

THE PREFECT'S PLOT!

A Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.



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DODGING LODER!

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THE PREFECT'S PLOT!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Kipps' Little Joke!

"Go it, Kippy!"

There was quite a crowd in No. 1 Study, in the Remove passage, at Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton & Co.—the Famous Five of the Remove—were there, and Mark Linley, and Squiff, and Peter Todd, and Billy Bunter; and last, but not least, Kipps.

Tea was over, and Kipps, the amateur conjurer of the Remove, was going to entertain the distinguished company by an exhibition of his powers.

Kipps' weird and wonderful powers as a conjurer and sleight-of-hand-expert did not always make him popular. Fellows became quite crusty sometimes when they found their watches in their trousers-pockets or jam-tarts in their hats. But there was no stopping the enterprising Kipps.

He had even played tricks on Loder of the Sixth, the worst-tempered prefect at Greyfriars, and the result had been very painful for Kipps.

But when Kipps gave an entertainment in one of the studies he was always sure of an audience. It was as good as a professional show, and there was no charge, so it was really a war-time economy, in a way, to give Kipps his head on such occasions. Thus, after tea, there was a chorus in No. 1 Study:

"Go it, Kippy!"

Kipps rose and grinned, and prepared to go it. And just then there came a tap at the door, and Lord Mauleverer put a sleepy face into the study.

"Hope I'm not late, you chaps!" said his lordship.

"That depends!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You're late for tea, but you're in time for the conjuring show."

"Oh, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"There's a sardine left, Mauly," remarked Frank Nugent. "I'll get it out for you, if you like."

"Thanks; don't bother!" said Mauleverer. "Sorry I'm late; forgot all about it, you know! Fellow does forget things."

"Come in and see the show, anyway!" said Kipps, taking Mauleverer by the arm and leading him into the study.

"Thanks, awfully! But I haven't had my tea—"

"Never mind tea—this is better than tea! Besides, missing meals is war economy," said Kipps cheerfully.

"Oh, all right!" yawned Mauleverer. And he dropped into the chair Kipps pushed him into.

Lord Mauleverer seldom said "No" to anybody; he found it less trouble to say "Yes."

"Lost your pocket-book lately, Mauly?" asked Kipps.

"Not got it in my pocket."

"Sure?"

"Yass."

"Got your money in it?"

"Yass."

"Then, what's this?" demanded Kipps, taking a crisp and rustling five-pound note from Lord Mauleverer's collar.

"Oh, begad!" ejaculated Mauleverer in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "It's all right, Mauly—only one of Kipps' spoof banknotes!"

"By Jove, it isn't!" exclaimed Wharton, in surprise. "That's the real article!"

"My hat!"

The juniors stared at the banknote. Kipps sometimes played tricks with the "Bank of Elegance" notes, used by conjurers. But this evidently was the real article, worth five solid quid at the Bank of England.

"I—I say, that can't be mine!" ejaculated Mauleverer. "My money's in my pocket-book. I keep it in an inside pocket since I lost it last time; there was such a silly fuss about it."

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter jumped up, his eyes glistening behind his big spectacles. "That fiver's mine! I—I've lost one—Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter collapsed into his chair again as he received a shove on his fat waistcoat from Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter's claim to the fiver was evidently not to be entertained.

"You're jolly careless with your money, Mauly!" said Kipps severely. "You might have lost that fiver, sticking it in your collar—"

"But—but I didn't—"

"Why, here's another!"

There was a buzz of astonishment as Kipps drew a second banknote from Lord Mauleverer's collar. His lordship gazed at it dumbfounded.

"Bib-bub-begad!" he gasped.

"You careless ass, Mauly!" said Harry Wharton.

"But—but—but—" stuttered his lordship.

"Bump him!" said Bob Cherry. "We've promised Mauly a bumping every time he leaves his giddy wealth about."

"Hold on!" said Kipps. "Let's gather it up first. Blessed if he hasn't got his currency-notes up his sleeve!"

"I—I haven't—Begad—"

Kipps lifted his lordship's helpless arm, and extracted currency-notes from his sleeve. The juniors gazed on in astonishment as note after note was produced. Lord Mauleverer's jaw dropped. He seemed fascinated by the notes as they came into sight one after another.

"You utter ass, Mauly!" ejaculated Squiff. "What do you keep currency-notes in your sleeve for?"

"I—I don't. It's a blessed trick—"

"Fathead! They're real notes!"

"They—they can't be!"

"They are ass!" said Peter Todd. "Every one of them worth a quid at the tuckshop."

"Oh, begad!"

The juniors were prepared for conjuring tricks from Kipps. But certainly the most skilful conjurer could not have produced real currency-notes at will. Lord Mauleverer was the only fellow in the Remove who had banknotes and currency-notes galore. Kipps never had more than a quid at a time himself. Certainly Kipps couldn't have produced that heap of money from his own resources for a joke on Mauleverer.

Ten currency-notes were extracted, one after another, and added to the banknotes in a heap on the table.

"Is that the lot?" asked Mark Linley, in wonder.

"Oh, begad!"

"No; here's some more," said Kipps. "Why, he's rolling in money—he's got notes tucked under his waistcoat!"

"I haven't!" yelled Lord Mauleverer.

"What's this, then?"

"Ten-bobbers, by Jove!" exclaimed Nugent.

Kipps was drawing red ten-shilling notes from under his lordship's elegant waistcoat. The marvel was they hadn't dropped out while Mauly was walking to the study. It certainly wasn't a safe place to keep notes. But there they were! Seven currency-notes for ten shillings each came into view, one after another, to be added to the heap.

"Well, of all the thumping asses!" said Bob Cherry. "Have you gone off your rocker, Mauly?"

"I—I—I—"

"Blessed if he hasn't got a banknote in his mouth, too!" exclaimed Kipps.

"Great pip!"

Lord Mauleverer's mouth was open with amazement. Kipps made a dive at it, and held up a five-pound note.

Lord Mauleverer sank back in his seat, gasping.

"What did you do it for, Mauly?" demanded Wharton. "What do you mean by plastering yourself all over with banknotes?"

"I—I haven't—I didn't!" stuttered Mauly. "That money isn't mine. Mine's in my pocket-book in my pocket."

"Let's see the pocket-book, then," said Kipps.

Lord Mauleverer fumbled in his pocket.

"By gad, it's gone!"

"You shrieking ass!" said Bob Cherry.

"Bump him, you fellows!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hold on!" said Kipps again. "That pocket-book had better be found. You know where it is, Bob!"

"I!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Yes; it's in your pocket!"

"Mum-mum-my pocket?" roared Bob. "Yes; look!"

Bob Cherry looked quite hypnotised as Kipps drew Mauly's celebrated russet-leather pocket-book from his pocket. It was open.

"Nothing in it!" said Kipps. "Did you plaster those notes all over Mauly for a joke, Bob?"

"I! Nunno! I—I—" Bob stammered helplessly. "I—I don't know anything about it. Did you put it in my pocket, Mauly?"

"By gad! Of course I didn't! I thought it was in my own pocket."

Kipps stepped quietly to the door, and opened it.

"Gentlemen, the entertainment is over! Ta-ta!"

And Kipps vanished.

Bob Cherry jumped up with a roar. "The—the spoofing beast! After him!"

"But what—what—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lord Mauleverer. "He was spoofin' you, you

asses! He got the pocket-book off me when he pulled me into the study, and the notes weren't there at all. He pretended to find 'em there. You've been spoofed!"

"Oh, my hat!"

It was clear now—and it was also clear why the merry Kipps had departed so suddenly. He had abstracted Mauly's pocket-book, "found" the notes plastered about Mauly's person, and "found" the book in Bob's pocket—it was only Kipps' sleight-of-hand again!

"I—I—I'll squash him!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I've told him what I'd do if he planted anything on me again!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It's all right, Bob, it was only the entertainment he promised us," said Wharton, laughing.

"I'll spiflicate him!" roared Bob.

He dashed from the study, and along the Remove passage. He was just in time to hear a key turn in the lock of No. 5. Bob thundered wrathfully at the door.

"Kipps, you spoofing bounder——"

"Hallo?"

"Come out, and I'll mop up the passage with you!"

"Bow-wow!"

"I'll—I'll—I'll——"

Bob Cherry bestowed a thunderous kick on the door of No. 5, and stamped away. And the Remove conjurer gave Bob a wide berth until he had had time to cool down.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Five in Trouble!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
"More trouble!" sighed Nugent.

It was the following afternoon, which happened to be a half-holiday. Harry Wharton & Co. were going down to the gates, intending to visit Cliff House for tea with their chums there. Marjorie and her friends were expecting them, and so the Famous Five were not pleased to see Loder of the Sixth bearing down upon them with a thunderous brow.

"More trouble for our esteemed selves," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The noble Loder wrathfully glareth."

"Hook it!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Stop!" called out Loder.

As Loder was a prefect, his call had to be obeyed. The Famous Five stopped, not looking pleasant. Loder came up with knitted brows.

"Isn't he with you?" he demanded.

"Eh? Who?" asked Bob Cherry politely. Apparently it was not the Famous Five themselves that Loder wanted, after all.

"That young rascal Kipps!" growled Loder. "He's been dodging me for half an hour."

"You want to ask him to tea?" asked Bob innocently.

And his chums chuckled. Loder did not look as if he wanted to ask Kipps to tea.

"I want to give him the licking of his life!" growled Loder. "I'm going to give him a lesson about playing conjuring tricks on a prefect. Where is he?"

At that moment Bob Cherry caught sight of Kipps. Kipps had flattened himself behind a big tree near the gates, keeping the broad trunk between himself and Loder. He made an anxious sign to the chums of the Remove. But they did not need it. They were not likely to betray him.

Bob looked in the opposite direction.

"Can't see him about, Loder," he said.

"Do you know where he is?" demanded Loder.

"Have you looked in the top box-room?"

"Eh? No."

"Well, a chap might hide there. Bunter hid there once when he had scoffed our pie, and we were half an hour finding him."

Loder turned away, and then turned back again.

"Do you know that he's in the box-room?" he demanded.

"Oh, no," said Bob cheerfully.

Loder scowled.

"I understand! He's somewhere about, and you're trying to put me off the scent. Where is he?"

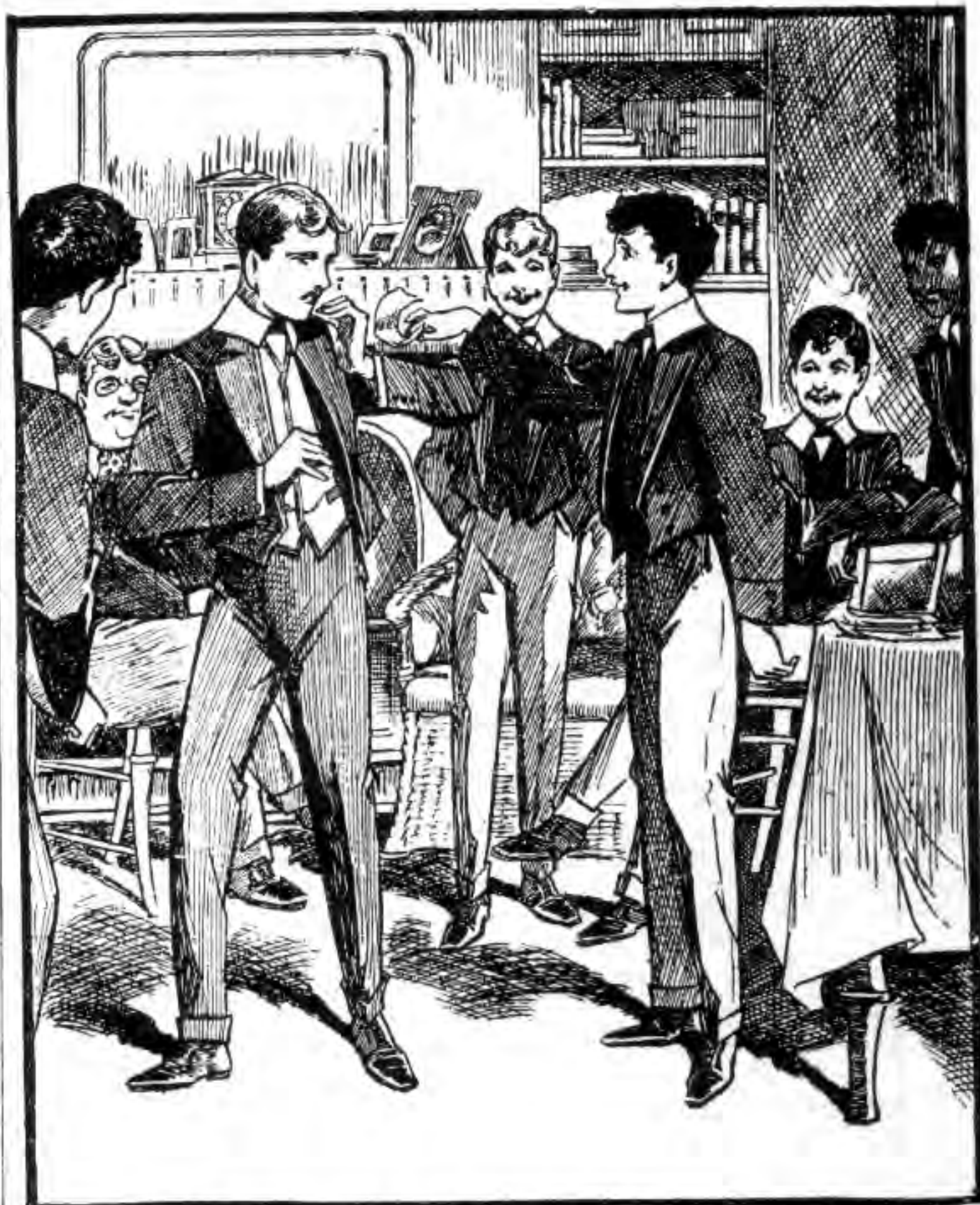
"Gentle shepherd, tell me where!" sang Bob softly.

Loder let his ash-plant slide down into

them, and the ash-plant came into play. Loder was in a bad temper. The instrument of punishment came down across Bob Cherry's shoulders, and Bob gave a roar; and then it caught Hurree Singh on the back, and the Nabob of Bhanipur let out a yell that would have done credit to a wild Hun. Wharton got the next lick. Loder was quite impartial in the distribution of his favours. Wharton spun round with a yell.

"Collar him!"

It was a moment of excitement, and the juniors, smarting under the ash-plant, forgot that the person of a prefect was supposed to be sacred. They collared the enraged Loder, and brought him down on the ground with a terrific bump. It was Loder's turn to yell then.



"Blessed if he hasn't got his currency notes up his sleeve!" said Kipps.
(See Chapter 1.)

his hand, and took a tight grip on it. He was always down on the cheery Co., and perhaps he was as well pleased to rag them as to rag the enterprising conjurer who had taken the liberty of playing tricks upon a high and mighty prefect.

"You know where Kipps is, Cherry? Tell me where he is."

"Nice afternoon, isn't it?" said Bob.

"What?"

"Nice for walking, if it doesn't rain."

"Hold out your hand!" shouted Loder.

"Time we moved, I think," remarked Bob. "Come on! Loder seems to be losing his temper."

And the Famous Five made a rush for the gates. Loder made a rush after

"Give him another!" panted Bob. "In for a penny, in for a pound, you know! May as well have our money's worth."

"Bump him!"

"Yow-oh!" roared Loder. "Hands off! Yaroooh! Oh, my hat!"

"Boys!"

At that unlucky moment Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, came in at the gates. The Remove-master's eyes seemed to bulge at the sight of a prefect being bumped by a band of the Lower Fourth.

The juniors let Loder go with great suddenness. The prefect sat on the ground and roared. Mr. Quelch almost

petrified the unfortunate Co. with his glance.

"What does this mean, Wharton? How dare you touch a prefect?"

"Well, he touched us, sir," said Harry. Loder staggered up.

"Mr. Quelch! I appeal to you—you saw?" he gasped.

"Certainly, Loder. I am not likely to pass over such an infraction of discipline," said Mr. Quelch. "Wharton!"

"We had to stop him, sir," said Johnny Bull. "He was letting out with that ash-plant!"

"Cherry refused to be caned," said Loder, with a glare. "Kipps has played a trick in my study, and Cherry knew where he was, and refused to tell me."

"You knew where Kipps was, Cherry?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

Kipps had vanished out of gates; but Bob could not deny that he had known where he was when Loder questioned him.

"Why did you not tell Loder?"

"Ahem!"

"You are aware, Cherry, that you are bound to obey a prefect's order!" said Mr. Quelch severely.

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"You must learn the meaning of discipline, Cherry. You will all be detained for the half-holiday, and write out two hundred lines. Go into the Form-room at once."

"Oh, dear!"

There was no help for it. The five juniors walked dismally back to the School House, which they had left in high spirits ten minutes before. Tea at Cliff House was off now.

