"Oh, take a hand, you kids!" he said, after several rounds. "We're only playing for counters, you know. There's no harm in that; and I'm a prefect, you know."

The fact that Loder was a prefect made the matter worse, not better; but his guests did not like to say so.

"You play round games at Christmas for nuts, I suppose, don't you?" said Carne.

"Well, yes."

"Take a hand, then, and be sociable."

"All right."

Wharton and Nugent reluctantly joined in the game. They did not like it; but they had a natural horror of appearing priggish and putting on airs over their elders. But they had an uneasy inward suspicion of what was coming—and their forebodings were soon realised.

Walker yawned portentously after a few minutes of idle play.

"Bit slow playing for nothing," he remarked. "Suppose we have penny points, just to give us something to play for?"

"Right-ho!" said Carne.

"Well, only pennies, then," said Loder. "I won't have any gambling in my study. But, of course, penny points doesn't amount to anything."

Wharton turned red.

"Excuse me," he said, "I can't play for money."

Loder laughed. He was already dealing the cards; and it was a most awkward moment for Wharton to speak. But he felt that he had been entrapped, and a feeling of anger was rising in his breast.

"It's not playing for money," said Loder reassuringly—"only pennies, you know."

"Pennies can soon mount up at this game," said Harry.

"Well, if you're afraid of losing a few shillings—" said Walker, with a sneer.

Wharton's flush deepened.

"It's not that," he said. "But playing cards for money is gambling, and I don't want to do it."

"Same here," said Nugent, rising from the table.

"Oh, sit down!" said Loder. "Let's have just the one round."

Wharton shook his head.

"I'd rather not, thanks."

"My dear kid—"

"Take your cards," said Carne. "I call three."

"Four," said Walker.

"Your call, Wharton," said Loder.

Wharton set his lips.

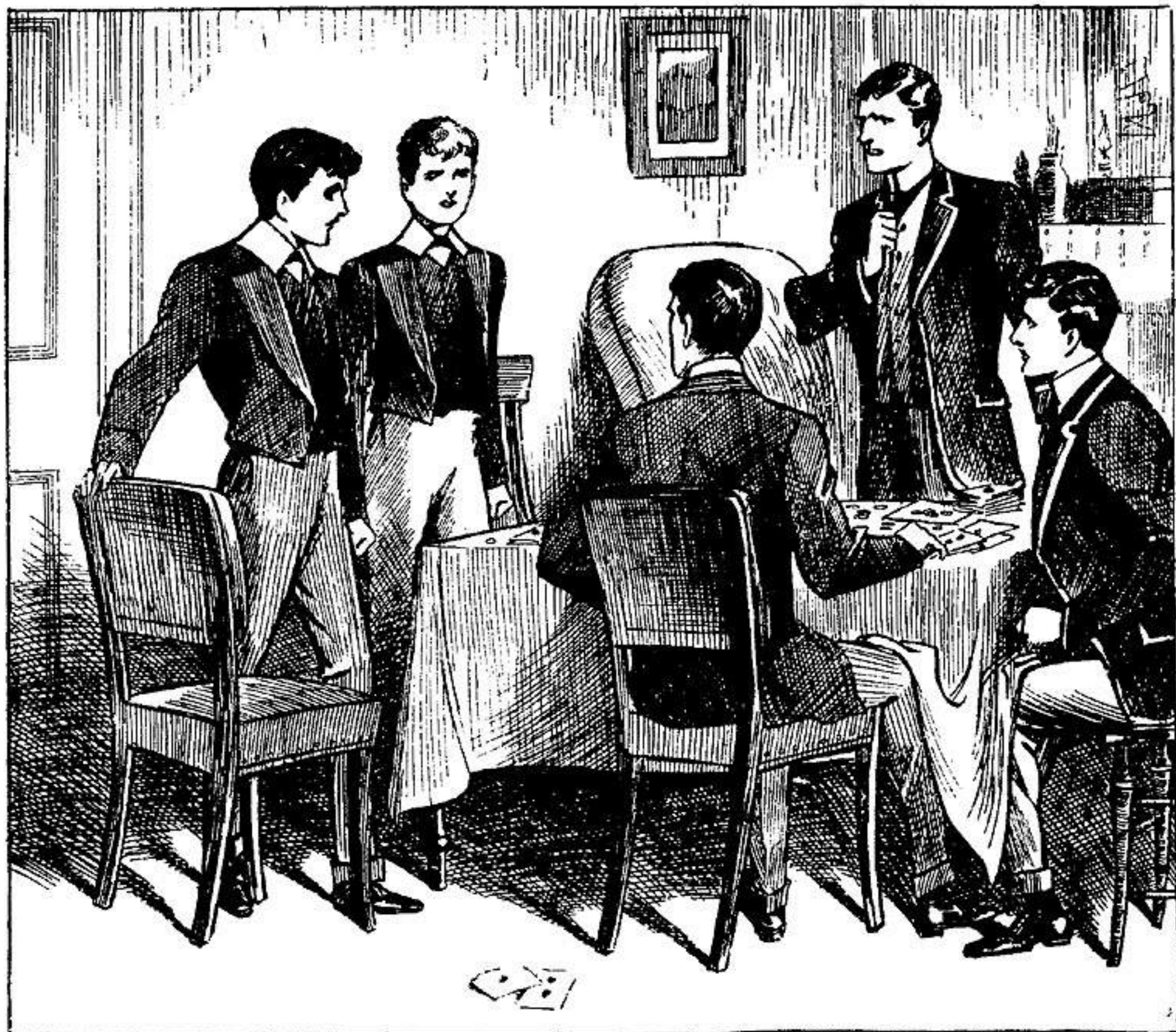
"I'm not going to call," he said; "I'm not going to play. I don't want to be disagreeable, but I'm not going to gamble."

"No fear!" said Nugent. "I think we'd better be getting along. We've got our preparation to do."

And the two juniors stepped back from the table. Loder & Co. exchanged glances, and Loder rose to his feet. There was a very ugly gleam in his eyes.

"I think you'd better play," he said.

"We don't want to."



"I'm not going to call!" said Harry Wharton, setting his lips. "I'm not going to play. I don't want to be disagreeable, but I'm not going to gamble." And the two juniors stepped back from the table. Loder & Co. exchanged glances, and Loder rose to his feet. There was an ugly gleam in his eyes. "I think you'd better play!" he said. (See Chap. 4.)

"I ask you to."

"Sorry!"

"Look here," exclaimed Loder savagely, "will you take a hand, or will you not?"

"Not!" said Wharton and Nugent together promptly.

"You cheeky young cads!" exclaimed Loder, losing his temper completely, as he saw that his device was quite in vain. "If you put on any of your cheeky airs here—"

"We didn't ask to come here," said Wharton, his eyes flashing; "and if you asked us here to gamble it's your own look-out. You ought to have known us better."

"I told you you'd get nothing but a sermon out of the young cad, Loder!" growled Carne.

"Then it was all arranged in advance, was it?" said Wharton scornfully. "I began to think so. Well, we're not going to play. We're in funds just at present, I know; but we're not going to get rid of the money, gambling."

"Good!" said Loder, between his teeth. "Put away the cards, Carne. And then lend me a hand; I'm going to give these cheeky young scoundrels the licking of their lives."

Wharton and Nugent backed away.

Clump! Clump!

"What on earth—"

The two juniors groped for the pokers. Loder stared blankly at the iron end of a poker sticking out of Nugent's trousers-leg close to his boot.

"My hat! Collar them!" he shouted.

The three seniors rushed upon Wharton and Nugent. The

juniors were collared long before they could get the pokers out. Bob Cherry's brilliant idea had not been a success, after all. Walker and Carne held the two Removites, while Loder dragged away the pokers and tossed them into the grate, with a mocking laugh.

"So you came prepared for trouble?" he jeered.

"Yes!" said Wharton, his eyes blazing. "We knew what a cad you were. Look here, you asked us into this study as guests, and if you touch us you're a rotten blackguard!"

Loder did not reply. He selected a cane, and stepped towards the Removites.

"Hold them!" he said unpleasantly. "I've got a little score to pay off for what happened in the tuckshop this afternoon! And I'm going to pay it now—with interest!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Licked.

"BACK up!" shouted Harry Wharton.

The two Removites began to struggle.

Juniors as they were, Carne and Walker had a great deal of trouble to hold them, and they plunged to and fro about the study, panting and gasping.

"Here, lend us a hand with this young sweep!" gasped Walker, who was struggling with Harry Wharton. "I can't manage him!"

Loder had grasped his cane, but he laid it down now to lend Walker a hand. He grasped the captain of the Remove

NEXT
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"COKER MINOR, SIXTH-FORMER!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

from behind, throwing an arm round his neck, and pulling him backwards. Against the two seniors Wharton was quite powerless. He was dragged upon the floor, and they turned him over on his face, and Walker put a knee into his back and pinned him down.

"Got him!" gasped Walker. "Now the other rotter!"

Loder sprang up. Nugent was still struggling furiously with Carne. Carne was a powerful fellow, but Frank Nugent was giving him plenty to do. Nugent's object was to get loose for a moment and hurl something at the window. Bob Cherry & Co. were waiting in the Close for a signal that help was needed, and that was the only way of attracting their attention. Escape from the study without aid was impossible. The door was locked, and the key was in Loder's pocket.

Nugent made a sudden effort and broke loose from Carne. The senior sprang to intercept a rush to the door, but Nugent darted towards the window.

Crash!

There was a loud ringing of broken glass in the Close. Nugent had driven his elbow through the nearest pane.

Carne gasped.

"Why, you—you young ruffian!"

His grasp was upon the junior the next moment. Loder ran to his aid, and Frank Nugent was tossed down upon the carpet, and Carne knelt upon him.

"Got them now!" said Loder, with a grin. "Keep them tight while I get my cane. I'm going to give the young cads something to remember!"

"Go it!" gasped Carne.

Loder grasped his cane and stepped towards Nugent. His eyes were gleaming cruelly. Never had he had such an opportunity of punishing his special enemies in the Remove.

Thwack!

The cane descended upon Frank Nugent with a cruel lash, and the junior yelled:

"Ow!"

Lash! Lash!

"Yaroooh! Ooooh!"

Lash, lash, lash, the cane came down upon Harry Wharton. Wharton set his teeth.

"Oh, you coward!" he muttered.

"I'll give you some more for that!" said Loder, with a grin.

"Help!" yelled Nugent, as his turn came again. "Rescue, Remove! Ow!"

Lash! Lash!

"Yaroooooooh! Oh!"

The bullies of the Sixth chuckled. Loder was getting his hand in now, and he was making rapid play with the cane. The two juniors, pinned down under the weight of Carne and Walker, struggled in vain. They could not get loose, and they had to take the licking. And Loder laid it on with a heavy hand.

But rescue was coming. There was a rush of feet in the Sixth Form passage, and a loud bump at the door. Bob Cherry bawled through the keyhole.

"Open this door, Loder, you cad!"

Loder started.

"My hat! There's the whole crowd there!" he exclaimed. "I'll give these young cads some more for that! Take that! And that! And that!"

"Yow! Ow! Help!"

Bump! Bump! Crash!

The door shook and groaned under the attack from without. Loder paused in inflicting the punishment in his surprise. For juniors to attempt to force a way into a Sixth Form study was something new; but Bob Cherry was evidently reckless.

"Go away, you young sweeps!" roared Loder. "I'll come out to you in a minute!"

"That's what we want you to do, you cad!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Open the door, or we'll bust it in!"

"Clear off!"

"Rats!"

Crash! Crash!

"I—I say," stammered Walker, "they'll rouse the whole place! We shall have Wingate coming along to poke his nose into the matter. Better chuck it!"

"Yes, they've had enough, anyway," suggested Carne.

Loder gritted his teeth.

"I'm going to give them some more," he said.

The cane lashed down savagely.

"Rescue!" yelled Wharton. "Break in the door!"

Crash, crash!

Some heavy article was evidently being used to assault the door, for the lock creaked, and the stout oak groaned under the blows.

"It's giving!" gasped Carne. "Chuck it, Loder!"

There was a sudden cessation of the uproar in the passage. A sharp voice was heard—that of Wingate, of the Sixth.

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A Story for ALL

"Magnet" Readers:

"ROUGH ON RATCLIFF!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this Thursday's number of "THE GEM" LIBRARY. One Penny.

"You young sweeps! How dare you make a row like this in the Sixth-Form passage? Clear off at once!"

"They've got Wharton and Frank Nugent in there!" bellowed Bob Cherry. "They're bullying them. We're going to have 'em out."

"What!"

"They're bullying Wharton and Nugent!"

"The bullyfulness is terrific!" gasped Hureo Jamset Ram Singh.

Wingate rapped sharply at the door.

"Loder!"

"Hallo!" said Loder sullenly. He tossed his cane upon the table and signed to his comrades to release the juniors. It was time to give in now.

"Let me in!"

"Certainly," said Loder.

He unlocked the door. The captain of Greyfriars strode into the study, with a dark frown upon his brow. He waved his hand to the juniors outside to keep back. Harry Wharton's friends were there in a swarm; Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry and Mark Linley in the lead. But Wingate's gesture kept them from invading the study.

Wingate glanced at the broken window, and then at the two juniors, who had risen to their feet, white with pain.

"Well?" said Wingate sharply.

"Well," said Loder, with an assumption of indifference, "what's the row?"

"You have been licking these kids?"

"Certainly."

"What for?"

Loder pointed to the shattered pane in the window.

"Look at that!"

"Did these kids do that?"

"Yes."

"I did it!" yelled Nugent. "It was to get help. Those rotters got us in here to have tea, and caught us. It was a rotten trick."

"Oh! You came here to tea, did you?" said Wingate.

"Yes."

"Look here, Loder—"

"I don't want any interference from you, Wingate!" said Loder savagely. "I know you're head prefect, but I'm a prefect, too. I'm quite willing to account for my actions to the Head. I asked these kids to tea, and instead of behaving themselves, they started acting like hooligans. I licked them. That's all."

"Yes—all lies!" said Harry Wharton. "You wanted us to gamble, and we wouldn't, and that's why you licked us, you cad!"

Loder shrugged his shoulders.

"I shouldn't condescend to reply to an accusation of that sort," he said. "You had better get out of my study, Wharton."

Wingate looked from one to the other in doubt and amazement.

"I've been trying to be kind to them," said Loder, with virtuous indignation. "I asked them to tea, and tried to be pleasant. They acted like hooligans—they actually brought pokers with them, hidden in their trousers, to break the things up with. They've broken the window, and would have done a lot more damage if they hadn't been stopped. They took advantage of my invitation to try to wreck my study. I've punished them, and I've done with them. They'd better go."

Wharton and Nugent simply gasped. They had never suspected even Gerald Loder of having such an astounding gift of misrepresentation.

"Well, you'd better go," said Wingate. "I recommend you not to accept any more of Loder's invitations to tea. And, look here, you'd better keep clear of Loder. We can't have these rows continually going on. Buzz off."

Wharton and Nugent left the study. Wingate had done all he could for them, but with such contradictory stories to decide between, he could do no more. The chums of the Remove limped very painfully as they departed. Walking was a painful exercise, and sitting down was more painful still. There was no doubt that Loder had scored this time with a vengeance. The chums of No. 1 Study had had the licking of their lives, and the cads of the Sixth were left in the enjoyment of their triumph.

"We'll make them sit up for it, though!" Nugent gasped, as he sank into the armchair in No. 1 Study, and then immediately rose again, with an exclamation.

"Yes, rather!" groaned Wharton. "Ow!"

ANSWERS

"Hurt very much?" asked Johnny Bull sympathetically.
 "Ow! Yes!"
 "It's rotten!" said Bob Cherry indignantly. "We'll make them squirm for it, somehow. The awful rotters! Why didn't you lam them with the pokers?"
 "Ow! We didn't have a chance! Yow!"
 "It will pass off in time," said Mark Linley comfortingly.
 "You'll feel better presently."
 "Ow! We want to feel better now!" groaned Nugent.
 "Groo! Oh!"
 And the voices of the chums of No. 1 Study for a long time were like unto the voice of Rachel, who mourned and would not be comforted.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Dormitory.

THE chums of No. 1 Study limped very painfully when they went up to the dormitory that night. They were aching all over from the castigation they had received at the hands of Loder. Vernon-Smith grinned as they came into the dormitory.

"Here come the lame ducks!" he remarked.
 There was a chuckle from Vernon-Smith's special friends—Snoop, and Bolsover major, and Stott. Wharton glared at them.

"I don't see anything to cackle at!" he growled.
 "But we do!" said Vernon-Smith cheerfully. "It seems to me that you've got what you deserve. You were always too cheeky."

"Yes, rather," said Snoop. "You can't expect to be allowed to bust a prefect's windows, you know, even if you are rolling in quids."

"You ought to behave yourselves, you know, when you go into a senior's study to tea," said Bolsover major. "It's a bit thick to start wrecking the place."

"You know jolly well what the trouble was about!" said Nugent angrily. "Loder asked us there because he'd found out we'd got money, and he wanted to get it off us at cards."

"Well, it's no business of yours to give him sermons," said Vernon-Smith. "I play a little game myself sometimes."

Wharton's lip curled.
 "Yes, and you'd jolly well get sacked from the school if the Head knew about it!" he exclaimed.

The Bouncer shrugged his shoulders carelessly.

"I'm willing to risk that," he remarked. "Anyway, I don't want any preaching from you. I think you've got what you've been asking for."

"Hear, hear!" said Bolsover major.

"Oh, shut up!" said Bob Cherry. "You're asking for trouble yourselves now, and you'll get it pretty soon."

"Rats!" said Bolsover.

Whiz!

Bob Cherry's pillow flew through the air, and Bolsover major yelled. He was bowled over like a ninepin, and sat down quite suddenly upon the floor.

"Oh! Ow!" roared Bolsover. "You—you—I'll—I'll——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover major jumped up like a jack-in-the-box, and made a wild rush at Bob Cherry. Nugent put out his foot, and the bully of the Remove went sprawling again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover major sat up.

"Ow!" he said. "Yow!"

"Go for the cad!" said Vernon-Smith. "I'll back you up. It's about time those cheeky rotters were taken down a peg."

"Quite ready," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Harry, old son, take care of the Bouncer, while I attend to Bolsover."

"What-ho!" said Wharton promptly.

Vernon-Smith's malicious jeers, while Wharton was aching all over from his castigation, had roused his temper very much, and he was very willing to come to blows with the Bouncer. Bolsover major jumped up again and rushed at Bob Cherry, and in a moment they were fighting. Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith were fighting the next moment. Nugent and Johnny Bull rushed at Snoop and Stott, but those two allies of the Bouncer promptly dodged round the beds.

"Hold on!" yelled Snoop. "I'm not in this. Keep off!"

"I—I don't want to fight anybody!" howled Stott.

"Hands off!"

Nugent and Johnny Bull paused, laughing. The followers of the Bouncer were evidently not ready to follow him into battle.

Bob Cherry and Bolsover, Wharton and Vernon-Smith, were fighting furiously. Micky Desmond looked round for an enemy, and rushed towards Snoop, who had dodged behind him to get away from Nugent.

"Come on, Snoopy!" shouted Micky, putting up his fists and advancing upon the sneak of the Remove in a very war-like way.

"Hold on! Keep off!"

"Put up ye're hands, Snoopy!"

"I—I'm not going to fight you!" yelled Snoop. "Keep off!"

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TUESDAY;

"COKER MINOR, SIXTH-FORMER!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

"Faith, and ye are. Ye're backing up Smithy, and I'm backing up Wharton," explained Micky, "and sure ye've got to fight."

"I'm not!" yelled Snoop, scrambling over a bed. "Keep off."

Micky ran round the bed.

"Ain't you backing up Smithy?" he demanded.

"No!" roared Snoop.

"Are ye backing up Wharton?"

"Ye-es."

"Then I'm backing up Smithy," said Micky Desmond.

"Come on!"

"You—you ass—I—I——"

"That's for your nose, intirely," said Micky Desmond, tapping Snoop upon his somewhat thin and prominent nose; "and that——"

"Yaroo! Yah! Keep off!"

