

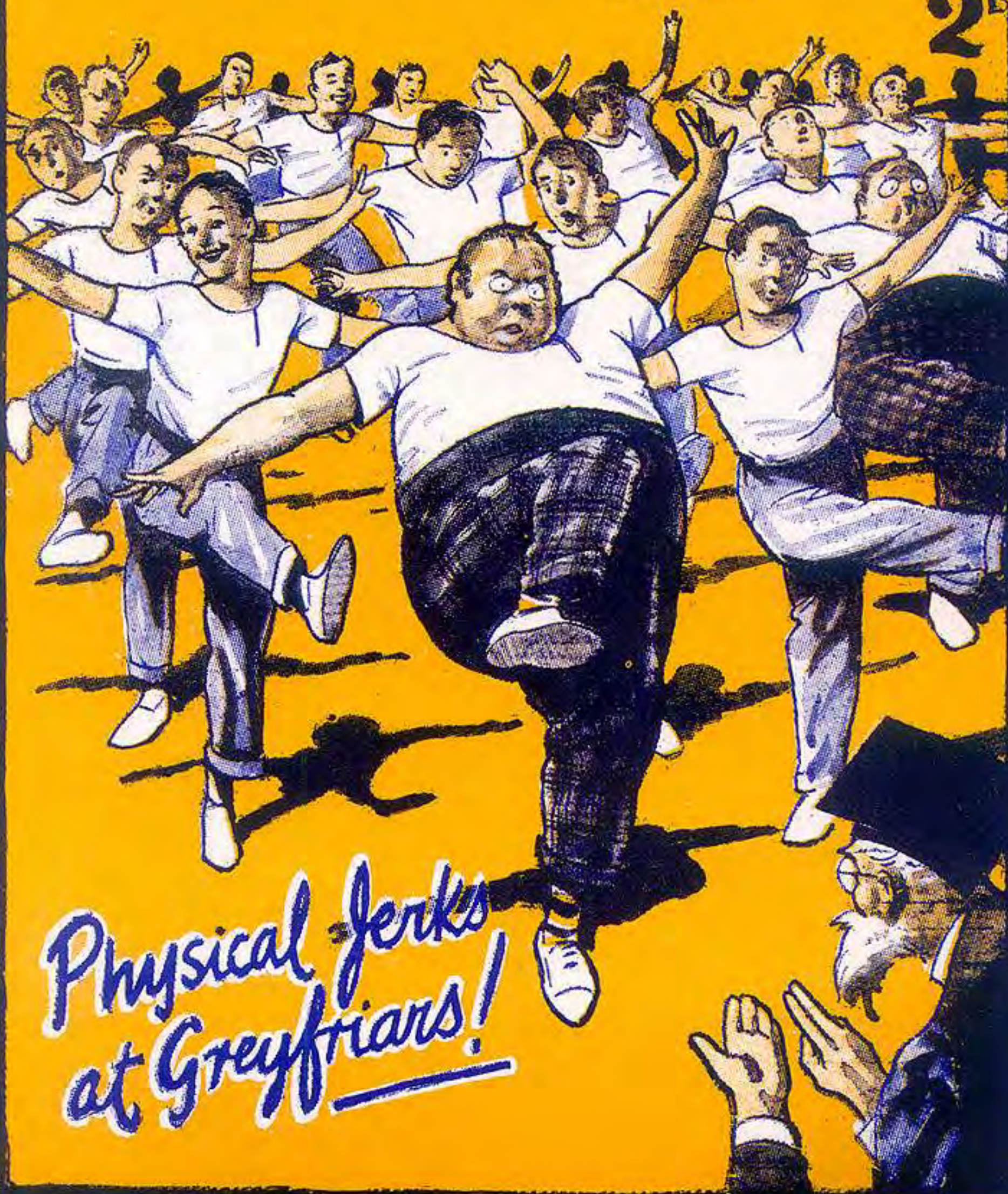
“GREASE-PAINT WIBLEY!” This week's full-o'-laughs
story of Greyfriars.

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The MAGNET

EVERY SATURDAY.

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*Physical Jerks
at Greyfriars!*

INSIDE INFORMATION!

BY THE "OLD REF."



"Old Ref's" store of knowledge is at the disposal of all "Magnet-ites." Send along your queries, and then look for a reply in this regular weekly feature.

I AM reluctantly forced to the conclusion that many of my readers are still of opinion that my supply of wet towels has not yet run out. Some of the puzzles in my post-bag really demand that I should put a wet towel round my head in order to clarify my thinking box.

Just listen to this one from a reader in Halifax: "Which football rule would you say is the most frequently broken without the offenders being punished in any way?" Theoretically, of course, no football rule should be broken without the people breaking it being punished in some form or other.

The rules of the game were framed to be obeyed, and those who break them should be punished in some way.

as the self-same rules lay down what the punishment shall be for each offence.

It is a fact, however, that certain rules are broken quite often without any punishment following, and while I find it difficult to decide which rule is broken most frequently with impunity, I shall mention a few and then leave my readers to form their own conclusions, based on observation at matches which they witness.

In these notes some months back I mentioned one rule which goalkeepers break quite a lot, and yet I have never seen a player punished for doing it. I refer to the habit of goalkeepers swinging on the cross-bar. This is against the rules, and the goalkeeper who does it should be warned that he is guilty of ungentlemanly conduct. But some of our most famous goalkeepers just keep on doing it when a high shot is sent in, but referees pass over the offence.

Then there is another rule which goalkeepers very frequently break without being "called over the coals." This is in regard to the number of steps they take while holding the ball. If you watch a lot of football—like I do—you would never get the impression that it was illegal for the goalkeeper to take more than two steps while holding the ball. Scarcely ever do I watch a game in which one goalkeeper or the other does not take three, four, or even as many as half a dozen steps with the ball in his hand without being punished.

Indeed, so often is this rule broken with impunity that I am almost forced to the conclusion that the referees in general think it an unfair rule. I admit that it is a pretty drastic rule.

If a goalkeeper catches the ball, and a couple of opponents come for him at the same time, it is very difficult for him to dodge those opponents and get rid of the ball while taking no more than two steps.

However, that is what the rule says, and so long as it is a rule, then the referees should see that it is obeyed.

BY the way, in reference to this carrying rule, I should perhaps mention that when the referee does punish a goalkeeper for taking more than two steps with the ball in his hand a goal cannot be scored direct from the free kick. One other point concerning this rule which is important is that an official decision has been given to the effect

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that bouncing the ball on the hand is equivalent to carrying, which really means that the goalkeeper who does find it necessary to dodge opponents should drop the ball on to the ground between each series of two steps.

There is another rule, too, which is broken in almost every match, and indeed there are many players who do not know that such a rule exists. But it is a fact that, according to rule,

a ball is not in play until it has travelled a distance equal to its own circumference.

Now a full-sized football is about twenty-seven inches in circumference, and a ball should travel that distance before it is in play. Now, remembering this rule, watch at the next match and see if it isn't broken. It is the habit in these days, when kicks are being taken, for the full-back, having placed the ball on the line, to tap it back to the goalkeeper, who stands quite close to him. The goalkeeper immediately picks up the ball and punts it down the field. This picking up by the goalkeeper frequently occurs before the ball has travelled its own circumference, and therefore such goal-kicks are not properly taken.

THE length of time allowed teams for a rest at the interval is set down in the rules as five minutes, but I can honestly say that in no first class match I have witnessed this season has the interval been confined to five minutes only. The players, with the tacit consent of the referee, usually take a few minutes over the five, and from the last kick of the first half to the first kick of the second half ten minutes are taken much more frequently than five.

Indeed, it might almost be said that some first class football grounds are so constructed that if players had to carry out this five minutes' interval rule they would have to run to the dressing-rooms and back again. Take the Cup Final ground at Wembley. From the goal farthest from the dressing-rooms it is at least two minutes' walk, and if a player had to restart in five minutes he would only have one minute left for his "refresher" at the interval. Referees are very lenient on this point, but I would hate to suggest that their leniency is due to the fact that they, as well as the players concerned, like to have an extra minute or two in which to get back their wind and enjoy their refresher. Yes, the lemon-time rule is very frequently broken.

SO far as the literal reading is concerned, there is one rule on the books which is repeatedly broken, for the simple reason that the rule does not mean what it says. Here is a section of the rule in question:

"After a goal is scored the losing side shall kick off."

Now consider this for a moment. Suppose a side which is five goals down manages to score a goal. The other side, then having a lead of five goals to one, cannot by any stretch of imagination be called the losing side. But they have to kick off. What this rule really means, of course—though it certainly does not say it—is that the side losing the goal shall then kick off from the centre of the field.

If you watch football carefully, too, you cannot fail to observe that referees generally are somewhat lax concerning the taking of certain free kicks. It is laid down in the rules that when a free kick is being taken no player of the opposing side shall take up his position within ten yards of the ball.

Now consider what happens when the referee finds it necessary to give a free kick against the defending side just outside their penalty area—or anywhere within shooting range. The players whose job it is to try to prevent a score, line up with a view to making a solid mass through which the ball cannot be shot.

By way of a start they don't stand anything like ten yards away, but probably the referee notices this. He comes along, and measures out very carefully the ten steps which are supposed to represent ten yards. And he tells the defenders that they must stand on an imaginary line that distance away from the ball.

Possibly they do so, but as the man who is taking the kick approaches the ball, the whole of those defenders move nearer, and in my experience it is quite the usual thing for defenders to be no more than six yards away from the ball when it is actually kicked. Very seldom, however, does the referee order the kick to be re-taken, but this is what he should do if he carries out the rules properly.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Modern Daniel!

"SLACKERS!"

William Wibley made that remark with great emphasis. "Rotten slackers!"

Wibley glared savagely at his wrist-watch, glared at the four walls of the Rag, glared at his wrist-watch again, glared at the partly open door, and then snorted. Really it was too bad!

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and William Wibley, president of the Remove Dramatic Society, had called a rehearsal of his latest play: "The Flying Terror!" for two o'clock prompt. It was now five minutes past the hour, and so far the only member of the cast to put in an appearance in the Rag was William Wibley himself.

"This is too bad!" he muttered.

William Wibley took his histrionic adventures very seriously—too seriously. That he could act, all the members of the Remove Dramatic Society were fully prepared to admit; but, like many other aspirants to histrionic laurels, Wibley had a preference for "fat parts." All his plays were written round one central character, who did most of the talking, and who occupied the stage practically all the time. And the central character was always William Wibley. In the circumstances, it was perhaps possible to understand the general falling off of keenness among the remaining members of the society.

"Ten past two!" growled Wibley.

And he began to tramp up and down the floor of the Rag in the manner of an old time tragedian.

"I say, Wibley, old chap—"

A fat face, adorned with a large pair of spectacles, suddenly appeared round the door of the Rag.

Wibley paused in his perambulations and bestowed a frown on the podgy face of William George Bunter.

"Roll in, barrel!" he said gruffly.

"You're the first to arrive!"

"Oh, really, Wibley!" said Bunter.

"I came to ask you—"

"Shut up," said Wibley magisterially, "and have a look at your lines! I expect you've forgotten them."

"Oh, really, Wibley!" protested Bunter. "I jolly well haven't forgotten the silly lines! See?"

Which remark was true in substance, for the Owl of the Remove had not even attempted to learn the few lines Wibley had seen fit to allot to him, so he certainly could not have forgotten them.

"Where are the other chaps?" asked Wibley.

"Talking footer in the Common-room," said Bunter, with a grin.

Wibley jumped.

"T-talking footer?"

Bunter nodded.

Wibley seemed to be on the verge of an apoplectic fit.

"Talking silly footer when I've called

Act? Why, William Wibley can act their heads off in more senses of the word than one.

Get started on this snappy complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

a rehearsal of the play for two prompt? Of all the slacking asses!"

He started for the door of the Rag at a great pace. Bunter rolled between him and his objective.

"I say, old chap," he blinked, "never mind about your rotten play. It's a lot of trash, if you don't mind my saying so—"

Wibley paused, and a warlike gleam came to his eyes.

"A lot of trash?" he ejaculated.

"Yes," said Bunter, with great frankness. "Besides, you've got all the principal lines in the play. You always do bag a fat part, you know. But never mind that. The play can wait. Look here, old chap," he went on in a confidential tone, "I've been disappointed about a postal-order from one of my titled relations—"

But this was more than the wrathful William Wibley could stand. To be told by a fat freak like William George

Bunter that his play was a "lot of trash" was the limit.

Next moment Bunter's bullet head was smiting the wall of the Rag.

Bump!

"Yaroooooh!"

And, feeling somewhat mollified, Wibley stalked out of the Rag and made tracks for the Common-room to round up the slackers, as he chose to regard the members of the dramatic society.

Billy Bunter glared after him, then his fat face broke into a grin.

"Yah! I'll make the rotter sit up!" he muttered, caressing the back of his head where it had come in contact with the wall.

Next moment Bunter coughed, and anyone who knew the Owl of the Remove would have recognised in that cough a preliminary to Bunter's ventriloquism. It was the one and only gift the fat Removeite possessed, and he possessed it to a marked degree.

"Wibley!"

The president of the Remove Dramatic Society stopped and wheeled sharply as he recognised the acid tone of Mr. Henry Samuel Quelch, master of the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars.

"Yes, sir!"

Wibley answered automatically, although he saw no sign of Mr. Quelch.

"Follow me to my study at once! And kindly return my cap and gown!"

"Oh crumbs! I mean, yes, sir!"

Wibley's mobile features expressed sudden dismay. That summons to Mr. Quelch's study could mean only one thing—the master of the Remove had discovered the culprit who had borrowed his spare cap and gown. Really Wibley could have kicked himself for not returning those articles of apparel a little more quickly. They had been required to complete a little impersonation he had given the previous night to an admiring audience of Removeites, and Wibley had borrowed them without troubling to ask Mr. Quelch's permission. Furthermore, he had forgotten to return them.

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How the master of the Remove had been able to fix the loss of his scholastic paraphernalia on the head of William Wibley puzzled that unhappy junior. Naturally, he was not to know that William George Bunter, who was lurking out of sight in the Rag, had made full use of his knowledge concerning the said cap and gown to wreak vengeance on the fellow who had banged his head against the wall.

"Oh crumbs!" Wibley was quite dejected as he tramped off to Study No. 6 to retrieve the cap and gown; and as he disappeared from view Billy Bunter emerged from the Rag and chuckled victoriously.

"He, he, he! That'll teach the silly ass to bang my head on the wall! Hope he gets it hot! He, he, he! Yooooop!"

Bunter's fat cachinnation changed to a howl of anguish as a firm finger and thumb closed on one of his podgy ears.

"Hope who gets it hot, fatty?" asked Bob Cherry, who had come along the passage in time to overhear Bunter's charitable expressions. "What have you been up to?"

"Yooooop! Leggo my ear, you beast!" roared Bunter.

"What have you been up to, old fat man?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Nothing, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "If you think I imitated old Quelch's voice and sent Wibley to him, you're wrong! See?"

"What?"

"Nothing of the kind, old fellow!" said Bunter, dexterously wriggling his ear out of Bob's playful grasp. "I never told him to take the cap and gown back to Quelch. Besides, he banged my head on the wall, the rotter!"

"Oh!" said Bob, beginning to see daylight. "You've been up to your rotten ventriloquism again!"

"Nunno!" gasped Bunter, not liking the grim look that came to Bob Cherry's eyes. "I didn't imitate Quelch's voice. I'm not the sort of chap to get another fellow a licking, I hope?"

"You fat worm!" said Bob, who knew all about Wibley's impersonation of a schoolmaster the night before, and the circumstances attaching thereto. "You've sent Wibley to Quelch with the blessed cap and gown! Oh, you rotter!"

"Nunno!" said the Owl of the Remove. "You know I wouldn't do a thing like that!"

"You fat worm!"

And, banging Bunter's head against the wall by way of giving outlet to his indignation, Bob rushed off to Study No. 6.

A glance in that apartment told him that he had arrived too late. Wibley was already on his way to Mr. Quelch's study.

Bob raced off to Master's corridor just in time to see the forlorn figure of William Wibley, carrying a cap and gown, approaching the Form master's study.

"Wib!"

Bob's voice carried the length of the corridor, but if Wibley heard it he heeded not. Doubtless his thoughts were far away, for he paid no heed to the warning.

"Wibley!" roared Bob. "Stop, you ass!"

But the shining light of the Remove Dramatic Society did not stop. His hand was on the door of Mr. Quelch's study, and Bob Cherry realised with dismay that his warning had come too late. At that moment Bob compared William Wibley to Daniel entering the lion's den—a simile that occurred to Wibley himself as he tapped at the door.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The One Enthusiast!

TAP!

Mr. Quelch looked up irritably.

Although it was a half-holiday at Greyfriars that afternoon, the master of the Remove had at least an hour's work in front of him correcting the papers of his Form. And, with very few exceptions, those papers served only to add fuel to Mr. Quelch's irritability. Really it was amazing how little the members of the Remove seemed to know about the early emperors of Rome—or so it appeared to Mr. Quelch.

"Come in!" Mr. Quelch's tone was not inviting.

Wibley entered the study. It was unfortunate that a trailing end of the voluminous gown managed to get entangled beneath his feet, for without warning Wibley suddenly found himself sprawling in a horizontal position on the carpet, and the mortar-board, flying from his fingers, caught Mr. Quelch a glancing blow over the nose and then toppled into the fire where it speedily began to burn.

"Bless my soul!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Wibley.

He scrambled to his feet and made a terrific dive to retrieve the burning mortar-board. It was a case of great minds thinking alike for Mr. Quelch dived at the same time, with the same object in view.

The result was disastrous and painful, for their heads met with a resounding thud!

Bump!

"Oh! Ah! Ooooooh!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Whooooop!" roared Wibley.

Master and pupil staggered to their feet clasping their damaged heads. For the space of a second or two Mr. Quelch eyed the horrified Wibley wolfishly.

"Boy!" he articulated at length.

"I'm s-s-sorry, sir!" gasped Wibley.

"It was an accident, sir!"

"What!"

"It was an accident, sir," said the unhappy Wibley. "I—I—I tried to s-s-save the hat, sir!"

Mr. Quelch breathed hard. He was angry, very angry, but he was a just man. It was obvious that to rescue the hat had been Wibley's worthy intention. The collision was indeed an accident. Still that did not lessen the pain Mr. Quelch was experiencing where his head had come in contact with Wibley's. Neither did his wrath abate when, on looking at the burning mortar-board, he discovered it to be his own property.

"Boy!" thundered Mr. Quelch at last. "That is my hat!"

"Ye-es, sir!"

The Form master's eyes roved to the gown which Wibley had picked up from the floor and was holding in his arms like a bundle of laundry.

"And is it possible? Do my eyes deceive me? That is my gown?"

"Ye-es, sir!" answered Wibley, wondering why Mr. Quelch should indulge in all these unnecessary questions.

"Bless my soul!"

After that ejaculation the master of the Remove seemed speechless for a few moments.

Wibley waited in a state of growing apprehension, not liking the terrific expression that was beginning to take hold of Mr. Quelch's angular features.

"Boy!" Mr. Quelch found his tongue at last. "Boy!"

"Ye-es, sir!"

"What does this mean? How come

you to be in possession of my property?"

William Wibley, wishing that the floor would open and swallow him, shifted uneasily from one foot to the other.

"I—I—I—" he began.

Mr. Quelch cut him short with an imperious gesture.

"I—I—I—" began Wibley once again.

"Do not indulge in such useless repetition of the first personal pronoun!" snapped the master of the Remove.

"You see," began Wibley, starting on another tack, so to speak.

"Well?"

"I—I—borrowed them, sir!"

Mr. Quelch started.

"Do I hear you aright? Am I to understand that you borrowed these articles of apparel without asking my permission?"

"Ye-es, sir!" gulped the unhappy junior.

"This is monstrous! Outrageous! The audacity of it!" thundered Mr. Quelch, now thoroughly wound up.

"Boy, how dare you?"

Wibley, standing there, wondered now how he had dared to borrow those articles of apparel. Certainly he had never bargained on this.

Mr. Quelch gave one glance at the remnants of his mortar-board, pursed his lips, and then reached for his cane.

Wibley watched these proceedings with alarm.

"I won't trouble to ask you why you borrowed these things," said Mr. Quelch grimly, "for I am well acquainted with your idiotic interest in things theatrical. But I shall endeavour to point out to you that borrowing of this nature is not to be encouraged."

"Oh!"

"By your act of returning these things I take it that your better nature prompted you to make a full explanation. Otherwise you could have replaced them without my being any the wiser that they had been abstracted."

William Wibley wondered what all this meant, still, of course, being unaware of Bunter's contribution to the drama, so to speak, that had taken place.

"I shall take that into consideration when I punish you," continued the master of the Remove.

"Thank you, sir!"

"And while I am on this History subject," said the Form master, "let me offer you a few words of advice. Your History paper is very nearly the worst in the Form."

"Oh, sir!"

"If you would give more time to your Form work and less to a useless study of the histrionic art it would be to your advantage."

"W-would it, sir?" mumbled Wibley.

"It would indeed!" Mr. Quelch swished the cane suggestively.

"Touch your toes!"

Whack, whack, whack!

The master of the Remove put considerable vigour into those strokes.

Whack, whack, whack!

Wibley bit his lip hard, but no cry escaped him.

Mr. Quelch, breathing a trifle heavily after his exertions, laid the cane on his desk.

Wibley resumed a perpendicular position.

"I hope that will be a lesson to you," said Mr. Quelch; and then, as his glance rested on the smouldering remains of his mortar-board, he added: "I shall deduct the cost of a new mortar-board from your allowance."

"Groooooough!"

"You may go!"

And William Wibley, with feelings too deep for words, departed.

Outside in the corridor he came across Bob Cherry who had been waiting for him to emerge.

"Had it hot, old chap?" asked Bob sympathetically. "I tried to stop you."

Wibley looked at him curiously. "You tried to stop me? What do you mean?"

And Bob explained. When he had finished, Wibley's expression was almost homicidal.

"Bunter! That fat villain! Why, I'll burst him!"

And the infuriated junior threw off Cherry's detaining hand and rushed off towards the Rag, breathing threats and slaughter on the devoted head of William George Bunter.

