

WONDERFUL FREE GIFTS—AND ALL-STAR PROGRAMME—Inside!

The MAGNET^{2D}



*They're
inside!*

**SIX
SUPER
PICTURE
STAMPS
FREE
WITHIN**



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address:
The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

WELL, chums! You've got another six stamps to add to your collection, which, I'll wager, is beginning to look mighty attractive. Don't forget—our companion papers, "Modern Boy" and "Ranger," also present six grand picture stamps to every reader of this week's issues. So if you can manage to get these popular books you will be able to add another twelve stamps to the six you have already received with this copy of the MAGNET. And don't forget, either, there will be six more super stamps in NEXT SATURDAY'S MAGNET. Have you ordered your copy yet? If you haven't taken this precaution I strongly urge you to trot round to your nearest newsagent AT ONCE. Now for some titbits of information concerning the fine strip of stamps given away with this issue.

BEANS FOR THE BULLY!—"Just you wait, you bully!" is the muttered remark with which many a fellow has to content himself after an encounter with a bigger fellow. And it's far from satisfying! Get to know a few smart tricks of simple self-defence, and there is no reason why you should not turn the tables on the beefiest bully, much to his astonishment. Two of these useful tricks are shown in the Super-Stamps given away with this week's issue.

No. 2 shows the "Head Trick." Awfully simple, yet very effective. If ever you find yourself in the position of the fellow on the right of that picture, with a bully's arms encircling you and binding your arms down to your sides, jerk your head backwards—hard and sharp and suddenly, into your attacker's face, and whilst he is wondering what hit him you shake his arms free and make for where it's safer! That's the Head Trick.

The next self-defence picture shows the bully on the left. Grab him as shown—your right hand gripping his body beneath his left arm, your left hand gripping his right arm just above his elbow. Then heave him suddenly backwards over your bent right leg, and he'll know all about the Waist Hold and Backward Throw!

SHUNTERS AND WHALERS.—Another of this week's six picture-stamps is of a huge and immensely powerful electric locomotive used on the Australian railways for shunting heavy goods trains. One of our British shunting engines placed beside this Australian whopper would look a midget. But then our railways don't have to carry such tremendous loads as the Australian railways, and smaller engines and trucks are much more suitable for our purpose.

The same tremendous strength and power as shown by that great shunting engine is possessed by the big modern whaling ships of the Pacific Ocean. These vessels have to stand up to all sorts of awful weather and keep going for long stretches without returning to harbour, so it wouldn't do for them to be built on elegant lines. See the harpoon gun mounted on the whaler in our picture? An expert is stationed behind that to fire a

harpoon, attached to a rope, at any whale that comes within striking distance. Sometimes the harpoon has a charge of explosive in its head, and when that "goes off" after the harpoon has pierced the whale the latter can't put up much of a tussle—as it is able to do otherwise—and so can be dragged aboard without a great deal of trouble by means of the winch to which the other end of the rope is tied.

SPEEDSTERS OF THE AIR.—All the world knows the wonderful single-seater fighting plane called the Bristol Bulldog, used to-day by our R.A.F. and by the air forces of several other countries. It has a 450 horse-power air-cooled Bristol "Jupiter" engine, carries 70 gallons of fuel, and has two Vickers guns, one on each side of the cockpit. Its wingspan is 34 feet, length 24 feet 9 inches, its speed at 10,000 feet up is 170 miles per hour, and it can climb to 25,100 feet.

The other plane in this week's set of pictures is the Hawker Nimrod Fleet Fighter, a single-seater which "works" with the Fleet. Its land under-carriage can be substituted by floats, to enable it to land on the sea, and it is specially arranged for launching by mechanical catapult from the deck of an aircraft carrier. It has two Vickers guns, firing through the propeller, and its speed at 10,000 feet up is 207 miles per hour.

£8,000,000 FROM BOOTS!