"Let him alone, Micky, you ass!" exclaimed Nugent, gasping with laughter. "What the dickens are you fighting Snoop for?"

"Sure and I'm not going to stand by and see a fight without joinin' in it," said Micky Desmond. "Come on, Snoopy!"

But Snoop did not come on. He dodged the excited Irish junior, and rolled under a bed for safety. Micky Desmond charged at Stott.

"Come on!" he roared.

"Ow! Keep off, you Irish lunatic!"

"Faith, and I'll lick ye for calling me names!"

"I—I take it back!" gasped Stott, retreating before the onslaught.

"Then I'll lick ye for being a funk."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep him off!" bawled Stott. "Ow!"

Micky Desmond smote him on the nose, and he sat down. He did not get up again. Micky Desmond pranced round him, shouting to him to get up and have some more, but he declined without thanks. Then the Irish junior looked round for fresh worlds to conquer.

"Come on, Ogilvy!" he roared.

"You ass!" roared Ogilvy, catching up his pillow.

"Keep off! What do you want to fight me for?"

"Faith, and there's a fight going on, and I'm not going to be left out of it," said Micky Desmond. "Come on!"

"You fathead—ow——"

Ogilvy swept his pillow round, and Micky Desmond rolled on the floor. Ogilvy sat on him and kept him there.

Meanwhile the fighting was getting fast and furious between the captain of the Remove and the Bouncer. Bob Cherry had already swept Bolsover off his feet, and the bully of the Remove was sitting on the floor holding his nose, which ran red in his fingers. But the Bouncer was sticking to his foe with undiminished energy. Vernon-Smith was a good boxer, and he had plenty of courage; and he had more than once tackled the captain of the Remove, in the hope of licking him sooner or later. But he did not seem to have much prospect of success.

A terrific right-hander from Harry Wharton swept the Bouncer off his feet, and he bumped over on Bolsover. There was a wild roar from the bully of the Remove as the Bouncer's weight crashed on him and knocked him flying.

"Oh! You clumsy ass!"

"Groo!" gasped Vernon-Smith.

Bolsover struck him savagely and knocked him off. Vernon-Smith sat up dazedly. At the same moment the dormitory door opened, and Loder, the prefect, came in to see lights out for the Remove.

Loder paused, and stared at the scene. The juniors made a rush for their beds.

"In trouble again, Wharton?" said Loder, in a very unpleasant voice. "There never seems to be any trouble in the Remove without you being mixed up in it."

Harry Wharton did not reply. He knew that it was no use trying to justify himself to the prefect; and he disdained to make the attempt.

"You will take a hundred lines for fighting in the dormitory, Wharton," snapped Loder.

Wharton turned towards his washstand to bathe his face. Vernon-Smith had had the worst of the struggle, but he had hit pretty hard, and Harry had not come off scatheless.

"Do you hear me, Wharton?"

"Yes."

"You will write out a hundred lines of Virgil."

"Very well."

"And if there is any more trouble in this dormitory, I shall report your conduct to the Head!" said the prefect, spitefully.

Wharton bit his lip in silence. The Remove turned into bed, and Loder, with a frown, turned out the light, and retired.

"Nice dear fellow, I don't think," remarked Bob Cherry. "We will make him sit up for his cheek before long." "Oh, shut up," grunted Vernon-Smith. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Do you want another licking, Smithy?"

"Go and eat coke!" "Quiet, Bob," said Harry Wharton. "Loder's looking for a chance to have us up before the Head, and Smith knows that. Let him run on."

And the chums of the Remove remained silent, and declined to allow the Bounder to "draw" them. The buzz of voices died away in the Remove dormitory, but it was a long time before Wharton and Nugent slept. They were aching and stiff from their caning; and even when they slept, it was uneasily; and they woke in the morning feeling stiff and sore. And their feelings towards Loder were not pleasant.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Harry Wharton Has An Idea.

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, glanced at Wharton and Nugent when they sat at the breakfast-table the next morning.

Mr. Quelch disliked fidgeting; and undoubtedly both Wharton and Nugent were fidgeting that morning. They seemed unable to keep still in their places. The Remove-master glanced at them several times with frowning brows, and at last rapped out at them.

"Wharton! Nugent!"

"Yes, sir."

"Keep still! What are you fidgeting for? Kindly stop it at once."

"Yes, sir," said the unfortunate juniors.

Some of the Removites grinned. They knew the reason why the chums could not sit still, although Mr. Quelch did not. Wharton and Nugent were very glad when breakfast was over, and they were able to reassume a perpendicular attitude.

"Still hurting?" asked Bob Cherry, sympathetically, as they came out of the dining-room.

Wharton grunted.

"Yes. I'm stiff from my neck to my knees. That awful beast gave us a fearful wallop. I'm marked like a giddy zebra."

"Serve him right if you let Quelch see you," exclaimed Mark Linley. "If Mr. Quelch saw the marks, he would come down on Loder fast enough."

"Yes; it would serve him right, but—"

"But it can't be did," said Nugent. "We can't sneak, even about Loder—and that's what it would be called. We'll make him wriggle for it by ourselves."

"It won't be easy," said Johnny Bull. "He's looking for a chance of bringing us into trouble with the Head already."

"I've got an idea," said Wharton quietly. "I'll tell you chaps presently. Loder is going to be put through it."

When the Remove took their places in the Form-room, the same uneasiness was observed in Wharton and Nugent. They wriggled continually in their seats through the first lesson, in spite of the glances Mr. Quelch gave them.

The Form-master lost patience at last.

"Wharton and Nugent, I must insist upon your keeping still!" he exclaimed. "I cannot have this incessant fidgeting. Keep still!"

"Yes, sir."

The unfortunate juniors kept still for five minutes. But they could not keep it up longer than that, and Frank Nugent was the first to wriggle again.

Mr. Quelch's eye was upon him at once.

"Nugent!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir," said poor Nugent.

"You are persisting in that ridiculous fidgeting."

"I—I'm sorry, sir."

"If you do not regard what I say to you, Nugent, I shall punish you."

"Ye-es, sir."

"Why, you are fidgeting again, even while I am speaking to you," Mr. Quelch exclaimed, in angry astonishment. "How dare you, Nugent?"

"I—I—if you please, sir—" stammered Nugent.

"Are you ill, boy?"

"N-no, sir."

"Then why cannot you sit still?"

"I—I—I've got a pain, sir."

"Indeed! What kind of a pain?"

"A—a sort of ache, sir."

Mr. Quelch looked sharply at Nugent's crimson face. Then his countenance relaxed a little in expression.

"Have you been punished lately, Nugent?"

"Ye-es, sir."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 240.

A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers:

"ROUGH ON RATCLIFF!"

By MARTIN OLIFFORD, in this Thursday's
number of "THE OEN" LIBRARY. One Penny.

"Oh! And you, Wharton?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"Very well! I did not understand that. I excuse you."

"Th-th-thank you, sir."

And the two juniors were allowed to wriggle without further reprimand. They took full advantage of that. It was painful enough to sit down at all, without keeping still. They almost gasped with relief when third lesson was over, and the Remove were dismissed.

Vernon-Smith & Co. were grinning with satisfaction. Vernon-Smith had had fifty lines for bringing a black eye to the breakfast-table; and Boisover had been sharply reprimanded for a swollen nose. Both of them were feeling the effects of the fight in the dormitory, and their feelings towards the chums of No. 1 Study were not amiable.

Billy Bunter rolled up to the Famous Four in the passage. He was blinking in his most agreeable way through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows," he exclaimed, "I've got something to tell you!"

"Go and tell it to somebody else, Billy!" grunted Nugent, who was not in the best of tempers.

"Oh, really, Nugent! It's very important!"

"Expecting a postal-order?" asked Frank sarcastically.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I am," said Bunter. "But that's not what I was going to say. Speaking of postal-orders, however, I'm expecting a good big one this evening from a titled friend of mine, and if you care to cash it in advance—"

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

"Well, as you're so flush with money now I think you might do the decent thing for once," said Bunter. "I should have the postal-order now, only there is some delay in the post. I am frequently kept waiting for my remittances in this way—"

"You are!" agreed Bob Cherry. "Sometimes they don't come at all—ch?"

"However," said Bunter, without replying to that remark, "that isn't what I've got to say. I was going to tell you about Mrs. Mimble. She's got in a fresh stock to-day. The shop was pretty nearly cleared out yesterday. I've seen some of the things—jam-tarts, and cream-puffs, and cakes, and things—simply ripping."

"Well, let them rip!"

"What I was going to say is, that I didn't get enough to eat when you were standing the feed yesterday. The fellows are so greedy, you know, they wouldn't make room for a chap. I suppose I can go and have a bit of a snack now, can't I?"

"Certainly," said Bob Cherry.

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his big glasses.

"Good! Can I have same jam-tarts—say a dozen?"

"Better make it two dozen."

"Good!" said Bunter again. "And some cream-puffs?"

"Certainly."

"And what about doughnuts?"

"Oh, say a hundred."

"And cakes—one currant and one seed?"

"Yes."

"And a pot of jam—"

"Half a dozen."

"And a tin of pineapple—"

"Two."

"Good! I'm really very much obliged to you fellows—"

"Nothing to be obliged to us for," said Bob Cherry, in astonishment. "What have you got to be obliged to us for?"

"Why, you're going to pay—"

"Oh, no, we're not," said Bob coolly. "You can have all those things you've mentioned, and any number more—in fact, you can have anything you can pay for."

"Eh?"

"And I hope you'll have a really good feed," said Bob Cherry. And he walked away with his chums, leaving Billy Bunter rooted to the floor.

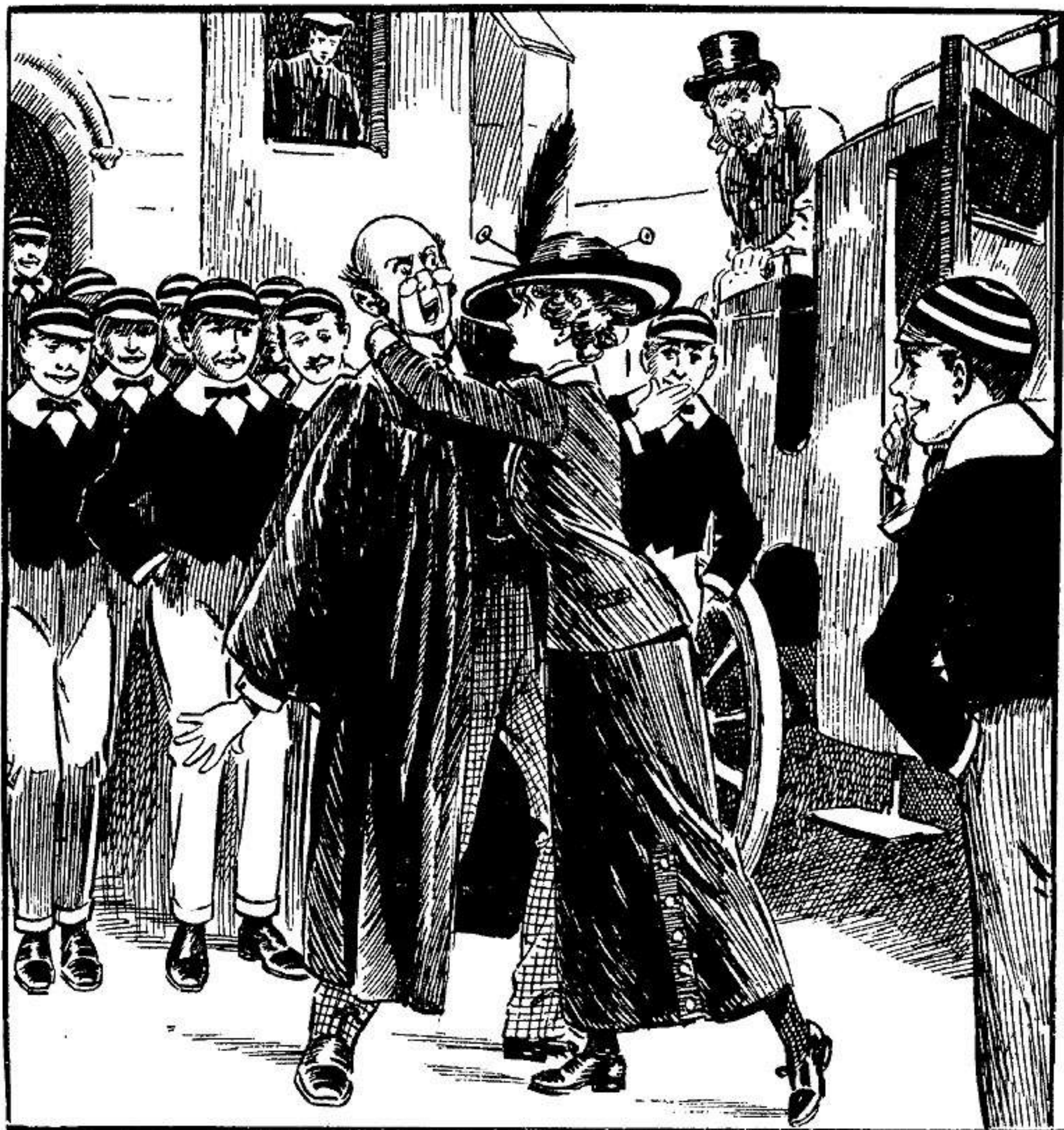
"Well, of all the utter rotters!" ejaculated Bunter. "Fancy leading a fellow on like that! Beast!"

The Famous Four did not go out into the Close with the rest of the Form. They went up to Study No. 1, and Wharton closed the door as they entered.

"I've got something to say to you chaps," he said. "Loder has scored over us this time, and we've got to make him sit up. He's got to be made to understand that it's safer to let the Remove alone."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"I've got an idea. We can't tackle Loder, because he's a prefect, and he would bring the masters down on us. He's cad enough for anything. But we're going to punish him all the same. We'll pay him a visit in his room to-night."



The lady—otherwise Kerr of the Fourth—made a sudden rush, and before the amazed housemaster could dodge, she threw her arms round his neck. "Oh, Horace, haven't you a kind word for your poor little wifey?" she sobbed. The housemaster struggled furiously to release himself. "Madam, let me go! You are mad, or—else intoxicated! You are not my wife! I am not a married man! Release me instantly!"
(For the above incident see the grand, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, entitled: "ROUGH ON RADCLIFF," by Martin Clifford, which is contained in our popular companion paper, The "Gem" Library. Out on Thursday. Price One Penny.)

The juniors looked serious.
"My hat!" said Johnny Bull, with a whistle. "That's rather thick, you know—raiding a prefect's room. There will be a row."
"Only he won't know it's us."
"Eh? Why won't he?"
"Because we're going to black our faces so that we sha'n't be recognised," said Harry Wharton. "He won't even know that it's Greyfriars fellows at all. We'll black our faces and put on old coats, and there you are!"
Bob Cherry chuckled.
"It will give Loder a bit of a jump when we walk in on him," he remarked.
"We'll give him something more than a jump," said Harry Wharton. "The cane he licked us with is still in his
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study. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. He can have a taste of his own medicine."
"There'll be trouble," said Nugent. "But I'm game. I'm simply aching to go for Loder. I'm aching all over!"
"I'll get some blacking into the dorm, to-night, and we'll go after the other chaps are asleep," said Wharton. "Keep it dark."
"What-ho!"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry softly. He made a spring to the door and threw it suddenly open. There was a yelp of surprise, and Billy Bunter rolled over in the doorway.
"I thought so!" exclaimed Bob Cherry wrathfully. "You fat cad, you were listening!"
"I—I wasn't!" stuttered Bunter, sitting up and groping

for his spectacles, and putting them straight on his fat little nose. "I—I'd scorn such an action! I was coming to speak to you fellows about the feed. I—I never even heard you mention Loder's name."

"You—you fat bounder, how do you know we were talking about Loder if you weren't listening?" roared Bob.

"I—I don't know it," gasped Bunter. "Besides, I sha'n't say a word about the blacking. And—and look here, I—Ow! Yow!"

Bunter scrambled wildly out of the study as Bob Cherry's boots came in contact with his plump limbs. He gained his feet, and blinked into the study furiously.

"You rotters!" he roared. "I'll—"

"Hold on, Billy," said Harry Wharton laughing. "You deserved what you've got, for listening. I suppose it's no good pointing out to you that that's a cad's trick? You wouldn't understand. But don't repeat what you've heard, or you'll get the biggest ragging you ever had in your life."

"Of course, I shouldn't dream of repeating anything," said Bunter. "I hope I'm not that sort of fellow. Did you say that I could have a snack at the tuckshop, Wharton?"

"No, I didn't."

"Ahem! One good turn deserves another, you know. I—"

"Oh, go and feed, and hold your tongue!" exclaimed Wharton. "Catch!"

He tossed a half-crown across to Bunter. Bunter caught it on his nose.

"Ow! What's that?"

"Half-a-crown, fathead!"

"Thanks! Shall I put this down to the old account, or will you have it out of my postal-order when it comes? Of course, you understand that I cannot accept it as a gift?"

Harry Wharton did not reply. He picked up a ruler and made a stride towards the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter went down the passage at top speed, leaving unsettled the important question whether he should repay the two-and-six out of his expected postal-order, or put it down to the old account.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

And Vernon-Smith Has Another.

VERNON-SMITH & CO. came into the school shop and found Billy Bunter there. The fat junior was looking rather jammy and sticky, and he was finishing a plate of jam-tarts with a somewhat disconsolate air. Vernon-Smith ordered four gingers, and sat on the high stool at the counter. Bolsover major, and Snoop, and Stott lounged up to the counter. Bunter blinked affably at the Bounder.

"How many gingers did you order, Smithy?" he asked.

"Four!" snapped Vernon-Smith.

"Oh! I thought perhaps you said five."

"Well, I didn't say five."

"You might make it five," suggested Bunter. "Jam makes me thirsty. You know, it's up to you to stand the Form a feed, Smithy, since Wharton and the rest have come down so handsome. They ain't the sons of millionaires, either."

"Well, there's something in that," remarked Snoop, looking at the Bounder out of the corner of his eye. "They're flush of money just at present, but they haven't really got so much as you, Smithy. It's up to you to show them that you can come down quite as handsome as they can."

"Good idea!" assented Stott.

Vernon-Smith smiled disagreeably.

"Fools and their money are soon parted," he remarked. "I've got more money and more sense. I'm not wasting ten quid on jam-tarts for a crowd. No fear!"

"It would keep our end up against them, you know," urged Snoop, with a hungry glance at the good things displayed in Mrs. Mimble's little shop.

"I'll find a cheaper way of keeping my end up," said the Bounder.

"Well, perhaps you're right," said Snoop thoughtfully. "Perhaps it's better to stand a feed to us, only, and leave the Form out of it."

"Yes; that's rather a good idea," said Stott.

Vernon-Smith did not take the hint. He paid for four ginger-beers, and put the change of a sovereign away carefully into his pocket. Snoop's eyes followed it in a famished sort of way. The Bounder was little liked by anybody in the Remove, but he had his followers on account of his wealth; but he handed his wealth out with a very sparing hand indeed. He had, as he sometimes remarked, plenty of money, and plenty of sense to take care of it.

"Give me a ginger-beer, Mrs. Mimble, please," said Billy Bunter.

"Yes," said Mrs. Mimble, waiting to see the money first, as she always did when she was serving Bunter.

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A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers

"ROUGH ON RATCLIFF!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this Thursday's
number of "THE GEM" LIBRARY. One Penny.

"Ahem! I haven't any change now," said Bunter. "You had better put it down."

"I can give you change, Master Bunter."

"Ahem! I—I say, Smithy, you might settle for this, and I'll let you have it when my postal-order comes," suggested Bunter.

"Rats!" said Vernon-Smith.

"You can put it down to Wharton's account, Mrs. Mimble."

"Not unless Master Wharton tells me so himself, Master Bunter."

The Owl of the Remove grunted peevishly.

"Where have you been getting money from, Bunter?" asked Bolsover, glancing at the remains of the feed before the fat junior. "You seem to have been doing yourself pretty well."