But that wily youth was wise in his generation; he emulated Brer Rabbit and lay low. Certain it was that

Nugent grinned.

"So are all the fellows!" he said.

"It's all Wibley," said Wharton. "He writes these blessed plays for himself. The rest of us are almost supers."

"That's true," admitted Nugent. "Still the silly ass can act, you know."

"So can the other fellows," said the captain of the Remove, "but they never get a chance now."

Nugent relapsed into silence.

Before Wibley had arrived at Greyfriars Harry Wharton & Co. had been the leading lights in the Remove Dramatic Society, but with the advent of Wibley a complete change had come

at the end of the room. At last he rapped the table in front of him.

"Order, please!" bellowed Bolsover major.

And the Remove, glad of the chance to exercise their lungs, yelled lustily:

"Order!"

William Wibley allowed a frozen smile to cross his face. Then he cleared his throat.

"Go it, Wib!"

"On the ball!"

"Get a move on!"

"Ladies and gentlemen," began Wibley, "that is to say, gentlemen of the Remove—"



The voluminous gown became entangled between Wibley's feet and the junior went sprawling headlong, while the mortar-board landed on Mr. Quelch's rather prominent nose!

"Hear, hear!"

"I have called this meeting—"

"We know that, fathead!"

William Wibley gave the interrupter a ferocious glare, and Bolsover major, who was always glad to listen to the sound of his own voice, bellowed:

"Order, please!"

"Shut up, Bolsover!" roared Bulstrode.

"Can it, Bulstrode!"

"I have called this meeting," repeated Wibley, raising his voice, "to point out to you worthy members of the Remove that the dramatic society is not receiving a fair support."

"Oh!"

"Gentlemen," said Wibley, striking a dramatic attitude, "I ask you, how can the Remove hold up its head in theatrical endeavour when the members of this society will not give a few of their leisure hours to necessary rehearsals?"

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Harold Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Skinner!"

"Order!" bellowed Bolsover major. "Order yourself, you silly fathead," remarked Sampson Quincey Ifley Field.

Wibley stepped into the momentary lull that followed.

"Here we have a good play, 'The MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,153."

Wibley, having explored every likely hiding-place, had to give up the search at last, for time was running short and the rehearsal fixed for the new play was already an hour overdue.

But a fresh set-back awaited the amateur actor of the Remove, for when he started to round up the acting members in "The Flying Terror!" he found only one enthusiast—and that individual was William Wibley!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Rough on Wibley!

"GOING down to the Rag?" Frank Nugent asked that question of Harry Wharton after tea that day.

"What for?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Wibley's called a meeting of the dramatic society!"

"Oh, blow Wibley!" grunted Wharton. "I'm getting rather fed up with Wibley and his rotten plays."

over their prospects. The juniors had been quick to see the outstanding merits of William Wibley and he had speedily taken charge of affairs; but with acting, like everything else, one can have too much of a good thing.

The Remove had arrived at the stage where they had had enough of a good thing, and William Wibley's star was on the wane.

"I suppose we might as well toddle along and hear what the silly ass has got to say," conceded Wharton at last. "After all, he's president of the society."

"Might as well!" said Nugent.

And the two chums strolled down to the Rag calling on Bob Cherry, Hurree Singh, and Johnny Bull en route.

Quite a crowd of Removites had decided to turn up at Wibley's meeting, not from any real motives of interest in the doings of the Remove Dramatic Society, but merely for the sake of a diversion.

William Wibley, looking as important as he could, was mounted on the dais

Flying Terror! all ready for production," he went on, "and what happens? I call a rehearsal, and no one, except myself, turns up."

"Too bad!"

"Rotten!"

"Poor old Wib!"

"Gentlemen, this—ahem!—wonderful play is billed to be produced in less than a fortnight, but a production worthy of the Remove can never be accomplished unless certain gentlemen are prepared to give up a little of the time they now devote to football."

Wibley paused and eyed the crowd appealingly. Practised performer as he was, he knew that the juniors had not attended his meeting to hear him discourse on the shortcomings of the dramatic society. They were out for a rag; yet such was the egotism of William Wibley that he hoped to sway them to his point of view.

"Football is all right in its way," continued Wibley. "but, fellow Thespians—"

"Who?"

"What?"

"Which?"

"Fellow Thespians," roared Wibley, "we must rally round and—and pull together. All of you will admit that the finest dramatic society in Greyfriars is the Remove."

"Hear, hear!"

"I want to say to all of you," went on Wibley earnestly—"I want to say—Yooooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

William Wibley had no intention of saying that, but from somewhere in the Rag a perfect hail of peas descended on his flushed face. Evidently a few choice spirits had seen fit to enliven the occasion by bringing their peashooters with them.

"I want to say to you," resumed Wibley, "that the only way to keep the Remove flag flying in the theatre world is for all the members of the society to put their backs into rehearsals. Some of you will remember that Sir Henry Irving was once heard to say—Grooooooh! Oh crumbs! Wow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Another avalanche of peas had found a billet.

"Did Sir Henry Irving say that, old scout?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

William Wibley, with a face as red as a beetroot, held up a commanding hand.

"Gentlemen of the Remove!" he roared. "Ow-yowp!"

Once more the peashooters came into play with stinging effect.

"Order, please!" bellowed Bolsover major. "I'll—Whooooop!"

Bolsover subsided in a burst of unintelligible mutterings as the peashooters were levelled in his direction.

"You rotters!" roared Wibley, shaking a fist at the juniors at the back of the Rag. "You've got no interest in the theatre. You don't appreciate a first-class actor! But art cannot be stifled! No, gentlemen—owp!—you rotters—the time will come when the world will look to art as habitually as it does to—Yarooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Once again the peashooter brigade got busy, and this time several of the juniors in the line of fire were the victims in addition to William Wibley. In a moment the Rag was in an uproar.

"You rotters!"

"Smash 'em!"

"Collar the rotters!"

William Wibley struggled to his feet.

"Gentlemen!" he bellowed. "Gentlemen—"

But no one paid any heed to William Wibley. Something approaching a Rugby scrimmage was developing in the body of the Rag. Harry Wharton & Co. found themselves hitting out indiscriminately as the struggle surged round them.

"Mop 'em up!"

"Scrag the cads!"

"Hurrah!"

"Gentlemen!" shrieked Wibley. "Oh crikey!"

In his eagerness to address the raging juniors Wibley did not pay sufficient attention to his footing, with the result that he stepped off the dais into space.

Bump!

Wibley landed on his back with a thud and a roar. The juniors tramped over his prostrate body regardless.

And in the midst of the din the awe-inspiring figure of Dr. Locke loomed in the doorway.

"Boys!"

At sound of that imperious voice the battle came to an abrupt halt.

"Bless my soul!" Dr. Locke was scandalised. "This is disgraceful, abominable!"

A very sheepish crowd of Removites faced him.

"Wharton," said Dr. Locke, "will you kindly explain the meaning of this abominable disturbance?"

The captain of the Remove crimsoned.

"It's—it's a meeting, sir!"

"A meeting? Bless my soul! You boys have very strange ideas of conducting a meeting," said the Head. "I could hear the disturbance from my study!"

"I'm sorry, sir!" said Wharton lamely, although he felt he was hardly to blame.

"A meeting, indeed!" snapped Dr. Locke. "It appeared to be more of a riot than anything else. I am greatly displeased that such a disturbance should take place the night before I go for my holiday."

The Removites were silent.

Rumour had run the round that Dr. Locke was taking a month's holiday, but the date of his departure was not known. Even Billy Bunter, who usually knew everything that went on at Greyfriars had not nosed out that piece of information.

"Disgraceful!" boomed Dr. Locke. "I shall make it my business to acquaint my successor with the unruliness of this Form!"

The Removites hung their heads sheepishly.

"Every boy here will take a hundred lines," resumed Dr. Locke, "and if there is any recurrence of this nature—"

He did not finish the sentence, but the juniors had no difficulty in finishing it for him.

"Now disperse to your studies!"

The juniors filed past him at the doorway with expressions that suggested butter wouldn't melt in their mouths.

Wibley was the last to leave.

The Head stopped him with a motion of the hand.

"Wibley, Mr. Quelch informs me that you are very backward in your Form work."

"Oh, sir!"

"I trust you will give Mr. Quelch a very different impression by the time I return from my holiday. I understand from him that your mind is more occupied with the histrionic art than with Form work. That will not do. You will oblige me, Wibley, by putting your back into your work, otherwise, it will



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be my duty to give you special attention."

"Oh, ah, yes, sir!" mumbled Wibley.

And Dr. Locke dismissed him with a majestic wave of the hand.

Really, it seemed that William Wibley's luck was out. He sauntered off to Study No. 6, which he shared with Micky Desmond and Dick Rake, with a very woebegone expression, but once in the confines of the study his enthusiasm for "The Flying Terror!" came back with full force.

Desmond and Rake were just starting prep when Wibley came in.

"Do you know your lines, Desmond?"

"Faith, an' I've no interest in any lines at all," grunted the Irish junior.

"But the play—" began Wibley.

"Blow the play!" grunted Desmond.

"Bless the play!" added Rake.

Wibley glared.

"But it's the finest play I've ever written!" he exclaimed indignantly. "I'll give you a sample of the opening of the first act."

"Faith, an' there'll be a dead Wibley knocking around if you do, begorra!" hinted Desmond.

But Wibley ran on regardless.

"The scene is the study of Sir William Willoughby. The time is midnight. Sir William, who had been reading, drops off to sleep in his armchair. Suddenly there is a slight movement behind the curtains at the window. The Terror—that's me—creeps into the room like a menacing shadow."

In his enthusiasm William Wibley did not perceive the expressive glance that Rake and Desmond exchanged.

"He creeps behind the sleeping figure of Sir Willoughby," went on Wibley, "and—Yooooop! Wharrer you doing? Oh crikey!"

Before he was quite aware of what was happening William Wibley found himself despoised on the cold, hard, unsympathetic linoleum outside the door of Study No. 6 with a bump that shook every bone in his body. Then the door of Study No. 6 slammed, and a key grated in the lock.

By the time it dawned on William Wibley that he had been thrown out of his own study, it also dawned on him that he had been locked out, too; and, with feelings too deep for words, the hapless amateur actor went down to the Common-room, where, with an audience consisting of the four walls, he ran over the leading part in his latest play: "The Flying Terror!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

William Wibley's Wheeze!

"I'LL show 'em!"

William Wibley was responsible for that ejaculation.

It was the following day, and the shining light of the Remove Dramatic Society was strolling down to Friardale to get some grease-paint. Wibley was still feeling very sore at the indifference the Removes showed to his latest play.

"The slackers!"

Wibley seemed to find solace in uttering these ejaculations as he tramped along moodily. After tea he had once more attempted to call a rehearsal of "The Flying Terror!" but the Removes had made it quite clear that they were fed-up with "The Flying Terror!" and its author. Indeed, some of the more candid juniors had told Wibley in no uncertain terms that he couldn't act for toffee; that he was a conceited ass, and that he could go and bury himself and his play as soon as he liked. Really,

it was very discouraging for a budding Ronald Colman and a Sir Henry Irving rolled into one.

Wibley was full of his grievances as he trudged along. Even the fact that the Head was departing from Greyfriars that evening, and that his successor was due to arrive the next afternoon, was of very little importance to William Wibley.

He was so engrossed with his own thoughts that he hardly heard the warning hoot of a car coming from behind him, but as the car flashed by, Wibley saw the stately figure of Dr. Locke in it. Wibley raised his cap, and received a gracious nod in return; and the car swept by. Evidently the Head's holiday had started.

Wibley walked on a few hundred yards, and then he saw that the Head's car had come to a halt. A telegraph-boy was standing beside the car.

The Remove junior drew level, and was about to pass on when Dr. Locke called him.

"Wibley!"

"Yes, sir!"

"I want you to convey a message to Mr. Prout," said the Head, who appeared a trifle worried. "The telegraph-boy has just handed me a wire from Dr. Mitchell—my successor."

ANOTHER READER WINS A USEFUL LEATHER POCKET WALLET

for sending in the following Greyfriars Limerick:

Said Bunter, one day, with a squeak:

"I'm fed-up with Latin and Greek.

With this beastly muck.

I always get stuck,

And then that beast Quelch

makes me shriek!"

Sent in by: Mervyn Stephens,
14, Lansdown Place, Clifton,
Bristol.

"Yes, sir," said Wibley helpfully.

"It appears that Dr. Mitchell cannot take over my duties to-morrow, as was first arranged, but will arrive in three days' time."

The Head paused, and Wibley waited.

"In the circumstances, Mr. Prout will take charge of the school until Dr. Mitchell arrives. I have no time to return and acquaint Mr. Prout of this eventuality, my boy, so you will kindly inform him for me of the last-minute change."

"Certainly, sir!"

"Thank you, Wibley!"

The Head dismissed the telegraph-boy after tipping him generously for his astuteness in stopping the car, and waved a smiling farewell to William Wibley. That junior raised his cap, and once more the car resumed its journey.

For some moments the Remove stared after the fast disappearing car, deep in thought. There was a peculiar mischievous look in his eyes that plainly indicated William Wibley was in the throes of a brain-wave.

"My hat!" he ejaculated at length.

"I'll do it! Blessed if I don't!"

The very audacity of the scheme that had taken root in his brain fairly staggered him.

"I'll do it! By Jove! What a rag! Can't act, can't I? I'll show the silly asses!"

And, filled with his new idea, William Wibley fairly ran to Friardale and took the first train to Courtfield. Once there

he made all haste for the theatrical costumier's; and Mr. Sandy, the proprietor, who valued Wibley as a good customer, was soon bustling about to fulfil Wibley's amazing order.

All the way back to Greyfriars Wibley was chuckling to himself, for the great scheme he intended to put into operation was nothing less than an impersonation of the temporary headmaster!

"Three days' time!" ruminated Wibley. "That'll give me a chance to show the chaps that I can act. Dr. Mitchell will arrive to-morrow, according to the original programme, in the person of William Wibley. My hat! What a wheeze!"

The more Wibley pondered over it the more enthusiastic he became. Of the alarming consequences that were likely to attend such a daring imposture he gave scarcely a thought. Wibley was an actor first and last; and here was a chance of showing the doubting Thomases at Greyfriars that he really could act—could act their heads off, so to speak.

Not even the punishment of a hundred lines for being late for call-over damped Wibley's spirits. What was a hundred lines to a chap who would, with a little luck, be in a position on the morrow to award thousands of lines when and to whom he pleased?

In Study No. 6 that evening Micky Desmond and Dick Rake were amazed by Wibley's peculiar behaviour. All through prep the shining light of the Remove Dramatic Society was chuckling to himself.

Desmond looked up at last.

"Faith, an' is it potty ye are?" he asked.

"Eh?" ejaculated Wibley.

"Begorra, you've done nothing else but chuckle like a loony spalpeen for the past hour, at all, at all!"

"His blessed play's got on his mind," said Rake sagely. "Take a tip from me, Wib, old scout, and chuck that footling acting and play-writing, otherwise you'll finish up at Colney Hatch."

"Ass!" said Wibley cheerfully; and, closing his eyes, he leaned back in his chair to "rehearse" once again the most amazing role he had ever contemplated acting.

He was still chuckling when Micky Desmond and Rake, having finished their prep, went down to the Common-room.

Then William Wibley became galvanised with life. With a cautious step he entered the Sixth Form quarters and headed for the prefects' room. In that sanctum of sanctums was a telephone installed for the exclusive use of the prefects. Turning the key of the door on the inside, William Wibley crossed to the telephone and took up the receiver.

He asked for Dr. Locke, knowing beforehand that Mr. Prout, who was deputising until Dr. Mitchell should arrive, would take the call. In a few moments the fruity voice of the master of the Fifth came over the wires.

"Who is it speaking?"

Wibley cleared his throat and got busy.

"My name is Wibley—" he began in a deep voice.

And Mr. Prout, doubtless feeling his new position, temporary as it was, very keenly hastened to make himself agreeable.

"Ah! Yes, Mr. Wibley. Yes, yes. I remember you, sir, I think. You have a son in the Remove."

"Yes, Dr. Locke—William Wibley. I—"

But again Mr. Prout jumped in.

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"Let me hasten to enlighten you, Mr. Wibley," said Mr. Prout. "Dr. Locke has just departed for a month's holiday. I am acting for him until the new Head arrives. If there is anything I can do for you, sir, I shall be only too happy to oblige."

"You are very kind," said Wibley.

"Not at all. Not at all, my dear sir!" came Prout's fruity voice. "Only too happy to oblige you, Mr. Wibley!" Then William Wibley took the plunge.

"I would like William to be given leave of absence for a few days," he said, in the deep tones of his paternal relative.

"H'm!" Mr. Prout's effusiveness underwent a slight change.

"I know the request is rather unusual," Wibley hastened to explain, "but the circumstances leading up to it are rather exceptional. I should deem it a personal favour, Mr. Prout, if you would concede the point."

That little flattery did the trick. Wibley could almost see Prout's rubicund face as he replied.

"Well, of course, Mr. Wibley, if you put it like that I think I can manage to grant your son leave of absence for a few days."

"You are very kind, Mr. Prout," said Mr. Wibley alias William Wibley. "I might add you're a sportsman, sir."

Mr. Prout, at his end of the wire, positively beamed. He prided himself on being a sportsman, and was about to plunge into a lengthy description of his sporting activities in the Rockies in 1899 when Mr. Wibley cut him short.

"Then I can expect William early tomorrow, my dear Mr. Prout?"

"Certainly, my dear Mr. Wibley," said Prout fruitily. "He shall leave first thing after breakfast."

"I am very much obliged, Mr. Prout."

"Don't mention it, Mr. Wibley. I am only too happy to be of service to you. Good-bye, my dear Mr. Wibley, good-bye—"

But William Wibley had already rung off. There was the sound of a furious knocking on the door of the prefect's room, and then Wibley recognised Wingate's voice.

"Hallo! Who's locked this blessed door?"

"Is it locked?" This time it was Patrick Gwynne speaking.

"Of course it's locked, fathead!" said the captain of the school testily. "Blow it! I shall have to ask Prout if I can use his telephone. I expect some of the youngsters have been skylarking about and hidden the key."

"Hold on!" said Patrick Gwynne, who was peering at the keyhole. "The blessed key's in the lock!"

"Eh?" said Wingate. "Where?"

"On the inside," said Gwynne. "You can see for yourself."

Wingate stooped down and saw for himself that Gwynne's words were correct.

"My hat! Then there's someone in the room."

"Of course!"

And as William Wibley heard that remark his heart leaped to his mouth.

He gazed about him like a cornered rat. It would never do to be caught in the prefects' room with the door locked. It might mean the ruination of all his plans. Yet the only way of escape was by the window, which meant a risky climb down the ivy to the quad below—a matter of twenty feet or more.

"Open this door!" roared Wingate. "I know there's someone here!"

"Open it begorrah, ye spalpeen!" roared Gwynne, relapsing into his

native brogue in his excitement, "or we'll burst it in!"

William Wibley bit his lip. Then he made up his mind. Crossing softly to the window, he began to prise it up. Fortunately for him the sash did not creak, otherwise the raging prefects outside would have guessed his intention and circumvented it.

Bang, bang!

Wingate was beating a furious fist on the panels.

Bang, bang!

Patrick Gwynne was doing likewise.

Meantime, William Wibley had clambered over the sill, and was seeking a handhold and a foothold on the old ivy. His heart was beating fast, for the descent was decidedly risky. Foot by foot he lowered himself to the quad, the knocking from the prefects' room becoming fainter and fainter.

Three feet from the ground William Wibley jumped. He touched ground, and then was speeding off to the School House as fast as his legs would carry him. In the corridor he ran into Tubb of the Third.

Tubb was looking anything but pleased.

"Oh, here you are!" he growled. "I've been looking for you for the past five minutes. Comes to something when a chap's got to fag about for a blessed Removeite!"

"What's up?" asked Wibley pleasantly, knowing beforehand the answer to that question.

"Old Prouty wants you in the Head's study," growled Tubb. "Like his cheek to fag me! You blessed Removeites want putting in your places. Yah!"

With which elegant remark George Tubb stalked off with all the dignity of the leader of the Third Form. But a well-placed foot from William Wibley rather spoiled the effect, for Tubb suddenly found himself pitching forward on his hands and knees.

"Yooooop! You rotter!" he roared. "Why, I'll—"

But Wibley did not stay to hear the warlike Tubb's murderous threats; he was trekking it for Dr. Locke's study.

Mr. Prout beamed at the junior when he entered the study.

"You sent for me, sir?"

Wibley was quite composed.

"Ah, yes, Wibley!" said Mr. Prout.

"Your father has just been in communication with me over the telephone."

"Oh, sir!"

"It appears, my boy," went on Mr. Prout, in his long-winded fashion, "that he desires your presence at home for a few days, and to that end he has asked me to grant you leave of absence. In the circumstances, I am only too happy to oblige your father, my boy, so you may make your arrangements to depart from this school after breakfast tomorrow morning."

"Oh, sir! Thank you, sir!" said Wibley, with a beaming smile. "That's jolly good of you, sir!"

Mr. Prout beamed.

"Not at all, my boy—not at all!"

And he waved a majestic dismissal.

Once outside the study Wibley felt like executing a war-dance. But he restrained his feelings, and his face was quite composed when he joined the Removeites in the Common-room.

The great wheeze was already working. Leave of absence had been granted to William Wibley, and the rest was as easy as falling off a form, or so thought the shining light of the Remove Dramatic Society.

Anyway, after breakfast next morning Wibley shook the dust of Greyfriars

from his feet, his exit causing no little envy among his Form-fellows; but certainly no suspicion.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Trouble with Highcliffe!

"HERE she comes!"

Bob Cherry made that remark, and pointed along the platform at Courtfield Junction.

The two-thirty express was steaming in.

"Now for it!" said Frank Nugent. "Wonder what the old bird will be like?"

"The wonderfulness of the old bird will be terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in his original English. "Let us hopefully hope that the ridiculous and esteemed Dr. Mitchell is not a toughful bird!"

"Hear, hear!"