Of all the letters I get from my readers, I think the most interesting and welcome are those from fellows who ask my advice about various ways of earning a living. It is late in the day for any fellow to start thinking about what he is going to work at, after leaving school. That should be decided whilst there is still a year or two of school life ahead, so that proper preparations can be made.

Starting penniless is a hardship which it is really a joy to surmount. Work hard, save as much as you can, remember always that you are as good as the next fellow—or set about it and **MAKE** yourself so—and you'll do big things. Like the shoemaker who has just died and has left a fortune of £8,000,000. He started life in a small village in Czechoslovakia, saved £80 by the time he was eighteen—and

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that meant tremendously hard work for him—and lived to see his own factories turning out 10,000 pairs of boots every day!

HOLIDAY IN A BALLOON.

This mighty bootmaker, Thomas Bata, was much too busy to take a holiday like ordinary folk. For a change from business routine, he used to enjoy himself in a balloon, which cost £25,000, anchored to the ground at the end of a 4,000 feet long cable! Up he would go with his personal staff and direct his enormous business from the clouds! That was the world's most prosperous bootmaker's idea of a holiday!

It is strange that he should have met his end in the air. He had just started out on a business trip in an aeroplane when the plane smashed into the chimney stacks of his own headquarters factory, in a dense fog, and Thomas Bata was killed.

KEPT IN SCHOOL!

No doubt you've often grumbled at being kept in at school, for doing something you ought not to have done—or for not doing something you OUGHT to have done. But you can thank your lucky stars you don't go to school at a place called Torda, in Transylvania. At a certain school there the authorities were recently unable to collect the scholars' fees when these became due. So the authorities kept the scholars in and told the parents their children wouldn't be let out again until all the fees were paid!

Most of the parents retorted by saying their own salaries hadn't been paid by the State—which employed most of them—for at least a year, so the school had better keep the scholars until more prosperous days returned!

BOOKS FOR YOU!

Don't forget what I told you last week about two of the finest books in all the world—"The Holiday Annual" and "The Popular Book of Boys' Stories." One or both of these MUST come into your possession. Last year their appearance created an enormous sensation, and thousands and thousands of MAGNET readers are still treasuring their Annuals. The new "Holiday Annual" and "Popular Book of Boys' Stories" are even better. Ask your local bookseller to let you see them—as the first step to getting the Old Folks at Home to buy them for you!

Next Saturday's Grand Programme:

"HARRY WHARTON DECLARES WAR!"

This is a sparkling story by famous Frank Richards, continuing his series dealing with Harry Wharton's feud with Gerald Loder and Mr. Quelch. It's great! It's amazing! It's wonderful!

"THE RED FALCON!"

More thrill-packed chapters of this sensational story of the days when Highwaymen menaced the roads.

THE NEW GREYFRIARS HERALD.