"Wharton made me a small advance upon my postal-order," said Billy Bunter, with dignity. "Some fellows can take my word."

"Must be silly asses, if they do!" remarked the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy! I could get a tip out of Loder, if I weren't such an honourable chap. He would be jolly glad to know what Wharton's going to do to-night."

The Bounder looked interested.

"What is he going to do?" he asked.

"I decline to tell you. If you can't trust me with the price of a ginger-beer, you can't expect me to trust you with a secret. Besides, it will make a fearful row; there's certain to be trouble about it."

"Another ginger-beer, please," said Vernon-Smith. "Now go ahead, Bunter."

"Can I have a tart with it?"

"Yes, you fat bounder."

"And some more cake."

"Yes, porpoise."

"Good!"

Cake and tart and ginger-beer were placed before Bunter, and Vernon-Smith threw another sovereign on the counter, in a princely way. Billy Bunter devoted his attention to the eatables and drinkables, and seemed to have forgotten that he had undertaken to tell the Bounder anything. Mrs. Mimble had gone back into her little parlour, and Vernon-Smith gave Bunter a poke in the ribs to remind him that he had not yet disclosed the secret. Bunter was drinking ginger-beer at the moment, and the poke in the ribs made him give a wild gasp and gurgle.

"Gorrrroooh!"

"I'm waiting," said Vernon-Smith.

"Grococooch! You ass! You've made me ch-ch-choke."

"I'll pour it down the back of your neck if you don't keep your bargain," said Vernon-Smith threateningly. "Now, what are those bounders in No. 1. up to?"

"Grooh! I don't know whether I really ought to tell you. You see—" Billy Bunter broke off as Vernon-Smith clenched his fist. "All right; I'm just going to tell you! It's a jape on Loder, you know."

"Loder! What kind of a jape?"

"They're going to get into his room to-night," whispered Bunter cautiously. "They're going to black their faces so that they won't be recognised, and rag Loder. What do you think of that for a jape?"

Vernon-Smith whistled softly.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bolsover, in amazement. "That's rather thick!"

"You'd better keep your head shut about it, Bunter," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "If they knew that you had told us, you'd get a fearful ragging."

"You're not going to give me away?" exclaimed Bunter, in alarm. "I—I was telling you in confidence, you know."

"You'd better not tell anybody else in confidence."

Vernon-Smith signed to his followers, and walked out of the shop. They stopped under the shady elms outside. The Bounder's eyes were glittering.

"I fancy we can get even with those cads in No. 1. now," he muttered.

Bolsover frowned.

"You're not thinking of giving them away to Loder?" he asked. "I bar sneaking, Smithy. I'm up against them as much as you like; but I draw the line at that."

"Who's talking about sneaking?"

"Well, I thought—"

"Well, don't think, then!" growled the Bounder. "Leave the thinking to me; I've got the brains to do it with."

"Look here—"

"You chaps think I ought to stand a big feed, to keep level with Wharton & Co.," said the Bounder sarcastically. "Well, I'm not throwing money away, if I know it. But I've got a wheeze; it came into my head as Bunter was jawing. I think I can promise you that we'll have a feed after lights out to-night, as big as anything that Wharton and the others could stand, if they blued all their tin."

"You're thinking of raiding them?"
 "I'm thinking of a raid—not a study raid, though." The Bounder lowered his voice. "What about raiding the tuckshop?"

"Phew!"
 "Mrs Mible has got in a fresh stock—heaps and heaps of things. We could carry off enough to stack away somewhere, and feed as we liked."

Bolsover hesitated.
 "But I—I say," he muttered. "It's all very well raiding a study—that's among ourselves, and it's understood on both sides. But raiding the tuckshop—that—that comes to the same thing as stealing, you know."

"Oh, if you're going to begin preaching in Wharton's style——"

Bolsover reddened.
 "I don't call that preaching," he said. "I call that being barely decent. Raiding Mrs. Mible is stealing, and there's no other way about it. If you're proposing to pay for the things, there's no need to raid them. And if you're not——"

"I'm not—no fear!"
 "Then I'd rather you left me out," said Bolsover.
 "I'll leave you out, with pleasure," said the Bounder, with a sneer. "I suppose I can rely on you to hold your tongue? You're not going to sneak?"

"No," said Bolsover savagely. "I'm not going to sneak. But I won't have a hand in it."

"Please yourself."
 Bolsover swung angrily away. But Snoop and Stott, apparently, were less particular, for they listened with eagerness as Vernon-Smith unfolded his plan.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. In the Dead of Night.

"GOT it?"
 "Yes."
 Harry Wharton showed the neck of a bottle from his jacket pocket, and then slipped it out of sight again. Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Good. I say, I suppose the stuff will come off all right?"
 "Yes; it will wash off easily enough afterwards," said Harry, laughing. "We can slip into the bath-room after we've seen Loder, and clean it off before we get back to the dorm."

"Right-o!"
 In the Remove dormitory, Wharton slipped the bottle of liquid blacking under his pillow. Loder came in to see lights out. He bestowed a scowl upon the Famous Four.

"You have not done your lines, Wharton," he said.
 "No," said Harry.
 "They are doubled."

"Thanks!"
 Loder gritted his teeth.
 "And if they are not done to-morrow I shall report the matter to your Form-master," he said.

"Right-o!"
 Loder dropped the subject. He put the lights out in the Remove dormitory, and quitted the room, with a last scowling glance at the chums of Study No. 1. There was a chuckle from Billy Bunter's bed.

"Loder doesn't know," he remarked.
 "Shurrup!" growled Bob Cherry.
 "Oh, I say, you fellows, there's no need to keep the secret now, you know——"

"Dry up!"
 "Oh, really—I think—yooop!"
 A boot descended upon Billy Bunter, and he left off his remarks to yell.

"If you want the other boot, you'd better go on jabbering," said Bob Cherry.
 "Yow! Beast! Groo!"

"Shurrup, and go to sleep, porpoise."
 And Billy Bunter snorted and shut up. He did not want the other boot.

"What's the giddy secret?" asked Vernon-Smith.
 "Mind your own bizney," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. And he went to sleep.

The Removites dropped off into slumber one by one. Harry Wharton remained awake. He still had an ache in several places, reminiscent of the terrific licking he had received in Loder's study, and it helped him to keep awake. He lay in bed listening to the clock as the hour tolled again and again.

It was not till midnight had struck that he sat up in bed. The dormitory was dark and silent; only the sound of steady breathing was heard, with the deep unmusical snore of William George Bunter.

"You fellows awake?" whispered Wharton.
 Snore!

Wharton smiled, and slipped out of bed. He shook Bob Cherry and Nugent and Johnny Bull in turn, and they woke up, and turned out of bed without a word. The chums of the Remove did not intend to let the rest of the Form know anything about the intended expedition, if they could

help it. If there was an inquiry afterwards, the fewer that knew anything about it the better it would be.

The juniors dressed themselves quietly, without exchanging a word, and stepped softly towards the door of the dormitory. Wharton opened it with great caution, and they passed on tiptoe into the passage. Harry closed the door almost without a sound.

He drew a deep breath in the passage.
 "That's all right!" he murmured. "Nobody was awake, I think."

"Good egg! Come on!"
 The chums of the Remove stole along the shadowy passage. At midnight all the lights were out at Greyfriars; the Head himself had long gone to bed. There was no sound in the great building.

The juniors reached the Remove passage and stepped into No. 1 Study. Wharton had carefully closed the blind before going to bed; and now he lighted the gas, without danger of the light showing in the Close without.

He poured a quantity of the liquid blacking into a basin, and added water to it. Then he dipped a sponge into the mixture, and, standing before the glass, daubed his face with it.

In a couple of minutes he had transformed himself into a very good imitation of a Christy minstrel.

Bob Cherry grinned as he looked at him.
 "My only aunt!" he murmured. "It's enough to give anybody a jump to see a chivvy like that at night time."

Wharton grinned. The effect of the grin upon his black face was ludicrous, and Bob Cherry roared.

"Shut up, you ass!" said Nugent.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry proceeded to daub his face, and Nugent and Johnny Bull followed his example. The four blackened juniors grinned at one another. Certainly they had obviated the danger of recognition. In the broad daylight it would have been difficult to say with certainty who they were.

"Now, shove the coats on," said Harry.

Four old coats had been provided by the chums in readiness. They slipped them on, and buttoned them up, quite concealing their clothes. Harry Wharton took a last glance into the glass, grinned at his reflection, and turned out the gas.

"Follow your leader!" he murmured.

The juniors left the study, and strode away cautiously towards the Sixth-Form passage. The Sixth had the privilege of occupying separate bed-rooms, their rooms being studies by day and bedchambers by night. Each of the Sixth had a room to himself, therefore; and so the juniors knew that they would catch Loder alone. Loder was not a believer in the old proverb which tells us that it is wise to go to bed and rise early in order to obtain health, wealth, and wisdom. He was generally one of the last fellows to bed, and when he made his little excursions out of bounds—as he sometimes did—his hours were very late indeed.

Harry Wharton & Co. reached Loder's door, and paused there. Wharton tried the door, and found it open readily. There was a slight creak of the handle as he turned it. The door opened, and Wharton put in his head and listened.

There was no sound in the room. If Loder was asleep, he was sleeping very soundly. Wharton stepped in, and the juniors followed him cautiously. Bob Cherry was the last, and he closed the door.

Wharton listened again, with his ear cocked towards the bed in the alcove. He could hear no sound.

Crash!
 Bob Cherry caught his leg against a chair in the darkness, and it went over. He clutched at it to save it, and succeeded in knocking it at full length on the floor.

"Oh!" gasped Bob.
 "You ass!" murmured Wharton.
 "Well, he's got to wake, anyway."

"Listen!"
 Strangely enough, there was no sound from the bed. Even the crash of the falling chair had not awakened Loder.

"He's sleeping jolly soundly," said Nugent, in amazement.
 "We'll give him something to cure all that!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Mustn't awaken him with faces like this," said Harry.

"We don't want to give him a fright. Call him first."

"Good! Loder!"
 "Loder!"
 "Loder!"

There was no reply from the bed. The juniors raised their voices as high as they dared, for fear of awakening the fellows in the adjoining rooms. But Loder did not awaken.

"I—I say, that's queer!" muttered Nugent uneasily. "Do you think he's gone to bed squiffy, and can't wake up?"

"I shouldn't wonder. It would be like him."

"Perhaps he's ill."

"Then we'll make him iller. Loder! Loder!"

Still no reply. Harry Wharton picked up a cushion from the armchair, and tossed it upon the bed. Thud!

They heard the pillow fall upon the bed. Still there was no voice from Loder. Harry Wharton, very much puzzled, stepped towards the bed at last, and groped over it. Then he uttered a sharp exclamation.

"He's not here!"

"What?"

"The bed's empty!"

"Great Scott!"

The four juniors groped over the bed together. Certainly it was empty, and had evidently not been slept in. They left smears of blacking over the bedclothes as they groped, but they did not see them in the darkness.

"Well, my only summer chapeau!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Sold!"

"The rotter is out on the tiles!" growled Nugent. "I know he sometimes goes down to Friardale of a night. That's where he's gone, for a cert."

"The rotter!"

"Yes, it's specially rotten of him to be out of bounds when we've taken all the trouble of getting up in the middle of the night to wallop him!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hark!" exclaimed Wharton suddenly.

There was a faint sound in the passage.

"Somebody's coming!" whispered Wharton.

"It must be Loder!"

"Yes."

"Time he got back. Past half-past twelve," murmured Nugent. "Well, let him come. I don't suppose he'll strike a light. It would show from the window. Keep close against the wall here, and mum!"

The juniors flattened themselves in a row against the wall. There was no time for more words. The door opened, and a dim, shadowy form entered stealthily.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Raiders.

AFTER Harry Wharton & Co. had quitted the Remove dormitory the great room remained in dead silence for some minutes. Then a bed creaked as one of the Remove sat up. The eyes of the Bounder of Greyfriars glittered in the darkness.

He stepped softly from the bed, and shook Snoop, who was in the next bed. Snoop opened his eyes and grunted.

"Wharrer marrer?"

"Wake up!"

"Oh! Is that you, Smithy?"

"Yes. Quiet!"

"Have—have they gone?" murmured Snoop drowsily.

"Yes. Get up!"

"I—I say, Smithy," murmured Snoop, "I—I don't think it's such a ripping scheme, raiding the tuckshop, you know, after all. Suppose we chuck it?"

"Do you want me to empty your washstand jug over you, Snoop?" asked Vernon-Smith, in a low, concentrated tone.

"N-n-no, of course not."

"Then get up!"

"Oh, all right!" said Snoop resignedly.

He turned out of bed. Vernon-Smith shook Stott in his turn, and Stott woke up. There was a murmuring remonstrance from Stott, and a savage growl from the Bounder. Stott followed Snoop's example, and turned out.

"Don't make a row," whispered the Bounder. "This thing has got to be kept awfully dark. Carry your boots in your paws, and follow me."

"All right."

"And don't jaw."

Vernon-Smith led the way, and in a few minutes they were safe in the passage outside, and putting their boots on in the dark. Then the Bounder led the way to the box-room at the end of the Remove passage, on the next floor below, and opened the window. Snoop and Stott followed him, dropping from the window to the ground outside.

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There was a glimmer of starlight in the Close. Snoop and Stott looked white in the dim light, and Vernon-Smith sneered as he glanced at them.

"What are you afraid of?" he demanded.

"N-n-nothing," stammered Snoop. "I—I—I'm not afraid."

"And I'm not, either, S-s-s-smithy!" said Stott.

"What are your teeth chattering for, then?"

"It's c-c-cold."

"Pah! There's nothing to be funky about," said Vernon-Smith contemptuously. "We're going to make a jolly good raid, and the blame will be put on those rotters. It's as easy as falling off a form."

"I'm r-r-r-ready," said Snoop.

"Come on, then, and get a little pluck from somewhere, for goodness' sake."

The Bounder led the way. He stopped at last in an angle of the old building where great masses of ivy grew thickly.

"Here's the place."

He drew a packet of lampblack from the recesses of the ivy, and an old jam jar full of water. He took a soft sponge from his pocket. Snoop and Stott watched him while he made a mixture, and daubed his face with it. They shivered as he daubed their faces in turn.

"I—I say, how are we going to get this off again before we go back to the dorm?" Snoop muttered uneasily.

"Wash it in the fountain in the Close."

"Oh! All r-r-right."

Vernon-Smith grinned as he surveyed his companions.

"You'll do," he said. He put the jar and the packet back into their hiding-place in the recess of the ivy, and led the way across the Close. The three juniors kept as close as they could in the shadows of the buildings. Suddenly Vernon-Smith paused, with a quick, gasping breath, and grasped both his companions, and drew them close to the wall.

"Hush!" he scarcely breathed.

Snoop and Stott crouched against the wall, scarcely daring to draw breath. They did not know what Vernon-Smith had seen in the darkness of the Close; but in their excited imagination the dreaded form of the Head loomed up.

A shadowy figure passed within six paces of them.

It was not the Head. It was evidently a senior, but Snoop and Stott did not recognise him. He was walking near the buildings, and with stealthy steps. The two juniors shivered as he passed by, and disappeared into the gloom.

It was full ten minutes after the figure had passed that Vernon-Smith ventured to release his grasp upon his comrades, and move.

"It's all right now," he muttered.

"Who—who was it?" gasped Snoop.

"Loder!"

"Loder! My hat! He's been out, then."

"Yes, out on the tiles, I suppose," grinned the Bounder.

"One of his little ways, you know."

"Then there's nothing to be afraid of," said Stott, with more courage. "He wouldn't dare to say he saw us here—he'd have to own that he'd been breaking bounds."

"Ass! If he saw us here, he'd run us in, and pretend that he heard us, and got up specially!" growled the Bounder. "But it's all right now, Come on!"

They skirted the Close, and reached the tuckshop in the corner, under the old elms. The shadows of the trees fell thickly on the front of the little shop, and the raiders were secure from observation now, if there had been anybody in the Close at such an hour.

Snoop and Stott were trembling again. They felt very much like burglars as they paused in the darkness before the little shop, and only the influence of the Bounder prevented them from bolting, and giving up the enterprise.

But the Bounder was perfectly cool.

The little window in the door of the shop was his object. It was made to open, and the catch was a simple one. Vernon-Smith forced it back with the blade of his pocket-knife, and opened the window, and put his hand through and unbolted the door.

"There's only one bolt," he remarked. "It's all simple."

"G-g-good!" muttered Snoop.

Vernon-Smith pushed the door cautiously open.

Mrs. Mimble had a room behind the little shop, and the raiders did not wish

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Mrs. Mimble was clinging to the counter, shrieking. "Oh, Master Wharton, thank goodness you've come!" she gasped, ceasing to shriek at the sight of the familiar face of the Remove captain.

to risk awakening the good lady. If she awakened, and should see them, they would certainly not be recognised, with their blackened faces—but Vernon-Smith did not want that to happen until the booty was safe.

He led the way calmly into the shop. He lighted the gas, turning it high enough to show them light to move about.

"Now, then, buck up with the stuff!" he said.

He opened a large cricket bag he had brought with him, and the three raiders began to pack Mrs. Mimble's good things into it.

Bags of jam-tarts and puffs, jars of jam and marmalade, bottles of jelly and preserved fruits, were rapidly packed away.

In spite of their caution, the raiders made some noise in moving the articles.

But there was no alarm, and the bag was soon packed full to overflowing.

"I say, we sha'n't get that away very easily," muttered Stott.

"We can carry it between us"

"Where are we going to hide the stuff? We can't get it into the dorm."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 240.

"We can stick it in the old cell in the Cloisters till morning."

"Oh, good."

"Get it outside now."

The heavy bag was carried out. Vernon-Smith turned out the light. The three juniors carried the plunder away, and it was safely stowed in the old monk's cell in the recesses of the Cloisters of Greyfriars.

"We'd better get in," said Snoop.

"Not yet!"

"Why not?"

"We've got to go back to the shop."

"Why—what for?"

"For Mrs. Mimble to see us."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You're m-m-mad!" gasped Snoop.

"Oh, come on. If she doesn't see fellows with black faces, how is she going to identify Wharton & Co. as the raiders to-morrow?" demanded Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, but—"

"Shut up, and come on."

The weaker natures obeyed the stronger one. Vernon-

Smith led the way back, and Snoop and Stott followed him with wildly pulsing hearts. The Bouncer led the way into the raided tuckshop and lighted the gas. Then he picked up a jar of jam, and allowed it to fall from his hands upon the floor.

Crash!

"M-m-my hat!" stuttered Snoop.

Crash! Crash!

Two or three bottles of preserved fruits followed the jam jar, crashing and breaking on the floor. There was a sound of movement in the back room, and a cry. It was evident that Mrs. Mimble was awake. Vernon-Smith dropped another jar.

The door at the back of the shop opened, and a terrified face looked out. In the gaslight in the shop, three juniors with blackened faces were distinctly visible.

"Oh!" shrieked Mrs. Mimble. "Help! Burglars! Fire! Thieves! Help!"

The three raiders ran for the door.

They bolted into the Close and vanished from Mrs. Mimble's sight; and the still night air rang with the shrieks of the terrified old lady.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Licking for Loder.

HARRY WHARTON & Co., motionless in the study in the Sixth-Form passage, held their breath as the dim figure entered at the door. They could barely make out the outlines of the figure in the deep gloom, but they knew that it was Loder.

The prefect closed the door behind him, and groped his way to the bed and sat down on the edge of it. The juniors heard him taking his boots off.

Quite unconscious of the presence of the juniors in the room, Loder was preparing to go to bed. Harry Wharton reached out his hand towards the closed door, and tapped on it. Loder gave a jump as he heard the tap. The tap was on the door, and he did not suspect for a moment that it came from within the study, and not outside. He started to his feet, and the juniors heard his gasping breath.

"Who—who's there?" called out Loder.

Tap!

The prefect came groping over towards the door, and Wharton squeezed back out of sight close to his chum.

Loder opened the door, and peered out into the dusky passage.