The Famous Five waited expectantly. At Mr. Quelch's request Harry Wharton & Co. had turned up at Courtfield Junction to welcome the new Head and to give a hand with his luggage, if necessary.

Originally, Mr. Prout, in all the glory of his brief headship, had detailed Mr. Quelch to meet and welcome the new Head, but the master of the Remove, without consulting the pompous master of the Fifth, had passed on the job to the Famous Five.

Harry Wharton & Co. had been only too eager to comply, for a trip to Courtfield was distinctly preferable to swotting maths in the Remove Form room.

The express steamed in and came to a halt, and the Removeites eagerly scanned the passengers who were alighting.

"Change 'ere for Friardale!" bawled a porter. "Number three platform!"

But the only travellers who made tracks for No. 3 platform were two labourers and an old lady. As neither one of these answered in any way to what a headmaster would look like Harry Wharton & Co. came to the conclusion that they had drawn a blank.

"Doesn't look as if the old Beak's travelled by this train," remarked Bob Cherry.

"And the next train isn't due for an hour," said Wharton. "I suppose we had better hoof it back to school."

"No need to hurry, though," said Nugent. "The Quelch bird didn't tie us to time."

The five juniors waited a little longer, but there was no sign of Dr. Mitchell, and when the express steamed out again they made a combined move to the barrier.

"A journey for nothing," said Johnny Bull.

"Still, it's a thumping sight better than mugging in the Form-room!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Oh, rather!"

The Famous Five were unanimous on that point.

They began to step out briskly for Friardale. It was a fine spring afternoon, and walking was a pleasure; furthermore, walking meant dodging at least another half an hour of classes.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly. "Highcliffe rotters!"

The Famous Five had suddenly turned a corner in the lane, and approaching them was a score, at least, of Highcliffians. At their head were Ponsonby & Co.

"Clear decks for action!" said Johnny Bull significantly; and his chums nodded.

Cecil Ponsonby & Co. were always at



"This overgrown boy seems very stupid-looking," said the pseudo Dr. Mitchell, in a voice that reached the burning ears of Coker and most of the Fifth-Formers. "I—h'm—h'm!—must give him my personal attention!"

war with the Remove in general, and Harry Wharton & Co. in particular; but the Highcliffe cads usually preferred to make war when the odds were in their favour.

Certainly, the odds were well in their favour now.

The Highcliffe juniors came along at a swinging stride. Evidently they had been out for one of their customary natural history lessons, for each junior carried a notebook under his arm. That, under the leadership of Cecil Ponsonby the weekly natural history lesson degenerated into an hour's indulgence in smoking and card-playing, the authorities at Highcliffe were not yet aware, although it was known to Harry Wharton & Co.

"Shoulder to shoulder, you men!" said Wharton. "You can bet there'll be trouble!"

Of that there was no shadow of doubt, no possible, probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever. To retreat was unthinkable for the Famous Five, so they kept on.

At a word from Ponsonby, the Highcliffe juniors spread out across the lane entirely blocking the way.

Still Harry Wharton & Co. marched on. Each of them realised that a scrap was imminent; but, despite the heavy odds of four to one, they showed no trace of turning back.

"Collar the rotters!" exclaimed Ponsonby suddenly; and like one man the Highcliffe juniors rushed to obey.

"Back up, Greyfriars!" yelled Bob Cherry; and simultaneously his left

came into violent contact with Cecil Ponsonby's elegant nose.

"Yooooop! You rotter!" roared Pon, and he staggered back clasp his damaged nasal organ.

Vavasour and Gadsby fared no better, for Johnny Bull and Wharton both registered "direct hits," and two Highcliffians rolled in the road roaring.

Hurree Singh was fighting gamely with Monson, and was more than holding his own, whilst Frank Nugent was hitting out right lustily to two lefty Fourth-Formers.

"Collar the cads!" roared Ponsonby, taking care, however, to keep somewhere in the background.

"Oh, absolutely!" said Vavasour. "Grooooooh! My dose!"

"Wow! My eye!" moaned Gadsby.

"Back up, Greyfriars!"

"Down the cads!"

"Mop 'em up!"

The Famous Five fought like Trojans, but the odds were already beginning to tell. Wharton was down on the ground with four Highcliffe juniors sitting on him, although he had left his mark on more than one face before that happened.

Cries and moans rang out on all sides, for the Famous Five were the champion fighting men of the Greyfriars Remove, and they were doing deadly damage. But weight of numbers told in the end. A combined rush swept the Greyfriars juniors literally off their feet, and soon they were lying helpless and panting at the mercy of their enemies.

"Now you're going through it!" said Ponsonby unpleasantly, giving Wharton a dig in the ribs.

Wharton's eyes blazed.

"And you'd go through it, too, if I could get my hands on you!" he snapped.

"Call this fair play?" panted Johnny Bull. "Four to one! Just like you Highcliffe cads!"

"Hold the cads tight while we get busy with the crayons!" drawled Ponsonby.

"Oh, absolutely!"

The Famous Five were held tight, despite their frantic struggling, and then Ponsonby and his cronies selected a number of crayons from their boxes. Those crayons were issued by the school authorities for the purpose of transmitting to paper the outline and general characteristics of trees and shrubs; but they came in exceedingly handy to the victorious Highcliffians in the present instance.

Ponsonby, who was something of an artist, began to exercise his art on the crimson faces of the helpless Removites. First he whitened Wharton's face, and then proceeded to streak diagonal lines of green and red across it. A big black spot on the end of Wharton's nose completed the picture.

"Oh, you rotter!" panted the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Don't like it, what?" drawled Ponsonby. "Dear me, some fellows are never satisfied!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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The Highcliffians laughed, as in duty bound, at this flash of wit from their elegant leader.

Bob Cherry was the next victim. In his case the colour scheme was entirely different. On a groundwork of black chalk Ponsonby executed some very weird designs in yellow, with the result that the hapless Bob looked like nothing so much as a zebra by the time the Highcliffe dandy had finished.

Each member of the Famous Five underwent similar treatment, with the result that their own parents would hardly have recognised them.

The Famous Five writhed and struggled to get free, but they were too securely held, and each attempt at freedom merely raised a roar of laughter from the triumphant Highcliffe juniors.

"You awful cads!" said Wharton between his teeth.

"I'd like to have Ponsonby to myself for five minutes!" growled Bob Cherry. "I'd burst him!"

"The burstfulness would be terrific!" added Hurree Singh, who had taken their plight with all the philosophy of the East. "But the proverb tells us that he who waits last laughs longfully."

"Ring off!" growled Gadsby.

"Take their jackets off!" ordered Ponsonby. "Don't let the cads escape!"

But there was no fear of that. In a very short time the Famous Five were minus their jackets.

"Now turn 'em inside out and put 'em on again!" drawled Ponsonby.

The Highcliffe juniors hastened to obey. The effect was startling, and Ponsonby & Co. roared with merriment.

"Now tie their wrists behind them," commanded Ponsonby, "and join the cads together in a circle!"

The Famous Five struggled desperately; but it was of no avail. Their wrists were securely fastened behind their backs, and another length of cord joined the five helpless juniors together in a circle.

"Now got going," said Ponsonby, in high glee; and he gave the circle a push towards Greyfriars.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was all Harry Wharton & Co. could do to keep from falling, for only two of them were walking naturally. Nugent, Bull, and Cherry were walking half sideways half backwards, by reason of the circle Ponsonby had made in tying their wrists together. How long it would take the hapless five to reach Greyfriars was a matter of conjecture, for their progress was painfully slow and somewhat dangerous.

"Go it, you cripples!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, this is awful!" groaned Wharton.

He was facing the route to Greyfriars, and stumbling along with great difficulty, for Bob Cherry, who was walking backwards, kept falling on to him. Thus Wharton was unaware of the approach of a taxicab.

But Bob, walking backwards, was. To his amazement, the taxi suddenly pulled up alongside the chortling Highcliffe juniors, and an elderly gentleman, in frock coat, jumped out.

He displayed surprising agility for a man past middle age. His face fairly bristled with wrath as he took in the scene. Next moment the umbrella he was carrying started to flay the hilarious Highcliffe juniors, and their roars of laughter changed with startling suddenness to roars of anguish.

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"You young rascals!"

Swish, swish, swish!

And with each swish of the umbrella came a Highcliffe yell.

"Look out!" yelled Ponsonby. "The man's mad—Yooooooooop!"

He ended with a yell as the whirling umbrella caught him with full force.

"Young hooligans!" hooted the newcomer. "Disgraceful—h'm—h'm!—abominable!"

The Highcliffe juniors scattered in alarm before that avenging umbrella. Who the newcomer was they hadn't the faintest idea; neither could they reason why he had interfered. Their unanimous conclusion was that they had encountered a madman.

Swish, swish, swish!

The Highcliffians scattered like chaff before the wind as the elderly gentleman rushed in amongst them, smiting lustily, and moans and cries rang out on all sides.

"Run for it!"

"He's mad!"

"Oh crikey!"

In the space of a very short time the Highcliffe juniors were flying for their lives, eager to put as much distance between the "madman" and themselves as was humanly possible.

And only when the last junior had disappeared round a bend in the lane did the elderly gentleman call a halt.

"My hat!" That ejaculation sounded amazingly out of place, for the elderly gentleman sported a beard and moustaches, and his wrinkled face suggested that much water had flowed beneath the bridge since he had been a schoolboy. "My hat! That gave the Highcliffe bounders something to think about! Ha, ha, ha!"

Again the youthful laughter was entirely unreconcilable with an elderly man, but beneath that elderly waistcoat beat the heart of William Wibley, alias Dr. Mitchell!

The amateur actor of the Remove had missed the train at Courtfield, whither he had repaired to don his make-up, and had hastily chartered a taxi to take him to the school. His make-up was perfect in every detail; certainly no one would have recognised William Wibley of the Remove now.

It was more than the disguised Remove junior could do to pass by the triumphant Highcliffians without chipping in, but despite the fact that he had put Ponsonby & Co. to rout, Wibley had not the slightest intention of freeing Harry Wharton & Co. from their plight. A far better idea had occurred to Wibley's mind. He felt he had a grievance against the Famous Five for not having backed him up in the production of "The Flying Terror!" Like the other juniors of the Remove, Harry Wharton & Co. had told Wibley that he couldn't act for toffee. Well, they were soon to be enlightened on that point.

The circle of captive juniors had come to a halt as soon as Bob had explained what was going on in the ranks of the Highcliffe fellows, and their spirits rose. If the newcomer had been sporty enough to chip in and put Pon and his merry men to rout then, of a surety, he would liberate the captive five.

Accordingly the hopes of Harry Wharton & Co. rose.

But they received a sudden damper when the elderly gentleman stepped back into his taxi and commanded the astonished driver to proceed to Greyfriars.

Not a glance did the elderly gentleman give to Harry Wharton & Co. as the taxi whizzed past.

"Oh crumbs!"

That dismal ejaculation proceeded from Harry Wharton & Co.

The whole thing seemed inexplicable to them. Who was the man who had interfered? And why hadn't he liberated them? Why hadn't he looked at them even as he drove past?

"Oh, come on," groaned Wharton at last. "It's no good hanging about here. Let's get on."

And with feelings too deep for words, the hapless five shuffled their way towards Greyfriars, where, if they only knew it, another surprise of a painful nature awaited them.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Put to the Test!

HONK!

William Gosling, the porter, came out of his lodge as the sound of a taxi horn disturbed his afternoon siesta. But he quickly became alive as he beheld the staid gentleman in the cab.

Gosling did not need telling that this was the temporary head—Dr. Mitchell—for like everyone else at Greyfriars, Gosling knew that Dr. Mitchell was expected that afternoon.

"Good afternoon, sir," said Gosling respectfully, and he touched his cap and hastened to open the gates to admit the taxi.

"Dr. Mitchell" gave Gosling a wintry smile and waved the taxi on.

It halted outside the School House steps.

Wibley, his heart beating furiously, despite his outward appearance of calm, paid off the driver, and, from the corner of his eye, saw Mr. Prout bearing down upon him.

Mr. Prout was all smiles. He came up to the new Head and introduced himself, the while he examined the gentleman who was to control the destinies of Greyfriars until Dr. Locke's return.

The master of the Fifth was none too impressed. Dr. Mitchell appeared to be a very undersized gentleman who bore a distinctly Victorian stamp about him, but there was a very youthful gleam in his eyes as he shook Mr. Prout by the hand.

"Ow—wow!" Mr. Prout could not restrain the yell that came to his lips as he felt his own podgy hand gripped as in a vice.

"How do you do, Mr. Prout," said Dr. Mitchell, in a deep voice. "I am pleased—h'm—h'm!—to make your acquaintance."

"Oh, ah, yes!" muttered Mr. Prout, trying to withdraw his crushed hand.

"I feel certain we shall pull together—h'm—h'm!—my dear Prout," continued Dr. Mitchell. "Oh, ah—h'm—h'm!—your hand. I'm sorry. I am hurting you?"

"N-not at all," mumbled Mr. Prout, who felt that his hand had been damaged for life. "You would like to see over the school, sir, before you take over officially?" he added.

Wibley, alias Dr. Mitchell, shook his head.

"I am a great believer in striking while the iron is hot, Mr. Lout—"

"Prout!" said that gentleman stiffly, trifle stiffly.

"H'm—h'm, oh, ah! Prout!" said Wibley, who by this time was thoroughly enjoying himself, safe in the knowledge that the master of the Fifth had not penetrated his disguise. "Will you kindly assemble the school in the quad here—"

Prout's eyes opened wide, for the request was a very unusual one, a fact that he ventured to tell the new Head.

"It may be unusual, my dear Grout," murmured the Head. "But I wish it. I want to see the boys in my charge; I want to address them. You will kindly—h'm—h'm!—proceed to assemble them here."

Mr. Prout could do nothing more than nod his compliance. Already the "undersized" gentleman who had taken Dr. Locke's place had proved that he had a will—and a hand-grip—of his own.

And while the master of the Fifth proceeded to inform the various Form masters of the new Head's command, William Wibley strutted up and down the quad turning things over in his mind. So far, his masquerade had been a triumph. Certainly the frockcoated gentleman with the Victorian beard bore no resemblance to William Wibley of the Greyfriars Remove.

In the space of five minutes the Greyfriars fellows, seniors, juniors, and fags, were marching into the quad, and many surreptitious glances were levelled at the new Head.

Dr. Mitchell was unconscious of them. His attention seemed to be directed towards the gates where he expected at any moment Harry Wharton & Co. to appear.

"I'll show the silly asses," Wibley muttered to himself. "Can't act, can't I? Well, they'll be thumping sorry they said that before I've finished with 'em."

Mr. Quelch and the rest of the masters came striding majestically towards their new headmaster.

Wibley, with beating heart, turned to greet them.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," he said in deep tones. "I trust—h'm—h'm!—that our acquaintance will be of a pleasant nature."

And the masters, having been introduced by the pompous Mr. Prout, all hoped the same.

Certainly not one of them ever guessed the real identity of the "man" who stood before them. Even Mr. Quelch's keen eyes, often compared to gimlets by the members of his Form on account of their penetrating qualities, did not see anything amiss in Wibley's clever make-up.

"Mr. Prout—h'm—h'm!—" said the Head. "You will kindly call the roll."

"Certainly, sir!"

The roll was called, and Mr. Prout rolled towards Mr. Mitchell with his report.

"Five boys of the Remove are absent—Wharton, Cherry, Hurree Singh, Bull, and Nugent," said Mr. Prout, in his fruity voice. "I gather from Mr. Quelch that they went down to the station to meet you."

"That is so," said Mr. Quelch. "I am surprised that they have not yet returned."

Dr. Mitchell smiled.

"Ah—h'm—h'm!—my dear Mr. Squelch, I'm afraid I did not travel by the two-thirty express as was expected, so—h'm—h'm!—that perhaps explains why these boys are still absent."

"One boy from the Remove, Wibley, by name, is absent on leave," went on Mr. Prout.

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir; his parent desired him to be allowed two or three days away from the school," explained the master of the Fifth, "so, in the circumstances, I gave the necessary permission."

"That was quite right," said Dr. Mitchell agreeably. "I will now—h'm—h'm!—inspect the boys."

Accompanied by a bodyguard of masters, the new Head went down the

ranks of the various Forms, passing comments in audible voice that made the objects of the said comments blush.

GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES.

This week our clever Greyfriars Rhymester tells a few home-truths about Lord Mauleverer, the slacker of the Remove.



GREYFRIARS has a species rare,
Though others may be cleverer,

That noble schoolboy millionaire,

Great Herbert P. Mauleverer.
His veins are filled with blood that's blue,

This fact's not false or hazy;
Supplied with good grey matter, too,
Though usually it's lazy.

He first arrived in coach and four,
Which caused a great sensation;
And "slugs" and "toadies" looked
him o'er

In thoughtful speculation.
Lord Mauleverer, they found
To be a chap worth knowing,
His money he will share around,
And e'en forget what's owing.

An aristocrat is he—begad!
His polished tone betrays it.
You'd guess the fam'ly of the lad,
His every move betrays it.
But Mauly's very popular,
Not only for his fortune—
He's just a boy, like others are,
His money's no misfortune.

He shares a Study—Number Twelve—
With Vivian, his cousin;
But into books he does not delve,
Nor learn things by the dozen.
He's got a brain that, when it tries,
Can shine just how it chooses,
But usually it sleeping lies,
As Mauly gently snoozes.

He's elegant and so refined,
But not the least bit uppish;
To luxury he's much inclined,
And yet he's never foppish.
Piet Delarey, and his "coz,"
Enjoy the study-sharing—
He's gentlemanly in all he does,
And never over-bearing.

So lift your glasses in the air,
While other chaps you're toasting,
And cheer the schoolboy millionaire,
Who's free from pride and boasting.
He's generous, a kindly chap,
Who likes to see folk happy;
And though he sits in Fortune's lap,
He's a downright decent chappie!

Dr. Mitchell paused when he came abreast of Coker of the Fifth, and eyed him appraisingly.

The rugged faced Coker glared at him. He had taken an instinctive dislike to the new Head. The dislike seemed mutual.

Dr. Mitchell turned to Mr. Prout. "This overgrown boy seems very stupid-looking," he said, in a voice that reached the burning ears of Coker and most of the Fifth-Formers.

"Oh, really, sir!" burst out Coker, but a glare from Mr. Prout silenced him, and the Fifth Form men who were tittering.

"Very stupid-looking," murmured Dr. Mitchell. "I—h'm—h'm!—must give him my personal attention."

The new Head passed on leaving behind him a crimson Fifth-Former who would have given anything to have shown Dr. Mitchell his "left."

Cecil Reginald Temple of the Upper Fourth was the next to be placed in the stocks so to speak. The new Head halted before him and gave him a glance of disfavour.

"What is your name, my boy?"

"Temple, sir," drawled the leader of the Upper Fourth.

"Your full name?" rapped the new Head.

"Cecil Reginald Temple—"

And the hapless Temple gave his full name in such confusion, that his Form fellows burst out into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You look a very stupid boy," said Dr. Mitchell candidly.

"D-do—do I, sir?"

"Incredibly stupid!" snapped Dr. Mitchell.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the rest of the Upper Fourth.

"Silence!" commanded Mr. Capper.

"Boys, how dare you laugh like this!"

Dr. Mitchell held up his hand.

"Mr. Capper, as your Form seems to be imbued with laughter, we will give them a little—h'm—h'm!—exercise. Now, boys, when I count three, all laugh."

A dead silence settled on the Upper Fourth.

Was the new Head mad?

But the new Head was anything but mad. He held up his hand and began to count:

"One, two, three—laugh!"

There was a feeble response from the confused Upper Fourth.

Dr. Mitchell's eyebrows came together ferociously.

"I have commanded you boys to laugh," he said grimly. "Any boy who does not obey will be caned. Now, then, you hilarious young gentlemen, all laugh—and laugh heartily—when I count three! One, two, three—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" It was a ridiculous burst of laughter, and it rang absurdly false.

The masters behind Dr. Mitchell began to entertain the notion that he was not quite right in the head.

"Once more!" commanded Dr. Mitchell, thoroughly enjoying himself.

"Ha, ha, ha!" bellowed the crimson-faced Fourth-Formers.

And then, to their intense relief, the new Head passed on.

"Ye gods!" gasped Temple. "The old bird's batty!"

"Mad as a hatter!"

Meantime, Dr. Mitchell was inspecting the Remove. His comments amongst those juniors were thrustful and in many cases humiliating. Skinner & Co., the cads of the Remove, came in for special attention. They were told

that they were weedy, lazy, and generally good for nothing—a judgment that was marvellously accurate, coming from a headmaster who was beholding them for the first time.

Skinner & Co. were shaking in their shoes when Dr. Mitchell had finished with them.

"The rotter must be a blessed character-reader!" muttered Skinner to Snoop. "How did he guess that we smoked and played cards, and didn't play footer?"

"Shurrup!" hissed Snoop, who was thoroughly unnerved.

Dr. Mitchell came to a halt again. This time it was the ample figure of William George Bunter that held his attention.

"Disgustingly fat!" was his audible comment. "The boy obviously over-eats—"

"Oh, really, sir!" protested Bunter. "I've got a delicate constitution that requires constant nourishment—"

"Silence!"

And Bunter, quaking like a jelly, relapsed into silence.

"This boy is a disgrace to the school," said Dr. Mitchell, who evidently did not believe in mincing his words. "His condition is disgraceful! That boy, my dear Mr. Quelch, must be put on a diet at once."

"Quelch, my dear sir!"

"Sorry—er—Mr. Quelch. But as I said, this boy must be put on diet."

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

Like any Form master, he felt that an insult levelled at any of his boys was an insult to him. He knew quite well, however, that Bunter was a greedy youth given to over-eating, but he disliked being reminded of it in this public fashion by a man who had been in the school barely ten minutes. This sort of thing wasn't done in the best scholastic circles.

"You will see to that—h'm—h'm!—my dear Belch!"

"Quelch, sir," said the master of the Remove pointedly. "Q-U-E-L-C-H."

"Oh! Ah—h'm—h'm!" mumbled Dr. Mitchell.

And he passed from the Remove ranks to the Third and Second Forms, much to Mr. Quelch's relief.