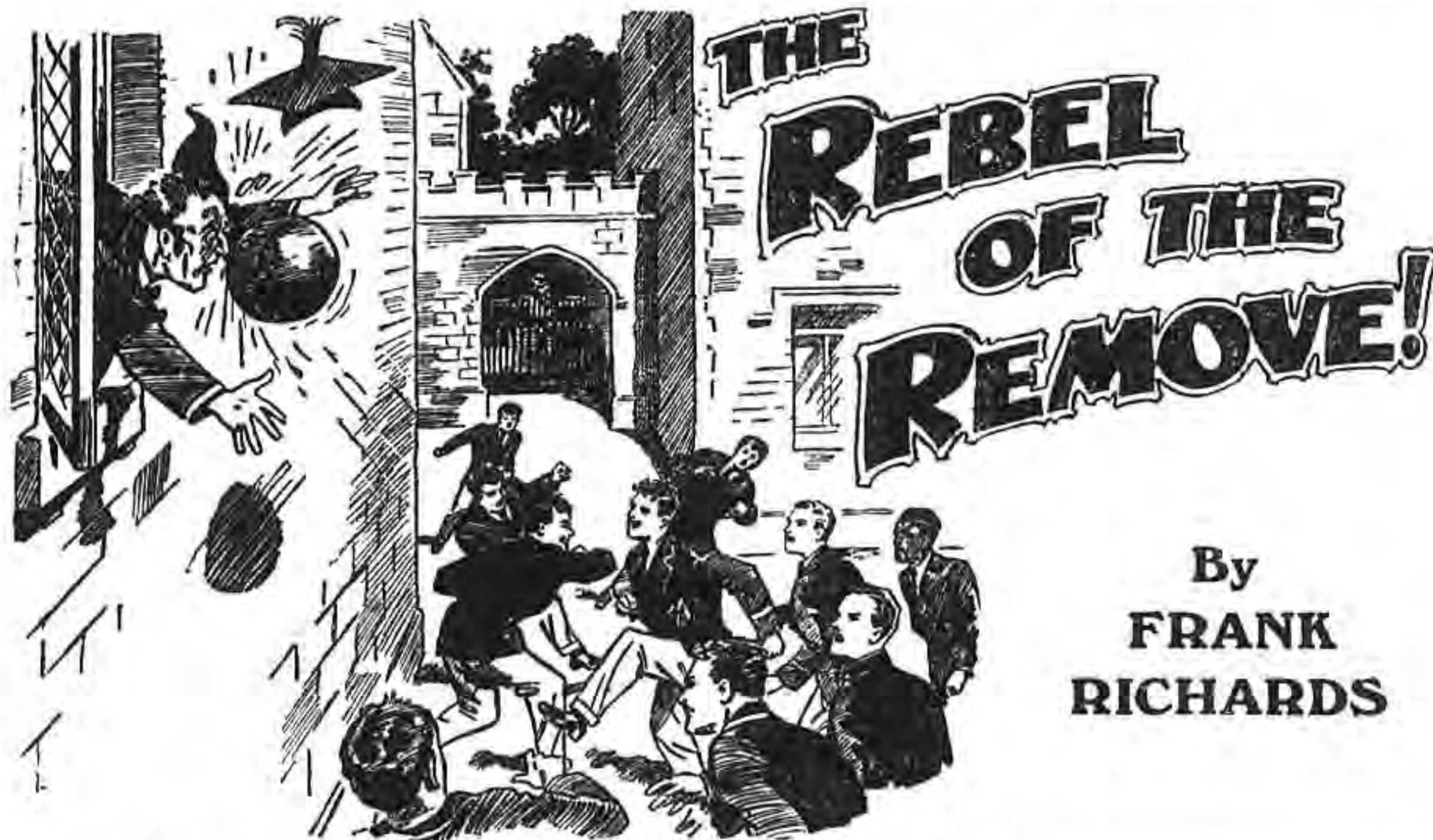
Look out for more interesting titbits dealing with the boys of Greyfriars and another snappy article from the pen of

"LINESMAN,"

who is never happier than when he's dealing with Soccer and Soccer "bafflers." Finally make sure of the

SIX SUPER-STAMPS GIVEN FREE with next week's MAGNET, by ordering your copy TO-DAY!

YOUR EDITOR.



THE FIRST CHAPTER An Unexpected Goal!

TRAMP, tramp!
"Hurrah!"
Tramp, tramp, tramp!
"On the ball!"

It was morning break at Greyfriars School, and the Remove were "out." They had had two hours with Mr. Quelch in the Form-room, which they had not enjoyed. But now they were enjoying life.

A merry crowd of juniors were punting a footer in the quad. A hefty kick from Harry Wharton's foot landed it at a distance on the path that ran under the windows of Masters' studies. It dropped almost under the sill of Mr. Quelch's window, and after it came a tramping, jostling, whooping crowd of Removites.

And Mr. Quelch, in his study, rose from his table in wrath.

Tramping feet and shouting voices from a distance were one thing. Under his window, which was open to let in the autumn breeze, it was quite another matter.

Morning break was a rest for the Remove, though most of them took that rest in rather strenuous ways. It was not wholly a rest for the Remove master, who was preparing a Latin prose paper for third school.