"Who is it?" he asked, his voice shaking. His natural thought was that a master had discovered his return from an absence in the middle of the night, and had come to speak to him on the subject; though why he did not enter the room was a mystery.

Loder peered up and down the passage. In the darkness he could not see very far; but he could see that there was no one near the door.

He stepped back into the study, and closed the door again. He stood for some moments listening, and then went back towards the bed.

Wharton had discerned a cane lying on the table, in the gloom, and he had taken it in his hand. Reaching out towards the door, without moving his body, he tapped on the panels with the end of the cane.

Tap!

Loder gave a gasp.

"What—what—who—" He rushed to the door and flung it open, and dashed out into the passage.

The juniors chuckled softly.

Loder came back in less than a minute, breathing hard.

"The young rotters!" he muttered aloud. "It must be a trick of some of those juniors. I'll make them squirm for it to-morrow."

And he went back to the bed, and sat down, and resumed taking off his boots. Wharton reached out with the cane again, and tapped the door.

Tap! Tap!

Loder did not move this time. He finished unlacing his boots.

Tap! tap! tap!

Wharton rapped on the table with the cane this time. That made Loder move. He realised that the sound was inside the study. He leaped to his feet.

"So you're in here!" he panted. "You cheeky young scoundrels! I'll—"

A deep voice, the nearest imitation Wharton could assume of the Head's stern tones, came through the gloom.

"Loder! Where have you been?"

Loder started back.

"Dr. Locke!" he muttered.

"Loder! Loder! Where have you been?"

"I—I—"

"Have you been on the tiles, Loder?"

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A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers:

ROUGH ON RATCLIFF!"

Loder staggered. That such a ridiculous question should be put to him in the deep tones of the Head was too amazing. He realised in a moment or two that it was a trick, and that it could not be the Head who was in the study.

He struck a match.

Four black faces looked at him in the sudden light, and he gave a startled yell, and stood staring, until the match burnt his fingers, and he dropped it with another yell, louder than the first.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You—you—you—" gasped Loder. "I—I—I—"

"Loder! Loder! Loder! Where have you been, Loder? Are you squiffy, Loder?" came the deep tones again.

Loder struck another match, and lighted the gas this time. As he lowered his hand from the gasjet the four juniors rushed at him.

The prefect hit out wildly.

But he was overborne by the rush and he went with a bump to the floor, and he struggled there in the grasp of the Famous Four.

"Leggo!" said Loder, in a suffocated voice. "Groo! Help! Oh!"

He broke off as a thick wad of paper was stuffed into his mouth.

"Groo! Ooooooh!"

Loder spluttered and struggled fiercely, but the grip of the four sturdy juniors was not to be broken. They held him down, and Harry Wharton drew a cord from his pocket, dragged the prefect's wrists together, and tied them tightly. Then he tied each of the prefect's ankles to a leg of the bed, Loder being spread-eagled on his face on the floor.

Loder gasped and spluttered, trying to get rid of the wad of paper in his mouth, but in vain.

"Now give him what he's been asking for for the last few days!" said Bob Cherry.

"Groo!"

Harry Wharton grasped the cane. The bully of the Sixth was nicely posted for taking a licking, and the juniors, who were still feeling the effects of their own late castigation, were not disposed to spare him.

The cane rose and fell.

"Yow—ow—ow!" came in a splutter from Loder. "Yaroo-ooooop!"

"Stick some more paper in his mouth!" said Harry.

"Ha, ha! Good!"

"Groooooh!"

Lash! Lash! Lash!

"Yowowowowowoooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

One dozen sharp cuts the captain of the Remove administered. He was greatly inclined to administer more, as he thought of the licking he and Nugent had received when held helpless in the grasp of the bullies of the Sixth. But he was more merciful and generous than his enemy, and he contented himself with a dozen. But they were well laid on.

Loder gasped and groaned. He ejected the gag with a great effort, and spluttered wildly.

"Groo! I know you, you young villains! One of you's Wharton—I know that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"One of you's Cherry—"

"Loder! Loder!" said Wharton, still in ludicrous imitation of the deep tones of the Head. "Are you sorry for your misdeeds?"

"Groo! I'll slaughter you—"

Lash!

The cane descended sharply, and Loder gave a fiendish yell.

"Are you sorry?" said the deep voice.

"Ow! Yes!"

"Will you be a good boy in future?"

"I'll smash you—"

Lash!

"Yowp!"

"Will you be a good boy?"

"Oh!" gasped Loder. "Yes!"

There was no help for it.

"Will you be a very good boy?"

"Yes!" groaned Loder.

"An awfully, fearfully good boy?"

"Yes!" said Loder, between his grinding teeth. "Oh!"

"Good! I hope you'll keep your word!" came the deep tones again. "Otherwise I shall be compelled reluctantly to administer this severe chastisement again, Loder."

The imitation of the Head's voice and manner was so complete that Wharton's chums shrieked as they heard it.

"You can get loose now, Loder! I dare say you can untie yourself in half an hour or so! Meditate upon your sins, and think how to become a decent chap!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this Thursday's
number of "THE GEM" LIBRARY. One Penny.

"Oh!" gasped Loder. "I—I—"

His voice failed him.

The gas was turned out, and Harry Wharton & Co. quitted the study, closing the door behind them. Loder was left wriggling in his bonds in the darkness.

He could have obtained help by shouting, but he did not care to do that. He would have to explain how it was that he was up and dressed in the middle of the night. It was safer for him to keep the matter quiet at present; and he struggled with his bonds, frantic with rage, and muttering the most lurid threats against the juniors.

Who they were he could not tell, but he was quite certain that Harry Wharton was one of them. The others might be any members of the Remove; but he was certain that Harry Wharton was the leader in the daring enterprise.

He understood that the juniors must have come to the study expecting to find him in bed, and intended to thrash him there. By returning from his nocturnal excursion while they were in the study he had to some extent placed himself in their power. He was very reluctant to have to explain his midnight excursion to the Head.

He wriggled and wrestled in the cords, and at last succeeded in getting his hands loose. Then he untied his feet, and rose.

As he rose he suddenly started and listened. From the dark Close without came the sound of shrill screams and shrieks for help.

"M-my hat!" ejaculated Loder. "What are they up to now? That's Mrs. Mimble!"

He strode to the window and threw it open. Clearly across the Close, through the still air of the summer night, came the shrieks.

"Help! Help! Burglars!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Suspected!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's that row?"

Bob Cherry uttered the exclamation. The Famous Four were in the bath-room, with a mere glimmer of gas, cleaning off the blacking. They had cleaned themselves down, and removed all traces of the disguise, and taken off the old coats, which were plentifully sprinkled with black. They had been about to leave the bath-room, and Bob Cherry had opened the door, when they heard the shrieks from the Close.

"Help! Help! Burglars! Thieves! Help!"

"My hat!"

"Burglars!"

"Come on!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Lucky we're up! That's Mrs. Mimble!"

The coats, which they had intended to take back to the study for concealment, were tossed into a corner of the bath-room, and the four juniors ran down the passage.

Doors were opening in several directions now, and voices were calling.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not stop.

They dashed down the stairs and tore at the fastenings of the door. They dragged it open and dashed out into the Close.

Two or three windows opened. Mr. Quelch leaned out.

"What is that?" he shouted. "Who is there?" He had caught sight of the moving figures of the juniors in the gloom.

"We're going to help, sir!" shouted back Wharton, without stopping. "It's Mrs. Mimble calling for help, sir!"

They ran on.

Lights were flashing and gleaming in the House windows now. Wingate of the Sixth came dashing out of the House, with a cricket-stump in his hand. Loder followed him with a poker. Courtney and Valence dashed after them, and then came Coker of the Fifth, in his shirt and trousers. The alarm of burglary and the shrieks of Mrs. Mimble brought the fellows crowding out; boys of all Forms turned out to the rescue, and poured into the Close with what weapons they could catch up in their haste.

But the Famous Four had a good start, and they were first. The gleam of light from the window of the tuckshop guided them, and they dashed across the shadowy Close, and arrived breathless at the open doorway.

"Mrs. Mimble, what is the matter?"

The stout lady was clinging to the counter and shrieking.

She ceased to shriek at the sight of the familiar faces of the juniors.

"Oh, Master Wharton, thank goodness you've come, sir!"

"It's all right now, ma'am!" said Harry comfortingly.

"Where are the giddy burglars? I can't see them."

"They're gone, Master Wharton!"

"Gone! Where?"

"They ran off into the Close!" panted the good lady. "They—they're there somewhere! They've robbed my shop! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I—I feel as if I'm going to faint!"

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NEXT
TUESDAY:

"COKER MINOR SIXTH-FORMER!"

EVERY
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ONE
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"Don't, ma'am!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in alarm.

"Hold on, Mrs. Mimble!"

Perhaps Mrs. Mimble was not able to "hold on." She slid to the floor, and Wharton caught her and lowered her gently. Her weight was a little too much for the junior to support.

"Buck up, Mrs. Mimble—"

Mrs. Mimble moaned faintly.

"Dash some water in her face!" exclaimed Nugent. "That's the best thing when they faint."

"No water here—"

"Here's a bottle of ink—that will do!"

"Good! I— Why, she's recovering!"

Mrs. Mimble opened her eyes quite quickly.

"I—I feel better now," she gasped. "Oh, dear! I've had such a fright! Oh, dear! The wicked villains! Oh!"

The crowd had arrived by this time. Mr. Quelch, half-dressed, with a dressing-gown over his scanty garments, strode in, with Wingate and two or three other prefects.

Mrs. Mimble was sobbing softly now. She had had a fright, and the reaction had set in, and she showed strong symptoms of going into hysterics. Perhaps the dread of being revived by means of the bottle of ink restrained her.

"What is it?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What has happened?"

"Oh, dear, me! Burglars! Burglars, Mr. Quelch! Oh, I never had such a fright in my life—with their dreadful black faces!" sobbed Mrs. Mimble.

Loder uttered an exclamation.

"Black faces, did you say, Mrs. Mimble?"

"Yes, Master Loder. Oh, dear—oh, dear!"

Mr. Quelch gazed round the shop. The smashed jars on the floor, and the articles upset on all sides, betrayed the work of the raiders. But Mr. Quelch did not put it down to a gang of burglars, as Mrs. Mimble did. The Remove-master did not consider it likely that cracksmen would break into Mrs. Mimble's little shop to raid cakes and buns and jars of jam. Mr. Quelch suspected that the delinquents would be found nearer home.

"I do not think there is any cause for alarm," said the Remove-master, frowning. "This is not the work of burglars. Will you ascertain what has been taken, Mrs. Mimble? I think you will find that nothing is missing that is not eatable."

"I think so, too, sir," said Wingate. "Some of the juniors have been raiding the tuck."

"Yes; that is my opinion."

"Is there any money in the till, Mrs. Mimble?"

"Yes, Mr. Quelch."

"Please ascertain if it is still there."

Mrs. Mimble did so. The money was intact. Mrs. Mimble began to recover herself now. She understood that the peculiar burglars she had seen most probably belonged to Greyfriars.

"Can you describe to me the persons you saw, Mrs. Mimble?" asked the Remove-master.

"They had their faces blackened, sir," said Mrs. Mimble. "Now I think of it, they were not tall enough to be men; they looked like boys, but—"

"I thought so. How many were there?"

"I saw three, sir."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"It is perfectly clear that this raid has been committed by boys belonging to the school, and not by burglars," he said. "They blacked their faces to avoid recognition. I suppose you cannot say who they were, Mrs. Mimble?"

"Oh, dear, no, sir! I thought they were burglars."

"Well, I shall ascertain," said Mr. Quelch. "There will be a very strict inquiry into this matter, and the young rascals will be severely punished, and your loss will be made good, Mrs. Mimble. It should be easy to discover which boys were absent from their dormitories, and had their faces blacked."

The Famous Four looked at one another in dismay.

They had been absent from their dormitory, and had had their faces blacked, and they realised at once that they were in danger. Loder came forward, with a spiteful look at Harry Wharton.

"I think I know something about this, sir," he said.

Mr. Quelch looked at him sharply.

"What do you know about it, Loder?"

"I was up, sir—"

"Indeed!"

"I was awakened by a noise, sir," said Loder calmly. "I rose and dressed, and let myself out of the house to see what it was. I could not see anything amiss, so I went back to my room; and when I entered it I found four juniors there, with their faces blacked."

Mr. Quelch looked amazed.

"In your room, Loder?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who were they?"

"I could not recognise them, sir, as their faces were blacked with soot, or blacking, or something of the kind. They seized me, and tied me to my bed, sir. I had only just succeeded in getting free when I heard Mrs. Mimble screaming, and came out."

"This is very extraordinary," said Mr. Quelch. "Has anything been taken from your room, Loder?"

"Nothing, sir. The young ruffians attacked me savagely, for revenge, sir," said the prefect. "I suspect whom they were, but I prefer not to mention names. It is better that you should inquire, perhaps, sir."

"If you only suspect, it is certainly better not to mention names," said Mr. Quelch drily. "We want facts, not suspicions."

"Quite so, sir. But it might be as well to ask these Remove juniors how they came to be up and dressed before everybody else."

And Loder made a gesture towards the Famous Four.

Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes upon them.

"Were you out before the others?" he asked. "Yes; I remember now you called to me at my window, Wharton."

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"You must have been up and dressed when the alarm was given, then?"

Wharton was silent for a moment. In the hurry of running to the rescue, when Mrs. Mimble screamed for help, the chums of the Remove had not thought about their own position. It was all out now.

"Yes, sir, we were up!" said Wharton.

"What were you doing out of your dormitory?"

Wharton was silent.

"They look as if their faces had been just washed, sir," said Loder, spitefully. "You can see that, sir. And there is still some black on Cherry's ear."

Bob Cherry's hand went up unconsciously to his ear. In the hurried washing in the bath-room in the dim light, the chums of the Remove had left several traces of the blacking. It was not easy to get rid of completely.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Have you boys had your faces blacked?" he demanded.

Every eye was upon the Famous Four now. Their faces were crimson. They felt that they had somehow been entrapped; they did not know how, but they were fairly caught.

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"You, then, were the boys who raided this shop?"

"No, sir."

"What! You admit that you were dressed, and out of your dormitory, and had your faces blacked?"

"Yes, that is true, sir."

"Do you deny that you were the boys Mrs. Mimble saw here?"

"Yes, sir. We were out of our dormitory, but we haven't been outside the School House, sir. We didn't leave the House till we heard Mrs. Mimble calling for help."

Mr. Quelch looked at them grimly.

"That is a very extraordinary statement, Wharton. You wish me to believe that other boys, then, were up and out of the House, with their faces blacked also?"

"I—I suppose so, sir."

Harry Wharton spoke falteringly. Even as he spoke, he realised how lame and unconvincing it must sound. It was asking Mr. Quelch to believe a great deal.

"Did you know that any other party of juniors had blacked their faces and left their beds to-night, Wharton?"

"No, sir."

"You know nothing about them?"

"Nothing, sir."

"You do not know who has raided this shop?"

"No, sir."

"Then I am to believe that two parties of boys, unknown to one another, blacked their faces for a secret excursion upon the same night?"

Wharton was silent.

"And if it was not for the purpose of a raid here, why did you act in that extraordinary manner, Wharton? What was your object in leaving your bed and blacking your face?"

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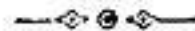
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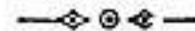


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"Loder's told you, sir. We ragged him because he had been bullying us."

"Then your object was to attack a prefect in the middle of the night?"

"N-not exactly, sir. That sounds rather strong," said Harry. "Loder had been bullying us, and we wanted to give him some of his own medicine. That's all, sir. We blacked our faces so that we couldn't be recognised."

"A very ruffianly thing, if your statement is correct," said the Remove-master. "But it is incredible to me that while you were in Loder's study, with your faces blacked, another party was here with their faces blacked also, unknown to you."

"They were the same party, of course, sir," said Loder.

"I must say I think so. If, however, they deny it—"

"We do deny it, sir!" exclaimed Nugent hotly. "Do you think that we would rob Mrs. Mimble? The fellows who took the stuff from here are rotten thieves, and nothing else!"

"That is quite true, Nugent. Everything that has been taken from this shop has been stolen, and I hope, for your own sakes, that you are not guilty. If you persist in denial, the matter will be left for the Head to investigate to-morrow."

"We know nothing whatever about it, sir," said Johnny Bull.

"Mrs. Mimble says there were only three!" exclaimed Wharton. "There are four of us."

"I saw only three, sir," said Mrs. Mimble. "And I can't believe that Master Wharton would do such a wicked thing. It isn't like him."

"Perhaps one of them was outside, keeping watch, sir," suggested Loder.

"Yes, that is very probable."

"They managed to get their faces washed, and then came back here, and pretended they knew nothing about it," said Loder. "It seems quite clear to me, sir."

"That's rot!" said Coker of the Fifth.

Loder glared at him.

"What do you mean, Coker?"

"I mean that they wouldn't have had the time to get a lot of blacking washed off their faces," said Coker sturdily. "Let Mrs. Mimble tell us how long it was after the thieves had gone before Wharton arrived here."

"Quite right," said Mr. Quelch, with a nod. "That is a point well taken, Coker. Do you know how long it was, Mrs. Mimble?"

"Master Wharton and the others ran up while I was screaming for help, sir," said Mrs. Mimble. "It certainly wasn't more than three or four minutes after the young wretches with the black faces had gone."

"That is a very short allowance of time for washing the blacking off their faces," said Mr. Quelch thoughtfully.

"They couldn't have got to the house, and got in, and washed their chivvies—I mean their faces, sir—and got back here in three or four minutes," said Coker.

"They could have washed in the fountain in the Close," said Loder, "and not gone back into the house at all. They were out of doors when you called from your window to them, sir."

"In that case, we can tell by looking at the fountain!" exclaimed Wingate. "The water is shut off of a night, and the water in the basin will show whether blacking has been washed off in it."

"Quite true," said Mr. Quelch. "We shall see."

He took a lamp from one of the seniors, and led the way to the fountain in the Close. In the daytime a jet of water played over the fountain, but at night it was shut off, and the water in the basin remained undisturbed. Mr. Quelch glanced at the wide stone basin, brimming with water. Even in the uncertain light it was easy to see that the water was discoloured. Black faces had been washed there, whether they were the faces of the Famous Four or not.

"Oh!" said Coker.

"That proves it, sir," said Loder, with satisfaction. "They had ample time to wash their faces here and to get back to the tuckshop and pretend they were coming to the rescue."

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"Quite so, Loder. Do you still deny that you were the raiders of the shop?"

"Yes, sir," said the Famous Four, with one voice.

"We washed our faces in the bath-room, sir," said Johnny Bull.

"Any traces left there?" asked Loder sarcastically.

"N-no; we were careful to wash all the blacking out of sight."

"Enough!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Go back to bed at once, all of you! This matter will be thoroughly inquired into in the morning. Enough!"

And the Famous Four, with downcast faces, returned to the Remove dormitory.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 240.

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Who Were the Raiders.

VERNON-SMITH sat up in bed as the Removites came back into the dormitory. The light was on in the Remove dormitory. Half the Remove had gone out at the alarm, and they followed Harry Wharton & Co. back now. The Bounder looked at the returning juniors with an air of inquiry. Snoop and Stott were in bed, and apparently asleep. Billy Bunter was sitting up in bed, with his spectacles on, and a grin on his fat face.

"Well, what was the row about?" asked Vernon-Smith. "Was it burglars?"

"No," said Tom Brown. "Some kids have been raiding the tuckshop."

"Phew! Anything taken?"

"Yes; an awful lot of Mrs. Mimble's stock. They've roped in jam, and pickles, and cakes, and tarts and things. Quelch has made up his mind that it wasn't burglars."

"Well, I don't suppose burglars would burgle jam and buns," said Vernon-Smith. "Any of the raiders found out?"

"No; they had their faces blacked, and couldn't be recognised."

"Lucky for them," said the Bounder.

"Rot!" said Trevor. "We all know who they were, and Quelch knows. You fellows don't mean to keep it up now we're by ourselves, do you?"

Wharton turned upon Trevor savagely.

"Do you think it was us?" he demanded.