The inspection finished, William Wibley, alias Dr. Mitchell, proceeded to address the assembled school.

"My boys," he began in a deep, carrying voice, "I trust that my—h'm—h'm!—short stay amongst you will be a happy one, and—h'm—h'm!—fruitful of results. You will not—h'm—h'm!—find me a hard taskmaster; but I expect complete obedience on all occasions—h'm—h'm!—without question. In consideration of—"

His words trailed off and his eyes travelled towards the gates.

The eyes of the assembled school did likewise.

Then there was one gigantic roar of laughter, as all Greyfriars saw the weird approach of Harry Wharton & Co. roped together in a circle, with faces painted in more colours than went to make Joseph's coat of many colours famous.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

Harry Wharton & Co. groaned. 'Too late they saw the assembled school. There was no retreat. With burning faces and feelings that were inexpressible, they stumbled on towards the ranks of the Greyfriars fellows, to the accompaniment of a storm of derisive cheers and laughter.

Wibley, alias Dr. Mitchell, could not have timed things better.

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THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Fall of Horace Coker!

"H A, HA, HA!"

Again and again the roars of merriment rang out, and the hapless Famous Five fervently hoped that the earth would open and swallow them.

Stumbling against each other, they came level at last with the horrified group of Form masters.

Dr. Mitchell, with well-feigned surprise, eyed them as if they were freaks from a circus.

And as Wharton & Co. saw that elderly gentleman they jumped; for they recognised him as the man who had intervened when Ponsonby & Co. had started them off on their painful journey to Greyfriars.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Goodness gracious!" boomed Mr. Prout.

"Oh crumbs!"

It was a groan in unison from the Famous Five.

"What does this mean—h'm—h'm?" demanded Dr. Mitchell warmly. "Who are these freakish people? And what are they doing here?"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch, for the second time. "Is it possible? Wharton—Cherry—"

"Yes, sir!" groaned those unhappy juniors from beneath their make-up.

"Well—"

Mr. Quelch seemed incapable of further speech at that moment. And while the unfortunate Removites waited like a lot of sheep huddled together the rest of the school gave voice once again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's Wharton and his crowd!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My only sainted aunt!"

"SILENCE!" Dr. Mitchell's voice boomed out above the din commandingly.

"Boys, what does this mean?" Mr. Quelch had recovered his voice at last.

The captain of the Remove felt it incumbent upon him to explain.

"We fell foul of some fellows on the way back to the school, sir," he said miserably, "and they ragged us—"

"Bless my soul!"

Dr. Mitchell stepped forward.

"Do I gather from your words, my dear Felch, that these strange individuals are known to you?"

Mr. Quelch gulped.

"They are the—the boys of my Form whom I sent to meet you at Courtfield Junction, sir," he said stiffly.

"Indeed!" snapped Dr. Mitchell. "This is positively disgraceful! I remember now passing these boys on my way to the school, but I had no idea that they were Greyfriars boys. Disgraceful, indeed!"

"The boys were—ahem!—attacked by some other boys," mumbled Mr. Quelch. "One can hardly blame them for their present plight, sir. And these boys—Wharton, Nugent, Bull, Cherry, and Hurree Singh—rank among the best members of my Form."

"You surprise me," said Dr. Mitchell sarcastically. "Kindly release them—h'm—h'm!—Melch—h'm!—Quelch!"

The master of the Remove proceeded to do so.

Once the cords holding the juniors' wrists were severed, Harry Wharton & Co. were able to adopt more normal positions; but their general appearance still provoked laughter from the rest of the school.

With burning faces and ears, the hapless five ranged themselves before the temporary Head.

Dr. Mitchell eyed them with strong disfavour.

"I do not approve—h'm—h'm!—of this foolish behaviour," he said grimly. "It is not—h'm—h'm!—in keeping with the traditions of a school like Greyfriars—"

"It was hardly our fault, sir," said Wharton. "You yourself, sir, saw the odds we had to face."

"Indeed!" snapped Dr. Mitchell. "I am not the slightest bit interested—h'm—h'm!—in the—the—er—odds. But I am going to impress upon you boys—h'm—h'm!—the folly of this stupid behaviour. You are strictly forbidden to remove any of that disfiguring paint or chalk until I give you permission—"

"Oh lor'!"

The idea of having to walk about amongst their Form fellows with painted faces for an indefinite period quite unnerved Harry Wharton & Co. They groaned in chorus.

Mr. Quelch stepped into the breach.

"Dr. Mitchell, may I be allowed to express my opinion—"

"You may!"

"Well, then, I think the punishment you have seen fit to award these unfortunate boys rather—rather humiliating."

"I'm sorry you think so, my dear Grech—h'm!—Quelch," said Dr. Mitchell. "But I am a man of my word."

He waved a dismissal to Mr. Quelch, and that indignant Form master subsided into silence.

"Boys!" Dr. Mitchell addressed the assembled school. "You may consider the rest of the afternoon—h'm—h'm!—your own. You may dismiss!"

A burst of cheering greeted the announcement. The new Head was a queer old bird in many respects, but he had excused the school from further lessons that day, a circumstance that gladdened the hearts of seniors and fags alike.

The school dismissed and Dr. Mitchell, escorted by the portly Mr. Prout, stalked towards the Head's study, leaving Harry Wharton & Co. in the midst of a crowd of hilarious juniors and fags.

"Where did you get that face?" chanted Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. felt their position keenly. They were in rebellious mood yet even their disregard of consequences fell short of disobeying the Head's command. But if they couldn't disobey Dr. Mitchell's orders, they could at least give an outlet to their feelings by hammering the hilarious juniors around them.

"The Five Freaks!" roared Bolsover major. "What a sight!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, stop your silly cackling," growled Johnny Bull.

"Walk up, walk up!" called out Snoop. "No charge! Come and see the Five Freaks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But this was more than Harry Wharton could stand. Their tempers were rising.

Skinner, Snoop, Bolsover major, and Bulstrode suddenly found their merriment cut short as the Famous Five charged at them with clenched fists and sent them staggering.

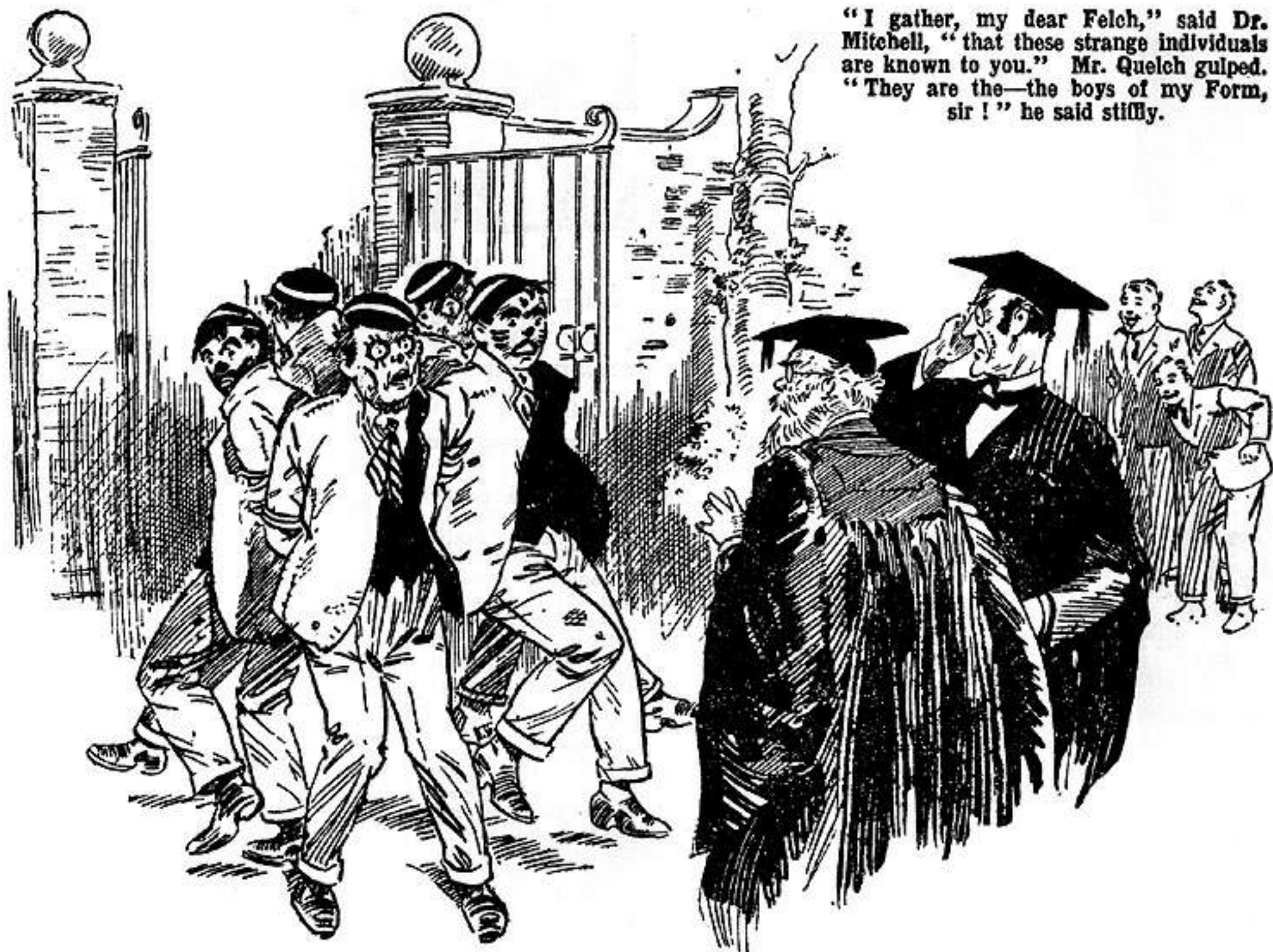
"Oh, my nose!"

"My eye! Yooooop!"

"Groooooogh!"

"Now, you cackling asses," roared Wharton, "come on and cackle at close quarters."

But the crowd began to break and scatter. The Famous Five were hard



"I gather, my dear Felch," said Dr. Mitchell, "that these strange individuals are known to you." Mr. Quelch gulped. "They are the—the boys of my Form, sir!" he said stiffly.

hitters as many juniors knew to their cost, and although they were prepared to laugh, the majority of the fellows had no desire to engage in a scrap with such formidable opponents.

"Come on, you chaps," said Wharton. "Let's get along to the study."

The Famous Five started at a run for Study No. 1.

A whooping crowd followed them—at a safe distance.

The door of the study was kicked open and the breathless juniors swarmed in. Wharton kicked the door shut and turned the key in the lock. Then, and only then did the Famous Five realise that there was another person in the room.

It was Horace James Coker.

The burly Fifth Former eyed them with strong disapproval.

"What the thump are you doing here?" demanded Bob Cherry.

Coker, heedless of the ferocious glances levelled at him, frowned.

"I've been waiting for you to come in," he said magisterially.

"Oh, have you," snapped Wharton crossly. "Well, you can clear out—sharp!"

"I want no cheek from you, Wharton," roared Coker. "I must say, you blessed fags look a positive disgrace. Look at your faces!"

"Have you ever looked at your own?" demanded Nugent sarcastically. "I shouldn't, though, if I were you; you might not survive the shock."

"You cheeky Remove kid!"

"You fathheaded Fifth Former!"

Coker breathed hard. He had what he was pleased to term a short way with fags; and the cheeky juniors wanted a lesson.

"Fancy Greyfriars fellows allowing themselves to be ragged like this," said

Coker scornfully. "It's a disgrace to Greyfriars, but I might have expected it from you cheeky rotters."

"Oh, can it!"

"Buzz off, while you're safe!"

Still Coker paid no heed to the warlike glances that went the round of the Famous Five.

"I'm going to give each of you a lamming," went on the burly Fifth Former, producing from behind his back a five's bat. "Bend over!"

"Eh?"

"Bend over!" said Coker magisterially. "I don't mind who's first!"

The Famous Five exchanged glances.

"Oh, you don't mind who's first," said Harry Wharton. "Right-ho! You can be first, old fathead!"

And before Coker fully realised the position, five pairs of hands seized hold of him and dragged him to the floor of the study.

"Here, wharrer you doing!" he roared. "Lemme gerrup! I'll smash you! I'll tan you—"

"Your little mistake," said the captain of the Remove grimly. "We're going to tan you!"

"Turn him over!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "We'll teach the silly idiot to come looking for trouble."

And Coker, despite his herculean struggles found himself turned over like a sack of coals.

"Stoppit! I'll skin you for this!" he roared.

"Some other time," snapped Wharton.

"Give me that five's bat, Franky."

Nugent obligingly fielded the five's bat Coker had thoughtfully brought with him, and Wharton started in to business.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yoooooop! Stoppit! I'll slaughter you! Oh crikey!"

Whack, whack, whack! Wharton was

going great guns with the bat, doubtless finding some consolation to his own outraged feelings in lamming Coker.

"Whoop! Grooooooh!" came Coker's muffled howls, for his head was jammed in the carpet. "Lemme gerrup! Wow!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"That's enough, I think," said Wharton, a trifle breathlessly, and he tossed the bat aside. "Open that door, Johnny, and we'll sling this Fifth Form freak out."

"What-ho!"

Johnny Bull turned the key in the lock and throw open the study door. Then he returned to the wriggling Coker and lent his aid in the throwing out process.

"You rotters!" roared Coker. "I'll smash you. Yooooop!"

"Out with him!"

The burly Fifth Former was lifted in five pairs of hands in very unceremonious fashion; and five pairs of hands dispatched him from the study.

Bump!

Horace James Coker shot on to the cold, hard, unsympathetic linoleum with a bump and a roar, scattering a number of Removees who were still lurking in the passage.

"You cheeky rotters!" roared Coker. "I'll—I'll burst you!"

"COKER!" It was an imperious voice, and the Fifth Former recognised it at once.

"Oh!"

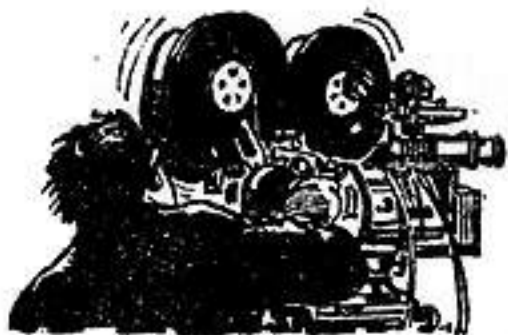
Through the crowd stalked the figure of Dr. Mitchell. He frowned at Coker in a way that made Horace James feel very small and unimportant.

"Coker—h'm!—that is your name, I believe?"

"Ye-es, sir!" mumbled Coker.

(Continued on page 16.)

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The MAGNET "TALKIES"



As William Wibley's first "Talkie" met with your unanimous approval, we have given Wib. a "bit more rope" and confidently submit for your entertainment his second spasm.

This week:

"BATTLING JACK!"



"It, and 'it 'ard!"

"NOW look 'ere, Jack Manley. If you'll only 'it 'Tiger' Punchard like you've been 'itting us this morning, you'll knock him to bits and win the World's Championship."

"'Ear, 'ear!"

"Oh, thank you for those few kind words. The worst of it is I get so nervous and hysterical in front of crowds. My dear old white-haired mater was always the same—"

"Bust your dear old white-haired mater!"

"Oh, really, Slogger Brown, if you weren't my trainer I should rebuke you for speaking about my mater like that."

"Br-r-r-r! Look 'ere, boys, we shall 'ave to do something to hinspire this coming World's Champ. before the fight comes off. We'll talk it over when he's gone. Going now, Jack Manley?"

"Yes, rather! My mater is expecting me to have a cup of tea and a bath bun with her this afternoon. Toodle-o!"

"Ta-ta! And now 'e's gone, boys, we can chew the mop over the great problem—'ow to make sure of Jack Manley winning the World's Championship. Gimme that bar of iron, somebody—I feel 'ungry!"



"It's naughty to fight!"

"Oh, Jacky, my son! Surely you're not going to scrap with that horrid Tiger Punchard to-night? They tell me he's an ex-burglar and kidnapper. Don't say you're going to fight such a dreadful person!"

"I'm awfully sorry, mater, but you see they want me to win the World's Championship. And then, of course, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,153.

there's the purse of a million pounds to be considered."

"But, dear, you shouldn't bother about that. I've enough housekeeping money to last me through next week. It's really very naughty of you to fight horrid men for a mere million!"

"Boo-hoo! I know it is, mater. You won't be very angry with your little Jacky-Wacky? And you—you won't spank me?"

"Not if you're a good boy. But I suppose it's no use talking. They haven't nicknamed you 'Battling Jack' for nothing. You always were fond of fighting since that horrid boy next door poked out his tongue at you!"

"Another cup of tea, mater?"

"No, thank you, Jacky dear! I am just going down the road to buy some smelling-salts and a packet of curling-pins."

"Mind how you cross the road, mater. And walk quickly if you see any bag-snatchers or car-bandits!"

"Dearie me! I shall scream for a policeman if I see such horrid people about. Good-bye, Jacky—and don't forget to put on your little flannel vest if you go out in the cold!"



"Collar her, boys!"

"'Arf a mo' missus! Are you Jack Manley's ma?"

"Yes, I am. What's it to do with you, young man? And why are you wearing that horrid black mask?"

"Ha, ha! Not going to tell you! Collar the old dame, boys!"

"Wot to!"

"Help! Ooooooh! Police! You're treading on my corns, you horrid men! Ooer!"

"Gag 'er, Bill, before she brings the cops 'ore! In you get, ma!"

"Oh, you wicked men, kidnapping a widdy woman! I'll tell my son about you!"

"'E won't 'elp you, ma! By this time 'e's on 'is way to the big fight. Don't struggle, and we won't hurt you. The gent who hired us told us to treat you gentle, didn't 'e, boys?"

"Wot to!"

"Now you're all right, ma! Drive on, Bill, and don't stop for nothing till we get to 'eadquarters!"

"NOT to-night, Slogger Brown—not to-night! I've just learned that my dear old white-haired mater has been kidnapped by masked thugs, and I'm not going to fight till she's found!"

"But what about the World's Championship?"

"Bother the World's Championship! What's that compared with my dear old white-haired mater?"

"Bah! The old girl's as safe as 'ouses! Listen to the crowd. They'll scrag you bald-headed! Come on!"

"Shan't! I'm going out to look for my mater!"

"You mean you're not going in to fight Tiger Punchard for the World's Championship?"

"I'm not!"

"Oh lor! Grab the silly kite, boys! And lend me a pin, somebody!"

"Wateha want a pin for, Slogger?"

"To change his mind with! 'Old 'im tight, boys! Now, Jack Manley! Going to fight?"

"No! Yowooooop!"

"Certain?"

"Yes! Ow-wow!"

"'Old 'im, boys! I'm going to keep stabbing 'im with this 'ere pin till he decides to fight, after all! 'Ere goes!"

"Yaroooooh! Yooooop! Groooooh! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Say when!"

"Never! Whooooop! Yow! All right! I'll fight, then, blow you! But I shall be fighting with a heavy heart!"

"Good enough! Better carry 'im in,



"I won't fight, until—"

boys, in case 'e changes 'is mind again before the first round! Off we go!"

"Hooray!"

"Good old Jack Manley!"

"Attaboy, Battling Jack!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, on my right, Jack Manley, and on my left Tiger Punchard! These two gentlemen are now going to knock each other about for the Heavy-weight Championship of the World!"

"Hooray!"

"The fight will be carried out under catch-as-catch-can rules. The principals in this contest will not be allowed to discard their gloves and scratch,

Similarly, neither must sit on the other's chest and bang his head on the floor. Biting is expressly forbidden. Now, gentlemen, are you ready?"

"Ay, ay, sir!"
"Then go!"
"Hooray! Go it, Tiger!"
"Hit him, Jack!"
Bang! Crash! Thud!
"Yaroooooh! You're hurting me, Tiger Punchard!"



Thud! Wallop! Thud!

"Gr-r-r-r! This is only the beginning! Hold this one!"
Wallop!

"Yooooop! Oh dear! I'm beginning to get all worked up and nervous! I wish those people wouldn't shout so much!"

"Boooo! Go for him, Tiger! He's funkng you!"

Thud! Wallop! Thud!

"Ow-wow! Leggo by dose, Tiger! Yooooop!"

Crash!

"Man down!"

"One-two-three-four—"

"He's up again! Good old Jack! Oh lor! He's running all round the ring! Wallop him, Tiger!"

Dong!

"Time! First round over!"

"Oh dear! I told you I should get nervous, Slogger! These great crowds of rough people make me all of a flutter! What shall I do?"

"Br-r-r-r! What you want to do is to hit out! If you'd only use it, my boy, you've got the finest punch in the world!"

"I know. But I'm too dithery to use it, Slogger, and, besides, I feel so worried about that dear old white-haired mater of mine!"

Dong!

"Time! Seconds, thirds, and fourths out of the ring!"

"Go it, Tiger!"

"On the ball, Jack Manley!"

Crash! Thud! Bang!

"Ow! Whooooop! Lemme alone, Tiger, you rotter!"

"Gr-r-r-r! I ain't lettin' you alone, my boy, till I've won the World's Championship! Take that—and that—and that!"

"Yow! Wow! Yaroooooh!"

"Hooray! Sock it into him, Tiger!"

Dong!

"Time! Seconds, thirds, and fourths out of the ring!"

"Go it, Tiger!"

"On the ball, Jack Manley!"

Crash! Thud! Bang!

"Ow! Whooooop! Lemme alone, Tiger, you rotter!"

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"Yow! Wow! Yaroooooh!"

"Hooray! Sock it into him, Tiger!"

Dong!

"Time! Seconds, thirds, and fourths out of the ring!"

"Go it, Tiger!"

"On the ball, Jack Manley!"

Crash! Thud! Bang!

"Now, Jack Manley, who do you think it was that kidnapped the frowsy old frump?"

"You mean my mater? I've really no idea!"

"Well, it was Tiger Punchard! What do you think of that?"

"T-T-Tiger Punchard?"

"That's the bloke!"

"My opponent for the World's Championship to-night? That cross-eyed, pie-faced apology for a boxer in the other corner?"

"Haw, haw, haw! That's 'im!"