Every fellow at Greyfriars knew that it was not permitted to punt a ball under Masters' windows. Perhaps, in the excitement of the moment, the juniors forgot, or perhaps they did not choose to remember. Anyhow, there they were, tramping and jostling under Quelch's window, as if oblivious of the rather important existence of Quelch.

Mr. Quelch laid down his pen, and stepped to the window. Under his bent brows his gimlet eyes gleamed.

Those gimlet eyes fixed on Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove. And Mr. Quelch frowned more grimly.

The term was only a few days old, but Harry Wharton, once his Form master's trusted head boy, seemed to

have had time to get into Mr. Quelch's blackest books. There was something almost like dislike in Mr. Quelch's look as he fixed his eyes on the junior whom he had displaced from the position of head boy on the first day of the term.

If Harry Wharton saw him at the window, he gave no sign of it. He seemed to be heart and soul in the tussle round the ball. Yet Mr. Quelch felt sure that Wharton knew that he was looking out, and that he was carrying on regardless, to display the spirit of insubordination and defiance that had marked his conduct from the first day of the new term. And thunder grew in Mr. Quelch's brow.

**Like a snake in the grass,
Loder of the Sixth schemes
to disgrace the boy who has
found out his shady secrets.
But in Harry Wharton, Loder
finds a foe he can neither
intimidate nor subdue!**

Bob Cherry kicked the ball, and Bolsover major stopped it, and it rolled to Harry Wharton's foot. Mr. Quelch leaned from the window.

"Boys! Cease this at once!" he rapped. "How dare you make this disturbance under my window! How dare you— Oh! Ooooh! Oooop!"

The ball whizzed from Wharton's foot.

It came like a bullet, direct for Mr. Quelch's window.

Undoubtedly it would have flown right in at the open window, had not Henry Samuel Quelch been standing there.

As it was Quelch stopped it.

It was long, long years since Henry Samuel Quelch had played football, and stopped a whizzing footer in its

flight. Even then, probably, he had not stopped it with his nose.

Now it was with his nose that he stopped it, the footer fairly crashing on his somewhat prominent proboscis.

Mr. Quelch gave a spluttering gasp, and disappeared from the window.

There was a heavy bump in the study.

Mr. Quelch dropped on the floor, and the footer dropped at his side. He lay and gasped.

Never in all the course of Mr. Quelch's long scholastic career had such a happening as this happened. Dazed and dizzy, the master of the Remove reposed on his study carpet, almost wondering whether the skies had fallen.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, staring in horror at the open window. "Was—was—was that Quelch?"

"It was the esteemed Quelch," murmured Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"You've done it now, Wharton!" panted Vernon-Smith. "Oh, my only winter bonnet! You've done it!"

"You awful ass, Wharton!" gasped Mark Linley. "Didn't you see where you were sending the ball—straight at the window?"

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Frank Nugent. "There'll be a fearful row!"

"Was Quelch at the window?" asked Johnny Bull. "I didn't see him."

"I didn't, till the ball landed," said Harry Wharton. "I dare say he will fancy that I did. But, as a matter of fact, I didn't."

"You knew the window was there, if you didn't know that Quelch was there," grinned the Bounder.

Wharton made no reply to that.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The Remove master appeared at the window again. All eyes were fixed on him. The Remove crowd, noisy enough a minute ago, were silent now. The most reckless fellow there wished that the ball had not been punted under Masters' windows.

Mr. Quelch was scarcely recognisable. That old footer had collected a good deal of mud from various puddles in

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the course of the punt about. Quite a considerable quantity of the mud had been transferred to the august features of Henry Samuel Quelch. Mud clung lovingly to his rather angular features, and dripped from his chin.

"Wharton!" His voice was almost a gasp. "Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!" answered the captain of the Remove carelessly.

"You kicked that ball at me."

"No, sir!" answered Wharton coolly.