"Well, wasn't it?"

"No."

"Who was it, then?"

"I don't know. We went down to Loder's room and ragged him. That's all we did. We know nothing whatever about the raid."

"Well, if you say so, all right," said Trevor. "I don't want to doubt your word. But you must admit that it was a bit thick."

"Might have been fellows in some other Form," said Bob Cherry. "Whoever they were, they were rotten cads. Raiding a fellow's study is all very well; but raiding the tuckshop is simply stealing."

"Faith, and ye're right!" said Micky Desmond. "I don't believe it was anybody in the Remove at all. Did ye give Loder a hiding, darlings?"

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle.

"Sure, and he'll fix this thing on you, then, if he can."

"Yes; it's jolly unlucky that it happened the same night," said Frank Nugent ruefully. "Two parties out with blackened faces does sound rather steep."

"Jolly steep," said the Bounder. "I think Quelch will want a lot of convincing on that subject, and so will the Head."

"We are telling the truth!" said Bob Cherry angrily.

"Of course."

"Look here, Smithy—"

"I'm not denying that you're telling the truth," said Vernon-Smith, with a yawn. "But the truth sounds so jolly steep that the Head may not be able to swallow it, that's all. They say that truth is stranger than fiction. This bit certainly is."

Some of the Removites laughed. In spite of the denial of the Famous Four, a good many fellows inclined to the belief that they were the tuckshop raiders.

Harry Wharton fixed his eyes upon the Bounder.

"I have an idea of what's happened," he said, between his teeth. "Somebody else got to know that we were raiding Loder to-night, and fixed up this tuckshop raid to happen at the same time, with the intention of throwing the blame on us."

"What a deep scheme!" said the Bounder lazily. "I think you'll find it a bit difficult to make anybody believe that, too."

"I don't know. There's going to be an inquiry, and it may come out that other fellows were out of the dormitory as well as ourselves," said Harry. "You and Bolsover, anyway, will have to speak up."

"Leave me out of it," said Bolsover harshly. "I had nothing to do with it."

"You'll have to prove that."

"I haven't been out of bed."

"Well, if you haven't, it's all right. But somebody has been putting this on us, and the truth is going to be shown up," said Wharton. "It means a flogging for whoever raided the tuckshop, and we're not going to take it."

"It might have been some of the fags," suggested Bulstrode.

"I believe it was some of the Remove," said Harry—

"some fellows who knew about our idea of raiding Loder."

"But did anybody know about it?"

"Bunter did. He was listening at our door when we were talking it over yesterday," said Harry Wharton savagely.

"Ha, ha, ha! It couldn't have been Bunter raiding the tuckshop! It's just the place he would raid, but he hasn't the pluck."

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"Mrs. Mimble didn't mention anybody among the raiders wearing goggles," remarked Russell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I haven't been out of bed!" yelled Billy Bunter indignantly. "I say, Wharton, I think it's rotten of you to try to put this on me!"

"Don't be an ass!" growled Wharton. "I didn't mean that. But you must have blabbed to somebody else about what we were going to do."

"Oh, really—"

Wingate entered the dormitory.

"Bed—sharp!" he said tersely.

And the juniors turned in. Wingate put out the light and left them, but the Removites did not go to sleep. There was a buzz of talk for an hour or more. Bunter was the only fellow who did not join in it. Perhaps he did not want to be questioned. A deep and unmusical snore was the only answer to questions put to Bunter.

Harry Wharton thought the matter out as he lay wakeful.

That Bunter had told of his discovery, and that some of the juniors had taken advantage of the Famous Four's raid on Loder, seemed quite clear to him. He suspected both the Bounder and Bolsover, but he realised that there was no proof. Even if Bunter admitted having told them what he knew there was no proof that they had taken advantage of the knowledge to get themselves up in a similar disguise at the same time and raid the school shop. Vernon-Smith & Co. had certainly been in bed when the Famous Four left the dormitory. They were in bed when Harry Wharton & Co. returned. Wharton firmly believed that they had been out of bed in the interval—some of them—but it was evidently impossible to find proof of it. If Vernon-Smith had played this trick on his old enemies, he had covered up his tracks with his usual cunning.

It was a long time before Harry Wharton went to sleep. He was feeling very uneasy about the morrow. But for the untoward events at the tuckshop, the juniors might have kept the secret of the expedition to Loder's room. Now they had to face that, as well as the consequences of what they had not done. Ragging a prefect was a serious matter, though not so serious as purloining Mrs. Mimble's property.

When the rising-bell clanged out in the morning, and the Remove turned out, the Famous Four were looking much less cheerful than usual. They were generally very bright in the morning, but they looked worried now.

Bob Cherry groaned dramatically as he drew his boots on.

"Get ready for the giddy execution!" he said.

"I don't know," said Harry Wharton. "We're going to get the facts out if possible."

Bob Cherry looked round.

"If the fellows who raided the tuckshop are in this dorm., they ought to own up," he said. "Now, what offers?"

"The offerfulness is not terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You do it well," said Vernon-Smith admiringly.

Bob Cherry glared at him.

"I do what well?" he demanded.

"Keeping up that you didn't raid the tuckshop," said the Bounder coolly. "Only it beats me how you expect us to swallow it."

"Why, you rotter—"

"Oh, shut up, Smithy!" said Bolsover major sourly. "You know jolly well that they didn't do anything of the sort! Shut up!"

Vernon-Smith looked uneasy. Bolsover major had kept out of the raid, but he knew, of course, who the raiders were. And although Percy Bolsover was not a particularly scrupulous fellow, he was far from possessing the brazen nerve of the Bounder. He did not intend to give the Bounder away, but his look showed very plainly that he would not keep silent while Vernon-Smith was lying. The Bounder joined Bolsover as the latter strode out of the dormitory, and tapped him on the arm.

"What do you mean, Bolsover?" he muttered. "If you sneak about us—"

Bolsover interrupted him without ceremony.

"I'm not going to sneak," he said; "but it makes me sick to hear you lying. I'm not a saint myself, but a fellow ought to draw the line somewhere."

"Can't you mind your own business?" said the Bounder, between his teeth.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 240.

A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers:

"ROUGH ON RATCLIFF!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this Thursday's
number of "THE GEM" LIBRARY. One Penny.

"It is my business, when I know who really raided the tuckshop," said Bolsover. "And I tell you plainly, if you pile it on too thick I shall open my mouth on the subject."

And Bolsover swung away angrily. In the Remove dormitory, the Famous Four exchanged glances of surprise. The last thing they had expected was that Bolsover would speak in their favour.

"Wonders will never cease," murmured Frank Nugent. "I suppose Bolsover was one of them, eh?"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Or else he knows who it was," he said. "Bunter!"

Billy Bunter had dressed himself quickly, and he was sidling towards the door. He blinked round nervously as Wharton called to him.

"Hullo!" he said.

"Whom did you tell yesterday about what you heard in our study?"

"Nobody. I hope you don't think I would tell after I promised not to?" said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"You told somebody," said Harry savagely.

"I decline to enter into a discussion on the subject," said Bunter, very loftily. "If you can't take my word, I've nothing more to say."

Wharton made a stride towards him, but the Owl of the Remove dodged out of the dormitory and ran, and did not stop till he was safe in the Close.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows.

"SMITHY, old man—"

Vernon-Smith scowled at Bunter. He was not feeling in a good humour that morning. His scheme had worked very well—better, indeed, than he had anticipated, for he had not foreseen that the Famous Four would be drawn to the tuckshop by Mrs. Mimble's screams, after she had seen the supposed burglars. That incident had had the effect of completing the case against them, as the inquiry upon the spot had made it necessary for them to admit that they had been out of the dormitory, with their faces blacked. But in spite of the success of his plot, the Bounder was feeling uneasy. He was uneasy lest Bolsover should speak incautiously, and the Remove bully seemed to find some pleasure in leaving him in doubt.

"What do you want, Bunter?" he snapped.

"Tuck!" said Billy Bunter.

"What?"

"Halves!"

"What are you talking about?"

Billy Bunter winked.

"It's all right," he said, reassuringly. "Nobody can hear us. What have you done with the grub?"

"What grub?"

"Oh, don't be funny," said Bunter, peevishly. "The grub you raided from Mrs. Mimble's last night. I want my whack!"

"It was Wharton—"

"Yes; that will do for Mr. Quelch," said Bunter, "but it won't do for me. You knew Wharton was going to raid Loder with blacking on his mug, and you and Snoop and Stott blacked your mugs, and raided the tuckshop at the same time."

Vernon-Smith forced a laugh.

"You have queer ideas, Billy," he said. "What put that into your head?"

"It's a fact."

"Not at all. It was Wharton raided the tuckshop, and I knew nothing about it till they came back to the dorm.," explained the Bounder. "I had forgotten what you told me yesterday about them."

"My word!" said Bunter. "I've heard chaps tell whoppers before, but you are a coughdrop, Smithy. You don't even turn red."

"You cheeky young rotter—"

"Oh, draw it mild. I know that you and Snoop were out, instead of being in bed; and there was a third chap, too. I didn't see him clearly because I'm a little short-sighted. But I saw you and Snoop plainly enough."

The Bounder caught his breath.

"You saw us?"

"Yes," said Bunter, with a nod.

"When?"

"Last night, when Mrs. Mimble was squalling," said Bunter. "I woke up along with the other fellows, you see, and wondered what the row was about. Everybody rushed downstairs excepting Bolsover and me—"

"I didn't," said Vernon-Smith. "I didn't get up at all." Bunter chuckled.

"No, I know you didn't," he agreed, "because you weren't in bed. After the fellows had buzzed downstairs, you three came into the dorm. You'd been waiting up the passage to sneak in quietly."

"You were dreaming!"

"No, I wasn't dreaming," said Bunter. "I had my eyes open. Only I didn't have my glasses on, of course, so I didn't see very clearly. But I recognised you and Snoop, because you had to pass close to my bed to get to your own. I suppose the other fellow was Stott. And I know why Bolsover didn't get up and rush downstairs with the rest. It was because he knew jolly well that there weren't any real burglars, only you and Snoop and Stott raiding the tuckshop. Isn't that so?"

"You fat cad—spying as usual!"

"Well, I couldn't help being awake, could I?" said Bunter indignantly; "and I didn't say anything then. I kept it dark, didn't I?"

"You were mistaken. You—you see, we were first out of the dorm," Vernon-Smith explained, "and—and we came back before the other fellows, that's all."

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, you fat idiot?"

"It won't wash, Smithy. You see, all the fellows were out of the dorm. in two or three minutes, most of 'em only half dressed. You and the other two were dressed up to the chin, when you came in, and you undressed as quick as anything to get into bed again. If you'd only got up when old Mumble screamed you wouldn't have had time to put all those things on. I thought it all out before I went to sleep."

Vernon-Smith clenched his hands. Billy Bunter, at that moment, was very near to being rolled in the grass and hammered severely. But the Bounder realised that it would not do to make an enemy of Bunter. The fat junior held his fate in the hollow of his fat hand. Bunter watched his face with an irritating grin.

"Don't you touch me," he said. "If you do, I'll go straight to Mr. Quelch and tell him that you were out of the dormitory. In fact, I don't know that I oughtn't to go to him now and tell him. It's really my duty to do so."

"If you sneak about me——"

"Well, be reasonable, then. You've raided the tuckshop, and I want my whack. Where is the stuff?"

"I tell you—hold on! Where are you going?"

"I'm going to see Mr. Quelch."

"Stop!"

"Where's the stuff, then?"

"It's in the monk's cell, in the cloisters," muttered Vernon-Smith, helplessly. "Keep it dark."

Bunter grinned.

"I'll keep it dark," he said. "What-ho!"

And the Owl of the Remove started at a run for the Cloisters. In two minutes he was seated in the old cell there, and feasting to his heart's content upon the contents of the cricket-bag.

Vernon-Smith remained, with a moody brow. Snoop and Stott joined him in the Close, and both regarded him with curiosity.

"Anything up?" asked Snoop uneasily.

"Yes," growled the Bounder. "Bunter knows."

"Oh, my hat!"

"The fat cad was awake, and watching us when we came in," muttered the Bounder. "He's made me tell him where the loot is, and he's gone for it."

"My word! He won't leave a crumb for us," exclaimed Stott, in alarm.

"Oh, never mind that," said the Bounder. "He can have the tuck so long as he holds his tongue. That's what I'm anxious about."

"Well, if he has the stuff he's made a party to the bizney," said Snoop. "If it comes out, he'll get as much as we do."

Vernon-Smith looked relieved.

"Good; that's true. He'll have to keep mum for his own sake."

"We'd better go and have some of it," said Stott. "It's not safe to leave it with Bunter."

"Safer to leave it where it is," said Vernon-Smith. "One can't be too careful."

Stott shook his head obstinately.

"What's the good of raiding the tuckshop and letting Bunter have all the loot?" he demanded. "You did it to score off Wharton—but I want the grub. I'm not going to let Bunter scoff it all."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said the Bounder testily.

"I'm jolly well going to have my whack!"

And Stott started off towards the Cloisters to save a part, at least, of the loot from the Owl of the Remove. He knew Bunter. Snoop, after a moment's hesitation, followed him. He did not feel any more disposed than Stott to lose the fruits of the raid.

The Bounder went moodily into the house. Harry

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

Wharton & Co. were in the hall, and the Bounder gave them a scowl. He realised that he was treading on very thin ice now, and that his success was by no means so certain as it had seemed to him the previous night. He remembered, a little too late, the old saying that the best laid schemes of mice and men gang off agley.

Mr. Quelch passed the Famous Four on his way to the dining-room for breakfast.

"You will come with me to the Head's study after breakfast, you four juniors," he said curtly.

"Yes, sir," said the Co.

They followed Mr. Quelch disconsolately into the dining-room.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Stolen Goods.

MR. QUELCH sat at the head of the Remove table. The Remove had all come in with one exception. Mr. Quelch was a very exact and punctilious master, and he was always annoyed if a member of his Form was late for meals. Certainly Billy Bunter had never offended in that way before, and as Bunter was the fellow who had not turned up to breakfast his absence was all the more remarkable. For Bunter to be late for a meal was a very remarkable phenomenon.

"Where is Bunter?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

Nobody answered. Vernon-Smith compressed his lips, but did not speak. He knew very well where Bunter was. He was feasting on the unlimited supplies in the cricket-bag in the Cloisters, and he had been too busily engaged to hear or heed the breakfast-bell. It was very like Bunter to draw attention to himself at the very moment when it was most injudicious to do so.

"Does anyone know where Bunter is?" asked Mr. Quelch.

No answer.

"Wharton, please go and look for Bunter."

Vernon-Smith rose quickly. If Harry Wharton looked for Bunter, and found him, the secret would be out with a vengeance.

"Shall I go, sir?" asked the Bounder. "I think I know where he is."

"Then why did you not reply when I asked the question?" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"I—I was just thinking, sir——"

"You may go, Smith."

"Yes, sir."

The Bounder quitted the dining-room. He returned in five or six minutes, bringing the Owl of the Remove with him. There was a smear of jam on Billy Bunter's fat face, and his countenance had the shiny appearance that followed a big feed. He grunted as he sat down at the table. Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes upon him.

"You are late, Bunter!" he rapped out.

"I—I'm sincerely sorry, sir," stammered Bunter.

"Where have you been?"

"In—in—in the Cloisters, sir."

"Indeed! And what occupied you so much in the Cloisters that you could not come in to breakfast when the bell rang?"

"I—I didn't hear the bell, sir."

"Are you growing deaf, Bunter?"

"N-n-no, sir."

"Then why didn't you hear the bell?"

"I—I was thinking over my lessons, sir," said Bunter.

Mr. Quelch stared at him. This statement was so extraordinary that the Remove grinned from one end of the table to the other. Billy Bunter gave as little thought as possible to his lessons, even in the class-room; and out of that apartment he was never known to waste a thought on them if he could help it.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I am glad to see that you are making a new departure, Bunter, and I hope your explanation is true. Take fifty lines."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

Billy Bunter began his breakfast. Breakfast was a substantial meal enough at Greyfriars, and Billy Bunter was the only fellow who did not find it big enough. The fellows were allowed to bring in anything they liked to the meal, and they often provided themselves with pots of jam, or sausages, or saveloys.

Whenever Billy Bunter was in funds, or when he had been upon a successful borrowing expedition, he brought in extra supplies, and always finished them up on the spot. He was not supposed to be in funds just now, but he had evidently brought in supplies. His pockets were all bulging out, and he proceeded to unload them upon the table.

Vernon-Smith watched him in alarm. Billy Bunter declined to meet his eyes. He put half a dozen ham pies and veal patties on his plate, and began to eat them with

great relish. When they were gone, a bag of tarts came out from under his jacket, and he extracted a cake from a bulging pocket.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Whom has Bunter been robbing?"

"The robfulness must have been terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Is it possible that the esteemed Bunter had an honourable hand in raiding the tuckshop of the estimable Mrs. Mimble?"

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed as he watched the fat junior. He glanced at Vernon-Smith, and read in his face the alarm he vainly tried to disguise.

From another pocket Billy Bunter produced a bottle of preserved fruits, and still the supply seemed unexhausted. Wharton leaned over the table.

"Where did you get those things, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"Eh? They're mine," he said.

"But where did you get them?"

"Bought them, of course!" said Bunter. "Do you think they were given to me?"

"When did you buy them?"

"Oh, just now!" said Bunter airily. "The fact is, I've had a postal-order, you know."

"Have you?" said Wharton grimly. "As the post isn't in yet, I don't know how you could have received it."

"I—I mean last night," said Bunter.

"Last night you tried to borrow some money of me, because you said a postal-order you were expecting hadn't come."

"Oh, that—that was another postal-order!" said Bunter feebly.

"Did Mrs. Mimble cash the postal-order?" went on Wharton mercilessly. "You certainly haven't been down to the post-office."

"Yes, she did."

"This morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good! I will ask her after breakfast."

Bunter blinked at him in alarm.

"Look here, Wharton, I—I in fact, you see, it wasn't exactly a postal-order. I—I happened to find some money in an old pocket; that's how it was."

"You are lying!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"What is that? What is that?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch testily. "Wharton—"

Harry Wharton stood up, and turned towards the Form-master.

"If you please, sir, I think Bunter ought to be made to explain where all these things came from. He's loaded up with tuck, and he says he bought it at the tuckshop this morning. We know he hadn't any money."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch, glancing at the fat junior.

"Indeed! Bunter, stand up!"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

Billy Bunter stood up in dismay.

"Turn out your pockets."

"Oh, sir!"

"Obey me!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Ye-e-e-es, sir," spluttered Bunter.

He turned out his pockets. It was amazing the amount of eatables he had contrived to cram into them. After all he had eaten, they still made quite a pile upon the breakfast-table.

"Do you suggest, Wharton, that those things are probably what were taken from the tuckshop last night?" demanded Mr. Quelch. "Is that what you mean?"

"Yes, sir," said Wharton firmly.

"Very well. Bunter, where did you get those things?"

"I—I—I bought them, sir."

"Where?"

"At—at—at the tuckshop, sir."

"Did you pay for them?"

"Yes—no, sir."

"Yes or no?"

"Yes, sir!" stammered Bunter desperately.

"Very well. I will send Wingate to inquire of Mrs. Mimble if you have made purchases at the tuckshop this morning; that will settle the matter."

Billy Bunter almost collapsed.

"I—I—I— If you please, sir, I—I forgot," he stammered. "I—I bought these things yesterday, sir, and—and kept them by me."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "What a stunner! As if Bunter could keep grub by him without scoffing it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sternly. "Bunter, it is impossible that you could have forgotten that. You are not speaking the truth, Bunter."

"Oh, sir! I—I'm a very truthful chap, sir! I often get into trouble just through speaking the truth, sir."

"You will get into trouble if you do not speak it now," said Mr. Quelch. "I am convinced that you did not purchase those things at Mrs. Mimble's. Are you willing to adhere to your statement if I send for Mrs. Mimble and question her?"

Bunter sank into his chair. He knew that Mrs. Mimble, of course, would remember perfectly well that he had not purchased the articles. Indeed, it was quite possible that she would recognise them as part of the goods stolen the previous night.