"Why, I'll spifigate him! I'll—I'll—Kidnap my mater, would he? I'll slaughter him! Lemme get at him!"

"Haw haw, haw! I thought that would hinspire 'im, boys! Wait till the gong goes, Jack, and then give 'im what for!"

Dong!

Crash! Bang! Wallop! Thud!

Clatter-clatter! Crash!

"Hallo! What the thump—"

"Look at him!"

"Look at Battling Jack!"

"Good old Jack Manley!"

"Hooray!"

Thud! Thump! Wallop! Bang!

"Yaroooooh! Wharrer you doin', you fearful brute?"

"Avenging my dear old white-haired

mater, Tiger! Stand up and take your gruel like a man!"

Crash! Thud!

"Whooooop! Keepimoff, ref! The man's gone mad!"

"Pah! That's no concern of mine! Fight him before I give you a smack on the nut with my official mallet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take that—and that—likewise that!"

"Help! Oh crikey! Lemme alone, Jack Manley! I don't want to be World's Champion!"

"No; but I'm going to make you the World's Champion Wreck before I've finished with you! Come on and be slaughtered!"

"Yowoop! Gerroff my chest! Stop the fight! I've just remembered an important appointment!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mop up the floor with him, Fighting Jack!"

"I will, gentlemen! Now, Tiger, as you can't stand, lean your head on my shoulder so that I can polish you off!"

"Mmmmmmm!"

Crash! Boom! Thud!

"Hooray!"

"One-two-three-four-five—six—seven—eight—nine—OUT!"

"Ladies and gentlemen! As referee, M.C., and head cook and bottle-washer of the show, I now beg to announce that the scrap has been won by Jack Manley, who now becomes Heavy-weight Champion of the World!"

"Hooray!"

"All that remains is to carry out the remains of Tiger Punchard—"

"Booooo!"

"And pass a vote of thanks to the referee—myself—for handling the fight so efficiently—Yowoop! Who threw that tomato?"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

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"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Use that punch of yours!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Anyway, the fight's over, and y6a can all go home, bust you!"
"Good old Battling Jack!"

"**H**ERE you are, Mr. Manley. I think you'll find this amounts to exactly one million pounds."

"Thanks very much! Just wait half a minute while I count it, will you? Yes, you're quite right—it's just a million! This means sausages and mashed for supper to-night, mater!"

"My boy, I am proud of you for knocking out that horrid bruiser! Give me the money so that I can look after it for you!"

"Certainly, mater! Are you sure you're quite recovered from being kidnapped?"

"I think so, Jacky, dear. This bag of gold seems to take a weight off my mind, somehow. Fancy that horrible Tiger Punchard nabbing me in broad daylight, though! What are you grinning at, Slogger Brown?"

"Haw, haw, haw! I couldn't 'elp it, mum! You see, it wasn't Tiger Punchard who kidnapped you! It was me!"

"You?"

"Little me! Or, rather, the gang of toughs that I hired for the purpose!"

"But—but—"

"Haw, haw, haw! I thought you'd look surprised, Jack, when I told you!"

"But why the thump should you kidnap my dear old white-haired mater?"

"That's easy! I did it so as to give you hinspiration!"

"Inspiration?"

"Jest so—hinspiration! You see, I knew you'd get nervous in front of the crowd when it came to the time of the fight, so I thought I'd have something up my sleeve to wake you up with in the fourth round."

"D-d-dear me!"

"I had the old dame kidnapped just before the fight so that you'd hear about it. Then I sent some of the boys to collect her and told you it was all Tiger Punchard's work. See?"

"And—and I fell for it?"



"Here you are, one million pounds!"

"Haw, haw, haw! I should say you did! First three rounds you fought like a rabbit. But as soon as you heard the news you started mopping up the floor with him!"

"Then—then I've won the Heavy-weight Championship of the World by mistake?"

"Exactly!"

"Oh, well, I can't think of keeping the money then. Just take back this million pounds with my compliments, Mr. Promoter, and give it to the poor and needy, will you? Half a minute, though! Perhaps on second thoughts, I'll keep it after all! Good-night, everybody—good-night!"

THE END.

(Another of these MAGNET "Talkies" will appear shortly. Meanwhile, look out next week for the return of your old favourites—Dr. Birchmell and the chums of St. Sam's in a screamingly funny yarn entitled: "A HANGING MATTER!")

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(Continued from page 13.)

"I am surprised that a boy of your years should—h'm—h'm!—behave like a small child—"

"But—but—but—" began Coker wrathfully, looking a very stupid figure sprawling on the passage floor.

"Silence!" commanded Dr. Mitchell sternly. "I repeat, I am surprised. My first impression of you was that you were stupid and certainly not a fit member of a senior Form like the Fifth—"

"What?" roared Coker.

"And now I have proof," continued the new Head. "I find you indulging in childish horseplay in junior quarters where you—h'm—h'm!—have no right to be."

"But I came to give those cheeky rotters a good hiding for letting down the school," babbled Coker, scrambling to his feet.

"Did you, indeed?" said Dr. Mitchell coldly. "And since when, Coker, have you been invested with the powers of prefect?"

Coker gulped.

Harry Wharton & Co. looking on from the door of Study No. 1, grinned, forgetful of their own ridiculous appearance now.

"Since when?" persisted Dr. Mitchell.

"I—I—I—" stuttered Coker.

The Head's lips tightened. He beckoned to Skinner, who was an interested onlooker.

"Kindly fetch me my cane, boy."

"Oh, certainly, sir," said Skinner, stifling a grin, and he departed with all speed.

The crowd of Removites waited expectantly; so did Horace Coker.

"I am going to cane you, Coker," said Dr. Mitchell, "in the hope that corporal punishment will help to restrain your childish and pugilistic tendencies."

A murmur ran through the crowd of juniors. Coker to be caned! A Fifth-Former to be caned like a fag! It was almost incredible.

And so it seemed to Horace James Coker. He, the great man of the Fifth, to be whacked—it was unthinkable!

"You're going to c-c-cane me, sir?" he asked dazedly.

"You heard what I said," said Dr. Mitchell calmly.

Coker glared, and his big fists clenched.

"You're jolly well not!" he exclaimed. "I protest! It isn't done, sir! The Fifth are never caned!"

Dr. Mitchell smiled faintly.

"I am aware of that—h'm—h'm!—Coker. But set your mind at rest. I do not intend to cane a Fifth-Former."

Coker brightened visibly.

"Oh, good!" he said involuntarily. "But you said—"

"I am not going to cane a Fifth Form boy," continued the Head. "From now on, my boy, you will consider yourself a member of the Remove Form!"

"Wha-a-t?" Coker could hardly believe his ears.

And the juniors in the passage stared.

"You will in future take your lessons

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in the lower Fourth class-room under the—h'm—h'm!—tutelage of Mr. Quelch," said Dr. Mitchell dryly.

Coker almost collapsed.

"But it's impossible—" he began.

"It is impossible," said Dr. Mitchell. "It is by way of being an accomplished fact. I see your stupidity is even more hopeless than I at first imagined. Ah! Thank you, my boy!"

The latter remark was addressed to Harold Skinner who had arrived with the necessary cane.

"Touch your toes, Coker!" Dr. Mitchell's voice was very stern.

Coker blazed up.

"I won't!" he roared. "I don't accept your judgment! You're only a temporary Head here, and you have not the authority to shove me into a lower Form."

And with a defiant glare Coker began to march off.

Dr. Mitchell barred his way.

"Stop!" he commanded.

Coker did not stop.

"If you attempt to stop me, sir!" said Coker truculently, "I shall be compelled to hit out—"

A buzz ran round the juniors.

"Wha-a-t?" ejaculated Dr. Mitchell. "You would strike me, your headmaster?"

Even Coker quailed before that. But the burly Fifth-Former was not in the habit of backing down. Heinous as was the offence, Coker of a certainty felt that he would biff the diminutive Dr. Mitchell if he attempted to cane him.

And Dr. Mitchell, alias William Wibley, who knew Coker better than that individual knew himself, felt assured, too, that the Fifth-Former would stick to his word.

For a moment there was a silence. Then Dr. Mitchell beckoned to Bolsover major, Squiff, Bulstrode, and Ogilvy.

"Kindly hold this recalcitrant boy while I—h'm—h'm!—chastise him," said the Head.

And the juniors concerned, who were enjoying the situation, were not slow in obeying. They, like the rest of the Removites, felt that it was time that the high-handed Coker was taught a real lesson. And here was the ready-made opportunity, so to speak.

"If you rotters touch me—" began Coker.

And that was all he had time to say, for next moment he was collared on all sides and bent over into the required position.

Dr. Mitchell surveyed the scene with a peculiar smile. Then the cane rose and fell.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yooooop! Oh crikey! I'll smash you—Groooooough!"

Coker's roars rang the length of the corridor, and mingled with them were the shrieks of laughter from the Removites. The sight of Coker being caned was too rich.

Wibley laid it on with an athletic arm. Coker once had bagged his play; once Coker had told Wibley that he couldn't act for toffee; on more than one occasion Coker had lammed Wibley for alleged "cheek." A few of those old scores were being very happily settled now—happily from Wibley's point of view, at least.

Wibley was breathing a trifle heavily when he had finished.

"My hat! That was warm work!" he muttered aloud; and the juniors who heard that exceedingly boyish exclamation jumped.

Strange words for a headmaster of middle age to use. Yet everything was strange about Dr. Mitchell. Wibley recovered himself on the moment. He

realised that he had come near to giving himself away.

He coughed and eyed the raging Coker sternly.

"I hope that will be a lesson—h'm—h'm!—to you, sir!" he remarked grimly. "Your threat to me is sufficient cause for me to expel you from Greyfriars. But I am inclined—h'm—h'm!—to view that typical crass stupidity with a lenient eye."

"Oh!" Coker felt quite done. For the moment the burly and aggressive Fifth-Former was as meek and as mild as a Second Form fag.

"You will proceed to your study in the Fifth Form," continued Dr. Mitchell, "and collect your things. You will then dig in—h'm—h'm!—share Study No. 11 which is at the moment, I believe, occupied by Skinner, Snoop, and Stott!"

The faces of the black sheep of the Remove fell.

Horace Coker in their study! Coker, the fellow who was "down" on any form of blackguardism.

Skinner & Co. almost groaned.

Card parties, smoking, and other petty vices which the cads of the Remove regarded as sporting pastimes faded from their vision like a beautiful dream.

Coker hardly knew whether he was on his head or his feet.

Relegated to the Remove Form—to share a study with smoky rotters like Skinner & Co. Really it was time for the stars to fall and the earth to turn round. But neither of these amazing things happened. What did happen was that Coker tried to voice his protestations, succeeded in producing nothing more than an unintelligible murmur and slunk away to tell the awful tragedy to Potter and Greene, his study-mates.

He left a crowd of Removites in a buzz of excitement.

Dr. Mitchell, feeling rather pleased with himself, was about to stalk off to his study when Harry Wharton touched him on the arm.

"Sir," began the captain of the Remove, "may we—may we—" Unconsciously he touched his face; and Dr. Mitchell, who remembered his command to the hapless Famous Five to keep their decorated faces intact, so to speak, until further orders, felt that the joke had gone on long enough.

"You may, my boy," said Wibley majestically. "And—h'm—h'm!—don't let such a thing occur again."

"Thank you, sir!"

And Harry Wharton & Co. rushed off to the bath-room to rid themselves of the chalks with which Ponsonby had so liberally adorned them.

So far William Wibley, in the role of Dr. Mitchell, was a success. It remained to be seen, however, just how far his amazing luck would carry him.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

One for Quelch!

"GOOD-EVENING, gentlemen!"

Dr. Mitchell smiled cheerily at the masters who were taking their ease in Masters'

Common-room; and the masters rose to their feet and acknowledged the greeting. It was not an unknown thing for the Head to drop into Masters' Common-room for a chat, although it was the fervent hope of more than one master that once having dropped in the Head would drop out again very speedily. The presence of such an important personage in their midst rather restricted the conversation.

Mr. Prout bore down upon the new Head with a beaming smile.

"Delighted to see you here, sir," he said in his ponderous fashion. "I was just recounting to Mr. Wiggins my experiences in the Rockies in 1899 when I was shooting bears—"

But William Wibley, who was as tired of hearing about Mr. Prout's adventures, real and imaginary, as any of the masters present, moved off and settled himself in a chair by the roaring fire.

Mr. Quelch, who was deeply immersed in Sophocles, looked up and smiled.

"Ah, Sophocles, I see!" remarked Wibley, rather vaguely. "Very—h'm—h'm!—interesting, is it not, Mr. Quelch?"

The master of the Remove beamed. He had his own peculiar theories as to the intended meaning of several obscure passages in that ancient and learned gentleman's works—theories which he was wont to discuss with Dr. Locke at great length.

Perhaps Dr. Mitchell would fill the gap that Dr. Locke's absence meant to Mr. Quelch in classical discussions.

"If I remember, Dr. Mitchell, you took a first in Classics at Oxford, did you not?" he asked.

Wibley felt a chill go through him. "D-did I?" he stammered. "H'm—h'm!—I—"

Mr. Quelch beamed. "You're too modest, my dear sir," he said chidingly. "If at any time you would care to join me in a discussion—"

"Of course, Mr. Quelch—" Wibley's courage was returning. "You must

come along to tea—h'm—h'm!—one day when I have settled down here, and we'll talk jolly old Sophocles till we're blue in the—h'm—h'm!—quite!"

Mr. Quelch started. "Jolly old Sophocles—" he murmured, overcome at such irreverence.

Wibley changed the conversation; he realised he was on dangerous ground.

"About the—er—h'm—h'm!—boy Wabbley, Webelay—"

"Wibley, sir?" put in Mr. Quelch helpfully.

Dr. Mitchell smiled.

"Ah! That's the name! Now, what sort of boy is this—h'm—h'm!—Wibley?"

Mr. Quelch's lips tightened.

"Frankly, sir," he said grimly, "Wibley is rather trying—"

"What?" ejaculated that young gentleman with more warmth than the occasion warranted.

"Very trying, I might say," said Mr. Quelch. "He's quite a capable boy, if he likes to put his mind to his work, but I am afraid his obsession is the theatre—"

"Jolly good, too!"

"I didn't quite catch what you said, Dr. Mitchell," remarked the master of the Remove.

"H'm—h'm—h'm! Go on, my dear Mr. Quelch."

"This boy Wibley has been slacking of late," resumed the Remove Form master. "His Form work is very poor and slovenly. On more than one occasion I have found him writing some stupid play, 'The Flying Terror!' when he should have been giving his time to

the lesson. 'The Flying Terror!' I ask you, sir—"

And Mr. Quelch cast an affectionate glance at his beloved Sophocles, as if by way of comparison.

"A jolly—h'm—h'm!—a very good title, too!" said Wibley warmly.

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"Perhaps our taste in literature differs," he remarked dryly. "However, we were talking of this boy Wibley. He not only slacks in the Form-room, but I fear that his obsession for theatrical nonsense is so strong that he neglects his sports. Exercise is very necessary to a growing boy, you will admit. Exercise and fresh air, sir—"

Wibley scowled.

It was rather unique to hear this frank and candid opinion of himself from Mr. Quelch's own lips. So he thought Wibley was a slacker. Exercise—fresh air—

A gleam came into the pseudo Dr. Mitchell's eyes.

"H'm—h'm! Talking of fresh air," he said, rapidly developing the idea that had come to him. "I am a great believer in what the Army describes as—h'm—h'm!—physical jerks before breakfast every morning."

"Physical j-j-jerks, sir?"

"Physical drill—h'm—h'm!" was the reply. "This sort of thing, you know!"

And the Head started to demonstrate in practical fashion by stretching his arms backwards and forwards vigorously.

Whether by accident or design is known only to William Wibley, but one

(Continued on next page.)

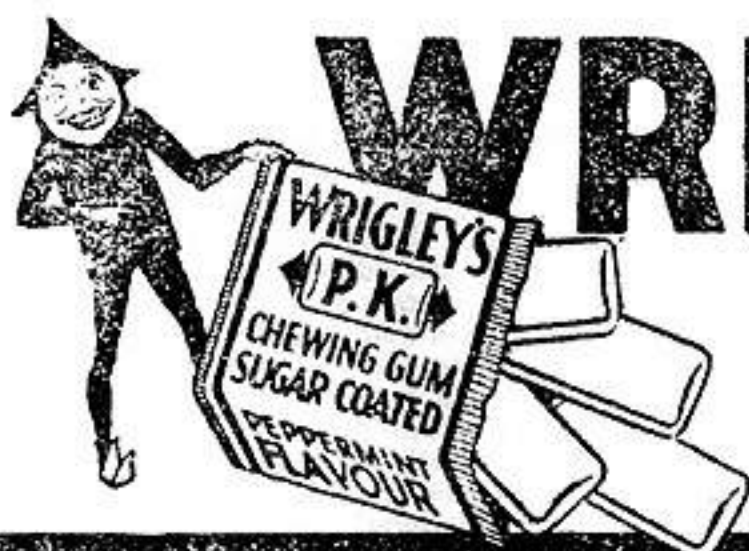
Wrigley's keeps you "on your toes" till the final whistle blows

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knuckled fist caught Mr. Quelch on the tip of his rather prominent nose.

"Yoooooop!" The master of the Remove flopped back in his chair as if he had been shot, claspings his damaged nasal organ.

"My dear Mr. Quelch, I'm so sorry," apologised Dr. Mitchell. "I fear my excitement carried me away."

"Groooooogh!" mumbled Mr. Quelch, dabbling away at his nose. "It's quite—groooooogh!—all right!"

The other masters stood round doing their utmost to refrain from grinning and failing rather badly in the process. It was the first time they had seen the nose of Mr. Henry Samuel Quelch, M.A., punched.

Dr. Mitchell uttered profuse apologies until Mr. Quelch had fully recovered. Then he addressed the masters at large.

"I was talking to Mr. Quelch about my enthusiasm for physical drill—h'm—h'm!" he said. "It is to be encouraged—a very worthy way of filling in half an hour before breakfast every morning."

"Very good indeed, Dr. Mitchell!" came Mr. Prout's booming voice. "In my young days—"

Dr. Mitchell broke in:

"During my short stay at this school I am going to inaugurate this before brekker—h'm—h'm!—breakfast. A system of drill. In fact, I shall parade the school to-morrow morning before breakfast, and drill them myself."

"Oh!"

Dr. Mitchell smiled upon his audience.

"And I want the co-operation of you fellows—h'm—h'm!—gentlemen. In short, gentlemen, I want you all to turn out with your respective Forms to-morrow morning in suitable attire—trousers and singlets—to set an example to all the boys."

"Oh!" It was a general chorus of dismay.

The idea of the masters turning out on parade before breakfast attired in singlets to take part in Swedish drill exercise was alarming in the extreme.

There was an uncomfortable silence.

Mr. Quelch was the first to break it.

"Don't you think Dr. Mitchell, that such an appearance as you suggest would tend to lower the dignity of the masters—"

Dr. Mitchell smiled.

"I do not, frankly, Quelch. There is nothing like—h'm—h'm!—setting an example to boys in a practical form. Very well, then, gentlemen, I shall—h'm—h'm!—expect the school paraded in the quad before brekker—h'm—h'm!—breakfast to-morrow, for the first drill. You gentlemen will, of course, be present in accordance with my wishes!"

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

"H'm!"

Dr. Mitchell seemed oblivious of the dismal faces before him. He persisted in smiling.

"Mr. Prout, will you kindly post a notice on the school board to that effect at once? Thank you, gentlemen. I am very happy to have been in your company."

And before the masters could quite grasp the fact that they had been, to all intents and purposes, practically commanded to be present on the "physical jerks" parade, Dr. Mitchell had departed with rustling gown.

Back in Dr. Locke's study William Wibley executed a war-dance, chuckling the while.

And while he indulged in these antics Horace Coker appeared in the doorway.

The burly Fifth-Former stared in

amazement at the weird capers Dr. Mitchell was cutting, for he was leaping about like an excited schoolboy and chuckling.

"Oh, great Scott!" As that involuntary exclamation escaped Coker's lips Wibley's capers ceased as if by magic, and Wibley, the schoolboy, became Dr. Mitchell, the middle-aged gentleman again.

"Oh—ah!—Coker—h'm—h'm!" began the Head. "Do not look so bewildered, boy. You doubtless saw me—h'm—h'm!—trying some physical jerks. Very good exercise, my boy. Keeps the muscles—h'm—h'm!—young."

"D-d-does it, sir?" babbled Coker, who began to think that Dr. Mitchell was off his rocker. "I—I—I—"

"Speak up!"

"I came to ask you if you would reconsider your decision about placing me in the Remove, sir—"

"Impossible!" snapped the Head. "You are an incredibly stupid boy, Coker, and a stay in the Remove will do you a power of—h'm—h'm!—good!"

"But, sir," flared up Coker, "I shall be the laughing-stock of the school—"

"That is a matter with which I am not concerned, Coker," said Dr. Mitchell icily. "You may go!"

"But, sir—" roared Coker.

"GO!"

Coker clenched his big fists. Really it looked as if Dr. Mitchell was going to sample the weight of them, for Coker was completely out of hand now. Fortunately for Dr. Mitchell, Wingate of the Sixth arrived at that moment accompanied by his pal, Patrick Gwynne.

"Wingate—Gwynne!" snapped Dr. Mitchell. "Kindly remove this stupid boy before I am tempted to expel him for threatened assault!"

Wingate and Gwynne jumped. They knew Coker of old, but that he would contemplate striking the august Head of Greyfriars almost unnerved them. Before Coker knew what was happening he was being whirled along the passage to the Fifth Form quarters.

"There, you silly idiot!" snapped Wingate. "You cool off! Why, man, you're simply asking for the sack! Ye gods! Striking the Head! Phew!"

"Just like Coker, begorrah!" grinned Patrick Gwynne.

And, leaving the raging Coker in the care of Potter and Greene, Wingate and Gwynne strode off.

Meantime, William Wibley was chuckling hugely. The idea of starting a physical jerks class, complete with masters, was really a brain-wave.

"I'm a slacker, am I?" muttered Wibley to himself. "Right-ho, Mr. Henry Samuel Quelch. I'll jolly well see that you get your fair share of exercise and fresh air. Ha, ha, ha!"