"What! I saw you!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "How dare you tell such a palpable falsehood, Wharton?"

Wharton's face set stubbornly.

"I did not kick the ball at you, sir," he answered. "I did not see you at the window when I kicked. I kicked it, but not at you."

"I do not believe you, Wharton. I believe that this was an intentional assault upon your Form master," hooted Mr. Quelch.

"You may believe what you please, sir," said Wharton. "I can only tell you the truth."

"Harry!" breathed Frank Nugent anxiously, pressing his chum's arm as a warning. Really this was not the way for a junior to talk to a Form master. Even the Bounder, in his most reckless mood, would have hesitated to "cheek" Quelch in that style.

Wharton shook off his anxious chum's hand.

He stood cool and collected, with a steady gaze at the angry, muddy face of his Form master. The other fellows exchanged uneasy glances. Wharton was "asking for it" again, as he seemed to have been "asking for it" ever since the new term had started.

"Wharton!" Mr. Quelch's voice had a choking sound. "Insolent boy! I shall report you to your headmaster for a flogging!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Wharton imperturbably.

"What—what did you say?"

"I said thank you, sir!" answered Wharton calmly. "You are very good, sir!"

"Shut up, you howling ass!" hissed Bob Cherry, in his ear.

"For goodness' sake——" breathed Nugent.

Wharton did not seem to hear them. He stood with a cool, sarcastic smile on his face, a glimmer of mockery in his eyes. Mr. Quelch gazed at him speechlessly for a moment or two.

"Enough!" He found his voice at last. "After school, Wharton, you will be flogged! Now go to your study, and remain there till the bell for third school."

"Very well, sir!"

Wharton walked away, and Mr. Quelch disappeared from the window once more, probably going in search of a wash, which he certainly needed. The captain of the Remove strolled into the House with his hands in his pockets, apparently quite unmoved by the fact that a flogging was due after school. He left the other fellows in a dismayed group.

"Jevver see a man ask for it like that?" said the Bounder, as the Removites moved off from the dangerous precincts of the Masters' studies.

"Hardly ever!" grinned Skinner.

"Blessed if I quite understand Wharton this term," muttered Bob Cherry

uneasily. "He seems keen on getting Quelch's rag out."

"Biffing a footer on his boko is a fairly sure way of getting a beak's rag out!" chuckled Skinner.

"That was an accident!" said Nugent sharply.

"Let's hope Quelch will believe so," said Skinner blandly. "He didn't quite seem to, did he?"

"Oh, rats!"

Skinner grinned cheerily, evidently much entertained by the episode. But the famous Co. were worried and troubled. Harry Wharton had made a bad beginning that term, and his friends could not help feeling concerned and a little alarmed at the way he was going.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Asking for More!

"**H**E, he he!" That sudden cachinnation disturbed the silence of the Remove Form Room in third lesson.

The Form-room had been very silent.

Mr. Quelch, sitting at his high desk, was engaged with some papers, but he had a gimlet eye on his Form.

The Removites, each with a Latin prose paper before him, worked with unusual care and docility. After what had happened in break, every man in the Remove knew that he had to walk warily under the eye of Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master had come in for third school newly swept and garnished, so to speak, with no trace of the mud from the footer on his scholastic countenance, but with an expression on it which said, more plainly than words, that it behoved his Form to be on their best behaviour.

It was no time for any fellow to break out into a sudden chuckle, and when Billy Bunter cachinnated it sent almost an electric shock through the silent Form-room.

Mr. Quelch, at his high desk, lifted his head and glared. Almost every fellow jumped.

Bunter, the next instant, was silent, realising what he had done. His unmusical cachinnation had been quite involuntary. What caused it was rather a mystery. Certainly no other fellow in the Remove was feeling like laughing.

Really, it wasn't Bunter's fault. Really, it was because Bunter was trying hard to work up a good paper that he had been guilty of that indiscretion.