"Stand up, Bunter!" snapped the Remove-master.

Bunter stood up feebly, his knees knocking together.

"Now, Bunter, as you did not purchase those things kindly explain where you obtained them," said Mr. Quelch.

Bunter blinked helplessly at Vernon-Smith. But the Bounder could not help him now. Vernon-Smith kept his eyes sullenly upon his plate.

"Answer me, Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I—"

"You cannot explain, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Certainly, sir. I—I—I—"

"Did you share in the raid on the tuckshop last night, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir!" yelled Bunter, in alarm. "I didn't—I wasn't—I never—"

"Did you obtain those things from the persons who raided the tuckshop?"

"Yes, sir—no, sir—I—I mean—"

"Who were they?"

"I don't know, sir. I wasn't awake at the time, and I never saw them come back into the dorm," groaned Bunter. "I—I don't know anything about the matter, sir."

Mr. Quelch was on his feet now, his face very grim. Masters and boys at the other tables were looking curiously towards the Remove table now. Billy Bunter was the cynosure of all eyes, and he was crimson, and had completely lost his wits by this time. His blinking at the Bounder for help was really pathetic.

"You saw them come back into the dormitory?" said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir—I mean no, sir; certainly not! Besides, I had my glasses off, and I couldn't recognise them, sir."

"Who were they?"

"I—I don't know, sir. I couldn't possibly say."

"Were their faces blackened when they came back?"

"Oh, no, sir. They had washed it off."

"All of them?"

"Yes, sir."

"How many were there of them?"

"Three, sir—I—I mean—I—I don't know—"

"Three!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Not four! When did they come back into the dormitory, Bunter?"

"Just after the fellows had gone down, sir—"

"Then they were not Wharton and his companions who

(Concluded on page 26.)

NEXT TUESDAY:

COKER MINOR, SIXTH-FORMER!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

OUR THRILLING NEW SERIAL STORY. START THIS WEEK!

TWICE ROUND THE GLOBE!

THE STORY OF THE
GREAT MAN-HUNT
BY SIDNEY DREW



Ferrers Lord, millionaire, and owner
of the Lord of the Deep.



Prince Ching-Lung, adventurer, conjurer and
Ventriloquist.



Nathan Gore, jewel collector
and multi-millionaire,
Ferrers Lord's terrible rival.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

"BY FOUL MEANS OR FAIR, I'LL WIN."

Nathan Gore, millionaire and jewel-collector, clenched his hands furiously and raved like a madman on the deck of the liner Coronation. He had started specially from America in order to be present at the sale-room in London where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," was to be put up for auction. "A telegram for Mr. Gore," a voice rang out through the darkness. The American was told the message, and as he listened, his face came over deathly pale, and he gave vent to a terrible oath. The message was: "Ferrers Lord purchased 'The World's Wonder' privately. No bidders. Price unknown." "I'll win yet," shrieked the man. "By foul means or fair, I'll win!"

"THE WORLD'S WONDER."

In the magnificent drawing-room of Ferrers Lord's house in Park Lane was assembled a varied collection of individuals. First of all there was the celebrated millionaire himself, and close to him sat Ching-Lung, a Chinaman, busily engaged in making paper butterflies. Hal Honour, the great engineer, was sipping tea, and Rupert Thurston yawned in a chair. "How much did you pay for that great diamond?" presently asked the latter. The millionaire smiled. "Money and fair words, Rupert," he replied. "By the way, you have not seen it yet?" The priceless gem passed from hand to hand. A thousand fires burned in its crystal heart; a thousand colours, ever changing, leaped from every facet. "I guess it would have been more money and less fair words if old Gore had turned up," remarked Ching-Lung sagely.

"I'LL TAKE THE CHALLENGE!"

The millionaire's house was wrapped in silence. A faint light shone from the drawing-room. Ching-Lung pushed open the door, then a cry broke from him. A man lay face downwards on the floor. There was a ghastly crimson stain on his collar. The man was Ferrers Lord. "Ching—the diamond!" came in a hoarse voice. Ching opened the drawer which Lord indicated, but there was no diamond there. But a message had been left behind: "To Ferrers Lord,—Knowing that you would not sell 'The World's Wonder,' I have taken it. Do your worst. I defy you. The stone is mine.—Nathan Gore." The millionaire rose to his feet. "I take the challenge, Ching," he said. "I'll hunt him down and win back my diamond." He begins the chase after the diamond thief, and rushes across Germany into Russia in a special train, taking with him a number of the crew of the Lord of the Deep, which vessel has been destroyed by Nathan Gore.

They are not able to overtake Gore, however, and when they reach the estate of Prince Miguel Olenorff, the prince invites them to stay at the mansion. Ferrers Lord, thinking that Nathan Gore is in hiding there, accepts. After a stay of a few days, Nathan Gore escapes, and continues his mad flight through Russia to the Black Sea. Ferrers Lord follows, and they take a boat, on arriving, to pursue Gore, who has caught the packet steamer to Constantinople. The boat they hire is an old one, but Hal Honour puts it at its best speed, at a great risk of bursting the boilers, and they have hope of overhauling Gore at Constantinople. In spite of the peril, the irrepressible Ching-Lung cannot refrain from playing a practical joke upon Prout, Barry & Co., but he is caught in the act, and, by way of punishment, is trussed up to the rail of the ship between two planks, like a human sandwich, with a bell tied to his pigtail. Fastening a thread to the bell, Prout gives it a pull, and a wild clang rings out upon the dark, foggy night. "Full speed astern!" yells Ferrers Lord, under the impression that the noise comes from another vessel. Alarmed at what they have done, Prout and his chums slip back to bed, and pretend to be fast asleep.

(Now go on with the story.)

Sandwich a la Chinese and a Plumduff a la Eskimo—Mopped.

There was a noise of stamping on deck, yells in Russian, Turkish, English, and a mixture of the three languages. There was a scramble for lifebelts, flares, and loose cargo—anything that would keep a man afloat. The siren roared, whistles pealed, and the Muscovy geese, imprisoned in a large hencoop, set up a quacking loud enough to have been heard in Constantinople.

The dreaded rending crash, the awful jar, and the wild confusion of a collision at sea in a fog did not occur. No headlight loomed up; no siren answered their own. Rupert loosed the siren-cord, at which he had been wildly dragging, and silence fell again.

"She must have slipped past us!" said the millionaire.

"Perhaps it was only some wretched rowing-boat, and we ran her down without knowing it," suggested Rupert.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 240.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"COKER MINOR, SIXTH-FORMER!"

"We must have felt her. Is that you, Hal? Can you see anything?"

"Not even my own hand when I held it up!" answered the engineer. "What's all the fuss?"

They failed to explain the mysterious bell. The millionaire's idea was the most feasible, but it was extraordinary that the vessel had not answered them. It was certainly no bell fixed on a buoy to mark rock or shoal. The water was too placid to ring a bell, and an excellent new chart showed a clear course. Ching-Lung might have explained the mystery had he chosen. Relying on Gan-Waga, and playing "possum," he thanked his stars that he had so far avoided discovery.

The conspirators breathed again, and put their noses out of the bunks.

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

"Troth," said Barry, breathing hard, "that lot made me palpitate!"

"By hokey, I turned cold all over!" said Prout.

"And I quaked like a pineapple-jelly wi' a bad dose of malharia fever!" added Joe, blowing his nose. "They've cooled down, any'ow. Question number one on the book is this—What's the next move to be?"

Barry scrambled down, and also blew his nose.

"Lit us thought harrd wid our thinkers!" he murmured. "Is it roight that we've got avin wid the prince over that doin' in the forest?"

"Not by lumps!" said Prout. "Ages of torture wouldn't wipe that go out!"

"Thin, frinds that have suffered," said Barry, "in the language of Shakespears, who's dead, 'wance more to the breach'! Bein' a man of brain, Oi knows the wurld. Oi knows that av Ching-Lung was found loike that ut wud be wurse than batin' him wid loive and wrigglin' shnakes! To the breach, sez Oi—to the——"

"Sh-h!"

Barry's lips compressed. A match flickered for a second in the distance, and revealed the form of Gan. He was on his hands and knees.

"He's guessed about the cotton," whispered Prout, "and the fat warmint is lookin' for it."

"And Oi'm lookin' for him!" muttered Barry. "Up wid yez, Joe, and guarrd the rear. He darren't yell for puddin'. We'll advinee on our hambones in dithly soilenoe, and thrup the arrch-thraitor. Hoy! Be careful wid the cotton!"

Joe was up the steps, across the deck, and down the other steps in a twinkling. He nearly came down on the back of his neck, but his hands found the rail just in time, and prevented a fall. Gan-Waga, dreading to stumble over the cotton and raise another alarm by ringing the bell, crawled along feeling the floor. He had heard the whispered remarks about the bell, and he was pretty certain that it was suspended from Ching's pigtail.

Gan rumbled with laughter. In spite of his affection for the prince, he appreciated an occasional downfall. Still, as he had shared part of the fun, it was his duty to help his accomplice. He was afraid to strike another match, and he was very much afraid of the cotton. He passed his hands here and there, occasionally discovering a terrified and scuttling cockroach, but otherwise the floor was as bald as Prout's head, though very dirty.

Suddenly Gan's outstretched forefinger touched something that puzzled him. It was a smooth and rather damp object. He ran his palm over it, and found it of oval shape. It was slightly warm, too, and Gan paused, trying to think what it could be. Before he could think any more, his throat was seized, and a hand was pressed over his mouth.

As a matter of fact, the smooth, round, damp, and slightly warm object was the bald head of T. Prout, Esq.

"By hokey, Barry," said the steersman, "I've fun' it!"

"And may Oi ax, frind of me hearrt, what yez are doin' wid ut at this moment?"

"Comrade, I'm kneelin' on the bit of pigeon-pie it calls a chast."

"Good!" grinned Barry. "Sthrange ut av ut avin winks!"

A soft whistle heralded the approach of Joe. Gan was threatened with blood-curdling tortures if he moved or spoke. Joe fetched more rope and a hammock. Gan was rolled up inside, and securely fastened. He looked exactly like a long pudding ready to be boiled.

"Take him up gently," said Barry, "and carry him into the galley."

"Why the galley, Irish?"

"Whoy, jest to label him!" said Barry. "There's some tar near ut, and a foire. Niver question the gent wid the brains, who lades the way to glory."

"Take him up tinderly,
Lift him wid care,
Fashioned so slenderly,
Fat and so fair!"

Bring him along now, me Bunsey Boys, and don't tickle his fate. Oi want to sarve him up at a big dinner. We've got the mate, and whoy shouldn't we have the puddin'?"

Gan was borne into the galley. To create an uproar would be to betray Ching-Lung. The fire was still alight, but it was some time before they found the tar. They melted it on the stove, and, using a stick as a pencil, Barry wrote in large letters on the human bundle:

"Very Plummy Duff.
A La Eskimo!"

The result was received with suppressed laughter.

"Have yez broke the thread off, Joey?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 240.

A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers:

"ROUGH ON RATCLIFF!"

"Yes," said Joe, producing the reel.

Barry pocketed it and looked wise. On a sheet of brown paper he traced another legend:

"Real Chinese Sandwich.

A.D. 1836.

Very High Indeed.

Warranted to Hum.

No Mustard Required with this Lot!"

Then Barry smeared the back of the sheet with tar, and smiled gently.

"The game goes loike this," he explained. "Oi'll take a lantern wid a cloth to douse ut, and Oi'll toie the cotton to the cloth so that Oi can pull ut off. Then Oi'll label Mither Ching—yez twig? Bedad, afther that we'll ring the bell, and invoite 'em all to supper!"

Prout and Joe shook hands with him warmly.

"D'ye think there'll be a row?" asked Joe, with some doubt.

"Not much, you bet!" chuckled Prout. "We've got our tale agen' him, ain't us? Lift, old bradawl and tintacks—lift!"

They waited for Barry to light a lantern and muffle it in an old black apron. Then they followed him into the fog and gloom. Gan was silent and sad. They had not let him hear the details of the plot. Fortune was with them. Barry felt his way along the scruppers, and pasted his notice to Ching-Lung's boarded back. They hitched Gan to the lower iron rail, and the lamp was placed so that one pull would remove the cloth. Two minutes later all was ready.

"Tell me, darlint," said Barry, stifling a chuckle, "can yez play 'Willio come home to yez supper, there's a kipper awaitin' for thec,' on that?"

"Easy!" chirped Joe. "What can you play on yours?"

"There's a loight in the winder for me," grinned O'Rooney. "Oi'm waitin'. Pull for yer loife, baby moine!"

Clang, clang, clang! Clatter-clang! Clang-clatter! Clang, clang, clang!

The amount of noise Joe got out of the bell was astonishing.

"Muffins, more muffins!" said Joe. "All fresh, and warranted made wi'out sordust!"

Again there was a rush of footsteps across the deck. The cloth shot away, and the lantern flashed brightly, even in the fog. And then from above came peals and roars of laughter.

"Come on wid yez!" cried Barry. "Oi wudn't miss the joy and bliss for all the goold this worl'd can show, and Oi'll be shot and in the pit av Oi ain't there in half a mo'! Fut ut, Joe!"

They raced above. There was a ring of laughing men round the two objects. Thurston was shaking with mirth as the "plum-duff" wriggled and squirmed.

"Marey and mushrooms!" cried Barry. "Do me oies desave me, or am Oi dhramin' in me cot? Mither Rupert—Joe—Tom, what is ut? Am Oi goin' off it? Faal me pulse, somewan, and bring me a coolin' draught in a bucket. What is ut at all, at all?"

"I'll ring the bell, and see if anybody is at home!" said Prout.

He gave the pigtail a tug, and a muffled and wrath-choked voice said from between the boards:

"Prout, you pig, I'll—I'll— Oh, I'll—"

"Och," said Barry, "that sandwich must be a thriffo hoigh! Made in the year 1836—ch? What in the name of yer foive sinses, Mither Rupert, is a Chinese sandwich?"

"You'd better consult a cookery-book," said Rupert. "I assure you I can't tell."

"I've heard tell of Chinese crackers and Chinese ginger," said Joe.

"And Choinese crackers and Choinese lanterns," added Barry. "Boy the wan-oied pig of me Uncle Dennis, this is a baffler! And hero's another bag of mysthery intoirely! 'Very Plummy Duff, a la Eskimo. Oi wondher av there's any currants in ut!"

"Mo break you into bitses, Barry Rooney!" yelled the plum-duff.

"Yez have no raison to spake, pudden!" roared Barry. "Gintlemen and Mither Rupert, what shall we do wid these pervisions? To ate thim is quite impossible. Shud we dhrop thim overboard? Ax av he's sthll there, Tommy?"

Again Prout tugged at the pigtail.

"I'll murder you, Prout, I swear it!" roared the sandwich. And shrieks of laughter followed.

"Better got them out of the way, Barry," whispered Rupert. "The chief might interfere."

"Not for millions, sor!" answered Barry. "We'll git ourselves away furst and lave the meal to yer honour. Bhoys, 'tis toime to floy!"

They hastened below. Rupert had promised them a brief start before he uncaged the two lions. They made frantic efforts to barricade the door, and they were barely a second too soon. Something like a battering-ram struck it. "That's 'im!" chuckled Joe.

"Whisht!" said Barry loudly. "Was that the cat scratchin' to get in?"

"Cat be blowed!" answered Prout. "It's only a fly walkin' up the door!"

"Sounded a bit louder nor that to me," said Joe. "More like a mouse."

After that there was a brief stillness. Then came a heavy footfall, and the voice of Maddock was heard grunting and chuckling. Maddock's chuckle was hard to mistake.

"Here's old Ben!" said Joe. "I hope the prince has sheered off!"

"Hallo!" said Maddock, trying the door, "what's wrong? Let me in, lads!"

"Steady on, Benjamin!" said Prout. "Is the coast clear?"

"Clear of what?"

"Why, the prince! Didn't you twig what we did—hey?"

"I couldn't, wuss luck! I 'ad to stick to the wheel; but they telled me about it. Laugh? Ha, ha, ha, ha! 'Ere, let me in!"

Maddock began to rumble and roar like a high-pressure boiler.

"Have a squint round furst, darlint!" said Barry. "Yez niver know his thricks; and, faith, he'll be madder nor a woid bull wid a mouthful of snuff and a bunch of crackers tied to ut's tail!"

"Right, Irish!" growled the bo'sun.

His footsteps retreated, and they began to remove the barriers. Gradually the sound of his tread was heard again. Joe pulled down the lamp, but could not make it burn, so he lighted a wretched Russian-tallow dip.

"He's done a guy," said Maddock, "and I'll bet he's bad enough on it! Talk about a doin'! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Don't keep me out no longer, or I'll die of laughin' on the mat! Ha, ha, ha, ha! Let me in, boys! You didn't give him no soft-soap that time—eh?"

"He'll give us some when we meet!" grinned Joe. "Come in! Soft-soap—yes; he'll cover us with it!"

"He will—he will!" roared a voice like unto the voice of Ching-Lung. "Take it, brutes—take it!"

"I gives 'em plum duffers!" thundered Gan-Waga.

"Soak 'em, Gan!"

Maddock was at the wheel, and Maddock would remain at the wheel for another hour. Poor Joe opened the door. A mop, clammy and sticky from a dip in the soft-soap barrel, smote him on the face and stifled his yell of dismay and horror. In rushed Ching-Lung and the warlike Eskimo. Gan polished up Prout's bald head, and the prince had a small washing-day on Barry's features.

"Farewell!" grinned his Highness.

"Tooral-roo!" grinned Gan-Waga.

After their departure, Barry scooped the soap out of his hair, beard, and mouth, and uttered a hollow groan.

"To think of him bluffin' us loike that!" he sobbed, "and us takin' him for Maddock!"

"Ow, ow, ow!" moaned Joe. "I've swallowed a quart of it!"

"What's the use of thrying to do him?" went on Barry. "Ivry toime we gets fairly——"

"Mopped!" screamed the voices of Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga from the darkness and the fog without.

Ashore in the Sultan's City—A Glimpse of Nathan Gore—The Wrong Man.

Most of the cases of isinglass and caviare had gone to feed the furnaces before the pilot-boat ran out. They were not very much surprised to find the pilot a Scotsman. The moment he was within hail Ferrers Lord called to know whether the steamer from Poti had arrived.

"No!" was the answer. "She's eight hours overdue; but eight years isn't much in these waters. We do travel!"

The pilot came aboard and took the wheel. They hove to to await the arrival of the medical and Customs' officers. A few notes carefully distributed among the greedy officials brought the vessel into the beautiful Bosphorus.

"Now, old diamond-chaser," said Ching-Lung flippantly, "what's our port—Therapia, Pena, Scutari, or which?"

"There are only two," answered the millionaire—"Scutari or Constantinople. The packet stops at Scutari. We shall go on to the Sultan's city."

"And if Nathaniel Gore—oh, sweet name, Gore!—gets off at Scut?"

"We shall hear about it," said Ferrers Lord. "It's hard to hide in Scutari."

They were crawling along, followed by boats manned by red-capped boatmen, who wanted to sell them all kinds of merchandise, from canaries to carpets. They made such a noise that Barry wanted to get them on deck in batches of

EVERY
TUESDAY.

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six at a time and fight them. The vessel left a smell behind her that set every dog sniffing the air, for isinglass and hides do not burn without an odour similar to that of a glue-factory. Towards evening they were before beautiful Constantinople, once the capital of the civilised world, still a city of palaces, but a city of corruption.

Here again the health officer and the Customs' officials made their appearance, and it took a long time to get rid of them. Pedlars swarmed over the deck, thrusting their wares on everyone, and pocketing any small article they could find. The voice of the muezzin, calling the faithful to worship, sounded from a hundred domes.

"Who's going ashore?" asked Rupert.

They were all willing. After a deal of haggling, two boats were procured. They landed on the quay.

"If you don't mind, Rupert," said Hal Honour, "you might come with me. I've got some English friends here."

"With pleasure, Hal."

The engineer looked inquiringly at Ching-Lung.