The more William Wibley thought over it the heartier became his chuckles. Nothing like this in the entire history of Greyfriars had ever happened before. And so far, no one suspected that Dr. Mitchell was, in reality, William Wibley of the Remove, otherwise it would have gone hardly with the daring impersonator.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Physical Jerks!

"TUMBLE out, you slackers!"

Bob Cherry's stentorian tones rang out through the Remove dormitory next morning.

Rising-bell was clanging out through the crisp morning air, and Bob was out of bed with the first peal.

Other fellows, not unnaturally, preferred to stay between the warm sheets as long as was possible.

"Tumble out!"

Bob was full of energy, as usual, and so were the rest of the Famous Co., for that matter.

Each of them was briskly sponging down before Gosling had finished his first task of the morning. Yet when rising-bell had changed its last note quite a dozen juniors were still in bed.

"Show a leg, Mauly!" cried the exuberant Bob.

"Oh, begad!" drawled his lordship.

"Has the beastly bell gone?"

"Yes, you slacker. Tumble out!" cried Bob. "Don't forget we start the physical jerks stuff this morning."

"Oh gad!"

Lord Mauleverer winced and groaned. Mauly hated anything in the shape of exertion, and, like many other fellows at Greyfriars, he had read with dismay the notice that had appeared on the board the previous evening, intimating the Head's intention. Skinner & Co. and William George Bunter had eyed that notice with equal dismay, for not one of them was given to athletic pursuits.

Lord Mauleverer closed his eyes and turned over on his side. But not for long. Bob grabbed a sponge and soaked it well with water. Then he went over to the sleeping junior and squeezed it over his face.

"Yoooooooooop! Oh gad!"

Lord Mauleverer leaped from the bed, with a howl, as if he had been shot.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors who were already out of bed roared with laughter. Really, it was wonderful what a sponge soaked in ice-cold water could do. Mauly, however, did not appreciate the assistance he had been given. He glared at the humorous Bob balefully.

"By Jove, Cherry, I'd give you a hiding for that, only I'm too tired, begad!"

But Bob wasn't paying any further attention to the schoolboy earl. He was approaching Skinner & Co., replenishing the sponge on his way.

Skinner & Co. saw him coming. "Don't you squeeze that rotten water over me!" shrieked Skinner.

"Tumble out, then!" exclaimed Bob. "I'll give you slackers three seconds, One—two—three—"

But Skinner & Co. were scrambling out of bed before the expiration of the three seconds. They glared savagely at Cherry.

That youth, quite unperturbed, reached Bunter's bed. The Owl of the Remove was snoring, and his sonorous note echoed through the dormitory. Bob yanked the bedclothes off the fat junior with one jerk of the hand.

"Groooooogh!" gasped Bunter, as the keen winter's air caught him. "Wow! You awful beast!"

"Turn out!" said Bob. "Rising-bell went five minutes ago. Turn out!"

And he poised the dripping sponge aloft significantly.

"You rotter!" roared Bunter. "I'm not jolly well going to turn out yet—see?"

But, for all his words, William George Bunter scrambled out of bed very hurriedly. One look at that dripping sponge was enough for him.

He stood shivering on the cold linoleum and glared at Bob.

"You beastly rotter!" he exclaimed. "I'm fed-up with Greyfriars. First some fatheaded freak of a new master puts me on a special diet, and then a silly fathead with the name of Cherry makes me get out of bed before I've

had my proper rest. Yab! I'm going to write to my people."

"Oh, ring off!" said Peter Todd, fowelling briskly. "You jaw too much!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"You'll be late, if you stand there shivering like a fat jelly," said Peter. "Don't forget there's an early parade for physical jerks."

"Oh lor!" Bunter groaned, and then proceeded to go through his scanty ablutions, with the result that, although he was the last out of bed, he was the first junior dressed.

"All ready?" sang out Wharton. "Come on, chaps! There goes the bell for physical jerks."

Clang, clang!

For the second time that morning the bell rang out, and soon all Greyfriars, from youngest fag to eldest senior, was hurrying towards the quad. Each fellow was clad in singlet and flannel trousers, as per the Head's instructions. The majority of the fellows were cheerfully looking forward to the drill, but others were anything but cheerful.

But even the cheerless fellows began to take heart when they saw each Form master on parade and suitably clad for the occasion. It had not been known the night before that the masters were attending the parade. And at sight of the plump Mr. Prout, skinny Mr. Capper, bony Mr. Quelch, and stout Mr. Twigg, a roar of laughter went up.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The masters crimsoned. They felt their position keenly enough, and they were wishing Dr. Mitchell anywhere but at Greyfriars at that moment. But the appearance of the gentleman himself brought a sudden stop to the laughter.

Wibley, carefully made up, could scarcely restrain his laughter as he beheld the strange and uncomely physical proportions of the Greyfriars masters, but his face was deadly serious as he brought the school to attention, and explained to them that he would give them a run round the quad as a preliminary exercise in order to "warm them up." And even the masters were glad of that preliminary exercise, for it was decidedly chilly in the quad clad in such scanty garments. Dr. Mitchell, they noted, was fully dressed, even to his cap and gown. Evidently he was prepared to take little part in the physical jerks.

The run commenced.

"Left, right, left," called out Dr. Mitchell. "Bend your knees a little more, Mr. Prout!"

Mr. Prout glared and his face crimsoned. At that moment he could cheerfully have bent Dr. Mitchell across his knee. But he refrained from giving voice to the flow of indignation his pride prompted for the simple reason he was in need of all his breath to keep moving. And keep moving he had to—for the ranks of the Fifth were behind him—or else be trampled underfoot.

The Greyfriars fellows enjoyed that run. It brought the colour to their

cheeks and set their muscles tingling pleasantly.

But Mr. Prout did not; neither did Messrs. Quelch, Capper, Hacker, Wiggins, or Twigg.

These gentlemen were in the "middle-age" stage of life, and running was something they had left far behind them with the passing of the years.

"You're doing splendid—h'm—h'm!" called out Dr. Mitchell. "Keep your head up a little more, Mr. Quelch. It assists inhalation. That's better. Wonderful example to the boys—h'm—h'm!"

Mr. Quelch felt his ears burning, and fancied he could hear the chuckles of the juniors behind him, as he led the way across the quad in the fashion of an officer in front of his men. He was

—welcome, at least, to the panting masters.

Titters and sniggers were smothered in well-feigned coughs as the members of the various Forms saw the hapless plight of their masters.

Dr. Mitchell beamed upon the assembly.

"Very ably done, gentlemen," he said flatteringly. "You set a fine example to the boys. H'm—h'm!—we will now have a little arm-stretching. School, 'shun! Take the time from me."

And Wibley, in front of the assembled school, indulged in arm-stretching backwards and forwards, sideways and downwards, to give them the "time." After that, he left the arm-stretching to go on untimed.

"Very good!" he said at length. "Now we will try a little balancing. On the command, 'Left leg raise,' you will bend the knee in this position—so. The

Whether by accident or design, William Wibley's fist caught Mr. Quelch on the tip of his nose. "Yooooop!" yelled the Remove master.



sorely tempted to pack up the whole ridiculous affair and return to his study; but, like Prout, once he had started he was perforce obliged to go on. Behind him "doubled" two ranks of Removites. In their rear came the Upper Fourth, with the puffing Capper dividing them. Behind the Upper Fourth came the Shell with the short-winded Mr. Hacker panting in the van. After the Shell came the Fifth, led by the portly Prout, and Mr. Prout was labouring in his stride and puffing like a grampus.

Such a sight had never before been seen in the precincts of Greyfriars, and Wibley enjoyed it to the full. He flattered here and coached there, so that, whatever the inner feelings of the masters, they had, once having set their hands to the plough, to keep going.

"About turn!" roared Wibley, as the Second-Formers reached the boundary of the quad. And the whole school "about turned" very ably, and started to double back.

"Halt!"

The welcome command came at length

great thing is to preserve the balance—h'm! The next command is, 'Arms sideways stretch'—so. Now—'shun!'

The school sprang to attention.

"Left leg raise," roared Dr. Mitchell, "left knee bend—hold it! Bunter! Boy, don't wobble like a jelly-fish!"

"I c-c-can't help it, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Arms sideways stretch! Knee a little higher, Mr. Prout!"

Again Mr. Prout glared.

"A little higher, Mr. Prout," insisted Dr. Mitchell. "Ah! H'm! That's better—steady!"

But steady himself Mr. Prout could not do. He carried a considerable quantity of avoirdupois, and was well past the time in life when he could indulge in balancing tricks. It was not surprising therefore as Prout lifted his knee high, according to instructions, he began to wobble, and from wobbling he crashed to earth in a sprawling heap.

"Oh dear! Bless my soul! Groogh!"

Blundell and Potter and Fitzgerald left the ranks and assisted their unfortunate Form master to his feet, to

the accompaniment of suppressed laughter from the rest of the Fifth and those members of other Forms who had witnessed Prout's fall.

Limping a little, and very much winded Prout approached Dr. Mitchell. "Dr. Mitchell," he panted, "I—I—I must ask you to excuse me."

And with that dignified remark—for dignified it was considering the state of Mr. Prout's inner feelings towards Dr. Mitchell, the master of the Fifth trudged off into the House.

The other masters were not slow to follow his example. They had had enough, and each and all made various excuses to the Head as they departed for a change of clothes and scenery.

Wibley felt jubilant. If anyone had said two days ago that William Wibley, an insignificant Removeite, could have "persuaded" the Greyfriars Form masters to turn out for physical jerks before breakfast, he would have been regarded as a fit subject to enter a lunatic asylum.

But the seemingly impossible had happened. No wonder William Wibley felt jubilant.

"I'll bet old Quelch has had all the fresh air he wants for a few hours," the schoolboy actor muttered to himself. "My hat! This is a go!"

For the next five minutes the pseudo Head put the school through a number of exercises and then he dismissed them—and no one was more thankful than Lord Mauleverer, who hadn't exerted himself in such hectic fashion for years, Skinner & Co., who had bellows to mend with a vengeance, and William George Bunter, who felt thoroughly done and more hungry than ever.

And as Bunter bethought him of the scanty breakfast that was to be his on account of his special dieting he groaned aloud. Really all the sunshine had gone out of Bunter's life with the coming of Dr. Mitchell. Already the fat Owl of the Remove was paying dearly for his trick on Wibley.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Head Comes Down Heavy!

"I'm not going to stand it!" It was Horace James Coker who made that remark. Potter and Greene looked sympathetic.

"I'm not going to stand it!" repeated the burly Fifth-Former, and he brought his heavy fist down on the study table with a heavy crash.

It was after breakfast that same morning.

By order of the Head Coker was to consider himself a Removeite until further notice, but Coker found no pleasure in the prospect. Neither did his study-mates. Coker was a difficult chap to get on with, but he was very generous, and usually stood the high feeds in the study, which was doubtless why Potter and Greene stood him. To lose Coker from the study was a serious business, for it spelled the end of free feeds. Thus Potter and Greene looked as worried as Horace Coker.

"The silly old fogey ordered me to take my things out of here," hissed Coker, "and he's had the cheek to plant me with Skinner & Co. Me—planted with that cheeky, smoky gang in the Remove! Why—"

Coker aimed a terrific swipe at an imaginary Dr. Mitchell and in his excitement sent the clock whirling from the mantelpiece.

Thud!

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The clock crashed into the fireplace and broke in a score of pieces of wood, glass, and whirring machinery. But Coker did not heed the clock; it wasn't his, anyway!

"I say, old bean," ventured Potter, "that's my clock!"

"Blow your clock!" snorted Coker. "What's a silly clock at a time like this?"

And Potter, with a last sorrowful look at the clock, tried to forget its existence.

"Something's got to be done!" snapped Coker savagely.

"The question is, what?" said Greene.

Coker whirled on him.

"Don't jaw so much, William Greene!" he snapped. "You make me tired!"

Which was rather ungenerous of Coker, for that remark was the first William Greene had contributed to the conversation—if conversation it could be called.

"I'm not going into the Remove Form room with Wharton and his silly fag gang!" went on Coker. "I'm not going to stand it, see!"

Potter and Greene nodded dutifully. They had heard all this a hundred times before—ever since the previous evening, in fact—and they were growing rather tired of it.

"It'll be classes in a few moments," said Potter.

"Blow classes!" roared Coker. "I'm—"

He broke off, and a gleam came into his eyes.

"By gad, I've got it!" he exclaimed. "The very thing! She'll do it! She'll make him see reason! Why didn't I think of it before?"

"Eh?" ejaculated Potter, as Coker's glance dwelt on him.

"Why didn't you put me up to it?" snapped Coker.

"Put you up to it—" stammered Potter, bewildered.

Coker's lip curled.

"Of course, I might have known not to expect anything from you chaps. Still, I've thought of it myself. I'll see whether Mister blessed Mitchell can ride the high horse over me."

"Might a fellow ask what all this means exactly?" asked Greene.

"You're an ass, William Greene! You're dense, too! Can't you see she'll make that old geyser see reason?"

Potter and Greene exchanged hopeless glances.

"Who is 'she,' old chap?" ventured Greene.

Horace Coker snorted.

"Don't I keep telling you it's Aunt Judy?"

Potter and Greene jumped. They began to see daylight now.

"Your Aunt Judy!"—they uttered the words in unison.

"Of course!" Coker was wildly jubilant. "She'll talk this old fool of a headmaster into seeing things in their right perspective."

"Oh!"

Potter and Greene exchanged another meaning glance. They knew Coker's Aunt Judy very well—a determined little lady with all Coker's obstinate traits and a few more thrown in. Aunt Judy doted on her nephew Horace; in fact, she was firmly convinced that there wasn't another fellow like him in the whole wide world. And in many respects, if not every, this was extremely accurate. Potter and Greene cast their minds back to their first meeting with Horace Coker as a Fifth Form man. Rumour had it that Aunt Judy had threatened Dr. Locke with her umbrella

until that venerable old gentleman had promised to move Horace Coker up from the Shell to the Fifth Form. How true that was perhaps only Dr. Locke and Miss Judy could tell; but the fact remained that Coker had been moved up, although his ignorance on many subjects ranked with that of a Third Form fag. "I'll hire a car and buzz off to her now," said Coker enthusiastically.

"But what about classes?"

"Blow classes!" snorted Coker. "Bless classes! Do you think I'm going in with those Remove fags? I tell you I'm not going to stand it!"

"We've had all that before, old scout," said Potter wearily. "Ring off, for goodness' sake!"

"If you're trying to be cheeky, George Potter—" began Coker, rolling up his cuffs.

"Coming, old chap!" called out Potter to an imaginary caller; and he departed from the study in great haste.

William Greene was not a moment after him. Coker did not seem to heed. He was full of his great idea. And when the bell rang for classes Horace Coker did not file into the Remove Form room with Harry Wharton & Co. He was on his way to see Aunt Judy, who was to be to Horace Coker what Joan of Arc was to persecuted France. And as the hired car ate up the miles to his aunt's house the frown began to leave the rugged face of Horace James Coker, and a contented smile took its place.

Meantime, Coker's absence had not been noted in the Remove Form room, for the simple reason that Mr. Quelch had not been notified of the fact that Coker was, in future to be one of his Form. His absence from the Fifth Form room was observed by Mr. Prout, and gloried in, for the master of the Fifth, who had been told of the Head's order, congratulated himself on having at last been relieved of his most troublesome pupil.

Those congratulations, however, were destined to be very short-lived.

Dr. Mitchell, alias William Wibley, forgot the existence of Horace Coker. The Sixth were occupying Wibley's attention. The lesson happened to be Shakespeare—whose works were very dear to the heart of the actor of the Remove. And the Sixth, who as a general rule had very little time for William Shakespeare, in the class-room at any rate, found delight on this occasion in declaiming passages of his immortal works aloud. For Wibley forgot his part as a schoolmaster; he was once again the born actor.

The Sixth, with one exception, sat enthralled as Wibley gave a first-class rendering of Hamlet. Certainly Dr. Locke, who was a lover of Shakespeare's works, had never put such fine shades of meaning into those immortal words.

Wibley was in his element. He could have jawed Shakespeare for the rest of his life. Then suddenly he caught sight of Gerald Loder. The black sheep of the Sixth was certainly not giving his attention to the lesson. As a matter of fact, Loder was endeavouring by a process of elimination to find the winner of the two-thirty race at Wapshot. To aid him in this extremely difficult task he had a racing "form" book.

And Wibley caught sight of this form book.

"Loder!" Dr. Mitchell's voice rapped out sharply. "You are not paying attention to the lesson."

"Indeed I am, sir," replied the rascally prefect.

Dr. Mitchell pursed his lips.

"Come here—h'm—boy, and bring

with you the book you have just endeavoured to conceal!"

Loder scowled. Dr. Locke had never addressed him like this, or called him out in front of the Sixth like a fag in the Second Form. Really, such treatment was not to be expected in the Sixth.

"You hear me, Loder?" snapped the Head.

"I can hear anything you say from here, sir," answered Loder sullenly.

Dr. Mitchell fairly bristled.

"Come out at once, wretched boy!" he snapped. "And kindly bring the book with you."

For a few seconds it looked as if Loder would openly defy Dr. Mitchell, but he seemed to think better of it, for he shuffled to his feet and walked out in front of the Form, with the incriminating book in his hand.

"Give me the book, boy!" snapped Dr. Mitchell.

Loder handed over his book of "Racing Form Up-to-date."

The Head's eyes seemed to start from their sockets when he saw the type of book Gerald Loder had brought into the Form-room, but the unscrupulous Sixth-Former was equal to the occasion—as he thought.

"Loder!" Dr. Mitchell's voice was expressive of his horror. "How dare you bring a racing-book into classes? How dare you, sir—h'm—h'm!"

"Oh, there's no harm in it, sir," said Loder casually. "I'm entering a competition in which I have to give the names of several famous racehorses, so I thought this book might be able to help me out."

"Indeed?" snapped Dr. Mitchell. "And does that explanation account for the pencil notes which I see are written here: 'Five pounds to five shillings,' 'Twenty pounds to a pound, Banks'?"

For a moment Loder was taken aback. The next his glib tongue was rolling out another lie.

"Oh, those notes, sir?" he said. "I expect the previous owner was responsible for those. You see, I bought the book at a second-hand shop."

The members of the Sixth, who knew Loder's shady ways, looked scornfully at him as he rolled out his glib lies. But the lies did not deceive "Dr. Mitchell," for William Wibley knew as much about Loder's shady ways as any Sixth Form man.

"I am—h'm—h'm!—sorry, Loder," snapped Dr. Mitchell, "but I am afraid I cannot accept your explanation. Go and stand on that chair while I—h'm—h'm!—consider the matter!"

There was a buzz in the Sixth!

It was unprecedented for a Sixth Form man, and a prefect at that, to be made to stand on a chair in the corner of the Form-room like some cheeky fag.

Loder's face turned a deep crimson.

"Wha-a-at?" he articulated.

"You heard what I said!" snapped Dr. Mitchell. "Stand on that chair!"

"But, sir—"

Dr. Mitchell picked up his cane and looked so ferocious that Loder, who was not over blessed with pluck, involuntarily moved towards the corner indicated. With burning face and bitter feelings in his breast, Gerald Loder, prefect of the Sixth, perched himself precariously on the chair; and he stood there with downcast head.

The Sixth Form men could hardly believe their eyes. This was really too bad, and, but for the fact that it was Loder who was the victim of the Head's petty tyranny, and not a decent chap, Wingate and his fellow prefects would have remonstrated with the Head. As it was they all felt that nothing was too

bad for a fellow who indulged in such deliberate falsehoods as Loder had done.

And while the lesson went on, Loder, white with fury, stood first on one leg and then on the other, with feelings that were homicidal.

The atmosphere was so tense in the Form-room after that that neither the Sixth nor their headmaster noticed the passage of time. Morning break was well under way when Billy Bunter, who had been sent on a message to Dr. Mitchell by Mr. Queich, looked in at the Form-room.

Then he jumped as he caught sight of the dejected figure of Gerald Loder standing on a chair in the corner of the Form-room.

"Oh, my only hat!" Bunter could hardly believe the evidence of his eyes. He looked again to satisfy himself that it was indeed Loder, and then he rushed off to the Remove quarters, full of his tidings.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Enter Aunt Judy!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Run away, old fat lard-tub!"

"But, I say—" began Bunter, his eyes fairly glittering in his excitement.

"Say it to the marines!" chuckled Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy!"

The Famous Five and Peter Todd were discussing footer when Bunter bore down on them. The fat junior had raced at full speed for the Remove after his sensational discovery in the Sixth Form room, and he was out of breath.

"But I say, Toddy, old chap—"

"Buzz off, you fat wasp," roared Todd, "or I'll burst you! Can't you see we're talking footer?"

"Oh, really, Toddy!" said Bunter peevishly. "But Loder—"

"And I think Hazeldene will play a better game in goal than Bulstrode," said Peter Todd, ignoring the existence of his fat study-mate. "What do you think, Cherry?"

"I think the same as you, old bean," replied Bob seriously.

But Bunter was not to be denied.

"Yah! You silly asses!" He was getting his second wind now, so to speak. "Loder's standing on a chair in the corner of the Sixth Form room. He, he, he! Fancy Loder—"

"What?" It was a combined shout from six voices. Even footer could go by the board if the news that Bunter had brought were really true.

Peter Todd grabbed the Owl by his shoulder.

"What's that?" he ejaculated.

"Old Mitchell's made Loder stand in the corner like a blessed fag. He, he, he!"

In a moment the six juniors were scudding for the Sixth Form passage. If the news were true, it was a sight not to be missed.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" laughed Wharton, as he raced along. "Do you think Bunter's got it right?"

"The rightfulness of the esteemed and ridiculous Bunter's story is of the

quantity doubtful," purred Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

But Bunter's news was true.

The Famous Five and Peter Todd reached the door of the Sixth Form room with a rush. After them came a score or more Removites, eager to see for themselves the amazing sight of a prefect standing in the corner like a recalcitrant fag.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!"

"Great Scott!"

"Jumping snakes!"

"I guess this beats the whole shebang!"