Bunter had soon found his Latin paper too much for him. It required mental effort. Mental efforts were not in Bunter's line. At such times it was Bunter's usual resource to blink at some other fellow's paper, if he could do so undetected and copy down what he saw there.

This resource often saved Bunter trouble temporarily; though it certainly led to more trouble in the long run. On the present occasion he blinked over Harry Wharton's shoulder, to see what he had written.

Wharton, though no swot, was a good and careful scholar, and, as a rule, a fellow who followed Wharton's lead was safe from Quelch's "jaw." But blinking at Wharton's paper, Bunter did not

behold the answers to the questions set by Mr. Quelch. What he beheld was a rather artistic drawing, representing Mr. Quelch at his study window, with a football banging on his majestic nose!

That was how the captain of the Remove was filling up his paper.

That unexpected sight drew the unexpected chortle from Billy Bunter. He could not help it.

"Bunter!" came Mr. Quelch's deep voice.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I wasn't laughing, sir!"

"What?"

"I—I—I was coughing, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'm catching a cold, sir! I—I—I was just tik-kik-coughing, sir!"

"Bunter, you will take a hundred lines!"

"Oh lor'!"

"Silence!"

There was silence once more. Billy Bunter worked wearily at his paper; it was obviously no use to copy down what Wharton had done! And with Mr. Quelch's attention drawn to him, Bunter did not venture to blink at any other fellow's.

Several fellows, however, glanced at Wharton, and some of them grinned, though they were careful not to give audible expression to their merriment. Wharton had not touched his paper, so far as Latin went; but he was drawing very sedulously and carefully, and the picture was quite good. He seemed immersed in his task, and oblivious of the attention he was getting.

The fellows near him knew what he was doing; fellows farther off knew that something was "on," and wondered what it was. It caused a certain restiveness in the Form, which in its turn caused Mr. Quelch to glance up several times with a glinting eye.

Frank Nugent, who was at Wharton's side, seemed to be sitting on pins. He could hardly imagine what was going to happen when the papers were collected—Wharton's among the rest.

He touched his chum's arm at last.

Wharton glanced at him.

"Chuck it, you awful ass!" breathed Nugent, in an almost terrified whisper.

"Nugent!"

It was Mr. Quelch's voice.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"You were speaking to Wharton! It is my intention to maintain order in this Form!" said Mr. Quelch, in a rumbling voice. "You will take a hundred lines, Nugent! The next boy who speaks before the end of the lesson will be caned!"

Nobody spoke again before the end of the lesson. But the restiveness in the Form grew more and more pronounced. There were nods and winks among the juniors, and grinning faces that became suddenly solemn and sedulous when Mr. Quelch looked round.