"No, my son," said the prince, shaking his head. "You don't want the whole tribe with you. They'd think you'd brought a boarding-school. You pay your visit, and I'll look after the kids. Sling your pair of hooks, and be happy."

"Salaam! Me am a great good guide. Me talk him Engleesh grammatic. Salaam! All the cheap dear sights of Constantinople gived away for a gift. Noble Engleeshmans, Yussif Hamid will do you a treat for the small sum of starvation price. Salaam! He is the old firm, and his customer is the Duke of London and some more crowned heads. Look and read the glory they tell."

It was a little Turk, with a patch over his left eye, and he was touching the ground with his turban as he bobbed up and down. He pressed a few greasy letters in Ching-Lung's hand—testimonials from visitors for whom he had acted as guide.

Ching-Lung did not know the domed city. He glanced at one of the letters, and grinned.

"TESTIMONIAL.—Yussef Hamid is the dirtiest rogue unhung. He showed me round the city. I advise you to kick him.—G. ROBINSON SMITH."

Though the Turk could speak "Engleesh grammatic," he evidently could not read.

A second letter advised everybody to wring his neck, and a third, from a Yankee visitor, told them to "soak the little cuss."

Hamid did not get the job, although he warned them that they would be robbed, lacerated, and stabbed if they went alone.

All the same, they went, and had a splendid dinner at a French restaurant, the bill being paid by Ching-Lung. They kept to the wider streets, where there were European names over the shops, and where many European visitors and residents were driving and promenading in the cool of the evening.

Gan and Ching-Lung caused something of a sensation, especially when the Prince started a horrible dog-fight in the middle of a crowd. Of course, there were no dogs, but there might have been a pack of foxhounds by the way the people scattered.

"Let's have some coffee," suggested Prout; "I reckon it's good stuff in Turkey."

"O'i'm on ut!" said Barry.

Ching-Lung led the way, and they took their seats among the marble-topped tables of an out-door cafe.

"Come here, garcon! You ass—you idiot! Come, I tell you! I'll have your life! Will you obey me, sir? Garcon—garcon!"

They all seemed to be shouting at once to the poor waiter. Naturally, Ching-Lung was the culprit.

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25

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"COKER MINOR SIXTH-FORMER!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

The waiter stood dumbfounded until a dog behind him—an invisible dog—uttered a frightful yell. The horrified man howled with fear, and gained the top of a table with one leap. The pile of crockery he was carrying descended in an avalanche to the floor.

"Time to go," said Ching-Lung. "I'll pay the damage first, though, and see that the waiter doesn't get the sack."

Ching-Lung went in search of the proprietor, and managed to settle matters rather cheaply.

"We'd better get back to the ship now," said his Highness. "There's not much to do after dark."

"You buy me some cangles fust, hunk, Chingy?" pleaded Gan.

"If we can find a shop."

The shops appeared to retail everything except "cangles." They were not in the right district to purchase such articles. As they went on, the lights became fewer and the streets narrow.

"Right wheel, lads!" said Ching-Lung. "We're getting into the low part of the town. We'll have to give up the cangles, Ganus, till to-morrow."

"Hoo?" said Gan. "What dem? Oh, sausage—sausage!"

Turks do not eat pork themselves, but they do not mind selling it at a profit to those who do. Gan's heart was gladdened by the purchase of a large polony—red, fat, and shiny—and he went on his way rejoicing.

It was quite dark when they neared the sea. Numerous boats carrying lanterns were moving about. As they were pushing off there was a slight collision and a volley of Turkish abuse.

There was a European in the other boat. As it passed them shorewards the lantern flickered for an instant on the passenger's face, and Ching-Lung sprang to his feet.

The man was Nathan Gore, or else his ghost.

"Back—quick—to the shore!" gasped Ching-Lung.

He was out before the boat touched, and running across the dark quay. A sound of wheels reached him, and he knew he was too late. He remembered having seen a carriage standing there. He followed for a time, but was beaten by taking a wrong turn. Then he flung himself into the boat again.

"It was Gore," he said, in answer to the questions.

He told Ferrers Lord the news, and the millionaire smiled.

"He left the boat at Riva. I suppose," he said, "and took the ferry from Scutari. Are you sure there is no mistake, Ching?"

"Confident! I could not mistake him!"

"Was it a hotel carriage?"

"No, I think not. It was a closed brougham."

"Probably from the American Embassy," said Ferrers Lord. "We'll pay them a visit. A steamer leaves for Brindisi to-morrow. It is due to catch the P. & O. boat. He will travel by it, I expect. Come with me."

They landed again, and drove to the American Embassy. Ferrers Lord seemed to know everyone. They were courteously received, but the American representative could give them no information. Then they visited the head of the police. He promised to send men to all the hotels and report at once, and also to keep an eye upon the shipping-offices.

Hal Honour and Rupert did not turn up until early in the morning. About six o'clock the police-boat appeared, and a letter was handed to the millionaire. A man giving the name of Jones had booked for Brindisi in the steamer due to sail at midday. He called himself an American citizen, and his description tallied with that of Nathan Gore.

"Netted at last!" said Ferrers Lord.

The millionaire never hurried. Nathan Gore would probably only go aboard at the last moment. At twenty minutes to twelve exactly the millionaire, followed by Thurston, Ching-Lung, Prout, and Hal Honour mounted the ladder of the s.s. Bosphorus. An officer came to meet them.

"You have a gentleman here—a Mr. Jones?" said Ferrers Lord quietly.

"Then," drawled a voice, "I guess I'm that identical man."

They turned swiftly. It was not Nathan Gore; but it was almost his double. Ferrers Lord's eyes twinkled.

"Come below," he said, "and have some champagne."

"I guess I will, and I'll tell you something."

The defeat was bitter, but there was plenty of laughter.

"Wal," said Mr. Jones, "it seems you're after the old hoss. I picked him up in Warsaw, and we're a bit alike. I don't know what he'd done, but he paid me well to go with him to Baku. Then he sheered, long before we got thar. I should say about now, unless he didn't ketch the boat, he's makin' hot tracks down the Suez Canal."

"Prout," said the millionaire, "signal to the others to come aboard at once. We are going to Brindisi."

Ching-Lung's face fell, and Rupert groaned.

"Hang the miserable diamond!" thought the engineer.

"What a waste of time!"

(A splendid instalment of this thrilling serial again next Tuesday.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 240.

A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers:

"ROUGH ON RATCLIFF!"

THE TUCKSHOP RAIDERS.

Continued from page 22.

"No, sir—yes, sir—that is to say—"

"They were three Remove boys, but not Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, or Bull?" said Mr. Quelch. "And you saw them come back into the dormitory. What were their names?"

"I—I say, I—I didn't say so, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"Bunter, if you do not tell me the truth I shall take you before the Head at once. Tell me the names of the three boys who came back into the dormitory."

"It—it's no good, Smithy!" gasped Bunter. "You see he knows all about it! It's no good glaring at me—I can't help it! I don't know how he knows, but he does know—you can see that for yourself."

"Smith!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir?" said the Bunder, looking very pale.

"What do you know about this matter?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Did you tell Bunter where to find these stolen goods?"

"No, sir."

"Oh, really, Smithy!" gasped Bunter. "Didn't you tell me they were in the cricket-bag in the monk's cell in the Cloisters? Snoop and Stott jolly well know you did! That's where you put 'em last night!"

"Snoop! Stott! Stand up!" said Mr. Quelch. "I think we are getting at the truth now. You three boys raided the tuckshop last night, and Bunter discovered you, and you allowed him to take a share of the stolen goods—as the price of holding his tongue, I suppose."

"There! You see he knows it all!" said Bunter. "I—I hope you don't think I was to blame, sir. I just mentioned to Smithy, in a casual way, that Wharton was going to black his chivvy and pay Loder a visit. I never thought that Smithy would black his chivvy, too, and raid the tuckshop, and try to put it on to Wharton. You never know what Smithy's going to do, sir. He—he's dangerous."

"It—it was only a lark, sir," faltered Snoop, "and—and Smith led us into it, sir. I only looked upon it as a joke, sir."

"So d-d-did I," stuttered Stott. A harmless j-j-joke, sir."

"What have you to say, Vernon-Smith?" asked Mr. Quelch. "You have acted in a rascally way. Not only have you taken goods not belonging to you, but you have tried to throw the blame upon Wharton and his friends. Have you anything to say?"

The Bunder gritted his teeth. He was exposed now, with a vengeance, but he did not lose his courage. He was game to the last.

"Nothing, sir," he said. "I suppose I may as well own up, as these rotten funks have done so. We raided the tuckshop—that's all."

"Wharton, I am sorry you should have been suspected—you and your friends," said Mr. Quelch. "Your action in Loder's study was very unjustifiable, but under the circumstances, as you have been so nearly punished for what you did not do, I shall try to induce the Head to take a lenient view of that matter. As for you, Smith, Snoop, and Stott, you will follow me to the Head at once! Come!"

And Mr. Quelch rustled out of the dining-room, with the three young rascals at his heels, Snoop and Stott looking very unhappy, and Vernon-Smith sullen and defiant. Billy Bunter, much relieved at being passed over, sat down at the breakfast-table again.

"I—I say, you fellows," he remarked, "I—I'm glad Smithy's been bowled out. He's an awful rotter. Under the circumstances, I suppose there's no harm in my finishing these things."

And he finished them.

The interview of the tuckshop raiders with the Head was a very painful one—for them.

Snoop and Stott were caned severely; but the punishment of the Bunder, as the ringleader in the enterprise, was heavier. He was flogged by the Head, and there were very few who sympathised with him. Harry Wharton & Co. had five hundred lines each for their raid on Loder's study, but they did not mind that very much. They had got off cheaply, considering. Vernon-Smith had the additional pleasure of reimbursing Mrs. Mumble for her loss.

In the Remove Form-room that morning, three juniors sat through the lessons with anguished countenances. Vernon-Smith & Co. were suffering for their sins. But the Remove had no sympathy to waste upon the tuckshop raiders.

THE END.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this Thursday's number of "THE GEM" LIBRARY. One Penny.

My Readers' Page.



**OUR GRAND NEW
WEEKLY FEATURE
ON PAGE 28 AND
PAGES III. AND IV.
OF THE COVER.
SHOW YOUR FRIENDS
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NEXT WEEK'S STORY.

Next Tuesday's complete tale of Greyfriars School is a story of exceptional interest and unusual humour. As indicated in the title—

"COKER MINOR, SIXTH-FORMER!"

the younger brother of the big Fifth-Former, with whom Harry Wharton & Co. have had so many rubs, comes to the school, and proves himself to be the exact opposite of his major in almost every respect. The position which the younger Coker immediately takes in the great school is unprecedented for a new boy, and leads up to many curious situations. In

"COKER MINOR, SIXTH-FORMER!"

Frank Richards is seen at his best, and I anticipate that there will be a great run on next Tuesday's MAGNET Library, which will contain this grand and original story of school life. My readers are, therefore, once again warned to make a special point of remembering to order well in advance.

A LOYAL LONDONER'S LETTER.

The most pleasant of my daily tasks is always, to me, the examination of my morning postbag, which brings me day after day the most charming spontaneous letters of appreciation and encouragement from my staunch and true reader-chums in every part of the world. Sometimes that same postbag brings me letters of a different kind, it is true, which are not so pleasant to deal with; but this is, I suppose, only natural when one considers the vast number of boys and girls and grown-ups, young and old, who scan every issue of the "world-wide weekly," THE MAGNET Library. In reading letters of the unpleasant kind, however, I am heartened by the fact that they are far, far outnumbered by the other sort—by the kindly messages of goodwill and hearty support sent by my numberless loyal friends. I am printing below a typical spontaneous message of this sort from one of my many hundreds of London chums.

"Kensington.

"Dear Editor,—I am writing this letter to let you know what I think of THE MAGNET. I have taken in THE MAGNET from the very first number, and I have found it a very cheerful and bright paper. My friends also wish me to tell you that they think THE MAGNET a thoroughly ripping book, and will always read it. On wet or fine days, THE MAGNET is always a true friend. The stories are always excellent, and the paper is the best one a boy or girl could wish to read. I always give the MAGNETS I have read to boys who I know would like to read them, and nearly all of them have become regular readers. I might add that your companion paper, "The Gem" Library, is also an excellent paper. I will do my very best to make THE MAGNET an even more popular paper than it is by getting as many new readers as I possibly can. Wishing you and THE MAGNET every success, I remain, yours sincerely,

"EDWARD H."

Thank you, Master Edward H. It is to the generous help and good influence of fellows like you that THE MAGNET Library owes a large share of its unparalleled success.

TRICKS TO TEACH YOUR CAT.

Almost everyone likes to teach his or her dog at least a few simple tricks, but the cat is more often than not neglected entirely in this respect. As a matter of fact, pussy will be found to be very quick and intelligent, and, by the expenditure of nothing more than a great deal of patience and kindness, can be rendered quite accomplished in the number of pretty tricks she can be taught. A cat's education should really begin, of course, when it is young. A kitten can be taught to jump quite easily. Put down a saucer of milk, and, as puss makes for it, bend over it from behind, linking

your hands together so as to make a loop a few inches above the floor. The kitten will usually

Jump through the Loop

without hesitation to get at the milk, and will very soon learn to do so without any such attraction. The loop should then be made by holding your arms out sideways to your body, so that you form, roughly, the shape of the letter P. By gradually raising the height of the loop above the ground, you will soon teach pussy to make a clean spring through your arms when held at the full height of your shoulders. A small piece of fish, or some other dainty, should reward the kitten after each lesson, which should not last long enough to tire the pupil or make it indifferent.

A good way of practising a kitten in jumping is to tie

A Hare's Foot

to the end of a rod and line. Puss will jump up at it, and by raising the lure you can lead your pupil on to some surprising efforts. The hare's foot is also useful for teaching a cat to retrieve.

If the foot is thrown about the room, puss will go after it, and can be persuaded, with a little trouble, to bring it back to you each time. The retrieving trick, once it is thoroughly learnt, may give rise to some awkward situations at times, when, for instance, puss brings you

A Dead Mouse at Dinner-time

or at some equally inappropriate moment!

By attaching a piece of meat to the door-knocker you can teach the cat to

Knock at the Front Door.

Whenever puss succeeds in giving a rat-tat with the knocker, you must, of course, open the door to it at once. By gently propping a kitten up against the wall, and holding the hand lightly under its front paws, it may be taught to beg as well as a dog; while it is a very easy matter to train a cat to come when whistled for when once you have thoroughly gained its affections.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"The Daredevil" (New South Wales).—Thanks for your very interesting letter, and for the suggestion it contained, which I will bear in mind.

C. Bedford (Canada).—I am sorry I cannot insert your Back Numbers advertisement, as this column was closed at the time I received your letter.

Australian Reader.—Please accept my best thanks for your letter, and for the great help you have given me in trying to further popularise "The Magnet" Library.

Will the following readers please accept my best thanks for very interesting letters received during the last few weeks: J. Walker, Australia; A. C., Hendon; J. Jones, Liverpool; A Boy Chum, Yorkshire.

C. E. M. (Thornaby).—The winner of the "Daily Mail" £10,000 Flight was M. Beaumont.

P. H. (Sheffield).—Thanks for your postcard. I am sorry space does not allow of my publishing it.

L. F. H. (Cradley Heath).—The only way you can obtain a correspondent is by answering some of the advertisements appearing each week in "The Gem" Library Free Correspondence Exchange.

Bessie B. (Dublin). Thanks for your nice, long letter. As regards your request for a correspondent, see reply to L. F. H., above.

Ardent Girl Reader (E. M.).—Thanks for appreciative letter. Glad to hear I have such strong supporters in you and your brother.

"Interested" (Bradford).—Several 3d. books of Tom Merry & Co., but none of Harry Wharton & Co., have been published. The former are now unobtainable from this office, being out of print.

R. T. (Hove).—The issues you inquire about are now out of print, and cannot be obtained from this office.

THE EDITOR.

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

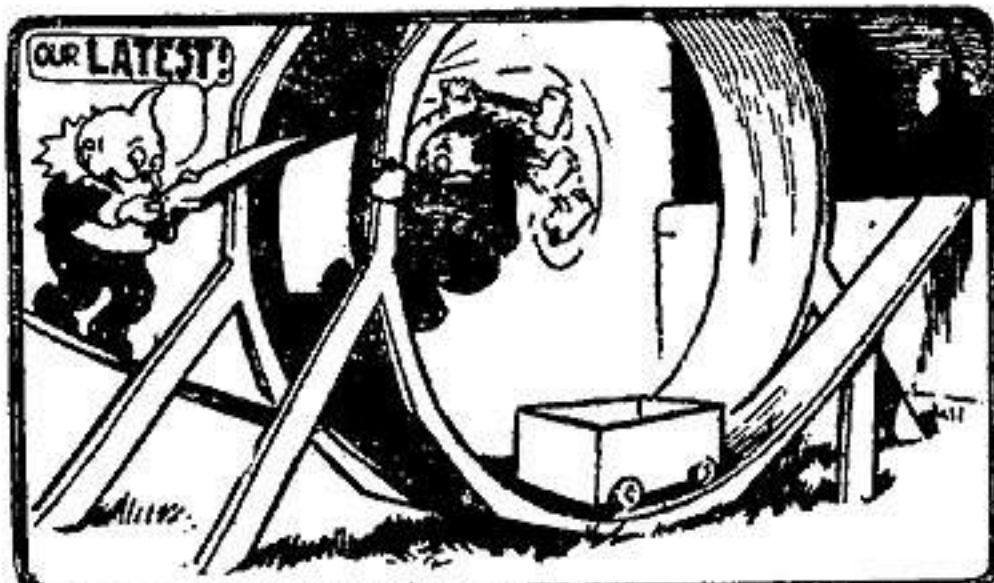
NEXT
TUESDAY:

"COKER MINOR. SIXTH-FORMER!"

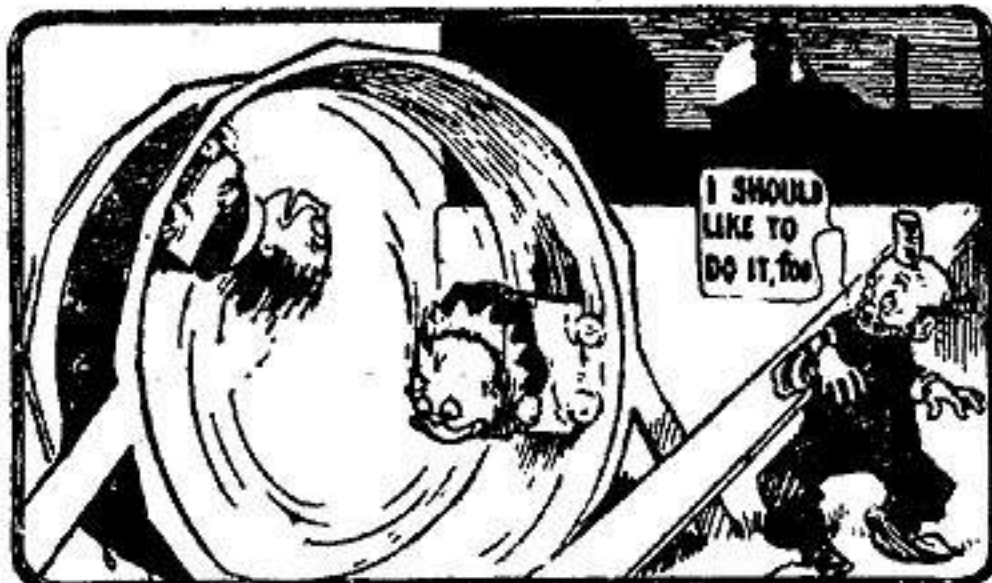
OUR SPLENDID NEW FEATURE!

SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

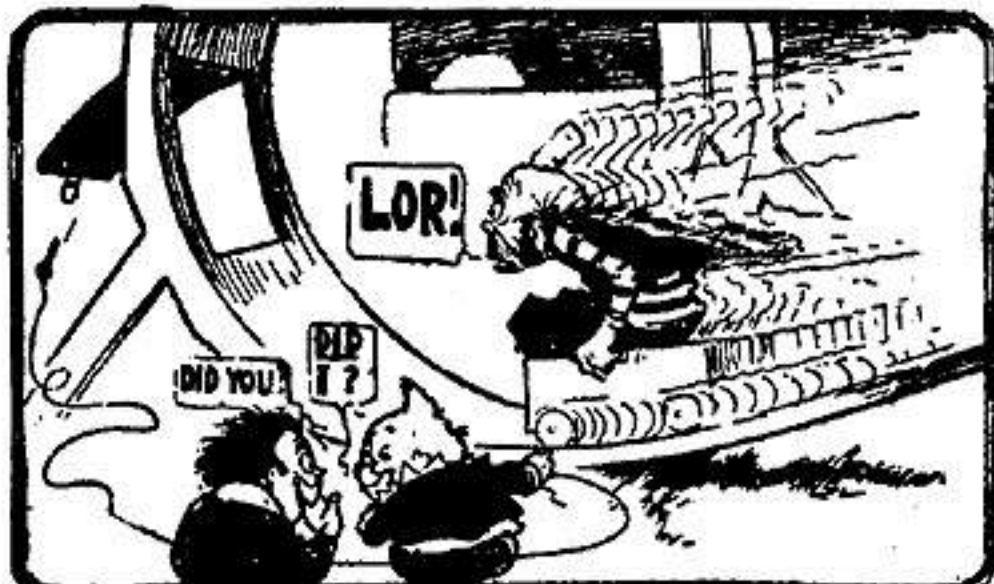
THE BUNSEY BOYS—AND IKE—LOOP THE LOOP!



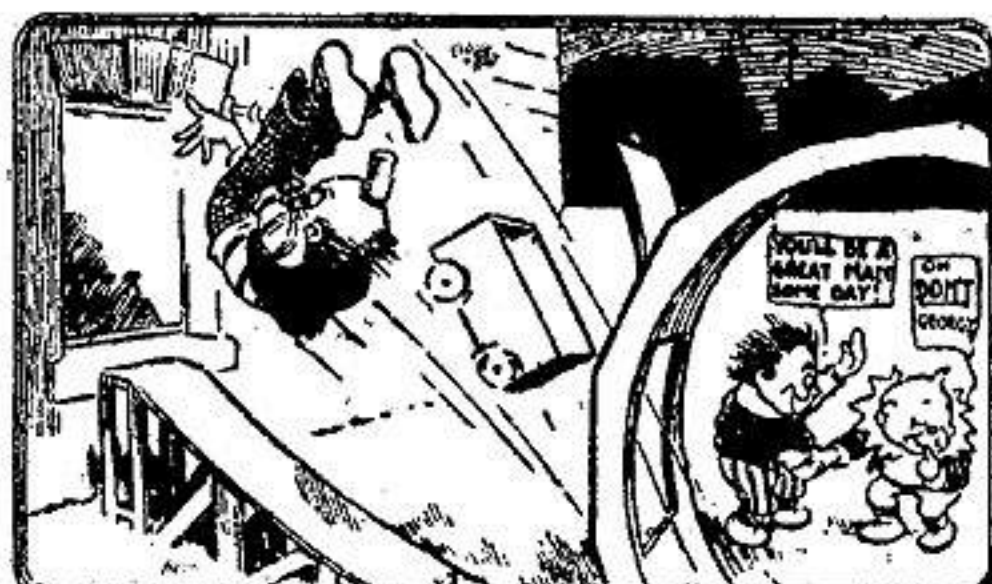
1. Dear Readers,—We've been sich good kids lately that ma got up a nice little amusement for us in the backyard, as per engraving above. "Georgie," remarked me, as we proceeded to improve the thing—"Georgie, let's allow Ike a half-share in the fun." "Sertinly!" replide the generous youth.



2. When we'd fixed up the trapdoor improvement we invited Ike round. "Cockled crab-apples!" observed Ike. "That looks a healthy kind of excitement. I'd like a try at it myself." "You're welcome!" sed us, before he had time to change his mind.



3. So we was kind enuff to let him have a go, and—that's where the little improvement came in—directly he'd got well started I pulled the string, and there was a draft on that raleway. "Gurr-rr-rr!" shrieked Ike. "Now look there, deer Ike," sed me coolly, pointing to the improvement. "There's a fine opening for a nice, pushful young man!"



4. Then I tried to explain to Ike that the object of the game was to get past the hole, without bludshed. Afore I could properly show him what I meant he had dropt out of the game, so to speak. He jost kept on his way rejoicing. "All rite!" skreemed Georgie, "I'll tell muther you broke a winder!"

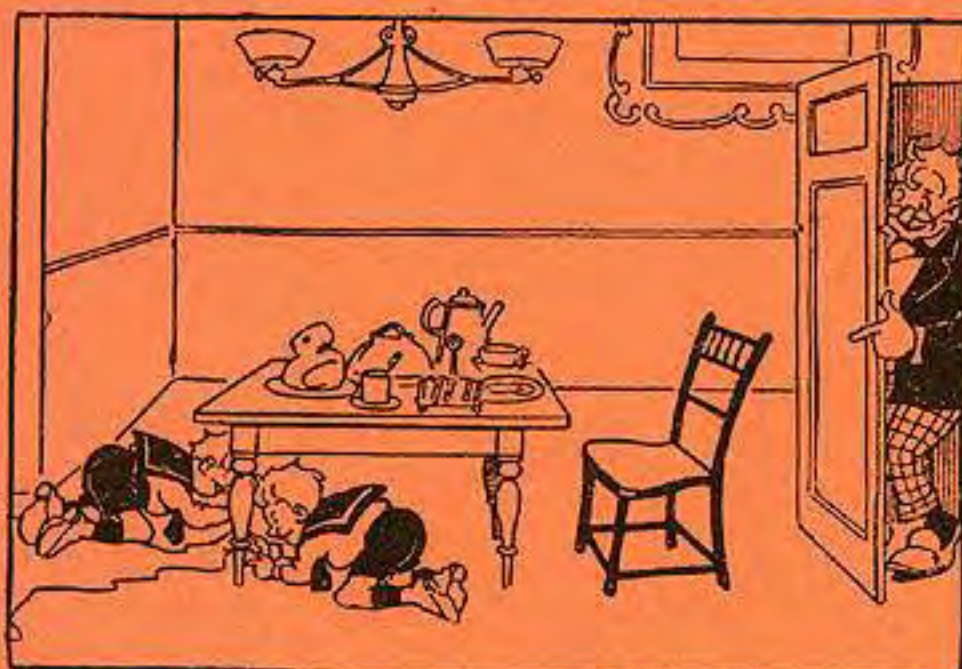


5. Ma happened to be having a dinner-party—there being some food in the house—and Ike dropt in quite unexpected. "Pardon me, genties and ladlemen," he cooed, as he stopt. "I hope I don't introod." "What!" shouted ma.

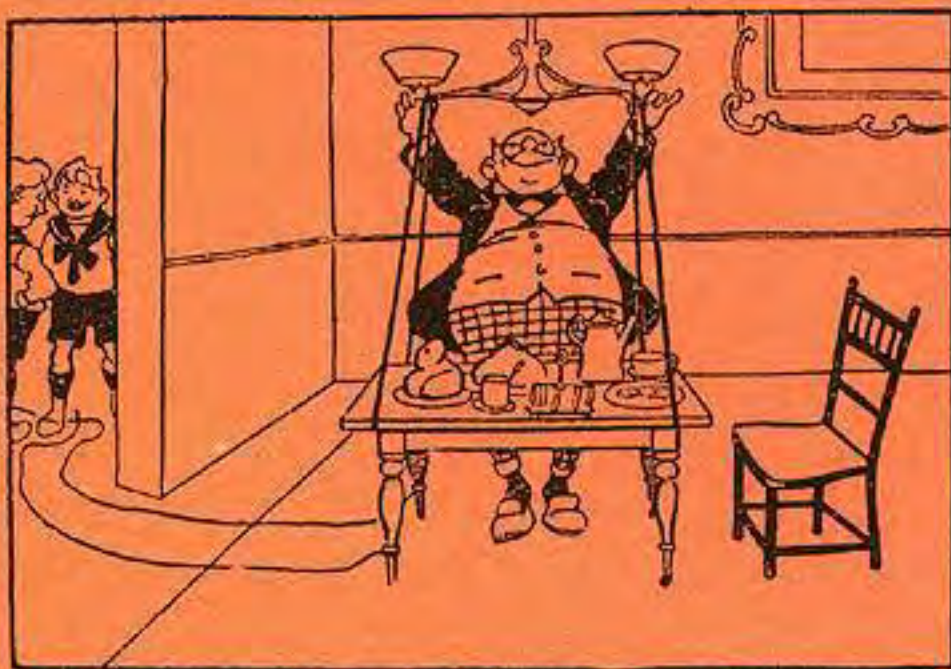


6. As we had to be in the last picture we stopt close handy to see it through. Presently wo noticed Ike leave the house abruptly, as if he was anxious to catch himself up.—Yours till next week, FERDY, the Bunsey Boy.

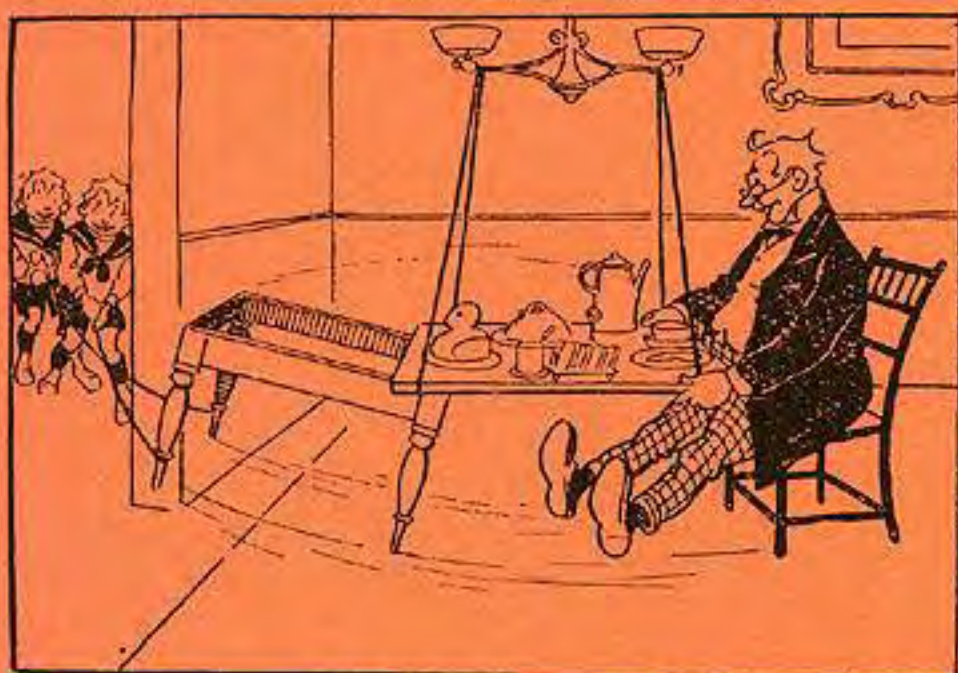
THE STORY OF A "BREAK-FAST" TABLE!



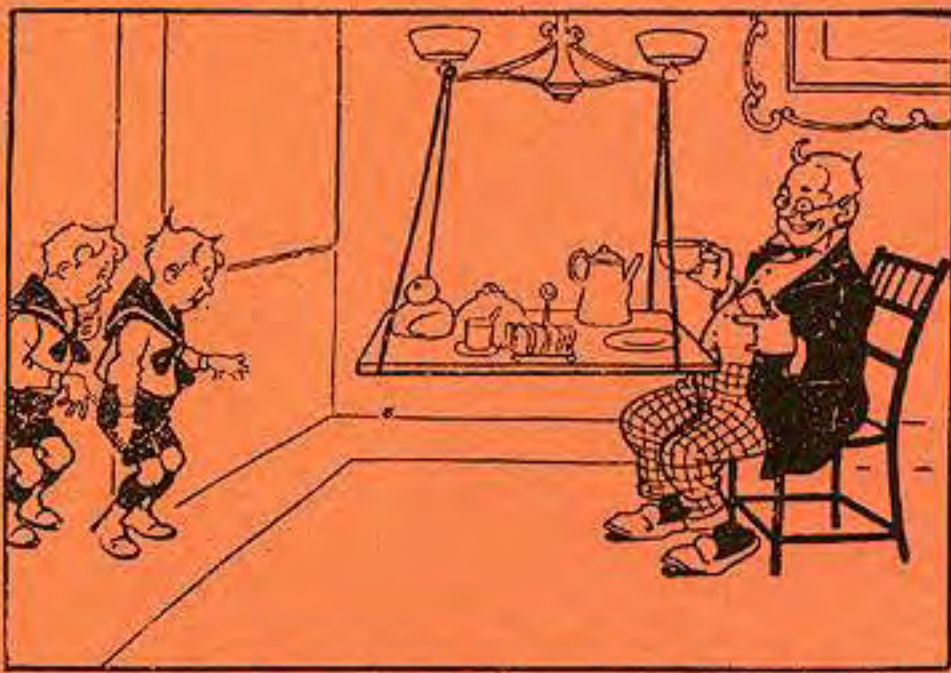
1. The Tiddler Twins got a nice little joke ready for grandpa. "We'll tie this string to the leg, and when he's having breakfast we'll pull the table away!" sniggered Tommy Tiddler. "Right you are!" said Teddy.



2. But grandpa had been watching round the door, and tumbled to their little game. "I know a trick worth two of that!" he murmured, as he fixed the table up, as above.



3. So when the naughty boys pulled the strings, expecting to find the table move away with grandpa's breakfast, they were considerably surprised when—



4. They found grandpa getting on nicely with his tea and toast. "Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled the old chap. "I had you nicely that time, laddies, didn't I?"

ALL HOT!



Passionate Percy: "Muriel, dearest, my heart is on fire!"

Muriel: "Excuse me, Percy, but I fancy it's your coat-tails."

A HINT TO THE REF.



"Ow did yer manage to lick a strong team like that, Bill?"

"Why, it was simple enough. The ref. has to pass through our street to git to the station. We told him where we lived!"

"WASTE"—NOT THE WORD.



"I hope you haven't been wasting time at the football match, Tommy?"

"Wasting time, sir, you're quite right. What with three men laid out, fourteen fouls, and quite forty throws in, it's nothing else but wasting time. The game's going to the dogs, sir!"

A HARD CASE.



The Boss: "You want a rise, owing to the increased cost of living? What the dickens do you mean, sir? I don't understand!"

The Clerk: "Well, you see, sir. For instance, when I went to a football match I used to go in as a boy for threepence. Now I'm grown up a bit, they charge me a tanner as a man!"

THE DEAR CREATURES!



Jess: "I don't care for men. It's a fact. I've already said 'No' to six of them."

Tess: "Really! What were they trying to sell?"

A GOOD GUESS.



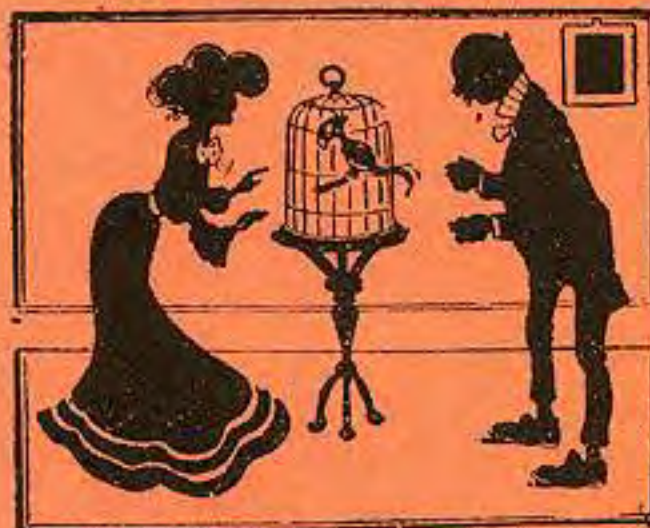
"Do you know your chickens come over into my garden?"

"I thought they did."

"Why?"

"Because they never come back."

A KNOWING BIRD.



Wife: "Scratch your poll, Polly."

Hubby: "My dear, if you keep scratching his poll, he'll be quite bald."

Parrot: "Has she been scratching your poll, too?"

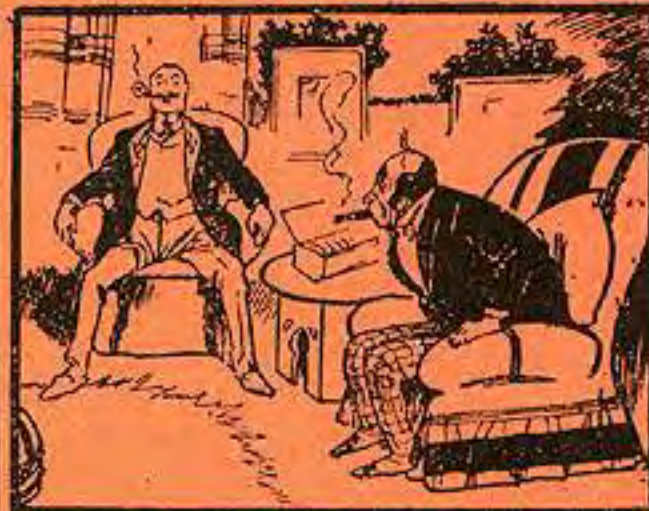
AN EXCEPTION.



"Oh, Edgar, don't you just love the season when the leaves begin to fall?"

"Naw. Not the school-book leaves!"

A FLOR DE CHRISTMAS.



"What do you think of that cigar?"

"I think it's awful—"

"So do I. It's one of those you gave me last Christmas."

A BROAD HINT.

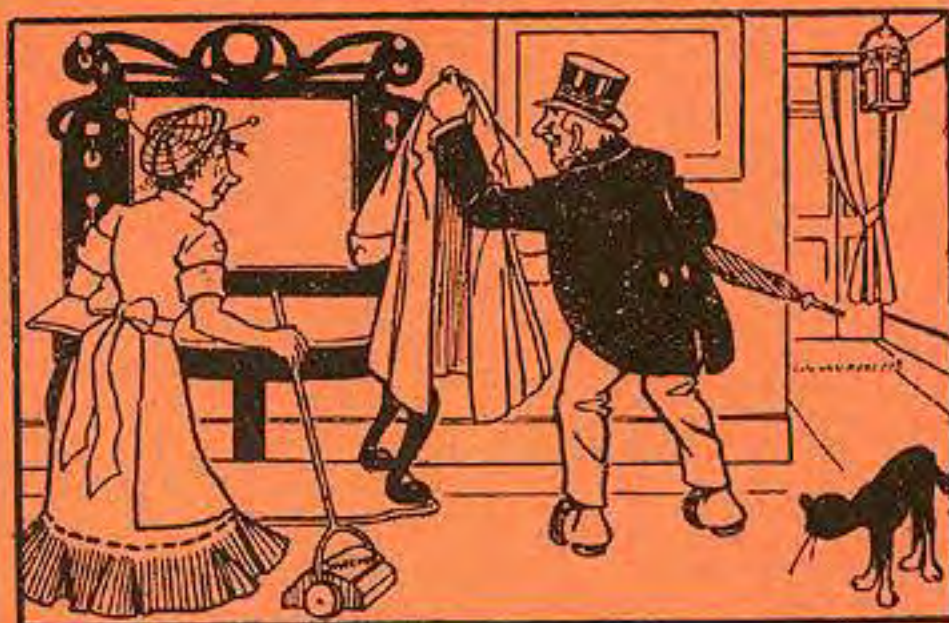


Jack: "I say, uncle, are sixpences still made round?"

Uncle Tightfist: "Of course they are!"

Jack: "Well, you see, uncle, it's such a long time since I saw one."

HE KNEW SHE'D KNOW!



Mrs. Prye: "When you were out a letter came, addressed to you, marked 'private and confidential.'"

Mr. Prye: "And what was in it?"