Loder, quite consoled by the punishment of his old enemies, proceeded to look for the elusive Kipps; but he did not find him. When Loder went out, half an hour later, Kipps had not put in an appearance. And as Gerald Loder had a very important appointment for that afternoon, he could not spend any further time looking for him just then.

Harry Wharton & Co. also had an important appointment. Tea with Marjorie and the Cliff House girls being very important indeed, from their point of view, at least. But it was useless to think of explaining that to Mr. Quelch; he would not have realised how important it was. The Form-master saw them into the Remove-room, thoughtfully provided them with detention tasks, and left them. And the feelings of the unfortunate juniors towards Loder of the Sixth were perfectly Hunnish.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Up a Tree!

"WHAT about Marjorie?"

Bob Cherry asked that question after the Form-master had left the detained juniors to their work. They were not working very hard.

Harry Wharton looked up, with a frowning brow.

"I've been thinking about that," he said. "They'll be expecting us to tea, and we can't send them word. It's rotten!"

"The esteemed Marjorie will be infuriated," remarked Hurree Singh.

"Fathead!" said Bob. "But we ought to send word somehow, if we can't go. What about making a break?"

"And getting taken before the Head!" growled Johnny Bull. "Not good enough!"

"We can't clear off," said Harry. "But—but somebody ought to go and tell Marjorie we can't come. One of us might get out without being noticed."

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"Too jolly risky!" said Nugent. "It means going before the Head if we're spotted!"

"But we can't leave them expecting us to tea and not turning up." Wharton rose to his feet. "Look here, I'm willing to risk it!"

"The riskfulness is terrific!"

"Quelchy might look in," said Nugent uneasily.

"Well, he's busy in his study over his blessed literary work. I could drop from the window, and scuttle round the House," said Harry. "I'd run all the way, and get back in an hour."

"Toss up which of us goes," suggested Bob. "Somebody ought to go."

"It's up to me," said Harry. "I'm going!"

The captain of the Remove looked from the Form-room window. There was no one at hand. Across the quad he could see Tubb and Wingate minor of the Third, and in the distance Monsieur Charpentier was walking under the elms. But there was no one near the Form-room windows, and Wharton resolved to risk it.

He pushed the window quietly open, and dropped from the sill to the ground. He had to go without his cap, but that could not be helped. Keeping close to the building, he beat a hasty retreat, and was soon in the cloisters, unseen, so far. There he waited a few minutes till he was sure the coast was clear, and then scudded along to the school wall, where it was shaded by a big tree, and clambered over it, hidden by the branches.

A minute later he was in the road; but he did not delay there. He lost no time in getting into the fields, and started at a run for Cliff House.

The cheery tea-party at Cliff House could not come off; but at least the girls could be told that their guests were not coming. It would have been too bad for Marjorie & Co to wait for them, perhaps a long time, and perhaps imagine that some accident had befallen them.

Harry Wharton kept on the run across the fields, making for the wood, through which lay a short cut. As he entered the footpath in the wood there was a sudden gasp as he crashed into a figure running from the opposite direction.

"Yow! Oh!"

"Kipps, you ass!" gasped Wharton, reeling back from the shock.

It was Kipps. He staggered back, and sat down on the grass. Wharton was about to pass him, when Kipps called out:

"Hold on, Wharton!"

"Can't stop!"

"Well, if you want to run into Loder—"

"Loder!" ejaculated Wharton, coming to a sudden halt.

"Yes."

"Hang Loder!" growled Wharton. "Is he on the footpath?"

Kipps scrambled up.

"Yes. He hasn't seen me yet, and I'm dodging him. He's coming in this direction. Do you want to meet him?"

"No!" growled Harry. "I'm supposed to be detained at this minute. I don't want to be reported to Quelchy."

"I don't want to meet him, either," grinned Kipps. "I don't know whether he's after me here. I don't see how he could know I'm about here. But I'm not going to run into him. Better hook it!"

Wharton knitted his brows. Down the footpath, where it wound among the trees, he could hear footsteps brushing in the thick grass. Someone was coming up the path—evidently Loder.

"No good hooking it!" snapped Wharton. "He would see me in the field as soon as he came out of the trees. He knows I'm detained."

"Better take cover, then."

Wharton looked round savagely. The meeting with Loder was very unlucky. The prefect would report him to the Remove-master if he saw him, and that meant serious trouble. It was useless to scuttle back into the fields—Loder would see him in the open meadows and recognise him at once. There was less than a minute to decide in. But a minute was enough for Wharton. He had to avoid being seen by Loder somehow.

"Hold on, Kipps! Give me a hand up, and I'll yank you up!" he muttered. "Right-ho!"

With a bunk from below by Kipps, Wharton clambered up the trunk of a big oak at the edge of the wood. From the lowest branch he leaned down, grasped Kipps' hand, and dragged him up. Kipps clambered on the branch. Without losing a second, the two juniors clambered higher into the branches, which quickly hid them from view of the footpath below.

They were none too soon. Through the branches they caught a glimpse of a hat passing below.

"That's Loder!" whispered Kipps.

"Quiet till he's passed!" breathed Wharton.

The two juniors, astride of a high branch twenty feet over Loder's head, were still as mice. They waited for the prefect to pass.

But the hat came to a stop on the edge of the wood, where the footpath ran into the open meadows. Loder had halted.

"Knows we're here, the beast!" groaned Kipps, under his breath.

"Shush!"

The juniors waited anxiously. Loder did not look upward, and it was soon quite clear that he did not know that they were there. He was standing just within the wood, looking out over the fields. What his object was was a puzzle; for they could not suppose that the Greyfriars prefect was simply admiring the view.

Five minutes passed, and Loder had not moved. Wharton and Kipps looked at one another, quite perplexed.

"Waiting for somebody!" whispered Kipps at last. "Must be that!"

Wharton nodded.

They heard an impatient exclamation from below, and then footsteps. But Loder was not going. Glimpses of his hat and coat could be caught through the branches. He was pacing to and fro under the big oak. It was clear now that Loder had an appointment with somebody at that spot, and was waiting for him to come. The two juniors were fairly caught. Kipps might have risked a run for it, but Harry Wharton could not. The fact that he had broken detention had to be kept a dead secret.

Ten minutes glided by, and Loder was still pacing below. Then there was a sound of voices.

"Oh, here you are! I've waited a quarter of an hour for you!"

"Sorry, Mr. Loder. I couldn't get 'ere afore!"

"Well, never mind," grunted Loder. "I can't stop more than a few minutes. What about Blue Bonnet, Beele?"

"Safe as 'ouses, Mr. Loder!" The husky voice was very emphatic. "The chance of a lifetime! Five to one against, and certain to win!"

Wharton and Kipps exchanged eloquent glances. They understood why Loder had been waiting in that lonely spot now. They knew something already of the little ways of the black sheep of the Sixth. It was a bookmaker whom Loder was meeting under the big oak, to discuss one of his little turf speculations—a sort of business that could not be transacted with safety near the school.

"You're backin' the gee, Mr. Loder?" went on the husky voice.

"I'm in rather a difficulty, Beele. It's a rotten shame to let such a chance slip, but—but I'm right on the rocks. What can you do for me?"

"Nothin', I'm afraid!" said Mr. Beele, in quite a changed tone. "You owe me five of the best at this minute, Mr. Loder, and I was expectin' you to settle up to-day."

"I'm stony!" growled Loder. "I've had bad luck!"

"A man wants 'is money," said Mr. Beele, in an argumentative tone. "I got to 'ave money to lay myself on Thursday. I'd be obliged if you could settle up."

"You'll have to give me time, Beele. Look here, if I lay a tenner, say, on Blue Bonnet——"

"If you've got the tenner——"

"I haven't! You can trust me, I suppose?" said Loder irritably.

"Trust you like anythin', Mr. Loder, only there's nothin' doin'. If you can put up the money, the bet's booked, not otherwise. You played on paper last time, an' now you say you can't settle. You're makin' me waste my time," grunted Mr. Beele. "I've come 'ere for nothin'!"

"You're sure of the horse?" muttered Loder.

"Course, accidents might happen, Mr. Loder. Barrin' accidents, Blue Bonnet will romp 'ome at five to one against!"

"It's a shame to miss such a chance," said Loder restlessly. "It would see me clear—I could pay up all round, and I've had rotten luck this term—and it would leave me something in hand."

"Well, a young gent like you could raise the cash," said Mr. Beele. "Why not make an effort, and find a tenner or a pony somewhere——"

"I can't!"

"Then we're wasting time. Good-afternoon, Mr. Loder!"

"Hold on!" Loder's voice was eager. "Look here, Beele, if I could raise a tenner somehow, you'd let our little account stand over till afterwards?"

"Certainly!"

"I'll try," said Loder. "Dash it all, there must be some way! A tenner on Blue Bonnet means fifty of the best for me. It's the catch of the season."

"It is that, Master Loder."

"I'll try! I'll manage it somehow. It hasn't got out yet about the gee's form?"

Mr. Beele chuckled.

"No fear! It's a dead secret. Not even the bookies will guess till the 'orse gets to the post. It's a stable secret. It's a dark 'orse, Mr. Loder. I got the tip from a man in the stable—a man I've done some things for. Nobody but the owner and trainer is supposed to know."

"I'm not going to miss it," muttered Loder. "I'll do the trick somehow. I suppose a letter will find you at the Cross Keys?"

"Right as rain!"

"Then I'll do what I can. I'll manage it somehow. It's simply got to be done. I'll dig up a tenner somewhere."

"Good for you, Master Loder. I can get it put on for you at five to one against, unless the news leaks out, and that ain't likely."

"It's a go," said Loder. "You can expect to hear from me. I've got an idea for raising the money, too."

There were a few more muttered words, and then Mr. Beele walked away the way he had come. Loder stood still under the oak, buried in thought. Doubtless he was giving the racing tout time to clear before he moved—it would not have done for the two to be seen together. After a few minutes, however, Loder strode away across the fields, taking the shortest direction to Greyfriars.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

An Invitation for Mauly!

HARRY WHARTON and Kipps had made no sound in the tree. They had not the slightest desire to hear anything of Gerald Loder's blackguardly secrets. But they had not been able to help it; the voices came up clearly from the footpath below. They exchanged looks of utter disgust.

"And that kind of thing is going on in war-time!" muttered Wharton, when Loder had gone. "Racing and rotten Turf trickery, at a time like this! And a Greyfriars senior taking a hand in it, too!"

"Well, we know Loder," said Kipps. "It's his little way. I wonder what the Head would say if he knew?"

"Order of the boot for Loder, and a jolly good thing, too!" growled Wharton. "Well, we needn't stick here any longer. They're gone, the rotters!"

"Come on!" said Kipps.

The two juniors slid down the tree. Loder was almost out of sight across the fields.

"Whither bound?" asked Kipps. "I'm not going back for a bit. I don't want to run into Loder."

"Then I'll tell you what—you can go to Cliff House for me," said Harry. "They're expecting us for tea, and I was going to tell them we couldn't come. You cut off and let them know, there's a good chap. Tell Marjorie we're detained for the afternoon."

"Like a bird!" said Kipps cheerfully.

Kipps started for Cliff House with the message, and Harry turned back towards the school. He was anxious to get back into the Remove-room before his absence was discovered. Owing to Loder, a great deal of time had been wasted already. Wharton skirted round the school as soon as he reached it. He did not venture to enter by the gates. He entered by the tradesmen's gate, and slipped into the house by the entrance usually used by the kitchen department. Thence he made his way into the School House.

"Hallo! Weren't you detained?" asked Skinner, meeting him in the passage.

"Yes. Where's Quelch?"

"Clicking away at the typer in his study," grinned Skinner.

"Good!"

Wharton hurried to the Remove-room, relieved to know that the Form-master was still busy in his study. He was glad to find himself safe in the Remove-room once more. Four pairs of eyes were fixed on him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You're soon back," said Bob Cherry.

"Spotted?" asked Nugent.

"No. Has Quelch been here?"

"Not yet."

"All serene, then!"

Harry Wharton dropped into his seat at the desk and started work.

"But you haven't been to Cliff House already?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Met Kipps, and sent him there with a message," explained Wharton. "Just as good, as long as they know."

"Good luck! Better pile in, and have something done by the time Quelch gives us a look-in."

"Yes, rather!"

The detained juniors worked away industriously. It was nearly six o'clock when Mr. Quelch looked into the Form-room at last. The Remove-master had spent a busy afternoon on his celebrated "History of Greyfriars from the Reign of King Stephen"; and Harry Wharton had reason to be grateful to that history of Greyfriars, which had kept his Form-master from looking in earlier.

Mr. Quelch glanced at the juniors and at the work they had done.

"You may go!" he said.

And the Famous Five went gladly.

Billy Bunter met them as they came up to the Remove passage.

"I say, you fellows, I've been waiting for you!" he said reproachfully. "I haven't had tea yet. Are you having tea in No. 1?"

"No," said Wharton.

"In your study, Bob?"

"No!" grinned Bob.

"Where are you having tea, then?"

"Nowhere, till we find somebody to stand it," said Bob, with a chuckle.

"Stony, my son—famine in cash. You shouldn't have waited for us."

Billy Bunter gave an expressive snort, and rolled away in search of other victims.

"Now, who's going to have the honour of standing us tea?" asked Bob.

"Marky's gone to tea with Penfold, I think, and there's nothing on in my study, excepting Wun Lung and his Chinese feeds. If you'd like some of that, Wun Lung is brimming with hospitality. I think he puts cats in his stew, though!"

"Groogh! We won't bother Wun Lung."

"Let's try the Bounder," said Nugent.

The Famous Five proceeded to No. 4. They found Skinner at tea there in solitary state.

"Where's Smithy?" asked Wharton.

"Gone out with Hazeldene."

"Oh, blow!"

The five hungry juniors didn't enter Vernon-Smith's study. They had no desire to share Skinner's frugal meal.

"Mauly!" said Johnny Bull. "We'll stick Mauly for a tea, and give him a chance to blue some of his blessed currency notes."

"Any port in a storm," said Bob.

"Come on!"

Bob Cherry thundered at the door of No. 12, and hurled it open. Lord Mauleverer and his study-mate Delarey were there. Mauleverer was sitting on the sofa, watching the South African junior, who was laying the table. They looked inquiringly at the Famous Five.

"Please, we've come to tea!" said Bob Cherry.

"Begad, you're welcome, my dear fellows!"

"Welcome as the flowers in May!" said Delarey, laughing. "You can cut down to the tuckshop, Mauly."

Lord Mauleverer sighed, and detached himself from the sofa.

"Any old thing!" he said resignedly.

"Tired?" asked Bob Cherry sympathetically.

"Yaas."

"I'll help you along, if you like."

"No, you won't!" gasped Mauleverer, dodging Bob's heavy hand. "Keep off, you Hun!"

And his lordship dodged out of the study. He came back in ten minutes laden with parcels, and the whole cheery party lent a hand in getting tea. They were very busy when Nugent minor of the Second Form put his cheery, cheeky face into the study.

"Mauly!"

"Hallo!"

"Loder wants you!"

Lord Mauleverer gave a deep groan.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's up?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What has Mauly been doing?"

"I haven't been doin' anythin' but restin' on the sofa!" groaned Lord Mauleverer. "Tell Loder I can't come."

Dicky Nugent chuckled.

"It's not a licking, fathend! Loder's asked you to tea."

"Begad!"

"He says tea will be ready in ten minutes," said Nugent minor. And he

look his departure, enlivening the Remove passage with a shrill whistle as he went.

"Chumming up with Loder—what!" said Lord Mauleverer, in astonishment. "Dashed if I know why Loder's asked me to tea! He asks Skinner and Snoop sometimes. I know jolly well I'm not goin'."

"Better go," said Wharton. "Loder will cut up rusty if you decline. It's an honour to have tea with a prefect, too."

"I don't want the honour. I'm not goin'."

"Why not, ass?"

"Too much fag."

"Fathead!" said Bob Cherry politely. "If you refuse, Loder will be savage, and he will find some way of taking it out of you. Better go."

"I'm not goin'," growled Lord Mauleverer. "Tea's ready here, isn't it? I'm not goin' to walk to the Sixth Form passage for nothin'."

"Look here, Mauly—"

"One of you chaps go an' tell Skinner to go instead," suggested Mauleverer.

"You'd better go," said Delarey. "Don't be an ass, Mauly! Loder will give you lines and lickings if you don't."

"Blow Loder!"

"Loder, be blowed!" agreed Bob Cherry. "But you're not going to get licked because you're too lazy to walk to Loder's study. I'll help you."

"Yaroo!" roared Lord Mauleverer, as Bob helped him off the sofa. "Leggo, you howlin' ass! I'll go, on second thoughts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Lord Mauleverer went, and the Famous Five and Delarey had tea in No. 12 without his lordship's company. Sir Jimmy Vivian was taking tea elsewhere, it seemed, for he did not put in an appearance.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

No Luck for Loder!

LODER of the Sixth was at home, and he greeted Lord Mauleverer with a gracious smile. Tubb of the Third, who had the doubtful honour of fagging for Loder, was busy in the study. Tubb had prepared tea, and he was looking red and savage; he had already received several cuffs for burning the toast.