Exclamations of astonishment came from the crowd of juniors pressing at the door of the Sixth Form room.

There was Gerald Loder, with a burning, crimson face and a ferocious expression thrown in, so to speak, standing sheepishly on a chair in the corner of the room.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That spontaneous burst of laughter brought home to William Wibley and the Sixth that they had almost missed their morning break. It also brought home to Gerald Loder that he had been made the laughing-stock of the school.

"What, what?" began Dr. Mitchell; and then he was hard put to it to stifle a roar of laughter himself as he caught sight of Loder's furious face and the pack of juniors in the passage.

"Dismiss!" he called out.

And the Sixth shut their books and made for the door.

Loder was the first.

Burning with shame and humiliation, he forced his way through a chortling crowd of Removites and rushed off to his study. Once there, he locked the door and then indulged in such expressions as would have earned him expulsion could anyone in authority have heard them.

Never in all his life had he been made to look so small. That he had in part, deserved all he had got and more never once crossed his mind. And had he known that the person responsible for his humiliation was none other than William Wibley, that cheery young actor would have died a sudden death.

But then, Gerald Loder did not know; furthermore, he was never likely to know, although his humiliation would live in the gossip of Greyfriars for many a long day to come.

"Good-morning, ma'am!"

William Gosling touched his cap very respectfully and bowed to the trim little lady seated in the car.

By the lady's side sat Horace Janes Coker, a warlike gleam in his eyes, and a dogged look on his rugged face.

Coker had lost no time. The car ride to Aunt Judith's house had been done at a racing pace, and a few words with

(Continued on next page.)

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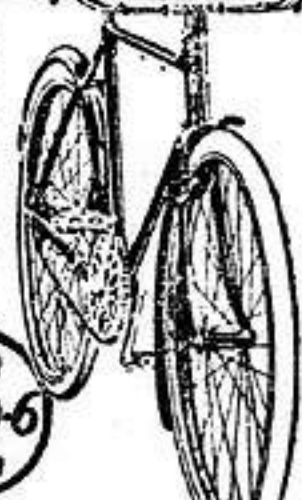
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his doting aunt was sufficient to send that lady bustling about the house for her hat and coat—without which latter she never went abroad.

Aunt Judith had been shocked at the dreadful news. She had not waited for Coker to ask her to intercede on his behalf with the temporary Head of Greyfriars. She had announced that as being her intention immediately, and her face had set in that same obstinate and aggressive mould that was part and parcel of Horace Coker.

The return journey to Greyfriars had been made in record time. Throughout the run Miss Coker had re-discussed the alarming situation with her nephew.

"Dreadful, my dear boy," she had said a score of times at least. "Dreadful!"

Gosling noted the warlike gleam in the eyes of Miss Coker as he threw open the gates and the car swept up the drive.

"Which I bet that young lady is agoin' on the warpath," he muttered. "Which as how I know the signs. William Gosling, there's going to be some squalls afore long."

And in that Gosling showed a remarkable gift of prophecy.

The car came to a halt outside the School House steps, and Coker sprang out and assisted his aunt to alight. Not that Miss Coker needed assistance. She was as independent in spirit as her nephew, and she barely took the hand that Horace held out to her.

"Now lead me to him," she said with a very decided air. "Show me this ignorant man, Horace, dear, who has dared to relegate you to a lower Form."

And it was noticeable that Miss Coker seized a firmer grip on her umbrella, as with Horace by her side she swept into the School House.

But the subject of her remarks, to wit William Wibley, had seen the approach of the formidable Aunt Judy from the window of the Head's study.

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Wibley, and his jaw dropped.

Only too well he recognised the compact little figure, the old fashioned full skirt quite fifteen years behind the fashion, the Victorian cut of the coat and freakish style of the hat.

Aunt Judy—the woman who had terrified Dr. Locke—had arrived.

No wonder William Wibley felt dismayed. It came to him in a flash that Aunt Judy's visit meant one thing—Horace Coker had informed that warlike spinster of his relegation to the Remove.

"Oh, my sainted aunt!" gasped Wibley.

He wished from the bottom of his heart that he had not allowed his joke with Coker to go so far. There was no knowing what might happen with Aunt Judy on the premises.

Wibley gazed about him wildly. There seemed no way of escape. And footsteps were echoing along the corridor. In that moment, Wibley, who hitherto had not known the meaning of nerves, completely fell to pieces, figuratively speaking.

The footsteps drew nearer.

Wibley could hear voices—could hear Aunt Judy's high-pitched tones.

"You leave him to me, Horace dear," she was saying, "I'll drive some sense into him."

"Groooooough!" Wibley, who had heard of Aunt Judy's reputation, shivered.

A hand was on the door of the study. There came the customary "tap" and then Wibley acted. Even as the door opened he dived beneath the table.

and fervently hoped that the draping folds of the table-cover would conceal his presence.

Horace Coker and Aunt Judy entered the study.

"Dr Mitchell does not appear to be here," said Miss Coker acidly. "However, I will wait. Now run along, my dear boy, and wait for me in your study. Don't worry, your auntie will see everything cleared up, never fear; otherwise there will be trouble for someone."

Wibley under the table, shivered. At that moment he thought to himself how like Horace Aunt Judy was. The same aggressive spirit; the same egotistic belief in her own powers.

"Very well, auntie," said Coker affectionately. "I will wait in the study. It's a half holiday to-day, and I'll get Potter and Greene to lay in a nice tea for us. But don't let Dr. Mitchell bully you."

Aunt Judy sat bolt upright like a soldier on a horse.

"Bully me, Horace?" she echoed. "There is no living man who could bully me."

And Wibley, under the table, felt that that was indeed the literal truth.

Horace Coker departed, and Miss Coker made herself comfortable. The minutes passed, and with the passing of the minutes Miss Coker's impatience began to grow.

"Will the man never come," she communed with herself. "I must say he seems to be very lax. I have been waiting in this room for quite seven minutes now, and yet this Dr. Mitchell has not put in an appearance."

Which was the typical "Cokerish" way of looking at things.

Wibley, under the table, felt that he was going to burst. For three minutes now he had been bottling up a desire to sneeze. But he could restrain himself no longer.

"Atishoooooooo!"

It was a terrific sneeze, and it made Aunt Judy jump out of the chair.

"Well I never!" she ejaculated. "Who was that?"

She stared about her, but saw no sign of anyone. Yet common sense told her that someone in the room had sneezed. Many ladies, in similar circumstances would have been scared by such a phenomenon. Not so Aunt Judy; she was made of sterner stuff. With a grim expression on her face she started to investigate.

"Atishoooooooo!"

This time Wibley's sneeze fairly thundered through the study.

"Ah!" Miss Coker pounced on the table-cover and jerked it aside, for in her perambulation of the room she had suddenly caught sight of a foot protruding from underneath its folds. "Dr. Mitchell, I presume!"

Dr. Mitchell looked a pitiful figure as he was revealed in that first moment, on hands and knees, with his beard all awry.

"Come out, sir," said Miss Coker acidly. "This—this is surely an extraordinary proceeding for a headmaster. No wonder dear Horace entertained the notion that you were mad."

"Dr. Mitchell" came out and stood erect, cutting a very sorry spectacle indeed.

"Madam—" he began lamely.

"Dr. Mitchell, I am surprised that you should descend to such a cowardly resource as to hide underneath the table."

"I—I—I—"

"Silence, sir," said Miss Coker authoritatively. "I have made this

special journey from my home to see you, sir, about my nephew Horace."

"Oh—ah—h'm—"

"He informs me that you have relegated him to a lower Form—"

"You see—"

But Miss Coker waved the umbrella in her excitement to "keep the floor," so to speak, and Wibley, mistaking the action, backed away a step.

"Relogated my dear Horace to the Remove! Why, sir, it's unthinkable! It's monstrous, and I shall certainly put my case before the governors unless you give me your word to rescind that stupid order."

"But, Miss Coker—" began Wibley, and again the umbrella cut him short. Like Horace James, Miss Coker was a great talker.

"Let me say what I have to say, Dr. Mitchell," went on Miss Coker firmly. "My time is precious, very precious. But I refuse to leave this school until you have reinstated my dear Horace to his rightful place in the Fifth. Why, he's the cleverest boy in the school," she went on, taking a swift breath, "and in my opinion he ought to be made captain of the school."

Wibley nodded dully. At that moment he would have made Horace Coker a field-marshal if it had lain in his power, in order to get rid of his formidable aunt.

"You see," he started to explain once again. And once again the umbrella waved.

"I see a man, sir," began Miss Coker, "who appears to be anything but one who should have control of the destinies of a school like Greyfriars. And—"

She broke off and came a step nearer, gazing in horror at Wibley's beard, which, unknown to that hapless youth, was beginning to peel from his face. Really he was beginning to think that Miss Coker was mad.

His nerveless hand came in contact with a long ruler which stretched beyond the desk. In his agitation, Wibley leaned his weight against the edge of the ruler, mistaking it for the edge of the desk. The result was most unforeseen.

At the other end of the ruler was a large inkwell full of red ink, and a careless maid had rested the inkwell actually on the ruler. Thus, when Wibley's end of the ruler went down that section of it on which balanced the inkwell shot up.

Swoooooosh!

The laden inkwell described an arc as it was catapulted into the air, and a shriek came from Miss Coker as the contents of the inkwell shot all over her dress.

"Oh crikey!" exclaimed Wibley, horrified at what he had done.

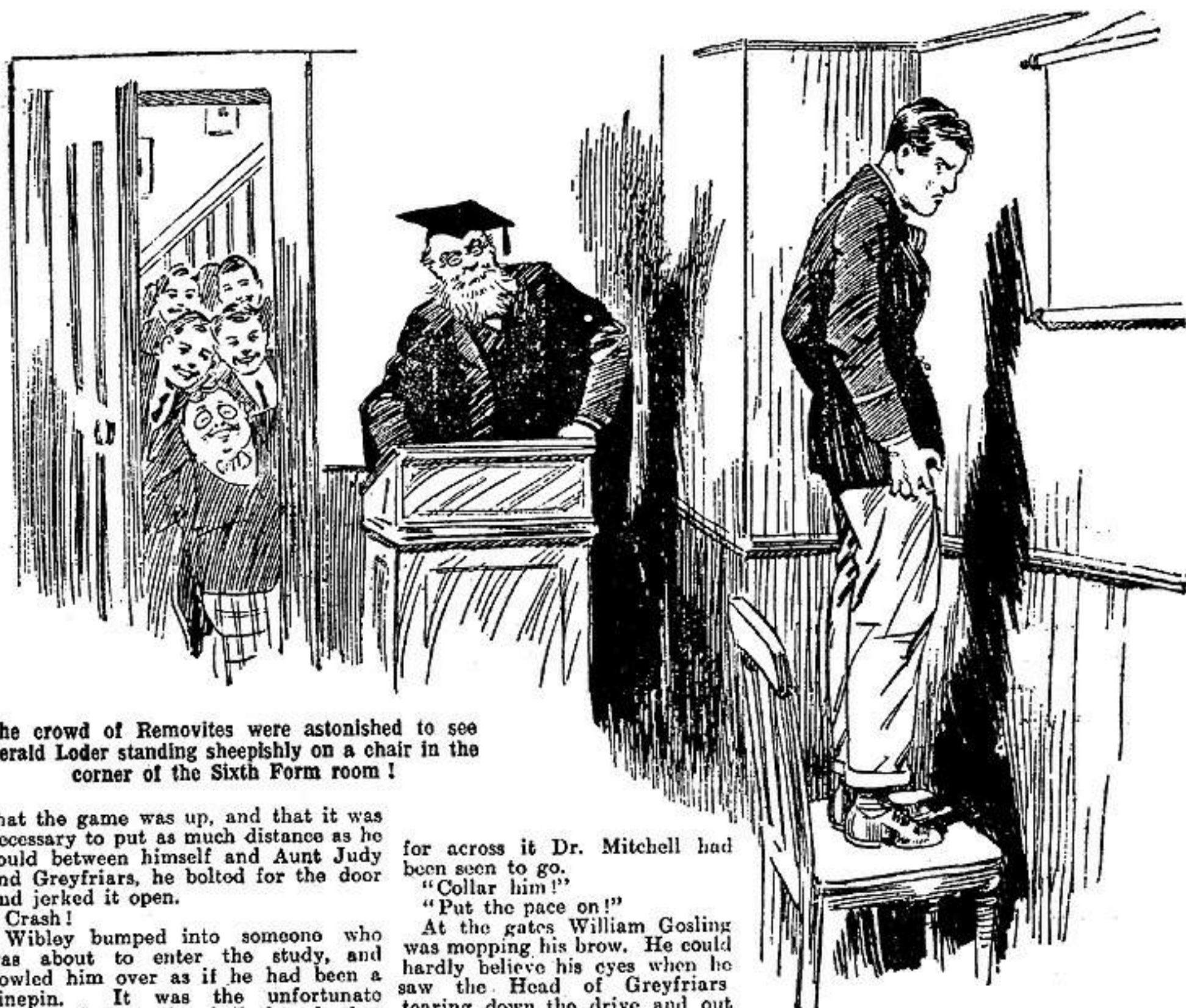
"You villain!" snapped Miss Coker, and with a very unladylike bound she sprang at the terrified Wibley with upraised umbrella. "You villain! You impostor!"

"Oh lor'!" groaned Wibley. Miss Coker's eagle eye had "rumbled" him. How, the schoolboy actor did not know at the moment. In any case, he had no time to consider that point, for Miss Coker came charging at him again with the upraised umbrella prepared for a second swipe. This time Wibley was not so fortunate. He ducked, but for all that the whirling umbrella caught him a terrific swipe across the shoulders.

"Yaroooooh!" roared Wibley.

"Miscreant! Villain!" breathed Miss Coker. "Take that—whack!—and that—whack!—and that!—whack!"

Wibley took them all; he had no choice in the matter. Then, realising



The crowd of Removites were astonished to see Gerald Loder standing sheepishly on a chair in the corner of the Sixth Form room!

that the game was up, and that it was necessary to put as much distance as he could between himself and Aunt Judy and Greyfriars, he bolted for the door and jerked it open.

Crash!
Wibley bumped into someone who was about to enter the study, and bowled him over as if he had been a ninepin. It was the unfortunate Horace Coker who had heard that shriek from Aunt Judy, and had come along to her assistance.

Coker collapsed like a folded pen-knife, thoroughly winded.

"Groooooooooough!"
Aunt Judy rushed to help him to his feet.

"My poor Horace! My dear boy! Has that villain hurt you?"

"Groooooogh! It's all right!" gasped Coker. "But what's happened? What—"

He caught sight of the crimson stains on his aunt's clothes, and his eyes nearly started out of their sockets in his horror.

"Blood——"
"No, no, darling!" said Aunt Judy soothingly. "It's ink—red ink. That villain upset it over me. He's an impostor and——"

In a few words she had told her nephew the whole story, and Coker listened like one in a dream. An impostor——

The burly Fifth-Former was not in the front rank when brains were served out, but he was not lacking in action. In the space of a very few seconds the news was running throughout the school that Dr. Mitchell was an impostor.

Greyfriars found itself caught up in a whirl of excitement, and within a couple of minutes a number of seniors and juniors were giving chase.

Wibley had got a few minutes' start, but whether it would avail him anything remained to be seen.

The long-legged seniors, outpacing the juniors, rushed out into the quad;

for across it Dr. Mitchell had been seen to go.

"Collar him!"

"Put the pace on!"

At the gates William Gosling was mopping his brow. He could hardly believe his eyes when he saw the Head of Greyfriars tearing down the drive and out of the gates as if ten thousand demons were at his heels.

"My heyo!" muttered Gosling.

"My heyo!"

"Which way did the rotter go?" gasped Coker, who was in the van of the pursuing party.

"My heyo!" muttered Gosling. "Which I hain't seen anything like it— 'Ere, wharrer you doin', Master Coker?"

For Coker in his excitement was shaking the startled porter.

"Which way did the villain go?" demanded Coker fiercely.

"Which I ain't seen no villain pass 'ere!" replied the indignant porter. "Wot I did see was Dr. Mitchell a-tearin' fit to break his neck——"

"I'll break his neck when I get hold of him!" growled Coker. "Which way did he go?"

"Across the woods!" grunted Gosling. "And wot I says is this 'ere——"

But the pursuing crowd did not wait to hear what Gosling had to say. They fairly flew in the direction the porter had indicated.

"There he is!" whooped Coker excitedly, pointing with outstretched finger to a fleeing figure a quarter of a mile in front, recognisable even at that distance as the bogus Dr. Mitchell.

"After him!"

The chase tore on, and Wibley, fleeing for his life, wished from the bottom of his heart that he had never assumed the guise and style of Dr. Mitchell; for staring Wibley in the face, in the event of his capture, were all manner of

direful consequences. And of a certainty one of them would be expulsion.

"Oh dear!" groaned the hapless actor of the Remove. "This is awful!"

And his spirits sank still further when, on looking round, he saw that the gap between him and his pursuers was lessening materially. In desperation, he put on a spurt as he turned a bend that led him on to the footpath again, and in his haste he did not observe another person coming from the opposite direction.

The result was calamitous.

There was a bump, two dull thuds as the novelists say, and two loud roars of anguish, and William Wibley found himself sprawling in the grass on top of an elderly gentleman's waistcoat.

"Oooooooooooooah!" gasped the elderly gentleman.

"Yooooooooooooop!" gulped Wibley.

Then they sat staring at each other.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Squeak!

"Ooooooooooah!"
The elderly gentleman sat and blinked and gasped for the space of a few seconds; and that was all the time Wibley allowed himself, for, on looking at the attache case which the gentleman obviously had carried, and which, owing to the sudden encounter, had sprung its catches, the Removite saw to his horror

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that a number of envelopes and documents bore the inscription:

"DR. WILFRED MITCHELL,
M.A., B.A., Oxon."

"Groooooough!" A groan escaped Wibley. This, then, was the genuine article—the real Mackay.

But desperation nerved Wibley to further effort. All his sins came home to him with a vengeance. At all costs he had to make good his escape. In a moment Wibley was scrambling to his feet. Without a word to the gasping gentleman reclining on the footpath he darted off and plunged through the nearest bush.

Behind him came the sounds of the chase, then a series of thuds and a chorus of moans.

Wibley did not know it, but the pursuing party had tumbled willy-nilly over the recumbent form of the genuine Dr. Mitchell, thus giving him another few precious minutes of grace.

"Oh crikey!" groaned Wibley, the perspiration streaming off him.

He gazed about him like a hunted rat. To his right stretched the big brick wall encircling Major Thresher's estate. If only Wibley could smuggle himself in there he ought to be safe. Certainly, the pursuing party would not invade the fiery major's estate without his permission, and Wibley knew enough about Greyfriars nearest neighbour to feel assured that the major would not grant his permission without a lot of fuss; and that meant precious time.

Wibley knew the wall and what few facilities it possessed for a chap who wanted to get to the other side. He doubled on his tracks in a semi-circle, and reached the favoured spot.

In a moment he was scrambling over the wall.

Once inside the grounds he stood panting and drinking in great gulps of air. So far he had eluded his would-be captors. The next thing was to get rid of his make-up as quickly as possible and become once more William Wibley of the Remove.

But Wibley was not yet destined to get away so cheaply.

From close at hand came a sudden exclamation, and Wibley felt his heart leap into his mouth.

He had been spotted, and by no less a person than Major Thresher himself! Really, it seemed as if the fates were conspiring against William Wibley that afternoon. For the space of a second, the hapless Removite stood there, looking a weird figure in his torn gown and his lopsided beard. Then he sprang desperately to the wall again.

"No you don't!" It was the major's harsh voice. "Got you! Trespassing! Huh!"

And a large size in hands reached up and dragged Wibley back from the wall as if he had been a baby.

"I—I—I—" babbled Wibley, writhing in that strong grasp.

"What have we here, huh?" The major peered closely at his captive. "A lunatic, by jingo! This is the fellow I've been reading about! Come along, my fine fellow! Huh!"

William Wibley's heart sank into his boots.

"Hi, Jelks! Mason!" bawled the major. "Come here! I've caught a lunatic!"

"I—I—I—you—you—you—" stammered Wibley, lending stronger conviction than ever to the major's theory that he had caught an escaped lunatic.

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Besides his incoherency, Wibley's strange appearance lent colour to the major's theory. The torn gown, the lopsided beard were certainly things not seen on the average normal individual.

"Take it easy, my fine fellow!" said the major soothingly. "We'll soon have you back again, huh!"

But Major Thresher was not reckoning on Wibley's desperation. Suddenly that cornered junior ducked, and—

Thump!

A hard, youthful head smote Major Thresher on a spot that had long since lost any muscled resistance, and the old soldier collapsed like a pricked balloon—winded.

"Stop!"

Jelks and Mason came running up. But they were a fraction of a second too late. Wibley was up and over that wall like a skilled gymnast. With his heart beating against his ribs like a steam-hammer he dropped to the ground on the other side and bolted into the thickest shrubbery nearest at hand.

"Hi! Stop! Stop, you varmint!"

Wibley did not look back, or he would have seen Jelks astride the wall, yelling at the top of his voice and waving his arms excitedly.

The hunted Removite plunged deeper into the woods and kept moving for at least five minutes before he stopped for a breather.

Next moment the flowing scholastic gown had been torn off and dumped in a bush. Then Wibley got busy with his handkerchief to remove the make-up of grease-paint and lining pencil. The beard was torn off his face and thrown unceremoniously away, and Wibley rubbed and scrubbed at his face until it assumed the colour of a newly-boiled lobster.

He looked a weird figure even then, for he was still wearing the frock-coat—an article of apparel in strange contrast to his youthful features. For a moment he was tempted to throw the frock-coat after the cloak, but before he could make up his mind definitely there came the tramp of feet and the sound of voices. And into the little clearing that skirted the clump of bushes that was Wibley's hiding-place came Harry Wharton & Co.

The Famous Five were in scouting kit, as were the other juniors who comprised the Eagle Patrol, and Wharton had evidently decided to fill in the half-holiday with a few hours' scouting.

"This will make a good headquarters," said Wharton. "Unload that trek cart, you chaps."

"Ay, ay, skipper!" sang out Bob Cherry boisterously.