"Come in, Mauleverer!" said Loder, with a friendly nod. "You can cut, Tubb."

Tubb was glad to cut.

"Sit down, Mauleverer!"

Lord Mauleverer sat down.

His lazy lordship was considerably astonished. Why Loder was showing him all this graciousness was a mystery. When Mauleverer had first come to Greyfriars Loder had been disposed to be friendly, on account of Mauleverer's wealth, and his lordship had had an opportunity of joining in the little games in Loder's study, if he liked. He didn't like, and he had given the "sporting" Sixth-Former a wide berth. He wondered now whether Loder was going to try that game again. It was not likely, for Mauleverer had made his views quite clear on that subject. But he could not guess what else Loder wanted.

When a junior had tea with Loder he was usually expected to wait on the great man. But Loder waited on Mauleverer now with great kindness. He poured out the tea, asked Mauleverer whether he took sugar, passed him the toast and the ham, and was kindness itself.

Loder was so kind, indeed, that Lord Mauleverer was not sorry, after all, that he had come. He began to think that he had misjudged Loder.

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Tea in Loder's study was, in fact, quite pleasant and agreeable.

The Sixth-Former chatted away genially, apparently quite forgetting the great gulf that was fixed between a member of the Sixth and a junior.

"Another cup of tea, kid?"

"Thanks, no," said Mauleverer.

"Help yourself to the cake."

"Thank you, dear boy!"

Loder smiled genially, not even put out by being addressed as a "dear boy" by a Remove. It was not till tea was over that Loder came to business.

"By the way, Mauleverer— Pull your chair to the fire, old chap, and warm your toes. Make yourself comfy, you know."

"You're awfully good," said Mauleverer.

"By the way, I'm going to ask a little favour of you, Mauleverer."

"Yaas."

"I understand that you have no end of tin for a junior?"

"Yaas."

"The fact is," continued Loder very agreeably, but with a hawkish eye on Lord Mauleverer's face—"the fact is, kid, I'm in rather a fix."

"Sorry to hear it, my dear fellow."

"You could help me out if you liked," remarked Loder.

"Could I, begad?"

Lord Mauleverer did not need telling any more. He knew something of Loder's little ways. His lordship was not remarkably keen, but he would have had to be very dense not to guess that Loder had asked him to tea in order to borrow his money. It was not a gratifying discovery. Lord Mauleverer was simple in some ways, and he was very careless with the money with which he was so amply supplied. But he had not the slightest intention of handing over his money to Loder to play ducks and drakes with.

Easy-going as his lordship was, he was quite firm on that point, as Loder was destined to discover.

"It's ridiculous, I know," went on Loder, with a smile, "but at the present moment I'm badly in want of a tenner."

"Lots of people like that in war-time," said Mauleverer sagely. "Lots of people hit hard by the war."

"Ahem! Yes, but—"

"Look at the old age pensioners," said Mauleverer affably. "It took a year to screw an extra half-crown for them, poor old chaps. I don't suppose they know where to turn for a tenner, Loder."

"H'm! Never mind them," said Loder. "The fact is, Mauleverer, I'm simply stumped for a tenner just now."

"Hard cheese!" said Mauleverer sympathetically.

"Yes, isn't it? Of course, you won't mention to any of the juniors that I'm borrowing a tenner of you."

"Of course not," said Mauleverer, looking surprised. "How could I mention it when you haven't done it?"

Loder coughed.

"To come to the point, Mauleverer, I'd be obliged if you could lend me a tenner for a few days."

"So sorry," said Mauleverer calmly.

"Can't you do it?"

"Sorry—no."

Loder's agreeable expression vanished. "Look here, Mauleverer, you've got the money! I know that."

"Do you, Loder? I don't see how you can know. Prefects are awfully clever chaps," said Mauleverer admiringly.

"Will you lend me a tenner, Mauleverer?"

"So sorry."

"I don't think you will refuse me, Mauleverer," said Loder, with a gleam in his eyes. "As I've said, I'm simply stumped. I happen to want the money

for a few days, for a very particular purpose. What do you say?"

"I say that racin' ought to be stopped in war-time," replied Mauleverer.

Loder jumped.

"Racin'! What do you mean, you young rascal? Do you dare to imply that I know anything about racing, or dabble in such things?"

"Certainly not."

"Sorry, then! I thought you did."

Loder half-rose, but sat down again. Mauleverer was within an ace at that moment of receiving a terrific thrashing. But Loder kept his temper. Lord Mauleverer was his only means of raising the necessary cash for the "chance of a lifetime." Unless he screwed the required tenner out of his lordship, that magnificent chance of backing Blue Bonnet at five to one against would pass him by. He could not afford to quarrel with Mauly.

There was a pause, and Lord Mauleverer rose to take his leave.

"Thank awfully, Loder, for askin' me here," he said affably. "It was rippin' of you. But you're always such a nice chap."

"Hold on!" said Loder. "Don't go yet, Mauleverer. About that tenner—"

"What tenner?" asked Mauleverer innocently.

"The tenner you're going to lend me."

Lord Mauleverer looked puzzled.

"But I'm not goin' to lend you a tenner, Loder," he said.

Loder breathed hard. But he thought of Blue Bonnet, and five to one against, and contrived to smile.

"Look here, kid, you—you seem to be under some misapprehension," said Loder. "You mustn't believe fag tatle you hear in the passages. As for racing, it's a thing I disapprove of very strongly. Especially in war-time. In fact, it's shocking to think of it going on with the country at war."

"Awfully shockin'!" agreed Mauleverer.

"It's nothing of that kind. I give you my word as to that, Mauleverer. The truth is, I want the money to—to help somebody—somebody who's in a difficulty."

"Bookmakin' chap?" asked Mauleverer.

"No!" roared Loder.

"Oh! All serene. I'd better be gettin' along now, Loder. Thanks awfully—"

"Wait a minute! To tell you all about it, Mauleverer, I—I—" Loder cudgelled his brains for a plausible falsehood. Getting hold of Mauly's tenner was a more difficult business than he had anticipated. "I—I—I want to help a chap who's been hard hit. I feel bound to stand by him; helping a fellow when he's down, you know. Of course, I shall return the money next week. I'm simply temporarily short of cash—"

"Yaas. Like Bunter?"

"Bunter?" howled Loder furiously.

"Yaas. Bunter's always temporarily short of cash—just like that."

Loder looked at Mauleverer as if he could bite him. To be compared with the impecunious Owl of the Remove was not flattering. Again a terrific thrashing loomed over Mauleverer; but again Loder held himself in check.

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ANSWERS

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"I'll explain a little further, if you're curious about it, Mauleverer."

"I'm not, Loder. Not at all!" protested Mauly.

"The fact is, it's a Greyfriars fellow who's in a fix," said Loder, unheeding. "He's been reckless, and I'm going to see him through."

"Those gee-gees are jolly uncertain, ain't they, Loder?"

"The—the chap I speak of may—may even be sacked, if he isn't helped out," said Loder. "I'm sure that, under the circumstances Mauleverer, you'll be willing to help me in—in doing a good deed."

"Oh, yaas! I wouldn't like to see a chap sacked. Tell me who it is, and I'll go an' have a talk with him, an' see what's to be done," said Mauleverer calmly.

Loder almost choked. He could not very well tell Mauleverer who the person was, as the person existed only in his own imagination.

The prefect rose to his feet. Mauleverer made a strategic movement towards the door. Loder's eye wandered to a cane. But he did not take it up. Somehow or other, he had to have that tonner, and licking Mauly would not get it for him, however satisfactory the operation might be otherwise. Loder, with a manful effort, assumed a more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger expression.

"I'm sorry you can't make up your mind to help, Mauleverer," he said. "However, as you don't choose to, the matter drops. You won't mention what I've said, of course?"

"Not a word, dear boy! Good-bye!" said Mauleverer.

And he left the study, glad to escape. Loder shook a furious fist at the door after it had closed behind the schoolboy earl. Then he sat down and lighted a cigarette, to think over the difficult problem.

Lord Mauleverer was smiling as he came back into his own study. He found the merry party there just finishing tea.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Had a good time with Loder?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Rippin', dear boy!"

And that was all Mauleverer said of his visit to Loder's study.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Loder Surprises the Juniors!

"ON the ball!" said Bob Cherry cheerily.

It was the following day, and morning lessons were over. Harry Wharton & Co. had gone down to Little Side for some footer practice before dinner. Mark Linley pitched down the ball, and the juniors were beginning, when Loder of the Sixth came sauntering up.

"Loder's looking for somebody!" grinned Bob.

"Ma, I suppose," groaned Kipps. "He was looking for me yesterday. Loder is a stickler, bless him!"

But the prefect did not take any notice of Kipps. He gave the Removites a genial nod.

"Hallo! Getting a little practice?" he asked.

"Yes, Loder."

"Good! Always stick to practice, and you'll win matches," said Loder.

The juniors simply blinked at Loder. Such a remark from Wingate would not have surprised them. But Loder never took the slightest interest in junior football; he never noticed the Remove at all, excepting to bestow lines or a cuffing.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," went on Loder, with the same surprising

geniality. "I'll give you some goal practice."

"You—you—you will, Loder?" stammered Bob Cherry.

"Yes; I'm thinking of trying goal in the next senior match, so it will do me good as well as you. Send me some shots," said Loder.

The Sixth-Former walked into the goal, followed by amazed stares. Such genial good-nature from Loder was simply astounding. It was time for the skies to fall.

"What on earth's the matter with Loder?" murmured Bob Cherry, in wonder. "He's in a good temper—with us, too!"

"The matterfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed age of miracles has come backfully."

"Look alive!" called Loder, from the goal.

"Right-ho!" said Harry Wharton cheerily. "Play up, you fellows!"

The Removites played up.

It was good enough practice for the junior footballers, sending in shots for a Sixth Form player to stop. Even if it had not been so, they could scarcely have refused this gracious favour from a member of the Sixth. But as it was, it was useful enough, and they were glad of Loder's services. Loder was not a first-rate footballer, but he sometimes played in the Greyfriars First Eleven; and the Lower Fourth, of course, seldom had a chance of practice with the seniors.

The Removites, astonished as they were by Loder's extraordinary good temper, played up very cheerfully, and Loder had plenty of work to keep the leather out of goal.

In spite of Loder's care, a shot from Vernon-Smith beat him, and the ball went through. The juniors expected a scowl, at least, from Loder. But Loder did not scowl. He tossed out the ball with a smile.

"Good shot!" he said heartily. "Try that again!"

"Wonders will never cease!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton brought the ball up to goal, and kicked. It was a shot for the corner of the net, and Loder had to jump at it with outstretched hand.

He jumped, and stumbled, and fell headlong in the goal.

Crash!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That shout of laughter at the clumsiness of the Sixth Form goalkeeper was irresistible.

"If Loder keeps goal like that for the Sixth, Wingate will have something to say!" grinned Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's hurt!" exclaimed Bob, as Loder sat up in goal, clasping his right hand with his left.

The juniors ran forward, the laughter ceasing at once.

"Hurt?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Oh! My wrist!" groaned Loder.

"I'm sorry, Loder," said Wharton.

"Let's look at it."

He helped the senior to his feet.

"It's all right," said Loder, in a strained voice. "I fell on it, like a clumsy ass! My own fault entirely. I've twisted it a bit. Nothing serious, but I sha'n't be able to handle a pen again for a bit. Can't be helped. I'm afraid I can't do any more goal-keeping for you, though, just now."

"Sorry, Loder!"

"Oh, it's all right!"

And Loder, still genial, walked out of goal and left Little Side, pausing every now and then to squeeze his damaged wrist on his way to the School House.

"Rotten luck!" said Johnny Bull.

"Blessed if I didn't expect Loder to start on us when he hurt himself!"

"Seems to have taken a sudden change for the better," grinned Tom Brown. "I must say I like Loder better to-day than I did yesterday."

"The betterfulness is terrific."

"I'm blessed if I understand him!" said Harry Wharton. "Something's happened to improve his temper."

"Picked up some of Mauly's nice manners last evening, perhaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors went on with their footer, but when they filed in to dinner Harry Wharton looked for Loder, to inquire after his wrist. Loder's unusual and surprising good temper seemed to merit that much. Loder was rather an uncertain person, as a rule, for a junior to approach; but on this occasion his extraordinary good-temper was still going strong. He nodded kindly to the captain of the Remove.

"Wrist all right?" asked Harry.

Loder made a grimace.

"It hurts a bit, that's all," he replied.

"Nothing much; only I can't use my hand. I shall have to explain to the Head in class this afternoon. But don't you bother about it; only my own clumsiness."

That was true enough, though it was surprising to hear Loder admit it. Wharton felt much more kindly towards the bully of the Sixth as he went in to dinner. Loder was a bully, and generally a most unpleasant person to juniors, but he seemed to have his good points, after all.

After afternoon classes, the Famous Five held a consultation on the subject of tea. No remittances had as yet arrived for the unfortunate juniors, and cash was at a lower ebb than ever.

"Tea in Hall, or whom shall we stick for one?" said Bob Cherry.

"Can't stick Mauly again," remarked Nugent. "What about the Bounder? He's not gone out this time?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Let's try the Bounder. Hallo, Tubb! What do you want?"

Loder's fag had come up, looking sulky.

"You?" he grun, d.

"Well, here I am," said Harry.

"What are you scowling about, you grubby little Hun?"

"Blessed if I'll fag for Loder much longer!" grunted Tubb. "I'm not going to fag getting tea for kids in the Remove, I know that! Bad enough fagging for the Sixth! Mauleverer last night, and now you! Me making toast for Remove kids! Br-r-r-r!"

Tubb was evidently indignant.

"What are you driving at?" demanded Wharton.

"Loder's sent me to ask you to tea!" growled Tubb. "If there's much more of it I shall go on strike, I know that!"

And Tubb grunted indignantly, and went his way.

"Well, my hat!" said Wharton, in astonishment.

"Lucky bargee!" said Bob Cherry. "Mauly said it was ripping yesterday. But what the merry thunder has Loder asked you to tea for, Wharton?"

"Give it up. He's been surprising us all day," said Harry, laughing. "I suppose I'd better go, especially as Loder was so decent to-day."

"Well, it's safer to go when a prefect asks you," said Bob. "We'll try the Bounder. Ta-ta!"

Four of the Co. made their way to Vernon-Smith's study, seeking what they might devour, so to speak, and Harry Wharton, in a state of considerable surprise, went to the Sixth-Form quarters.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Tea With Loder!

"COME in, Wharton!"

Loder's manner was wonderfully genial.

If Wharton had known what had passed during Mauly's visit, he might have suspected that Loder was looking further for the tenner he required. Not that it would have been of much use looking in Wharton's direction. Lord Mauleverer was the only junior at Greyfriars who was lucky enough to have tenners to dispose of, excepting sometimes Vernon-Smith.

Harry Wharton, even when he was in funds, was seldom in possession of more than a sovereign at a time.

Certainly that could not have been Loder's motive. Wharton had nothing to lend.

But the usually ill-tempered bully of the Sixth was as genial to Wharton as he had been the previous evening to Lord Mauleverer.

"Tea's ready," said Loder. "Sit down, my boy! I hope I haven't put you out at all asking you here?"

"Not at all," said Harry, smiling. "As a matter of fact, we're all out of funds, and we were scouting for tea when Tubb came along."

Loder laughed.

"Then it's all right. Like your tea weak or strong?"

"Weak, please."

Loder poured out the tea. There was hot, buttered toast on the table, and ham and eggs, and cake and jam. Loder had provided well for his guest. Wharton wondered what it meant. Unless it meant that Loder had turned over a new leaf, and was going to make up for past misdeeds by asking all the Remove to tea in his study one after another. And that really didn't seem particularly likely.

The prefect appeared to be in genial spirits. He chatted away pleasantly while tea was dealt with.

"I understand you kids do a lot of amateur bizney in the Remove?" he remarked, with a smile.

"Oh, yes!" said Harry.

"The Remove Dramatic Society—what?"

"That's it."

"I've seen some of your shows," said Loder. "Pretty good for juniors—a cut above Coker's Stage Club in the Fifth!"

"That's only a spurious imitation!" said Harry, laughing. "We had a dramatic society in the Remove long before Coker thought of a Stage Club!"

Loder's interest in the Remove amateur theatricals was surprising enough. Coker of the Fifth had sometimes condescended to offer to take leading parts in the Remove plays—offers that had been declined without thanks. Loder could scarcely have any such intention. But his next remark let in light upon the subject.

"The fact is," said Loder, "I'm thinking of getting up something of the same kind in the Sixth."

"By Jove!" said Wharton, flattered and surprised.

"Of course, we have something of the kind already," said Loder. "The Sixth Form gives a Greek play on Speech Day; but—well, the audience have to stand it on Speech Day. No good springing anything of that kind on the school on any other occasion. They wouldn't stand it!"