And the Eagle Patrol proceeded to carry out the order smartly. The small, hand-drawn trek cart was stripped of its outer covering of tarpaulin, and a small bivouac tent was taken out.

"Smart work!" Wharton, the leader of the Eagle Patrol, looked on admiringly as his Scouts speedily erected the tent.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry suddenly. "What the thump's this game?"

He pointed to a number of bobbing heads appearing and disappearing over the fringe of bushes in the near distance; and the rest of the troop looked on wonderingly.

"What on earth—" began Wharton.

And that was all he had time to say; for next moment a score or more of Greyfriars seniors, with Horace Coker at their head, rushed into the little clearing.

"Seen him?" panted Coker.

"Him?" echoed Wharton, puzzled.

Coker snorted.

"That villain calling himself Dr. Mitchell!" he gasped. "He's on the run, and we know he came round this way!"

"What?" The exclamation came from the Eagle Patrol in one breath.

"He's an impostor!" explained Blundell of the Fifth. "The real Dr. Mitchell is on his way to the school now."

"Eh?" Harry Wharton & Co. were still, naturally enough, very puzzled.

The captain of the Fifth proceeded to enlighten them.

"It appears that Dr. Mitchell could not turn up at the school yesterday, as was first arranged," he said; "and in some dashed peculiar manner, which has yet to be explained, the other chap—the fellow whom we've thought to be Dr. Mitchell—took his place."

"Oh, my hat!"

"He's a madman, I do believe!" went on Blundell breathlessly. "You fellows remember how queerly he acted all the time?"

Harry Wharton & Co. gasped.

The story Blundell was telling wanted some getting used to.

"You're pulling our legs!" said the captain of the Remove at length.

Coker snorted.

"Don't be a young ass, Wharton!" he exclaimed. "My aunt spotted the rotter. He was in a disguise of some sort. Then he bolted. We've been chasing him ever since. You sure you fags haven't seen him?"

"He hasn't come this way, old bean," said Bob Cherry.

"Hi!" There was another diversion.

This time Jelks and Mason came running up, with Major Thresher panting in the rear.

"Have you seen that loony, young gentlemen?" asked Jelks.

And Wibley, lying low in cover, wondered whether this was the end. Any one of the pursuing party had only to stretch out a hand, practically, to discover the impostor's hiding-place.

There was another delay as Jelks and Mason and Major Thresher explained the position—a delay of five minutes or more—before Coker and his pursuers identified the escaped lunatic with the pseudo Dr. Mitchell.

"We'll get the rotter!" said Coker at last. "He can't be far away."

Major Thresher grunted.

"I'll give him lunatic, begad, when I lay my hands on him—huh!" he stormed. "The villain winded me!"

For a few moments more the pursuing party stood undecided.

"Why don't you spread out in a circle?" suggested Wharton. "You'll be pretty certain to rope in this merchant then."

Coker scowled.

"We don't want any cheeky advice from Remove fags!" he exclaimed. "You keep off the grass!"

"Rats!" exclaimed Wharton cheerfully.

"What?"

"Rats!" repeated the captain of the Remove. "And many of 'em!"

It looked for the moment as if Horace Coker contemplated abandoning the chase after the bogus Dr. Mitchell and going for Harry Wharton instead. But he evidently thought better of it.

He turned to the Fifth-Formers.

"Spread out, you men!" he roared. "We won't give in until we've caught that awful rotter!"

And once more the pursuing party, not quite so keen now, rushed off to encircle the wood.

"Well, this is a go, and no mistake!" said Wharton, when Coker's crowd had

disappeared. "Fancy that fellow being an impostor!"

"It beats me altogether," admitted Bob Cherry, scratching his curly head.

"The beatfulness is terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Johnny Bull, who had been giving the matter much thought, chimed in.

"The fellows think that the old bird who took us in is an escaped lunatic," he said in his slow, direct fashion. "So does that ass Major Thresher."

"Well, it sounds as if they're right, old scout," said Nugent.

But Johnny Bull shook his head.

"How would an escaped lunatic, for a start, know that a Dr. Mitchell was expected at Greyfriars?" he submitted.

"Oh!"

"It's my idea that the whole thing is a hoax," he went on.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"I wouldn't like to be in the japer's shoes!"

"And I wouldn't mind wagering, if I were a betting man, that I could name the japer," continued Johnny Bull.

And William Wibley—still in hiding, and overhearing every word—wondered whether the astute Johnny Bull had hit the bullseye, so to speak.

"You could?" ejaculated Wharton in amazement.

Johnny Bull grinned—a slow, knowing grin.

"You fellows remember that Wibley was given leave of absence the same day as this Dr. Mitchell was expected—"

"What's Wibley got to do with it?" demanded Wharton, very much puzzled.

"Everything, I fancy," said Johnny Bull.

"I would stake my life on it that old Wib is the japer! Same size," he added reminiscently; "in possession of all the inside information; and cheeky and fatheaded enough to take risks."

Wibley thought it high time now to emerge from his hiding-place.

"Not so much of the 'cheek' and 'fathead,' young Bull!"

Simultaneously with the remark, the thickets parted and there stepped into view a Dr. Mitchell minus his beard, his rather lined and sallow complexion, and his gown. But the strange figure was still recognisable, for all that, as the weird old bird "Mitchell," and recognisable also as William Wibley of the Remove.

"WIB!" It was a combined shout of wonderment.

William Wibley trod cautiously towards the astonished Scouts.

"Mum's the word!" he said. "I've had an awful time; and I'm not out of the wood yet!"

"Well, my only hat!"

"My only sainted aunt!"

"Wibley!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

William Wibley bowed.

"Gentlemen, behold in me the last remaining fragments, so to speak, of a learned headmaster—to wit, Dr. Mitchell, M.A., B.A., late of Greyfriars. But seriously, you chaps, for goodness' sake, smuggle me back to the school! I can't walk about like this in a frock-coat. I must become William Wibley, the best actor in the Remove, again as quickly as possible!"

The Removites had not yet recovered from their astonishment. The whole thing seemed so incredible. Wibley—Dr. Mitchell—

"You spoofer!"

"You cheeky ass!"

Wibley smiled.

"I think, gentlemen of the Remove, I have fully convinced you that William Wibley is a born actor—that he can act your 'heads' off—excuse the pun."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughter faded suddenly as there came the tramp of many feet. Evidently the pursuers were coming back.

Wibley's confidence faded on the spot.

"Quick, you chaps! Cover me up in that trek-cart, for goodness' sake," he panted, "and get me back to school! I'll manage things after that."

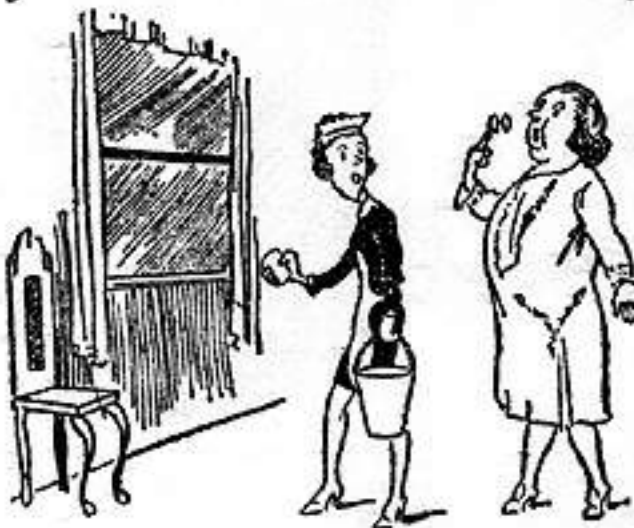
As he spoke, the schoolboy actor scrambled into the small trek-cart.

Wharton and Nugent and Cherry rushed the bivouac tent from its pegs and stretched it over Wibley's crouching figure, regardless of the fact that all the guy-ropes had been torn from their moorings, as it were, and now straggled over the tent-pegs remaining in the ground. It was certainly not the correct scouting method of striking camp, but it was effective.

By the time Coker, flushed and angry, came pelting into the clearing, there was no visible sign of William Wibley.

TIME FOR A JOKE?

Well, here's one for which Leonard Downes, 34, Highfield Road, Winchmore Hill, N.21, has been awarded one of this week's useful pocket-knives.



"Why, Bridget, you surely don't consider these windows have been washed?"

"Well, mum, I washed them on the inside, so that you could look out, but I purposely left them dirty on the outside so that those boys next door couldn't look in!"

I've got more prizes in stock, chums, so pile in with your efforts!

"He's been this way," exclaimed the Fifth-Former. "A labourer saw him climb over the major's wall and hide in the bushes somewhere near here. Have you seen the rotter?"

But Wharton did not answer that direct question.

"Oh, we're not interested in your silly lunatic!" he said. "You told us to keep off the grass. You jolly well hunt for your escaped lunatic on your own!"

"Hear, hear!" added the rest of the patrol, and at a word from Wharton the Eagles picked up the traces of the trek-cart, and began to move off.

"Cheeky rotters!" snapped Coker. "Come on, you men; search these bushes."

The Fifth-Formers started their search anew, and Wharton & Co., meantime, were legging it back to Greyfriars at a jog trot. They were very excited, for there were many things that had yet to be explained. Still, explanations could wait. It was up to them to see Wibley through.

All the juniors realised if the news leaked out that William Wibley had had the audacity to impersonate Dr.

Mitchell that expulsion would be his fate, as certain as it was that the sun would sink in the west that evening.

The gates of Greyfriars came in sight at last, and the trek-cart, with Wibley aboard, was rushed round to its shed. Fortunately, most of the fellows were out of doors.

"Cut off to the dorm, Franky," whispered Wharton, "and get Wibley a suit of clothes. He'll be able to change here."

"Right-ho, old scout!"

And Nugent dashed off. He returned in a very short time with a complete suit of clothes for William Wibley; and behind the locked door of the shed Wibley made a speedy change.

The news created a nine days' wonder at Greyfriars. The whole countryside was searched for the bogus Dr. Mitchell, but he was never seen any more. And, strangely enough, no one connected Dr. Mitchell's abrupt departure and William Wibley's return, although Mr. Quelch's face was very thoughtful when he called the roll that evening and observed that William Wibley was present.

That cheery youth took the bull by the horns, and sought an interview with his Form master after roll-call.

"So you have returned, my boy!" Mr. Quelch's tone was not inviting.

"Yes, sir," said Wibley cheerfully.

"I've had a wonderful time, sir!"

"H'm! I hope you will now endeavour to make up for lost time," said Mr. Quelch.

And, whatever his suspicions might have been, the master of the Remove did not voice them. He dismissed Wibley with a majestic wave of the hand, and rustled off.

In the seclusion of Study No. 1 that evening Wibley told the Famous Five and the rest of the Eagle patrol the full details of his amazing masquerade—a story that was almost unbelievable.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's the jape of a century! I shall never forget old Quelch and the rest of the masters on that physical jerks parade!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wibley flushed with pride.

"Well, you chaps made me do it, you know," he said. "You all told me that I couldn't act for toffee."

Greyfriars eventually settled down under their new headmaster, and the weeks seemed to fly past.

It was the day that Dr. Mitchell departed and Dr. Locke returned that William Wibley approached the Famous Five.

"I say, you men, what about a final rehearsal of 'The Flying Terror'?" he asked.

It was on the tip of Wharton's tongue to tell Wibley to go and bury his blessed play, but he thought better of it, remembering the result of earlier remarks to the same effect.

"Right-ho!" he answered. "I'll get the fellows to come along, Wib."

And the final rehearsal went with a swing, as did the opening performance of "The Flying Terror!" Wibley was the star turn, naturally, but even his consummate acting in that play did not reach the amazing heights he had touched in the role of Dr. Mitchell, headmaster of Greyfriars.

THE END.

(There will be another rollicking fine story of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, entitled: "THE FOOL OF THE FIFTH!" Mind you read it, chums!)

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FOR THE GLORY OF FRANCE!

By Geo. E. ROCHESTER.



Stulz was fighting desperately to loosen the awful vice-like grip which was slowly, remorselessly choking the life out of him.

INTRODUCTION.

To save Guy Warren, his scapegrace cousin from expulsion on a charge of theft, Paul Blake Fifth-Former of Greystones, takes the blame on his own shoulders by running away from school. Fired by its promise of adventure, he joins the Foreign Legion and is sent to the desert fort of Sidi-bel-Abbes, where he forms friendships with Charles Desmond, once captain of Greystones, and Esterharn, a former officer in the French Army. Warren, meanwhile, has inherited the title and fortune of his father, and is touring Africa with his sister June. In Sidi he arranges with the villainous Sergeant-major Bolke that Paul, the fellow who holds his guilty secret, shall be killed—somehow. A few days later a strong force of the Legion, including Paul, Desmond and Esterharn, is sent into the desert to quell an Arab rising, and Bolke awaits his chance to carry out his part of the dastardly plot, little dreaming that his own life is being plotted against.

(Now read on.)

THERE was a thousand pounds in English gold for Bolke as soon as word reached Sir Guy Warren that the boy was dead. Warren had talked, of course, about an enemy bullet. But that was eyewash, pure and simple. And Bolke knew it. He and Warren understood each other perfectly. Paul Blake was never to return from the desert, and that was the whole top and bottom of it. How he died did not matter.

So the sooner he did so the better. Bolke's thousand pounds would be safe then, and he could devote himself once more entirely to making these scum of Legionnaires sweat blood.

Therefore, it was on Paul that he concentrated now.

"Attention!" he roared; and the squad stiffened. "Pas gymnastique! En avant! Marche!"

The squad moved off at the double in response to the harsh command, and Sergeant-Major Bolke watched them like a hungry cat eyeing its prey.

But he could find nothing to justify him yet in pitching into Blake, or anyone. Every man moved like a machine; and Bolke made no effort to hide his chagrin.

"Halte!" he bellowed. "Attention!"

The squad halted, rigid and immobile. They had been at it all day, and it was only the fear of Bolke which kept them going now. Long minutes passed, and they stood there as though carved out of stone, waiting for the next command.

Suddenly a man swayed.

With blazing eyes, Bolke pounced.

"Stand still, curse you!" he screamed.

"Sang dieu, but I'll teach you to move in the ranks!"

White-faced, striving desperately to get a grip on his swimming senses, the man steadied himself.

"Par files de quatre! En avant! Marche!"

The squad moved off; but scarce had they taken ten paces than there came the order:

"Halte!"

This time Bolke halted them so that the sinking sun was shining straight into their eyes. As a torture to men on parade it was one of his happiest efforts.

Paul—in the leading four, aching eyes staring straight into the heart of the setting sun—was conscious that Bolke was looming close.

Bolke was; and his thin, cruel lips were twisted in a malicious grin. Slowly he looked the boy up and down; then, stepping back a pace, snarled:

"Keep your head up, you dog!"

In that moment Paul remembered the warning words of Lemarne. He was standing as erect and rigid as any ramrod, and there was no earthly reason why the sergeant-major should have singled him out for reprimand.

But the torture of the sun's rays was more than flesh and blood could stand, and momentarily the boy closed his eyes.

Bolke saw his opportunity and seized upon it with avidity. Confronting Paul, his fingers hovering near the unbuttoned flap of his revolver holster, Bolke treated the boy to a selection of the very choicest epithets. Delving into the very slime of his soul, he brought up phrases new and strange to those hardened men of the defaulters' squad. In short, he excelled himself.

But Paul, his every thought centred on the warning of Lemarne and the fate of Johansen, listened unmoved. It required almost a superhuman effort to shut his ears to the vile

things which were said.

However, he did it, although in the cold anger of his heart he registered a vow that some day there would come a reckoning between him and Bolke.

Suddenly a man on his right moaned, and, swaying forward, crashed to the ground, his rifle with fixed bayonet clattering from his nerveless hand.

It was Lopez, the Spaniard—and he was as all-in as a man well could be.

Before Bolke could turn his attention to the fainting wretch there came a voice from the direction of the officers' quarters:

"Sergeant-major!"

Bolke wheeled; then stiffened at the salute at sight of the drawn and haggard-faced Lieutenant Villiers.

"Dismiss those men!" commanded the lieutenant.

"But, mon lieutenant—"

"Dismiss the squad!" repeated young Villiers sharply; and there was not a man amongst those unfortunates on parade who did not thank le bon Dieu for this blessing.

Sullenly Bolke turned again to the squad. What was this sickly brat of a lieutenant doing outside of his quarters, anyway? The fool looked as though he were dying.

"Rompez!" barked Bolke, giving the order to dismiss.

Thankfully the defaulters fell out; and, clutching his rifle, Stulz scuttled for his quarters like a rat going to earth.

There was a peculiar glitter in the eyes of Stulz. The parade was over—Bolke's last parade. For before the dawn came a foot of crimson steel

would have sent the soul of the dog winging its way down into the nethermost pit whence it had come.

The Corridor!

HOTZMAN, Lemarne, Kalgar, Zimmerman, and Stulz! Behold the five, stripped to the waist, crouching in the darkness of a corridor along which they knew that Bolke must pass.

In the hand of Kalgar was a bayonet sharpened to razor-edge. One swift, deep plunge as the sergeant-major drew level with the recess in which they were hidden and the job would be done. Then they would dress, scale the mud wall of the fort, and, with rifles and full ammunition-pouches, strike westwards towards the coast, changing their uniforms for Arab dress at the first opportunity.

They wouldn't lose any time, either, in putting as much distance between themselves and the fort as possible. Not that they feared much of a hue-and-cry; for, with Bolke dead and the youthful Villiers a sick man, the command would fall upon some fool of a sergeant, who would have something else to think about than dispatching a posse in pursuit.

"He comes!"

Hotzman breathed the words in Kalgar's ear as a step sounded at the end of the corridor.

But it was a false alarm; for it was a corporal who passed. And never in his life had that individual, had he but known it, walked so close with death.

He passed within a yard of the five, crouching with bated breath, and had he as much as glanced their way there would have come a spring, a plunge, and a gurgle of death.

It would have been unfortunate, of course. The five had no quarrel with him. But one could not expect the life of a miserable corporal to stand between them and their carefully laid plan.

His footsteps died away, and silence, palpitating and intense, enveloped the corridor. In the black darkness nothing stirred. There came once the scamper of a rat, and Stulz started nervously, with half-stifled exclamation.

Hotzman silenced him with savage, whispered imprecation. Kalgar, moist hand gripping the bayonet-handle, touched dry lips with the tip of his tongue. This waiting was the hardest part; enough to break the nerve of a man. If only the dog would come—

Suddenly Hotzman's fingers tightened on the arm of Kalgar. A heavy tread had turned into the corridor and was coming towards them.

"It is he!"

Hotzman's lips were at Kalgar's ear. The latter tensed, every nerve and muscle taut.

The tread approached; the heavy, deliberate tread of Sergeant-Major Bolke.

Stulz bit hard on his lip to still his chattering teeth. Of a sudden he felt deathly cold, though it was a chill at the heart, rather than the body. Sang dieu, if it were only over!

The on-coming Bolke was almost opposite the recess by now. Not a man breathed. Kalgar, crouching, with livid lips drawn back in a voiceless snarl, was gathered for the spring.

Then suddenly he leapt, whirling bayonet raised.

It was the first faint slither of Kalgar's feet as he launched himself on the spring, which gave warning to the sergeant-major that he was not alone in the corridor. Instinctively, in that instant of time, he halted, and took a half-step backwards.

And thus Kalgar blundered.

It was not his fault. He had judged the moment of attack to a nicety. If Bolke had continued on, the downward-plunging bayonet would have taken him full in the body. As it was, the bayonet ripped through the shoulder of his tunic, causing only the most superficial of flesh wounds.

Carried on by the impetus of his missed blow, Kalgar stumbled forward. Bolke's coolness and presence of mind were wholly admirable. He did not require to have it explained to him that this was an attack on his life. Without an instant's hesitation he lashed out savagely with heavily-shod foot.

It was a kick aimed at the stumbling, indistinct form in front of him, but it smashed Kalgar's kneecap, and with a shout of agony the German went to

the floor, the bayonet falling from his hand with metallic clatter.

With a bellow of rage, calculated to arouse the guard, Bolke wheeled with outstretched hand. His clutching fingers gripped on the bare arm of a man and slipped upwards to the throat. It was Stulz whom he'd got; and, pinning the writhing, struggling man against the wall, Bolke held him there with maniacal strength.

The corridor by this time was full of shouting, jostling men. As for Hotzman, Lemarne, and Zimmerman, they had gone. The clatter of the falling bayonet, the knowledge that Bolke still lived, had spelt the death-knell of their plan, and, stripped to the waist, as they were, it was suicidal to remain.

There was nothing they could do for Kalgar, even had they known that, hunched in the darkness against the farther wall, he was moaningly nursing his shattered kneecap, sick with agony and apprehension.

Stulz, stark terror in his eyes, was fighting desperately with frenzied, clawing fingers to loosen the awful, vice-like grip which was slowly, remorselessly choking the life out of him.

"You rat!" snarled Bolke.

Stulz made a horrible choking noise, but tighter and tighter pressed the fingers about his throat. Bolke was in no hot and passionate rage. He was the cold, calculating killer in those moments.

Weaker and weaker grew the struggles of the wretched Stulz until, suddenly, his head sagged forward and he went limp. Then, and then only, did Bolke release his grip, allowing the lifeless form of the man whom he had killed with his bare hands to slither to the floor.

Turning, he surveyed the staring faces of half-dressed Legionnaires, visible in the yellow illumination of many lanterns.

"Double the guards!" he snarled. "Corporal Kurz, see that any man attempting to approach the outer wall is shot!"

(The plot has failed, and Bolke means to exact a terrible vengeance. Don't miss next week's instalment. It's packed with thrills!)

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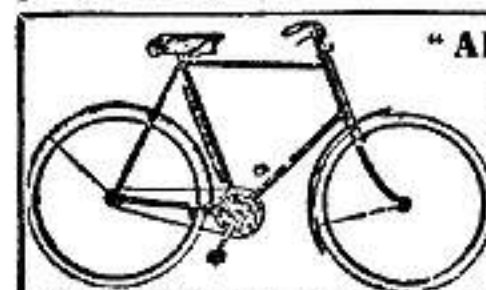
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