"I suppose not," said Harry, with a smile.

"But a really good amateur dramatic society ought to go," said Loder.

"I should think so," assented Harry, marvelling that Loder should con-

descend to discuss his project with a junior.

"I don't want you to mention it outside this study," said Loder hastily. "You see, it may not come to anything, and I don't want it jawed about unless it does. I'm speaking in confidence, of course."

"Right-ho!" assented Harry, beginning on the cake.

"I'm writing a play myself," said Loder. "Not much of a thing, I dare say; but I think I've got rather a gift in that line. If the idea comes to anything, the senior dramatic society will produce my play—a drama of school life. In that case, I should like you to play the junior part, Wharton, if you feel inclined."

"I'd be glad," said Harry.

"Thanks! Now, I'm in rather a fix," said Loder. "I've been scribbling away at my play every evening lately, but I've crooked my right wrist to-day, as you know, and I can't hold a pen. Could you give me half an hour or so after tea, and write down what I've got in my head to my dictation?"

"Certainly!" said Harry at once.

Considering that Loder's wrist had been crooked in football practice with the Remove, Wharton would willingly have done more than that to oblige Loder.

"It won't be taking up too much of your time?" asked Loder.

"Not at all."

"Then we'll get on with it after tea. You might look over my manuscript now, and tell me what you think of it."

"I don't know that my opinion would be of much value," said Harry.

"Still, I'd like to hear it. Here's the manuscript."

Loder rose, and took a number of sheets, pinned together at the corner, from the table drawer. He spread them out on the tea-table before Wharton.

Harry was feeling quite sure by this time that Loder was rather a misjudged fellow.

A Sixth-Former who attached so much value to the opinion of a Remove junior was a Sixth-Former to be encouraged! Wharton could not help feeling flattered. Loder had doubtless borrowed the idea of a dramatic society from the Remove—indeed, he had practically admitted as much.

That in itself was a compliment from a prefect, and his apparent desire to profit by Wharton's experience in that line was very flattering.

Wharton read over the manuscript while he ate his cake.

It was a very crudely-written play, so far. If Loder had dashed it off without stopping to think for a minute it could hardly have been more crude. It dealt with the adventures of a junior school-boy named Harry.

"Harry" was the only nephew of an affectionate uncle, and he got into trouble at school, being led into wicked ways by another fellow; and he found himself in debt to a rascally bookmaker to the tune of ten pounds, and was in fear of exposure and ruin from being unable to pay his debt. That was the first act—all that Loder had written so far.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Loder, as Wharton looked up.

The junior hesitated a moment. He did not like to tell Loder that it struck him as rotten stuff, worthy only of the powers of a fag in the Third. He could hardly deliver that candid opinion to the author.

"It's exciting," said Harry diplomatically.

"Yes, it's meant to be exciting," said Loder, looking pleased. "The junior character is the part I shall want you to

play, if it comes off. I've given that character your Christian name, Wharton, as you see."

"Yes, I see."

"It's really only in the rough, so far," explained Loder. "As you've had a lot of experience in this line, I should like you to go over it when I've got it finished and knock it a bit into shape."

"Certainly," said Harry, almost overcome by this modesty on the part of a prefect.

There was no doubt that Wharton could have improved the play, but it was amazing that Loder should be able to see it. Wharton's opinion of Loder was rising.

Harry Wharton was no fool, and if it had seemed possible that Loder had any motive for flattering him, he would have suspected that the senior was "buttering him up" with ulterior motives. But it did not seem possible. What on earth could Loder have to gain by asking him to tea, and flattering him? The thought crossed Harry's mind for a moment, but he dismissed it.

So far as it was possible for him to see, Loder had no purpose to serve excepting the one he stated.

"Well, if you're finished, we'll get on, kid!"

"Right-ho!"

And the tea-things were put aside, and Wharton sat down at the table, pen in hand, to write the next act of the play to Loder's dictation.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Letter!

L ODER wrinkled his brows in thought. He seemed to be in the throes of composition, and Wharton did not interrupt him. He waited, pen in hand.

"By Jove, I haven't given you any paper!" said Loder suddenly. "I'd have asked you to bring some impot paper if I'd thought—"

"I'll fetch some if you like, Loder."

"No, don't trouble. I've got some notepaper here."

Loder took a sheaf of notepaper from the drawer.

"There you are! Ready?"

"Yes."

"The next bit is a letter from Harry, the junior, to his uncle," explained Loder. "The letter has to be found and read out on the stage by the captain of the school, so that the audience know what's in it. That's a stage trick, of course—I dare say you can give me some tips later about that kind of dodge. Anyway, here goes for the letter! Let's see—"

Loder reflected again.

"Dear Uncle—" he said.

Wharton obediently wrote down "Dear Uncle."

Loder was again lost in thought.

Wharton waited patiently.

Loder's face broke into a smile at last.

"It doesn't seem to go," he said. "Perhaps it's a bit difficult for me to figure out a letter as a junior would write it. It's a long time since I was in the Remove. If you'd like to help me out, Wharton—"

"Certainly!" said Harry.

"Well, suppose I tell you what's to go in the letter, and you write it just as if it were a real one, in the way a junior would write it?"

Wharton nodded.

"That strikes me as a good idea."

"Right-ho! Well, you've seen from the first act the fix the kid is in. He owes a bookmaker money, and the rotter means to come up to the school and show him up if he doesn't pay. He can't pay,

so he resolves to run away from the school before the exposure comes. He asks his uncle to forgive him, and says he will never be heard of again. He knows it wouldn't be any good asking his uncle for ten pounds to pay his debt, and all that. Now you figure it out."

Wharton thought for a few minutes, and then began to write. His pen moved quickly enough over the paper, Loder watching him curiously.

"Done it?" he asked, when the junior looked up at last. "Read it out."

Wharton read out what he had written.

"Dear Uncle,—I am afraid you will be very shocked and surprised when you receive this letter. By the time it reaches you I shall have left school. I never really meant any harm, but I've got into trouble. I couldn't face you and tell you about it. If I don't pay Hicks, the bookmaker, ten pounds to-morrow, he is coming to see the Head, and expose me, and I haven't the money. I can't face it! I've been thinking over it till my head's spinning, and there's only one thing I can do, and that's to run away before it all comes out. I hope you'll forgive me, and don't think me ungrateful for all your kindness to me. Good-bye, dear uncle, and don't think of looking for me. You will never see me again.—Your unhappy nephew, HARRY."

"By Jove!" said Loder, in great admiration. "You've got the knack, and no mistake! I couldn't have figured it out like that!"

"Well, I have a hand in most of the plays we do in the Remove," said Harry modestly. "If you think it will do—"

"It will do splendidly!" Loder took the sheet, and read it over, and nodded with satisfaction. "Ripping! Now let's get on with the act."

Loder laid the letter aside, and proceeded to dictate, and Wharton scribbled away on sheet after sheet of notepaper. He had covered quite a pile by the time the second act of Loder's play was finished.

Then the prefect rose to his feet. "That's enough for now," he said. "I can't buzz off as you do, kid. I haven't much of a head for it, really."

Wharton quite agreed with that, though he was too polite to say so. He rose to his feet.

"I'm really very much obliged to you, kid," said Loder. "Don't mention anything about this yet. I don't want to be cackled at if it comes to nothing."

"Not a word," agreed Harry. He quitted the study, and Loder closed the door after him carefully. After Harry Wharton's footsteps had died away down the passage, Loder turned the key in the lock.

There was a grin on his face as he turned back to the table.

Then he carefully collected up all the sheets Wharton had written, with the exception of the letter beginning "Dear Uncle."

He crammed the papers into the grate, stirring up the fire with the poker, and watched them till they were consumed. Then he added the manuscript first act of his play, watching that till it was reduced to ashes.

If Harry Wharton had still been in the study, that proceeding on Loder's part would certainly have astonished him.

Of Loder's play nothing was left now but the letter written by "Harry"—the letter in which the supposed character in the play informed his uncle of his disastrous scrape, and his intention of running away from school.

Loder picked up that letter and read it over again, grinning.

"Ripping!" he murmured. "Couldn't be better!"

He folded the letter and placed it carefully in his pocket-book. Of all Loder's play, that letter seemed to be the only portion that had any value in Loder's eyes. Which certainly would have astonished Harry Wharton very much if he had known it.

Quite unsuspecting of Loder's very peculiar actions, Harry Wharton went up to his study in the Remove passage.

He found Frank Nugent there, beginning his preparation.

"You've been a long time having tea with Loder," said Nugent, with a grin. "How did you get on with him?"

"First-rate," replied Harry. Loder had asked him to say nothing about the play, or his intention of getting up a dramatic society in the Sixth, in case the enterprise was a failure. That was natural enough; and Harry, of course, had no intention of violating the prefect's confidence.

"Did you get any tea, Franky?" he asked.

Nugent laughed. "Yes; Smithy saw us through. We'll have Mauly and Smithy to tea on Saturday, when the tin comes, and make it square."

"Good egg!" Harry Wharton sat down to his work. Prep finished, the two juniors sauntered down to the Common-room.

Lord Mauleverer detached himself from an armchair there as they came in, and came over to Wharton.

"I hear you've been havin' tea with Loder," he remarked.

"Yes," said Harry. "It was my turn to-day. Loder's growing hospitable in his old age."

Mauleverer looked at him curiously. "Anythin' beside tea?" he asked.

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"What should there be beside tea?" asked Harry. "There was cake, if that's what you mean?"

Lord Mauleverer grinned.

"That isn't what I mean. Did Loder want you to lend him anythin'?"

"Lend him anything!" ejaculated Wharton, in astonishment. "Loder wouldn't be likely to borrow anything from me if he was hard up. And I couldn't have lent him more than three-halfpence if he had wanted it."

"Excuse my askin'," said Mauleverer. "I was goin' to give you a tip not to lend him anythin' if he wanted it, that's all. Sage advice to a thoughtless kid, you know."

"You ass!" said Harry warmly. "Do you mean that Loder wanted to borrow something of you yesterday?"

"Eh? I never mean anythin'," said his lordship vaguely, and he ambled out of the Common-room, leaving Wharton somewhat puzzled.

"I say, Wharton!" Billy Bunter rolled up, his eyes glistening behind his big glasses. "Was Loder good-tempered?"

"Quite," said Harry.

"He seems to have rather a fancy for Remove chaps feeding in his study lately," said Bunter. "I saw Tubb taking things into his study for supper. Do you think he'd like a Remove chap to supper, Wharton?"

"Better ask him," grinned Wharton.

"He would be bound to like a fascinating chap like you, Bunt," said Frank Nugent. "Roll in and tell him you've come to supper."

"Well, Loder's such an uncertain beast," said Bunter. "Still, if he can stand Wharton and Mauly, I should think he would like me to come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I suppose I'm better company than Mauly, Wharton, or Frank Nugent?"

"Heaps!" said Harry, laughing. "Go and try your luck."

"Blessed if I don't!" said Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove rolled out of the Common-room to try his luck in Loder's study. He came back in about five minutes with a very red ear, which he was rubbing ruefully.

"What luck with Loder?" grinned Nugent.

Billy Bunter snorted.

"Loder's a beast! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Evidently Loder's good temper and hospitality had failed under the strain of Billy Bunter's company. Apparently he did not want any more Removites to feed in his study.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Cornered!

SOMETHING lingering, with boiling oil in it!" said Kipps.

Kipps was rubbing his hand savagely while he made that observation. The Famous Five came on him in the quadrangle thus engaged.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you hurbuling about?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I'm thinking what I should like for Loder!" said Kipps, with a groan. "I should like something awfully lingering, with awfully boiling oil in it. Only that seems too good for the beastly Hun. Ow!"

"Loder!" repeated Wharton. "Why, Loder's quite decent! He had me to tea yesterday!"

"Yow-ow! He haen't had me to tea," groaned Kipps. "He's had me to lick. All because of a poor little conjuring trick three days ago. I dodged him all right till this afternoon."

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The chums of the Remove grinned. Kipps' last day or two had been quite exciting. The schoolboy conjurer had shown remarkable ability in dodging Loder, but evidently Loder had somehow run him down at last. Perhaps Loder had given him a little extra pay for the trouble he had caused. Poor Kipps seemed to be trying to tie himself into knots now.

"I thought Loder was improving," said Nugent. "He seems to have broken out again. Better not give him any more conjuring tricks."

Kipps snorted.

"I'd like to conjure his silly head off!" he growled. "He's nearly skinned me, and I'm not going to take it lying down. I'm going to see Loder!"

"I should think you'd seen enough of him for to-day!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"I mean I'm going to visit him. When he goes to bed to-night he may be sorry for this licking!" growled Kipps. "That is unless he enjoys cinders in his bed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And treacle on his pillow," said Kipps. "I'm going to waste threepence in treacle for Loder. He won't know whom to thank for it. There are some occasions—ow!—when it's best to hide one's light under a bushel."

"Better leave him alone; he's dangerous, you know."

"Rats! Rotten betting beast, too!" said Kipps. "It would serve him right if I told the Head about his betting with that beery bounder Beele. Only a chap can't sneak, and the Head wouldn't believe it, anyway. Blow him! I'll make him sit up to-night, anyway!"

The schoolboy conjurer was in deadly earnest. While the other Removites were at tea that day Kipps was borrowing cinders from various studies in the Remove passage, and collecting them into a bag.

He had purchased a jar of cheap treacle from Mrs. Mumble at the tuckshop, and transferred it to a bottle for convenience of carriage. With the bottle hidden in a pocket and the bag of cinders concealed under his jacket, Kipps kept an eye on the Sixth Form passage, waiting for an opportunity of slipping unseen into Loder's study. It was very necessary to be unseen.

Loder was in Carne's study just then, and Kipps heard their voices. Loder was giving Carne a valuable tip concerning Blue Bonnet for the Thursday's race next week—a very interesting topic to both the black sheep of the Sixth. Kipps cheerfully tiptoed past the study, and slipped into Loder's room.

The bed in Loder's room was in an alcove in the wall, as in most of the Sixth Form studies. The alcove was draped with curtains in the daytime.

With great care he disposed the cinders in the bed between the sheets, and then the treacle gurgled out of the bottle round the pillow.

Kipps grinned cheerfully over his task. Loder was pretty certain to be surprised when he slid into his bed that night. The junior had just finished when the door of the study suddenly opened.

Kipps drew a quick breath.

In the bed-alcove he was hidden from view by the curtains. Otherwise he would have been seen at once. But he had no chance of making his escape.

The schoolboy conjurer suppressed a groan.

His luck was out.

This was the second time he had been cornered by Loder—once in the big oak-tree in the wood, and now in Loder's study. It was cruel luck, and this time it did not look as if he would be so fortunate as on the first occasion.

He wondered whether it was Loder

who had entered the study, as he stood close behind the curtains, bottle in hand. He was soon informed.

"Tubb!" It was Loder's voice, calling to his fag.

Tubb of the Third put a sulky face into the room. Loder was not beloved by fags.

"I thought you'd had tea with Carne," said Tubb sulkily.

"So I have, you lazy little sweep!" said Loder. "I don't want you to get tea, you grubby little slacker!"

"Oh, all right!" said Tubb, brightening up.

"Go and find Mauleverer, and tell him I want to speak to him!"

"Right-ho!" said Tubb, quite cheerfully.

Kipps suppressed a groan. Loder had evidently come to stay, as he had sent the fag for Mauleverer. Kipps was cornered. Mauleverer could not be coming to tea this time, as Loder had had his tea with Carne. Doubtless his lordship had been sent for to be licked.

After that, would Loder go? If he did not, Kipps would have to show himself, that was certain. But the junior naturally decided to put off the evil moment as long as possible. If Loder discovered him there, he would know who had added those improvements to the comfort of his bed; and the licking Kipps had had that afternoon would be as nothing to the licking Kipps would get. His hands, still tingling from the last castigation, tingled more acutely at the thought of it.

He slid the bottle into his pocket, and stood back behind the curtains of the alcove, still as a mouse, and scarcely breathing. Unless Loder came to the bed he could not be seen, and Loder was not likely to do that. Kipps waited in a very unpleasant state of uncertainty.

Meanwhile, Tubb of the Third had gone to Lord Mauleverer's study in the Remove passage. Tea was over there, and Delarey had sat down to his preparation, and was urging Mauleverer to do the same. His lordship was yawning, and trying to make up his mind to begin work, when Tubb put his shock head into the study.

"Mauleverer's wanted!" said Tubb.

"Loder's study—sharp!"

"Oh, by gad!" said Mauly. "Tell him I've had tea, kid!"

Tubb grinned.

"Tain't tea this time," he said. "Loder's had tea. I expect it's a licking. Hope you'll enjoy it!"

With that charitable wish the fag sauntered away down the passage.

Lord Mauleverer sighed.

"Think I'd better go, Delarey?"

"I should say so, unless you want Loder to fetch you!" grinned the South African junior. "What have you been doing?"

"Nothin'."

"Well, even Loder won't lick you for nothing."

"Oh, I know it isn't a licking!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Loder's really a fearful bore. I suppose I'd better go."

And Lord Mauleverer, with a doleful face, lounged out of the study. He could guess what Loder wanted—that it was another attempt to borrow the "tenner." It was possible that a licking would follow a second refusal to lend it, however.

His lordship was not in a happy mood as he lounged down the Remove passage to the stairs. He gave a jump as a heavy hand smote him on the shoulder, accompanied by a yell:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Cheer up, Mauly!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"What are you looking down in the mouth for?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Wow!" said Mauleverer, rubbing his shoulder. "Don't be such a Hun, dear boy! I'm going to see Loder."

"More giddy hospitality!" said Bob, in astonishment. "'Tain't fair; it's my turn next for tea in Loder's study!"

"It isn't a tea—it's a jaw!" groaned Mauleverer. "Loder's goin' to jaw me, and I'm goin' to jaw him, and then he'll lose his temper, and lay into a fellow with an ash-plant! I'm not goin' to stand it, though! I'm not goin' to be licked for nothin'!"

"Why should Loder lick you for nothing?" asked Bob.

"Well, it won't be for nothin'—he'll be disappointed, you see."

"Disappointed about what?" demanded Bob.

"Oh, nothin'!"

Lord Mauleverer went on his way dismally, leaving Bob staring after him in astonishment. His lordship's words were riddles to Bob.

"Can you make head or tail of that, Harry?" he asked, turning to Wharton, who was looking out of his study.

Wharton was frowning.

"It looks to me as if Loder's trying to borrow of Mauly," he said. "From what Mauly let drop last night, and what he's just said."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"A prefect borrow of a chap in the Remove!" he exclaimed. "Draw it mild, old scout! Even Loder wouldn't come down to that."

Wharton's lip curled.

"He's hard put to it for money just now," he said. "I told you about being treed on Wednesday, Bob, and how those two cads were jawing under the tree while Kipps and I were stuck there waiting for them to go. Loder wants a tenner badly, and it looks to me as if he's going to squeeze it out of Mauly if he can."

"Mauly wouldn't let him have it," said Bob. "He'd know what Loder wanted it for."

"Then Loder will lick him!"

"I say, that's pretty thick, licking a chap for not lending you money!" said Bob incredulously. "Even Loder—"

"That's what Mauly thinks, it seems to me," Wharton set his lips. "Loder's not going to be allowed to do it, though! He's not going to screw money out of Mauly to blue on gee-gees. Come along, Bob! If we hear a howl from Loder's study we'll chip in."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob.

"When Loder knows we know his game he will be glad enough to let it drop, you see. He won't want all Greyfriars to learn that he's been bullying a junior to get cash out of him!"

"No fear!" chuckled Bob. "Come on."

The two Removites followed Lord Mauleverer down the stairs, and proceeded to admire the view at the window in the Sixth Form passage—prepared to rush to Mauly's aid at the first sound of trouble in Loder's study. The friendly relations established between the Removites and the bully of the Sixth had not lasted long!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

For Wharton's Sake!

LORD MAULEVERER tapped at Loder's door and entered. He did not look cheerful. To his relief he saw that there was no cane handy on Loder's table.

"Come in, Mauleverer," he said quietly. "Close the door. I've something rather important to speak to you about."

"Certainly, Loder," said Mauleverer,



Right into the prefect the schoolboy conjurer dashed.

(See Chapter 11.)

surprised by the prefect's tone. This did not look as if a licking were coming.

"Sit down, Mauleverer."

Mauleverer sat down.

"I spoke to you a couple of days ago," said Loder. "You remember?"

"Oh, yaas."

"About a fellow belonging to Greyfriars who was in a bad way, and whom I wanted to help out of his fix?" said Loder.

Lord Mauleverer smiled slightly. He had no doubt whatever that it was Loder himself who was to be helped out of a fix by the tenner, or that the fix, if it existed, had been brought about by dabbling in Turf matters.

"Yaas," he said.

"I'm going to give you some more particulars," said Loder quietly. "But first I must ask you to give me your word not to mention the matter to the fellow concerned. It would wound his feelings too deeply if he knew that it was known in his own Form."

"His own Form!" repeated Mauleverer.

Loder nodded.

"Then it's a Remove chap?"

"Yes."

Lord Mauleverer gazed at Loder's serious face. He was beginning to wonder whether there was any truth in the story after all!

"You understand, Mauleverer. I want your promise."

"Begad! Wouldn't it be easier not to tell me anythin' about it at all, Loder?" asked Mauleverer innocently.

"I leave that to you," said Loder calmly. "If you want a fellow in your Form to be ruined and disgraced for life, rather than make a loan of a ten-pound note for a short time, I leave it to your conscience."

Mauleverer shifted uneasily upon his chair.

"Of course, if it's as bad as that I'd pay up, no end," he said. "But—"

"But you want proof?"

"Well, yaas."

"Give me your word not to repeat anything I tell you outside this study, and I will explain. I want to save the kid from his own folly without showing him up," said Loder.

"Begad, that's awfully kind of you, Loder! Not the kind of thing a chap would have expected of you, either."

"I intend to be kind," said Loder. "I feel that, in this case, it would be better to give the poor fellow another chance, instead of reporting him to the Head for punishment—which would mean immediate expulsion from the school. The kid is a thoroughly decent fellow, who has been led into this by a rotter older than himself. I am sure that he is more sinned against than sinning, as you will agree, when I tell you his name."

"What is his name—Skinner?"

"No."

"Snoop?"

"Certainly not! Quite a different fellow, a fellow you are on very friendly terms with."

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"Begad!" exclaimed Mauleverer, "in astonishment. "Look here, Loder, I'll speak out plainly. If a friend of mine is in a corner, I'll help him out if I can; but I'm not partin' with any money till I know. That's flat!"

"I've got proof here, if you promise not to say a word to the fellow concerned. It would do no good, and would only add to his shame and humiliation."

"Yass, that's so. I promise, if you prove it."

"That's good enough," said Loder.

"Well, who is it, then?"

"Wharton."

Lord Mauleverer jumped.

"Wharton!" he ejaculated.

"That's the name."

"Oh, begad! You're on a false scent, Loder, dear boy. I'll bet you Wharton hasn't got himself into any fix he could be sacked for!"

"He has been led into it by another fellow," said Loder. "He never meant any harm, I am convinced of that, or I shouldn't be helping him, instead of reporting him to the Head. I had him in here last evening to talk the matter over and see what could be done."

"I—I thought he came to tea."

"The matter is, of course, secret," said Loder. "I asked him to tea so that we could talk the matter over in quiet. He owes ten pounds to a bookmaker named Hicks!"

"Impossible!"

"He was led into it, as I said."

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"I am not asking you to take my bare word, Mauleverer, and hand over the money," said Loder patiently. "The matter really does not concern me. Wharton owes this man Hicks ten pounds, and has signed a paper to that effect. Unless Hicks is paid this evening, he intends to come here and expose the whole business to the Head. You know what that would mean. I could not help the kid out—I was too short of money myself. I could only advise him to keep up a cheerful appearance before the other fellows, so that nothing should be suspected, and tell him that I'd do my best for him. That's what I'm doing."

Lord Mauleverer was silent. Loder's earnest tone made some impression upon him. But he simply could not believe the story.

"I have been afraid that the boy might take some desperate step," continued Loder. "For that reason, I have kept an eye on his correspondence. He put a letter in the post-bag to-day. I considered it my duty, as a prefect, to take that letter and examine it. I have it here."

"Begad! That was a rotten trick!" Loder flushed.

"Read the letter, and you will see for yourself what is in his mind," he said.

"I can't read it."

"You must!" said Loder, frowning.

"I tell you—"

Lord Mauleverer's face set obstinately.

"I can't read Wharton's letter without Wharton's permission!"

Loder had taken a letter from his pocket-book and unfolded it.

"For Wharton's sake, you must hear it," he said. "I will read it out."

And, without waiting for a reply, Loder read out:

"Dear Uncle,—I am afraid you will be very shocked and surprised when you receive this letter. By the time it reaches you I shall have left school. I never really meant any harm, but I've got into trouble. I couldn't face you and tell you about it. If I don't pay Hicks, the bookmaker, ten pounds to-morrow, he is coming to see the Head and expose me, and I haven't the money. I can't face it. I've been thinking over it till my head's spinning, and there's only one thing I can do, and that's to run away before it all comes out. I hope you'll forgive me, and don't think me ungrateful for all your kindness to me. Good-bye, dear uncle, and don't think of looking for me. You will never see me again. — Your unhappy nephew, HARRY."

Lord Mauleverer started to his feet.

"Wharton never wrote that! It's impossible—"

"Look at it!" said Loder.

He threw the letter on the table before Mauleverer's eyes. The junior looked at it now, his face pale and troubled. Then he gave a cry.

"Oh, the duffer! Poor old Wharton!"

For the letter was in Harry Wharton's well-known handwriting, and Lord Mauleverer could no longer doubt.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Tenner at Last!

THERE was a deep silence in Loder's study.

Lord Mauleverer passed his hand over his brow. He was almost dazed.

If that letter had been written by Skinner or Snoop, or even Vernon-Smith, he could have understood it.

But Wharton!

Wharton, whom he had always known to be so high and honourable, who had always scorned an underhand action, who had never concealed his contempt for the wretched, dingy blackguardism of fellows like Skinner and Snoop!

It seemed incredible.

Yet there it was, in black and white, in Wharton's hand. That letter—evidently written to Colonel Wharton—taken by the prefect from the school post-bag, furnished evidence that could not be doubted. In his dismay and amazement Mauleverer wondered for a moment whether it could be forged. But that was evidently impossible. Harry Wharton's hand was well-known to him, he knew every trick and turn of the writing. It was absurd to suppose that Loder had the skill to imitate it so exactly. That idea had to be ruled out. Wharton had written the letter. There was no doubt on that point. And why should he have written it, unless he was in the situation depicted in the letter?

Loder broke the silence.

"You can decide what you will do now, Mauleverer. I am sure you agree that Wharton should be helped, and saved from ruin? He is not a naturally vicious lad."

"I know he isn't," said Mauleverer. "He's one of the very best. I can't understand how he could have got into a scrape like this. It beats me!"

"It is a slip that can be retrieved," said Loder. "If he were a vicious lad, I should simply report the matter to the Head—"

"For goodness' sake don't do that!" exclaimed Mauleverer, in alarm.

"I have not done it. I want to save him. And I think if he is given another chance he will never fall into such a foolish error again!"

"I'm sure of it, Loder! You—you don't want him to know I know?"



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"Better not! He would be overwhelmed with shame!"

"Yaas, I know he would. That's how I should feel. But—but how's that rotter Hicks to be paid, then?"

"Leave the money here for Wharton—that is, if you choose to do so," said Loder. "Of course, I shall repay it."

"I don't want you to, Loder." Mauleverer was already opening his pocket-book. "I'm more than willin' to stand it. He's a friend of mine, and I'd back him up if it was my last tennor!"

Loder winced a little. Even Loder had his limits, and he could not quite bring himself to rob the junior.

"No, no!" he exclaimed hastily. "I shall repay it in a week or two, Mauleverer. I shall only let you leave it here on that condition. I undertook to see—to see Wharton through, and it's up to me. You will simply lend me the tennor till next week."

"Just as you like, of course!" said Mauleverer. "There's the tennor!"

Loder's eyes glistened as the crisp, rustling ten-pound note was laid on the table. His greedy fingers picked it up at once.

"You're a good kid, Mauleverer! Find Wharton at once, and send him here," said Loder. "I'll relieve his mind immediately. I shall not mention you. You'd rather I did not, of course?"

"Certainly!"

"Mind, not a word to him that you know anything! Simply tell him I want to speak to him."

"Yaas."

Lord Mauleverer left the study with that. Loder smiled, and put the bank-note into his pocket-book, along with Wharton's letter. He slid the book into the inner pocket of his coat, and smiled again. Loder was feeling very satisfied with the result of the little comedy he had played. He would not have felt so satisfied if he had known that two startled, staring eyes were watching him through a slit in the curtains of the alcove.

There was a tap at the door a few minutes later. Harry Wharton came in, looking surprised. Wharton and Bob Cherry had waited at the end of the passage, prepared to go to Lord Mauleverer's rescue if necessary. But it had not been necessary. Instead of that, Mauleverer had come along, told Wharton hastily that Loder wanted him, and hurried upstairs.

"You want me, Loder?" asked Harry.

Loder nodded. He had told Mauleverer to send Wharton there simply to keep up appearances in Mauly's eyes. He was very far from wanting the captain of the Remove, as a matter of fact.

"Yes, come in," he said. "Shut the door. I found some fish-hooks in one of my shirts to-day. Do you know anything about it?"

Wharton grinned.

"Nothing at all!"

"You didn't put them there?"

"Oh, no!"

"Perhaps you know who did?"

"As it happens, I don't know!"

"Well, if I find out who did it there'll be trouble!" said Loder. "That's all. You can cut!"

Harry Wharton left the study. Kipps, silent as a graven image behind the curtain of the alcove, drew a deep breath. Loder had not given the banknote to Wharton, though Mauleverer had sent him to the study for that purpose. The suspicion that was already in Kipps' mind—that the whole thing was a trick to get money out of Mauly to back Blue Bonnet for the race—was confirmed now. How Wharton had been induced to write the letter was a mystery; but it was certain that the ten-pound note was destined for

Mr. Beele, not for the captain of the Remove.

Loder burst into a laugh when Wharton was gone. He took out his watch and looked at it.

"Just time to catch Beele at the Cross Keys!" he muttered. "By gad! What a windfall for me! The kid shall have his tennor back next week if—if Blue Bonnet wins. He must win—he will win! Forty quid clear for me! By gad, it's worth a bit of trouble, a coup like that!"

And Loder laughed again with satisfaction.

He took his overcoat from the hook on the wall, and put it on, and picked up his cap. Then he left the study.

Kipps made a movement as the door closed behind Loder.

"My hat!" murmured Kipps. "Oh, my hat! Ten of Mauly's quids to put on Blue Bonnet, and it's cost Loder nothing but Wharton's good name! Oh, the cad! And—and what am I going to do?"

He crept out of the bed alcove.

Loder's steps had died away. Kipps, peering cautiously out of the study, saw the passage clear.

He slipped out, and hurried away.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where did you spring from?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as Kipps passed him and Wharton at the end of the passage.

Kipps did not stay to reply.

He hurried out of the House into the quadrangle, where the winter dusk was thickening into darkness.

Loder was striding down to the side gate, of which, as a prefect, he had the key. The big gates were locked.

Kipps dashed after him at a rapid run.

Loder reached the gate just as Kipps reached Loder. Right into the prefect the schoolboy conjurer dashed.

Crash!

Loder bumped on the gate as Kipps bumped on him. Kipps threw his arms round the prefect as if to save himself, and they rolled to the ground together.

"Oh! Ah! Ow!" roared Loder. "What the—oh, ah—who—"

Kipps was sprawling all over him.

"Get off!" shrieked Loder. "You silly young ass! I'll—I'll smash you!"

Loder struggled to his feet, hurling the junior off. He glared furiously at Kipps.

"What do you mean by rushing into me, you young hound?" he roared. "By gad, I'll—I'll pulverise you!"

"Yarough!" roared Kipps, as the prefect's hand closed on him.

Whack, whack, whack!

Loder had a walking-cane in his hand, and he made the cane sing on Kipps. The unfortunate junior yelled.

"There!" gasped Loder. "You'll think twice before you play any more of your Remove tricks on me!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" mumbled Kipps.

Loder unlocked the gate and strode out into the road. Kipps wriggled with pain; but he was grinning while he wriggled, and he was still grinning as he made his way back to the School House.

Loder strode away through the dusk for Friardale. Twenty minutes later he was in the smoky, beery parlour of the Cross Keys, where Mr. Beele greeted him with a beery grin.

"All serene!" said Loder cheerfully.

"I've got the tennor."

"Well done, my boy!" said Mr. Beele.

"Five to one against," said Loder anxiously; "and you can put it on in time?"

"You leave that to me. I'm your man!"

Loder slid his hand into his inner pocket.

Then he uttered a sharp exclamation.

"Great Scott!"

"Hallo! What's the matter?" asked Mr. Beele.

"My pocket-book's gone!" yelled Loder.

Mr. Beele whistled. Loder stamped furiously out of the room. His pocket-book, containing the tennor and Wharton's letter, and several other papers which Loder was anxious to have been seen by no other eyes but his own, had vanished. How it could have fallen out of an inside pocket was a mystery. But it was gone!

Loder, in a mood of savage desperation at this unlooked-for calamity, tramped back to Greyfriars with his eyes bent on the ground, examining every foot of the muddy lane for the lost pocket-book. He did not find it.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Kipps to the Fore!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's on?"

Bob Cherry asked that question as he came into No. 1 Study with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Wharton and Nugent were at work on their preparation, and both of them looked up in surprise.

"Nothing, that I'm aware of," said Harry—"only prep."

"Is it a lark of Kipps's, then?"

"The larkfulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh. "The esteemed Kipps told us there was an important meeting in this honoured study."

"First I've heard of it!" said Nugent.

Bob Cherry grunted.

"I'll punch his head for his blessed larks! Prep's bad enough, without being interrupted by a fat-headed, practical joker! Hallo, hallo, hallo! You, too!" exclaimed Bob, as Johnny Bull came into the study.

Johnny Bull looked surprised.

"What is it?" he asked.

"What's what?" inquired Wharton.

"The meeting. What's it about, all of a sudden?"

"There isn't a meeting," said Wharton, laughing. "Kipps seems to have been pulling your leg all round."

"Why, I'll spifficate him!" exclaimed Johnny Bull wrathfully.

"The spiffication will be terrific!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is—and Mauly, too!"

Kipps came into No. 1 Study, marching in Lord Mauleverer by the arm. The Famous Five stared at them.

"What do you mean by it?" demanded Johnny Bull. "What have you dragged Mauly here for, you fathead?"

"Wait and see!" replied Kipps.

"Blessed if I know," said Mauleverer, looking bewildered. "The silly chump came into my study and said there was an important meeting, and dragged me off. And Delarey was helpin' me with my prep, too!"

"It's one of Kipps' little jokes," remarked Bob. "Collar him, and we'll teach him to leave his little jokes till after prep!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Kipps, dodging the incensed Co. "It's not a joke; it's jolly serious."

"It will be serious for you if it isn't serious!" growled Johnny Bull, not very lucidly, perhaps, but his meaning was clear. "What's it all about?"

"I'll explain—"

"Buck up, then!"

"It's a jolly serious matter, and it concerns Wharton and Mauly," said Kipps. "But I thought you'd better all be here."

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer, with a start. "What the dickens are you drivin' at, Kipps, you ass?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 475.

"How does it concern me?" asked Wharton. "You're talking in riddles!"

"You remember what Shakespeare says—"

"Oh, blow Shakespeare!"

"We don't want Shakespeare now!" roared Johnny Bull. "We want to get our prep done, you burbling jabber-wock!"

"But it's to the point," said Kipps calmly, and he proceeded to quote from the great William:

"Who steals my purse, steals trash;
But he that filches from me my good
name,
Robs me of that which not enriches
him,
And leaves me poor indeed!"

The juniors stared blankly at Kipps. "Have you brought us all here to quote Shakespeare at us?" demanded Johnny Bull, in tones that were almost sulphurous.

"Not wholly. The thing is, that somebody has been filching Wharton's good name, and I'm going to put the stopper on!"

Wharton jumped. "My good name?" he repeated.

"Exactly. Suppose somebody made out that you'd been betting with book-makers—"

"I?" yelled Wharton.

"And were going to be sacked from Greyfriars for it—"

"Are you dotty?"

"And had made up your mind to run away from school first—"

Wharton rose to his feet, his eyes glittering.

"Do you mean that somebody's been spinning a yarn like that about me, Kipps?" he asked.

"Right on the wicket!" said Kipps cheerfully.

"Then I'm glad you've told me! I want to know the merry merchant's name next!"

"Loder."

"Loder?" gasped Wharton.

"Good old Loder! Sportin' old Loder!" agreed Kipps. "Don't stare at me like a fish out of water, Mauly! Your eyes will drop out if you're not careful!"

Lord Mauleverer's jaw had dropped, and he was blinking dazedly at Kipps. He could see that the schoolboy conjurer knew what had passed in Loder's study a short time before; though how, Mauly could not guess.

"What does Mauly know about it?" asked Bob Cherry, in wonder.

"It was Mauly Loder span the yarn to—"

"Mauly!" shouted the juniors.

"Oh, begad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer, sinking into a chair. "Kipps, you rotter, if you know about it, shut your silly head! What's the good of bringin' it all out before these fellows, you tattlin' ass!"

"Do you mean to say that you believed it about me, Mauly?" shouted Wharton.

"I'm not goin' to say a word!"

"You—you ass—"

"Don't jaw old Mauly," said Kipps. "Mauly played up like a little man, and sprung a tenner to save your bacon, Wharton."

"What on earth do you mean? Explain, you fathead!"

"You see, I was in Loder's study," said Kipps. "I told you what I was going to do. Well, I had just finished making his bed comfy, when Loder came in, and, you can bet, I kept behind the curtains, like old Polonius in Shakespeare. I didn't want to see Loder just then, with his bed in that cheery state."

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It would have been a painful meeting."

"Get on, you ass!"

"Loder sent for Mauly, and Mauly came, and Loder started a yarn on him. Poor old Mauly didn't believe it at first, till Loder proved it—"

"Proved it?" yelled Wharton.

"Yes; in your own handwriting."

"Mum-mum-my handwriting?" stammered Wharton dazedly.

"Yes. And how you came to be such a howling ass to write such a letter beats me hollow!"

"Letter? I've written no letter!"

"H'm! Loder produced a letter which convinced Mauly that if your debt to a bookmaker wasn't paid, you had to run away from school to escape the sack. Mauly trotted out a tenner for you."

"Great Scott!"

"You can bet," continued Kipps, "that I was flabbergasted. When Loder read out the letter, I thought he was spoofing Mauly; but Mauly recognised your hand, and had to believe it. It's your fist, right enough; I've seen it too—now."

"Either you're a lunatic, or I'm dreaming!" said Wharton dazedly. "I suppose you fellows know this is all rot?"

"Somebody's off his rocker, that's a cert!" said Bob Cherry, rubbing his nose. "Get on with the yarn, Kippy, before we scalp you!"

"Well, Mauly squeezed out the tenner, and Loder told him to send you into the study, Wharton, to have it. You came in—"

"Mauly told me Loder wanted me—that's right enough. I didn't see you there, Kipps."

"I was understudying old Polonius—behind the curtain," grinned Kipps. "I saw you through a chink, though. Loder jawed some rot, and never gave you any banknote."

"Of course he didn't!" said Harry.

"He—he—he didn't?" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

"Why should he, ass?" demanded Wharton.

"Oh, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer, in helpless bewilderment.

"And then I knew, of course, that Loder had been spoofing Mauly, using Wharton's name to get hold of the tenner," said Kipps. "He mumbled something about the Cross Keys, and went out, and I cleared."

"Do you mean to say that but for that you'd have believed the yarn you say Loder told Mauly?" demanded Harry.

"Naturally."

"Why, you rotter—"

"Easy does it!" said Kipps. "It's your own fault, when you wrote it down in your own hand. Unless you're potty, I don't know why you did that, and Mauly doesn't know—do you, Mauly?"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Mauleverer. "Loder made me promise not to mention it to Wharton."

"But you'd have found out that Wharton never had the note," grinned Kipps.

"Oh, I—I see now! But—but the letter—"

"What letter?" roared Wharton.

"The letter you wrote to your uncle, begad, about runnin' away from school!" said Lord Mauleverer indignantly. "The letter Loder took out of the post-bag to-day. If it wasn't true, what did you write it all to your uncle for?"

"Are you mad?" gasped Harry. "I haven't written to my uncle to-day."

The Co. looked on in utter astonishment. They felt as if their heads were turning round.

"You wrote that letter, whether Loder got it from the post-bag or not," said Kipps. "For there it is!"

And Kipps flung the letter on the table.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Plotter's Punishment!

HARRY WHARTON picked up the letter. He made a sign to his chums, and they all read it together.

"You wrote that, Harry?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Oh, yes, I wrote that!"

"I knew it was your fist," said Lord Mauleverer. "I couldn't believe it when Loder read it out to me, but—but when I saw your fist—"

"You howling ass!" exclaimed Harry, aghast. "Do you think that's a letter from me to my uncle?"

"Yaas, of course."

"What the thunder is it, then?" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Are you going off your onion, Harry?"

Wharton laughed involuntarily.

"It's part of a play, you duffers!"

"A play?" gasped Mauleverer.

"Do you think I should write such a letter seriously?"

"Yaas."

"Why, you chump—"

"Easy does it!" said Kipps quietly.

"That wants some explaining, Wharton. We write our plays on impot paper. That's written as a letter, on notepaper."

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"Do you mean to tell me that Loder passed this off on Mauly as a letter written by me to my uncle?" he asked.

"Yaas."

"Yes, he did."

"By Jove!" Harry Wharton clenched his hands hard. "The scoundrel! Now I can see light. That's why he asked me not to mention about his precious idea of a dramatic society in the Sixth. I can tell you now. You remember Loder hurt his wrist on the footer-ground, or pretended to?" exclaimed Harry, as a fresh suspicion came into his mind. "That's why the cad was putting on good-temper; he wanted an excuse for pretending to hurt his wrist, so that he could ask me to write down his rot at his dictation."

"You never mentioned you'd written anything to his dictation," said Bob, with a curious glance at his chum.

"He asked me not to," said Harry savagely. "I never suspected any trick. He was making up a fat-headed play—or he said he was—and asked me to write down an act. He hadn't any foolscap, so notepaper was used. That letter occurs in the play. It was a play about school life, with a character named Harry, who gets into difficulties with a bookie."

"Oh!"

"I can see it all now," went on Harry, his handsome face crimson with anger. "He was spoofing me. He wasn't writing a play at all, and only got me to write that letter to spoof Mauly with, and get ten quid out of him."

"Oh, the awful rotter!" said Nugent, with a deep breath.

"I see now," said Kipps slowly. "It beat me how you came to write that letter, if it wasn't true; but when Loder kept the ten pounds, I knew it must be a trick somehow."

"And that ass Mauly believed it!"

"Don't jaw Mauly," said Nugent. "I should have believed it if I'd seen it in your own handwriting."

"What!"

"The believableness would have been terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "You also would have believed it of another esteemed person, my worthy chum."

Wharton paused.

He nodded at last. He could not help admitting the justice of the remark.

"I—I suppose I should have," he said slowly. "Mauly knew nothing about Loder getting me to write for him. And—and believing this, Mauly, you handed

out ten quid to save me from the push, as you supposed?"

"I couldn't do less, dear boy," said Lord Mauleverer. "Never mind the cash, I'm only too glad it's turned out to be a lie. It's been worryin' me fearfully."

"And if Kipps hadn't happened to be in the study, you'd believe it still, and would never have mentioned a word to me?" Wharton exclaimed, aghast.

"I—I suppose so, begad!"

"Oh, the rotter!" Wharton ground his teeth. "He shall pay for this, prefect or no prefect!"

"And the tenner's gone," said Bob Cherry, with a whistle. "Loder's gone out, and you can guess where he's gone—with the tenner."

"That's all right," said Kipps. "I knew what he wanted the tenner for. But Loder won't back Blue Bonnet this journey, five to one against. I rather thought that Mauly would like to have his tenner back, under the circumstances."

"Yaas, begad!"

"And here it is!"

Kipps tossed a ten-pound note across the table to the astonished Mauleverer.

"How the dickens—" began Bob Cherry.

Kipps chuckled.

"I saw, where Loder put that letter and the tenner—in his pocket-book, in his inside pocket. 'Tain't for nothing that I'm a conjurer and sleight-of-hand merchant. I ran into Loder as he was going out—"

"My hat!"

"He laid into me with his cane, but his pocket-book was in my pocket all the time," grinned Kipps. "So I stood it. I fished the letter and the banknote out, and I've put his pocket-book on the table in his study. He'll find it there when he comes in. What he'll say at the Cross Keys when he misses it I don't know. Something very strong, I dare say."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put your tenner away, Mauly," said Wharton. "I don't know how to thank you for sticking up for me like that, old chap. It isn't every fellow who'd spring a tenner to get a chap out of a fix without saying a word about it. It was all bunkum, but I'm just as much obliged."

"Don't mench, dear boy!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I'm jolly glad it's turned out like this. What an awful Hun Loder is, by gad! He ought to have been born in Prussia, really!"

"The Head ought to know about this," said Johnny Bull abruptly. "Wharton, you ought to take that letter to the Head, and tell him the whole yarn. Loder would be sacked like a shot."

Wharton tossed the letter into the fire.

"You ass!" exclaimed Johnny.

"All serene!" said Harry. "I know Loder ought to be shown up, but we're not going to do it. This study can look after itself without calling for help."

"But Loder's not going to get off scot-free!" shouted Bob.

"No," said Wharton, setting his teeth, "he's not. Loder's going to be thrashed till he howls!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And I'm going to thrash him!"

"Thrash a prefect?" gasped Nugent.

"Loder can't come the prefect over us in this case. If he does, we'll take the matter before the Head. Never mind prep now. Come with me to Loder's study, and we'll wait for him."

"Hear, hear!" said Kipps.

And they went.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Grim Alternative.

L ODER of the Sixth found the light on in his study when he came back. He came in with a black brow, which grew blacker at the sight of seven juniors of the Remove waiting in his study. Then he started as he caught sight of his pocket-book on the table, and caught it up.

"What do you fags want here?" began Loder.

"You can take your pocket-book," said Harry scornfully. "I've burnt the letter you swindled me into writing, Loder, and Mauly's got his banknote back."

"Wha-a-at?"

Loder fairly staggered.

"You see, I was in the study all the time," said Kipps cheerfully. "I bowled out your little game from start to finish, Loder, and brought Wharton and Mauly together to compare notes. Savvy?"

Loder's face was a study.

"You'll find your bed rather in a muck," added Kipps. "But I don't think you'll make a fuss about it, Loder. It won't pay you."

Wharton closed the study door and picked up Loder's cane. Loder eyed him like a wolf.

"Now you can take your choice, Loder," said Wharton quietly. "You've slandered me to Mauleverer to screw money out of him. You practically stole his ten-pound note, to bet on the races. You're going to have the thrashing of your life!"

"What?" muttered the prefect furiously.

"Or else you can take the matter before the Head!" said Wharton.

"That's your choice. Shove him over the table, you fellows!"

"What-he!"

It was the first opportunity the juniors had had of handling the bully of the Sixth at their own sweet will. Loder struck out savagely as they collared him.

"If anyone comes here, Loder, the matter will have to be settled in public," said Wharton. "It's your affair."

Loder dropped his hands. Well he knew what the result would be if his swindle and trickery became known. Unresisting, the bully of the Sixth was flung across the table by the juniors, face downwards. Then Wharton started with the cane.

Lash, lash, lash, lash!

Loder's face was deadly white with rage and humiliation. He dared not resist; he dared utter no cry. For expulsion from the school, in black and undying disgrace, was over his head, and his fate was in the hands of the juniors he had so cunningly tricked. He had to take that tremendous thrashing at the hands of a junior lest worse should befall him. And he took it, to the last lash—and the last lash was not delivered till Harry Wharton's arm was aching.

Then the captain of the Remove flung the cane into a corner.

"Come on, you fellows!" he said. "That's enough for you, Loder; and you'd better leave the Remove alone in future!"

Harry Wharton & Co. left the study. Loder slid from the table, pale as death, his eyes burning. A torrent of savage words poured from his lips; but that was all the solace he had, such as it was. The chums of the Remove had the upper hand, and the "sportsman" of Greyfriars had to take his gruel quietly. And he did.

Loder's bet was not laid with the beery Mr. Beele after all, and the chance of a lifetime had to be missed. Loder found a little consolation on Thursday, however, when he learned that Blue Bonnet, the horse that was to romp home five to one against, had come in sixth on the list. The dead cert had proved extremely uncertain after all, as dead certs so often do. So nothing had been lost, though a terrific thrashing had been gained, by the defeat of the Prefect's Plot.

THE END.

(Don't miss "THE GREYFRIARS FLYING CORPS!"—next Monday's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"THE GREYFRIARS FLYING CORPS!"

By Frank Richards.

There are many elements in this story which should make its all-round appeal to readers great. Flying-men, aeroplanes, Zeppelins, footer, and a mystery of the past all enter into it. Fisher T. Fish supplies the comic element, with his Greyfriars Flying Corps, in their absurd little caps, and his very amateurish aeroplane, to go up in which is dangerous, but luckily not too easy, as it has a trick of refusing to ascend. The mystery is cleared up; the Zeppelin is brought down; and Fish's flying corps passes into the realms of things forgotten.

A REQUEST FROM THE EDITOR.

Will readers kindly abstain from ringing me up on the telephone? I don't want to seem discourteous or disobliging; but I am a very busy man, and I really have not time to answer questions as to whether a certain back number is in print, or whether a letter or a story has been received. To put the matter plainly, that is not what we have a telephone installation for. We have it to help on work, not to hinder it. And answering these queries from readers does not help on work. They are questions only of importance to the askers, not to the paper. The post is the proper medium for these things.

As to back numbers, these can generally be had from this office if they are not more than three months old; if they go back beyond that it is not likely they will be in stock. Applications for them should not be addressed to the Editor, but to the firm, and stamps at the rate of 1½d. for each 1d. number wanted, or 3d. for a double number, should be en-

closed. If the copies cannot be sent, the stamps will be returned as a matter of course.

NOTICES.

Back Numbers, Etc., Wanted.

By F. R. Frewin, 782, Fulham Road, Fulham, S.W.—any back numbers of "Magnet." State price when writing, and write early, please.

By H. Davis, 39, Quilter Street, Bethnal Green, E.—"The Boy Without a Name."

By Miss Thompson, 1, Rock Avenue, Gillingham, Kent—"Greyfriars Herald," Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, and 14.

Your Editor

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 10.—S. Q. I. FIELD.

IT was the humorous Bob Cherry who named him Squiff. Sampson Quincy Ifley Field is his correct name; but Bob said that Sampson Quincy Ifley Field was too much, seeing that life was short. And none of Bob's chums pointed out that in any case no one would ever call him Sampson Quincy Ifley Field, any more than anyone—except perhaps the wife of his bosom when inclined to nag—would call a man Henry Obadiah Nebuchadnezzar Perkins. Squiff is no shorter than Field. But Squiff it has been from the first, when the Australian junior tried to crowd in with the Famous Five at Lantham Junction, and Bob spotted the initials "S.Q.I.F." on his bag.

"A Cool Card" was the title of the story in which Squiff came to Greyfriars; and a cool card Squiff is. He has more than ordinary skill in the devising of japes, and he never lacks the audacity to carry them through.

But he is something more and better than that. Colonial readers are apt to complain that the great dominions overseas do not get sufficient representation in the stories of Greyfriars and St. Jim's. A fair answer to that would be to say that, after all, boys from the dominions are not quite as plentiful at British public schools as blackberries on a briar-bush in October. Three Colonials in the Remove at Greyfriars—Squiff himself, Tom Brown, and Delsrey—form quite a fair percentage.

In any case, however, Australian readers have no need to complain of their own special representative in the stories.

Squiff is as good a fellow as one might hope to meet in a long day's march—cheerful, plucky, good-tempered, ready of brain and hand. "A good sort all round," as a boy would say; "a really nice fellow," a girl might put it.

Somewhere or other not long ago there was an article the writer of which said that the great Colonies, short as their histories are, were already producing men differing essentially not only from the British stock whence they sprung, but also from one another. You could not, he said, mistake an Australian for a Canadian. The New Zealander tends to be more like the Australian; but here again there is a quite perceptible difference.

A good deal of this is certainly true, as far as the observation of one who knows something about the matter goes. But the difference is more on the surface—more in appearance—than underneath. There is an old proverb which says, "Scratch a Russian, and you find a Tartar." Germany had only to threaten scratching to find the men of the great dominions British!

In some small points the average Australian schoolboy may differ from our boys here; but he is like them in the things that matter most. He has their love of a jape, of fair play; he has their ideas of honour. He may use a few words that are to them unknown; but this makes no big difference. One cannot recall Squiff saying that a thing was "bonza" (or "bonzer," for the spelling of the word seems doubtful); but if he ever did he only meant that it was emphatically all right. And he must often have used the word at home in New South Wales.

Squiff took in the Famous Five—and, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 475.

indeed, the whole Remove—completely when he first came. Perhaps they deserved to be taken in. They might have known that no Australian boy could possibly be so ignorant of cricket as Squiff pretended to be. Cricket plays a big part in our national life; but it plays an even bigger one in the life of the sunny southern land whence Squiff hails.

Meekly he studied "Cricket for Beginners"; meekly he accepted hints at the nets from fellows who did not know half what he did; and quite cheerfully he fell in with Harry Wharton's offer to give him to Dick Trumper, of Courtfield, whose team was short of a man.

And then—the mask was dropped! Squiff showed what he could do, and the Remove team had a licking which was



S Q I Field.

chiefly the work of the supposed novice.

Mr. Richards may have based that story on fact, elaborating a little, as authors will. For it is true that when S. M. J. Woods (the very name reminds one of Squiff's!) turned up at Brighton College as a long-limbed youngster of about Squiff's age, he was asked whether he could bowl at all, and modestly replied, "A bit." He was given one trial, and went straight into the School Eleven, for even then he was a fast bowler almost good enough to play—as he did play in his Cambridge days, and later—for the Gentlemen of England.

Squiff soon showed his mettle at Greyfriars in other things besides cricket—outside the domain of games altogether. It was a great notion of his to go to Highcliffe as a new boy, and show Ponsonby & Co. how a resolute fellow could tackle them. Not only did he stand up to the nuts, but also to the snobbish Mr. Mobbs, to whom he administered a dose of his own physic—the cane. Of course, there were ructions when the imposture was discovered. Pon snooked; but Squiff and the Famous Five tarred and feathered Pon for that nasty trick.

Early in his career at Greyfriars he knocked out Bolsover, and he has always been a good fighting man—one of the three or four best in the Remove. But perhaps his merry japes and his skill in subterfuge have done more to make him a favourite with readers than even his

athletic prowess; and he is all there in any branch of sport—cricket, footer, boxing, swimming, gymnastics, running, or jumping. It was Squiff who devised the dodge of the supposed Maori footballers who played St. Jim's on Courtfield Common, when the ban of Mr. Quelch prevented the Remove from meeting Tom Merry and his men on the playing-fields of Greyfriars. The fire brigade was Squiff's scheme, and some fun, as well as some serious usefulness, came of that. The Australian was captain of the brigade at first, but generously resigned in favour of Mark Linley after the Lancashire lad's heroic rescue of Bunter.

During Johnny Bull's absence Squiff was a member of the Famous Five, as deputy for his chum; and he has always been on terms of close friendship with them. From the first he liked Vernon-Smith, who was no longer the rotter he had been when Squiff arrived; and he stood by the Bounder more than once when other fellows thought him going back to his old ways. During Squiff's membership of the Famous Five quite a lot of things happened; but one cannot pretend to give a history in each of these articles—only a mere sketch is meant. And so one needs to do no more than mention the German spies—including the egregious Bunter's "Belgian"—the Zeppelin trip, and the great jape played on Special Constable Coker, when Squiff and the rest masqueraded as invading Huns!

Coker got his own back. Very, very seldom has Sampson Quincy Ifley Field had such a set-back as befell him when Coker & Co. painted his face, and put him, bound up, in a hamper, and had him delivered at Greyfriars!

But he has thought out so many jokes on others that he could well afford to be on the wrong side of the rails for once. It was Squiff who suggested Wibley's personation of Mr. Mobbs at Highcliffe, whereof came sorrow to the nuts; and many another wheeze has he devised. And there are more to come yet; you may be sure of that.

SPECIAL NOTICE!!

In Next Week's Issue
will begin a Great
New Serial—

"IN A LAND OF PERIL!"

By BEVERLEY KENT.

The Extracts from the "Greyfriars Herald,"

which have been so
popular a feature of
this paper during
the last few weeks,

WILL BE CONTINUED IN "THE GEM."

Don't Miss Next Week's
"Gem" on any account!

EXTRACTS FROM THE GREYFRIARS HERALD. OUR RIVAL!

MORE in sorrow than in anger, the Editor-in-Chief of the "Greyfriars Herald" condescends to take notice of an absurd attempt to run a rival paper—the work of two misguided members of a Lower Form, whose vaulting ambition has quite obviously o'erleaped itself.

G—y and M—s are the two specimens of the inky-fingered brigade referred to. The paper appears to have owed its origin to the collapse of a small printer in the town which G—y honours with his presence during hols. G—y's Aunt Matilda had been generous. G—y had money to burn, and he bought the complete outfit.

So he styled it; but its completeness seems problematic, as the explanation of M—s, head foreman printer and printer's devil to the new rag, as to its extraordinary typographical appearance is that he couldn't help it. He had to use the type he'd got, he supposed, and he'd be blessed if he believed any other chap would have done any better with such a job lot!

Enough as to the mechanical side. As to the other department, G—y has expressed himself as of opinion that he and M—s—not, he says, that he thinks much of M—s as a journalist—were capable of licking the whole staff of the "Herald," with occasional contributors thrown in, into a cocked hat of the most cocked variety.

We of the "Herald" decline to waste our time in argument on that point. Certainly G—y and M—s produced between them a number—the first, and, fortunately, the last—the like of which the "Herald" staff never has produced. But the "Herald" staff has never tried on these lines, and is never likely to.

Here follows a true and accurate reproduction of the ill-fated venture. Some explanation of our giving it this utterly undeserved prominence may be considered necessary.

In the first place, we reprint it as a warning to others. Who knows when ambition may next seize some other duffer—when the temptation held out by a stony-broke printer may induce, say, F—h of the Remove, C—r of the Fifth, or, haply, one of the many weird specimens in the Upper Fourth, to buy a complete "plant," and do likewise?

In the second place, the one issue of the "Weakly" has become a kind of historical document. It is understood that 150 copies were printed. Only one is extant—the one thrust under the door of our editorial office. The other 149 perished in the flames, consigned thither by the stern hand of a certain respected member of the Greyfriars tutorial staff, whom we need not indicate by name. The one remaining copy would be worn to rags if all who wanted to read it were allowed to borrow it for that purpose; but by reproducing it in the "Herald" we give everyone a chance.

Our printer raised difficulties at first about giving it as it stood. He did not think it would reflect credit on him. But, of course, we stood firm!

Here goes, then!

G—Y'S WEAKLY.*

EDITORIAL.

We SHALL aLLways BE pLeesEd to see ThinGs belongINg tOO our REeders—we MEEN Tails, ArtikeLS, and PomeS—not KribbED.

We hav plezur in oferin to publick a neu hig clas paper The events Of the DaY wil b given regularly And we hav no doubt That the new PaPeR Will Be Popular

News of the daY BoY Scouts

This tremendous orGanIsaTion has been Ritly called the commencement of a fresh ERA in this empire The 3rd foRM troop is doing wonDeRs Gud luck to them

lOcal chit chAt deAth of MrS Mimble'S tomCat

JuSt as We go to proSS news reaches uS of the suDDen deaTh of ToBy the famous cat belonging to the estemd MRs. mimble rip

EdUcation

wE PropoSe to giv plEnTy of news about the Scheol The DocToR is a gud sportAnd we lik him alrightBUT he has some bad habiTSome is that he ThinKs a loT TOO MUCH about roTTen LatIN Still heRe's to him gud fORTune go WITH him

BiTs fromthe poEts

JohNNy sTout Is no fOOL
bEcaUse hes AlWays quickAnDCool

the WheTHER

the Wether is SurE To BE bAd NEXt Week or FaleINg tHAT Good

*Editorial Note.—This is a frank confession which, if intentional, goes far to mitigate the crime. The weakness is in the head, no doubt.—H. W.

our MENO

take one RoasT gOOSE and sERVE it quick WITH plENTY of apple sanceAnd dumplingSto Follow this is VerYPopular.

the FutuRe
thispaperwill be ISSUEDevery day thoughtfor the DAY—the 4th estateis MIGHTY

wiT
noaH haD a little ham, billy bunter hada lot.

poPular songS
Its A long LONG wait for BUNTER
ITS a long TIME to go
he wants his POSTAL order
but the spond ulix never show
hes a rum old chap is bunter and
plaGUEY HARD to please
when grub is going freely THE chance
hes there to seize.

sing TO me Onli with YOUR eyes
and i will not ask for Song
BECAUSE when er you vocalise
You GET the NOTES all Rong
i HOPE you no ROBINA
you OUGHT just TO have seen HER
as she TRips along the Way
Shes Nieco to Mrs mimble
her buty makes you trimble
and that all ive to say.

our cereal taLe was he TO blame?

book I Chap I

as the DuKe of sludchester scoffed his MORNING koffEE hisEyedid chance to lite on a letter WHICHDID lie On his TABLE this Letter was FROM the fair lAdy Rosabel.

to BE CONTINUED thought For the daY

if I shouLd liv To Be
the last SHRimp in the sea
ill Have my Fling
i Shant plead for any pITY
bUT laugh And be quite Witty
and as haPPY as a king.

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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 475.

THE FIGHT FOR THE FEED!

By WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER, Remove Form.

[Note.—Bunter's spelling has been revised throughout. So has his syntax. Otherwise the story is his own—as are the sentiments.—H. W.]

I.

THE sun was streaming through the dormitory window of Cheesecake College when Charlie Chokko, the hero of this powerful story, rolled out of bed.

Charlie was a wise youth for his age, and fully realised that early rising was one of the worst practices for the health. Besides, it is apt to make one into a skinny boulder, like Bob Cherry or Wharton!

But, for once, Charlie rose earlier than usual. The rising-bell had clanged out barely an hour ago!

No, Charlie was not developing the bad and injurious habit of rising early.

The fact of the matter was, Charlie had not had enough to eat the day before. It is shameful to think of how little food boys get at public schools nowadays, especially if the boys happen to have delicate constitutions and rather uncertain appetites, like the author!

The memory of past feeds haunted poor Charlie throughout the night. Four times he had dreamed he was sitting down to a royal repast; four times he was just putting a fork into his mouth when he woke up!

At last he could bear it no longer, and just as he was in the act of getting out of bed in search of grub, our story opens.

Charlie should have been captain of his Form, but he was kept down by the personal jealousy of a skinny rotter named Snortou.

Snortou and his idiotic pals, who were called the Foolish Five, were, as usual, already down.

Charlie tramped down the stairs with an aching void inside him, and staggered across the Close in the direction of the tuckshop.

He managed to reach the establishment without perishing of starvation on the way, but the foolish old dame who kept the shop had the audacity to cast doubts on his perfectly veracious statement that he was expecting a postal-order, and even refused to let him have any grub, although he informed her distinctly and several times that his titled relations were sending him large remittances!

He passed out of the shop in a fainting condition, and chanced to see the familiar figure of Simon Snakke, a notorious village character.

Snakke was always at loggerheads with the boys of Cheesecake College, and Charlie had walloped him more than once.

Snakke was engaged in digging up the playing-fields for all he was worth. The soil flew in all directions.

Suddenly he stooped, and lifted a heavy wooden box out of the hole he had made.

Charlie Chokko gasped, removed his spectacles, rubbed them with his pocket-handkerchief, replaced them upon his small, shapely nose, and looked again, long and hard.

Could he believe the evidence of his eyes?

What could be in the box? What was the one thing a man would use so much energy to obtain? There was only one answer.

GRUB!

The school treasure, containing preserved eatables, beyond doubt!

It was common knowledge that the old

friars had buried a treasure-chest somewhere in the school grounds. What should the old friars treasure so greatly but the one thing of real importance—grub!

The old chest might contain tinned beef, mutton, pineapple, and—who knows?—ginger-beer!

"The greedy beast!" grunted Charlie disgustedly. "Fancy not asking me to the feed! I'll show him!"

He pushed back his cuffs, and pranced up to the gluttonous scoundrel Snakke in a warlike way, the blood of the ancient Fryze Chokko boiling in his veins.

"Kim on!" he cried fearlessly, picking up a large stone and hurling it at Simon Snakke's head. "Funk! I'll beat you with bare knuckles! Coward! Yah!"

While Snakke was rubbing a rapidly-rising bump on the side of his head, Charlie, who had a dauntless spirit, picked up a large stick and gave him a tremendous blow in the small of the back.

Just as Snakke was about to fall backwards, Charlie gave him a skilful kick—he was a good footballer, although he was kept out of the Form team by jealousy—with the result that Simon fell grovelling upon his ugly face, completely knocked out of time.

Charlie stood upon the villain's head in triumph. Yet once more had his science and pluck as a boxer stood him in good stead!

"Now that I have got the grub, I must find somewhere to eat it," he murmured thoughtfully. "If Snortou & Co. get wind of it they'll want me to whack it out. I'll take it into the woods, and have a good tuck-in! Blow morning lessons! I'll give them a miss!"

He was a reckless boy, was Charlie, and the terror of the masters. Old Squelch, his Form-master, dared not say a word to him, much less give him lines, whatever faults he committed. Squelch was daunted by the brave and fearless lad!

He balanced the box upon his head—for he had a strong, thick head, a sure sign of a powerful brain—and marched out of the gates.

He was just about to leave the main road and turn into the footpath through the wood, when a horde of young hooligans from Gorgers' Grammar School pounced upon him.

Never taken by surprise, he threw the box at one, kicked another under the chin, back-heeled two or three, threw his spectacles at yet another with dire effects, and biffed twenty or so over with his head.

He picked up a heavy brick, and knocked all the rest senseless with it, save one. That one—the cowardly ruffian!—aimed a brick at Charlie, which hit him full upon his expansive—and expensive—waistcoat.

He was bowled to the ground like a cricket-stump, and while he was grunting, groaning, and gasping for breath, the enemy recovered and made off with the treasure.

When they were mere specks in the distance, he sat up and shook his fist after them.

"Beasts!" he muttered undauntedly. And, jamming his spectacle on his nose, passed on his way to school and morning lessons.

II.

THAT morning Charlie was completely off his appetite. A pound of sausages, a dozen eggs or so, and a plate of dough-nuts was all he could consume, besides a few courses of pudding, and half a dozen rashers of bacon.

The lost treasure was worrying him, and he bade fair to pine away, as his two choice chums, Guzzle and Gulp, sadly foretold.

His entrancing figure had decreased perceptibly, even after his first poor meal, so what would he be like after a day of it?

It was too horrible to imagine!

But Charlie did not mean to let it go on. He forced himself to eat a couple of dozen custards and a few pounds of ham-sandwiches, and settled down to think hard in the Form-room. Like most healthy boys, he could think best after a square meal.

"Where would they be most likely to go in order to eat quietly?" he murmured. "They couldn't eat it before morning school, that's pretty evident. They will eat it after dinner. But where?"

He racked his mighty brain for an answer.

In the wood, he remembered, there was a little clearing where a house was about to be built. For many months that space had been the favourite picnic-ground for the two schools.

"The very place!" exclaimed Charlie, his appetite returning so quickly that he began to chew his pen. "We'll give 'em a surprise there!"

Charlie unfolded his scheme to his hungry chums, and at dinner-time they made their way to the wood in force.

And, as they expected, the greedy Grammarians were gathered round the box, trying to open it with their teeth.

"At 'em!" roared Charlie, shying a couple of brickbats.

His chums gallantly responded to his call, and, gathering up clods, stones, and bricks, attacked the Grammarians fearlessly.

Under Charlie's gallant leadership they felt sure of victory.

But cruel fate overtook them.

A hefty brick, aimed by a cowardly Grammarian, hit Charlie full in the waistcoat, causing him acute discomfort.

But Charlie had endless grit and determination. He staggered on, he fell, he rose, and fell again—on top of a Grammarian, who immediately assumed the shape of a pancake—but with a super-human effort he extricated his boot from the Grammarian's mouth, and again rushed into the fray.

One Grammarian was cowardly enough to try and thump him, but Charlie got behind him when he wasn't looking and gave him a hefty clump on the side of the head, which bowled him over like a ninepin.

Another rascally Grammarian tried to stop him, but Charlie soon settled his hash with a tremendous kick in the ribs, which fairly doubled him up.

Charlie was almost frantic with hunger, but he fought bravely on.

He and his hungry, trusty followers gathered a fresh supply of bricks, and hurled them with deadly certainty and accuracy.

At last the final Grammarian lay
(Continued from page 49.)

stretched upon the field of battle, and the Cheesecakonians were victorious!

Each boy seated himself comfortably upon a Grammarian, and the box was quickly opened.

The best feed imaginable was revealed! All kinds of tinned goods, shrimps, bloaters, polonies, eggs—antique, no doubt, but seemingly new-laid—and cakes and ginger-beer galore!

The ancient friars could not have done better if their prophetic vision had foreseen Charlie Chokko!

"Here's to ourselves!" roared the noble Charlie, in stentorian tones. And he held aloft a glass of ginger-beer.

"Hear, hear!" bawled his chums. And the toast was drunk amid loud and prolonged cheers.

Never had Charlie felt so hungry or so happy!

His spectacles had been broken; and the Grammarians refused to pay for them; but all his troubles were forgotten in the delights of that ripping feed!

THE END.

MY FIRST CIGAR.

By RICHARD RAKE.

[EDITORIAL NOTE.—This is a frank confession of Dicky's. It takes a decent fellow to own up like this. You don't catch the bold, bad blades doing it—not likely! They maintain that they were never made ill by smoking; they took to it as a duck takes to water—or a sharper to sharpening!—H. W.]

*I'll ne'er forget my first cigar,
It was a Flor de Bolivar,
Given to me by my pa,*

The dad's a rummy sort of chap,
Who never says a lot;
But when he hands a licking out,
He hands it pretty hot!

Told me not to smoke, did dad,
Till I was twenty-one.
He may have known—or he may not—
That I had just begun.

He caught me in the greenhouse,
With a "Gypsy" 'twixt my lips;
And he stood still, gazing at me,
His hands upon his hips.

I thought it meant a licking—
And dad's lickings aren't a joke—
But dad just smiled at me, and said,
"Here, Richard, take a smoke!"

He pulled out his cigar-case,
And gave me a cigar—
A whopping, fat, great, shiny one—
A Flor de Bolivar.

Said dad, "Those 'Gypsy' cigarottes
Aren't good for you and me.
Try this, my son, and tell me how
With you it doth agree."

He struck a match, and lit my smoke
Before he lighted his;
And the first three puffs I puffed at that
I thought it real good biz!

It seemed the dad was off his nut
To be so very kind;
But that was 'cause I didn't twig
The pangs that were behind!

About the fifteenth puff I felt
My brow with sweat bedewed.
I longed to chuck the thing away;
No go—too beastly rude!

And dad, he kept his eye on me,
And smole a little smile.
Just like a man he treated me—
Chatting away the while.

He said he saw that I was now
No longer "just a pup";
I looked for different treatment,
Of course, being now grown-up!

I was feeling beastly rotten,
And dad seemed to grow tall,
And that big cigar got bigger,
And I shrank very small!

I could feel my eyeballs starting,
And everything looked red;
But I stuck to that big Bolivar
Till I felt nearly dead!

The greenhouse seemed all on the whirl,
Just like a roundabout;
And dad's voice had grown louder,
Till it rang like a shout.

The air was full of streaks and spots,
And rocky seemed the floor,
When I heard dad saying kindly,
"Dick, don't smoke any more!"

He saw that I was fairly pipped;
In fact, I was half dead,
When he led me up the garden walk
And put me into bed.

I put these stars above this verse
To show how I was feeling
When I was laid upon the bed,
And saw the whirling ceiling.

But dad, he never jawed a scrap—
He tried to soothe my pain.
But I'll bet old dad was thinking,
"Dick will never smoke again!"

*I'll ne'er forget my first cigar,
It was a Flor de Bolivar,
Given to me by my pa.*

SWIMMING HINTS.

By HERBERT VERNON-SMITH.

A THOROUGH knowledge of the art of swimming is generally admitted to be of the greatest importance. Swimming is, as a means of locomotion—next to walking—the most primitive and simple.

To the prehistoric savage swimming undoubtedly came as a sort of second nature. Being a savage, he was not afraid of water; unfortunately, a good many people, who think themselves civilised, are.

No one knows—history does not record—who invented the aquatic art. Most probably we owe a debt for it to some half-animal man who one day, sitting under a shady tree, idly watched the movements of a frog in a neighbouring pond or stream, and straightway tried to imitate it.

Watch the next frog you come across, and you will decide that this is a feasible theory.

But don't do as the savage did, for you might not get farther than the bottom of the bathing-pool in the attempt. And, being so civilised, you wouldn't like the wetness there.

Now go home to the drawing-room and flop yourself, waistcoat downwards, across mother's best chair, so you may try the movements in safety, and, which seems important to some of you, without getting wet.

I have been told that a revolving music-stool is hard to beat for learning the necessary movements with the arms and legs. However, with all due respect to those who thus advise, I would suggest that a swimming-bath is quite a useful place to learn swimming in.

The instructions following may not be of much service to the beginner, for to become a really good swimmer one really needs a competent teacher. But your instructor won't be annoyed with you for

having read up your subject beforehand. Complete ignorance is not always blissful or blessed.

CONFIDENCE

when bathing is all-important. The beginner should learn to know that water beyond his depth is quite capable of supporting his body. You can prove this by an experiment on a shelving beach on a day when the water is perfectly calm.

Walk out to a depth of three feet, bend down and take up a handful of sand. Walk out a little farther and do the same thing. The farther out you go and the more your body is immersed, the more difficult it becomes to get your handful of sand. By the time you are in up to the neck, you will find your legs going up as you duck your head under to get low enough.

Don't howl for help. Float. It's easy enough. Besides, you will be apt to swallow more water than you need if you howl.

THE FIRST STEPS.

A great deal towards mastering the rudiments of swimming can be accomplished without help from anyone. Go to the swimming-bath, and stand on the ladder fixed to the side. Let your feet rest on the second or third rung from the bottom, then strike off on the surface of the water. Continue the arm movements slowly and deliberately until your feet sink. Walk back to the ladder and repeat the performance. Stick to it, and after a bit you will find your legs don't sink nearly so soon. Then you are beginning to learn to swim.

Don't make use of artificial aids, such as cork-belts, air-belts and bladders. Each of these has a tendency to raise the body above its proper position in the water. Moreover, when once a pupil has used any of these appliances he will find it extremely difficult to discontinue them.

If you can get a chum to help you, it will be far better than any of these things—even if he ducks you a few times, as it's ten to one he will.

Again, cork belts and such things are liable to slip away from their proper position should the straps become loose, thereby causing the head to be submerged. Not that a ducking will hurt anyone; but the average learner, with artificial aid, may get over-confident, and a failure of the thing he is relying upon when he is out of his depth might prove fatal. The tragedy consequent upon this would vary in grievousness according to the identity of the learner. Most fellows here who would really be missed can swim already.

VARIOUS MODES OF SWIMMING.

The old-fashioned style is the best—on the breast. This forms the foundation of almost every other style, and you must learn to walk before you can run, anyway.

The first thing is to realise that water will support your body—even though you may have broken the last automatic weighing-machine at the station—and that, in case of its failure, a good ducking won't kill you, or even disturb permanently that beautiful parting in your hair.

The bold learner goes straight to the shallow end of the bath and takes a header. On rising to the surface, he commences the stroke by placing the hands, backs upwards, slightly curved, with thumb and fingers well together, wrists touching the chest, and not more than four inches from the surface. He thrusts the hands forward to the full extent of reach. Then he turns the palms outwards, and brings them back steadily and decisively at right angles to the body.

By "steadily" I do not mean some
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time next week; by "decisively" I mean with all the force you can exert without making frantic and hasty movements.

At the same time bring the knees up so that your heels almost touch the body, then shoot them out like miniature rockets, as wide apart as possible. Close them while your arms are preparing for their next stroke. If you are only in the water to amuse yourself—and others—it matters very little how you do the movements. In fact, the clumsier the funnier. But if you really want to be an expert swimmer, you must be very careful to aim at uniformity of action. Above all, be sure to make the strokes smoothly and quietly. Splashing about like a shoal of porpoises is all very well for the bath-room, but it's more funny than dignified in a school ducker.

And don't try to kid people you can swim when, in reality, you have one foot safely on the bottom of the bath. Some of us are more than six, about which age that trick ceases to be effective.

Although in the breast-stroke it is necessary to keep very near the surface, the whole body must be kept below the surface. No doubt that may seem rather unnecessary advice; but I have seen fellows of the don't-like-wet type who seemed to be trying to hunch themselves as far out as possible. Unless you have a hole through which to breathe in the top of your head—an unusual arrangement—it will be found convenient to keep your nose out of the water, of course. And there is a slight danger of butting into somebody from behind if you don't keep your eyes above your nose.

THE SIDE-STROKE.

This is the stroke for speed, and has undergone innumerable improvements and changes during the past few years. Besides being less fatiguing—I know some chaps that will suit!—it is most graceful and comfortable. As to which side you should swim on, I leave that to you. Much depends on whether you wish to keep your eyes on the dressing-box for fear of japes. But aim at using both right and left—at different times, of course. In this way, when tired of exercising one side, you may turn on the other. Proceed like this:

Lie on your side—you won't sink if you don't get flustered—keeping the lower extremities of the body nearer the surface of the water than you would in the breast-stroke. Take it that you are going to swim on the left side.

Throw the left arm out boldly to the front, in direct line with the head—but avoiding that dome of thought—keeping the palm turned inwards and the fingers close together. When the hand is stretched forward to its fullest extent, turn the palm downwards as quickly as you can, shaping the hand in the form of a scoop.

Bring the arm back through the water until it is almost touching the thigh; then bend the elbow, thus bringing the arm up for another stroke. The under-arm must be struck out from the shoulder in like manner. When extended as far as possible, the palm is turned downwards, and the arm drawn through the water. The elbow is then turned outwards, the hand being brought up sideways to the breast in preparation for the next stroke. While one arm is being drawn through the water, the other is returning for another stroke.

STEERING.

If you happen to feel a prod in the stomach while learning the side-stroke, you may be sure that your steering is not quite as careful as it might be, and that you have struck a mine, or butted into somebody from the rear. Of course, the victim won't mind. No doubt he'll thank you.

Bad steering is generally the result—if swimming on the right side—of the improper use of the left hand. This hand is the ship's rudder, and must not be thrown out as you would do in the breast-stroke. Take heed of this, or you may ram the side of the bath with your head. Whether you will be charged with damages is a question of the comparative density of the colliding bodies.

As to the leg movements, the action of the legs must be as long and vigorous as possible. Don't try to cuddle yourself round the neck with your feet. Draw the upper leg back very slightly—hardly at all, in fact. The leg below, however, should be pulled well back and sturdily. Then, when the kick is made, the legs cross each other, and you shoot through the water like a torpedo. But the legs and arms must work in strict unison.

SWIMMING BACKWARDS.

Perhaps you would like to be able to swim backwards. This is not very difficult to accomplish, but it is a big strain on the muscles. If you can't run a decent distance, give up all hopes of learning it. The way of it is this:

Lie on your stomach—don't take in more than a gallon of water—keeping your arms straight out in front of you. Work your legs up and down gently from the knees. Now try to imagine you're a boat, using hands and arms in much the same way as a rudder acts. If you find this difficult, try thrusting the water away from the chin with the hands. This answers the same purpose, but the arms must be thrown from the chin with all the force at your command.

THE TRUDGEON-STROKE.

This, copied from the South American Indians by a traveller named Trudgeon many years ago, is finely effective. The arm movements I should liken to a wheel.

Lie flat on your chest. Bring the left arm straight out in front of the head as far as it will go without falling off. Keep the right arm well behind. Bring the left arm down through the water, meanwhile sweeping the other arm to the front in a semicircular move, and bringing it back to its original position with the downward thrust.

With a rather large stretch of imagination perhaps you can convince yourself that you are a living wheel, or, again, that you are bowling a cricket-ball. For, really, this stroke is only a sort of double over-arm.

As for the leg movements, they are much the same as those used in the side-stroke—and, by the way, you must not think that you will be lying quite flat. Supposing, then, that the right side is uppermost, bend the right leg but slightly; the other leg is the one to bend, although this must not be pulled back too far. Then kick out, crossing the legs as before.

In order to accomplish the circular arm movements easily with it is essential that the body be kept out of the water as much as possible. And whatever else you do, you must put your arms the strokes.

MASTER EACH STROKE

completely before trying the next, as you might just as well give up swimming and play marbles. Spend an hour or two watching the methods of experienced

swimmers. It's quite possible they know more than you do. Acquire thoroughly first all the simple strokes, and then you will find yourself doing the more advanced movements almost without knowing whether you have practised them or not.

Twenty minutes is the outside term in the water for a new hand, though he may bathe twice a day. Don't go in till two hours at least after a meal—this rather cuts out B—r, but that can't be helped. Dry yourself thoroughly directly you are out, and then go and gorge if you like.

THE NATURALISED BRITON.

Made in Germany.

By PETER TODD.

He is quite a Briton now, though his name is Schenk or Schan—

He is second, in fact, to none.

Though he stands upon the shore, sending signal-lights galore,

To the ships of the raiding Hun.

Though he motors through the night with a large and brilliant light,

Which he flashes to the Zeppelins around,

His position can't be shaken, he can always save his bacon.

He's a Britisher on British ground!

All our Great Wise Men can do Is to say, "Pish! Tush! Poo!-poo!"

And that we all are ill-advised

To hurt the poor man's feelings,

Or to hint at double-dealings.

When we know that he's been naturalised!

He's a Briton sound and straight, though he sings the Hymn of Hate

And he takes the Kaiser's pay.

The police must not intern him, and the people must not spurn him,

He is guaranteed O.K.

He has cut the proper paper, he has signed a "scrap of paper,"

By which, of course, he's safely bound.

Say our Wise Great Men with pride

"It can never be denied

He's a Britisher on British ground!"

So he goes upon his way,

Waiting, hoping for "The Day!"

And he must not be despised,

Never mind what his race is.

Let him fill the highest places,

When we know that he's been naturalised!

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—This is Teddy's sarc. Things have changed a bit, but since it was written. But there's room for more change yet!]

NOTICES.

Pack Numbers, Etc., Wanted.

By H. B. Muscott, Revenue Accountant & S.A.R. Harbour Board Buildings, Adderley Street, Cape Town, South Africa—"Magnet," Christmas No., 1914.

By S. Dodds, 36, William Street, Edinburgh—"Magnet," Nos. 309-330.

By Jos. Parks, 38, Garnet Street, Saltburn-by-Sea, Yorks.—early vols. of "Boys' Friend," "Boys' Realm,"

"Boys' Herald." Must be clean and complete. State price when writing.

By Ernest Jones, 37, Falkner Street, Liverpool—"Clear, Boys, Clear," Nos. 1-49, and No. 65. Clean and good condition. Full price offered.

By Wingate, 6, Eaton Road, Reading—new and covered "Magnets"; "Titan," Nos. 320, 359, and 409; "Penny Poplar," Nos. 102-174; "Nelson's Library," No. 53.