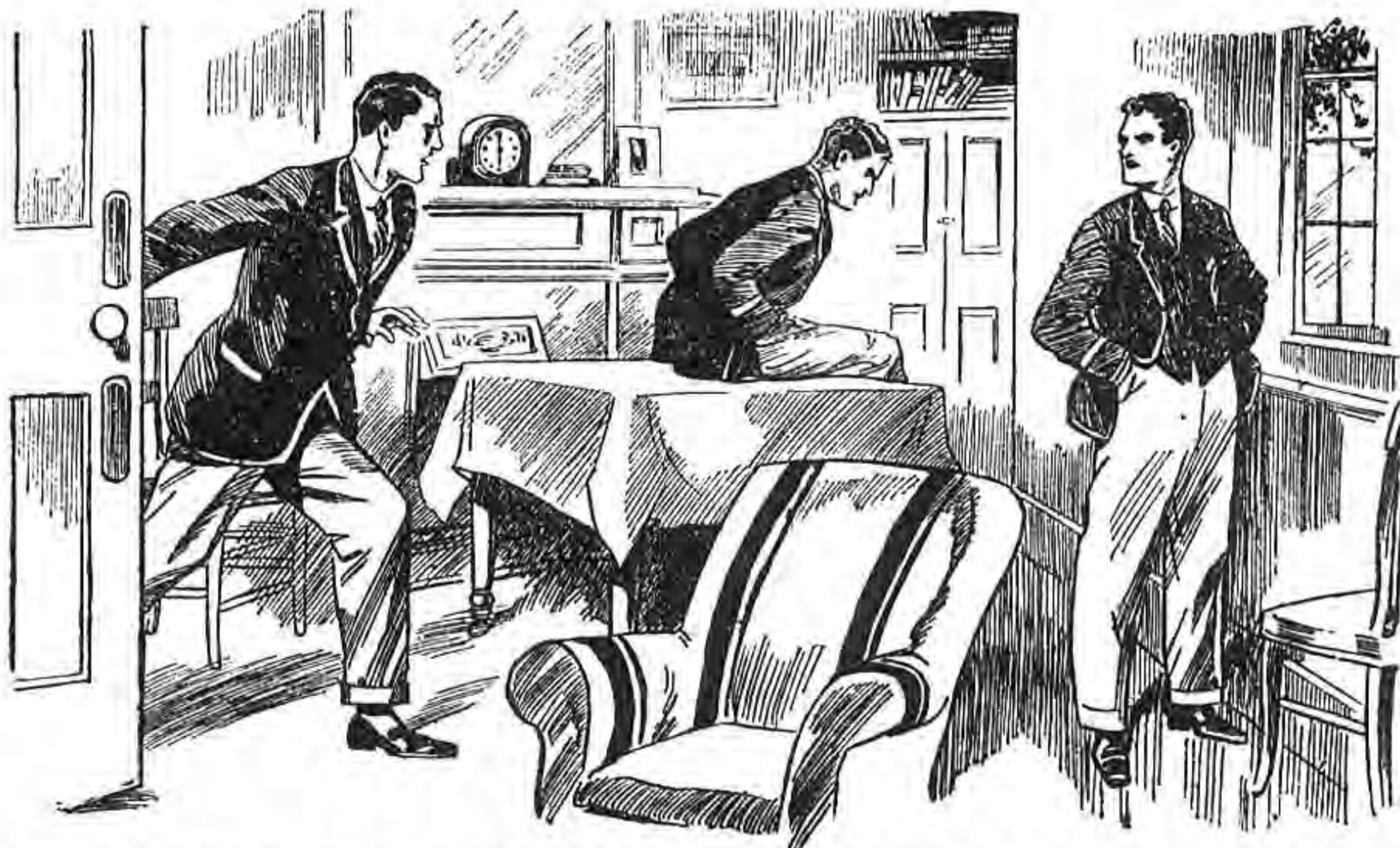
Wharton, having finished his artistic effort at last, sat back on the form, idly. Mr. Quelch gave him a look. But it was not unusual for Wharton to finish a paper before the others, and, beyond that look, his Form master gave him no heed—only mentally resolving that if this sulky boy's paper was not up to the mark he should have cause to be sorry for it.

The hour struck, much to the relief of the Remove, and the papers, finished or unfinished, had to be collected. That

THIS ISSUE CONTAINS

6 FREE-GIFT PICTURE STAMPS

Add them to your collection, boys!



"Wharton!" rapped out Loder. "You're wanted!" "What is it?" asked the junior, turning round. "If it's a message to the Cross Keys, Loder, I'm afraid I can't oblige!"

duty fell to the head boy of the Form. Mark Linley came along the desks, taking the papers.

He gave quite a jump when he came to Wharton's.

Wharton did not hand it to him; he left it on the desk for the Lancashire junior to pick up. Mark stared at it.

He stared at it with something like horror, and gave Wharton a startled look. Wharton replied with a sarcastic smile.

Mark coloured.

The Lancashire lad had always been on friendly terms with Wharton. They had not been exactly chummy, but they had always been good friends. Certainly, it was no fault of Mark's that he had been appointed head boy in Wharton's place; that rested with the Form master. It was not like the Wharton he had always known to resent it.

But Wharton was in an unusual mood this term, and Mark had a feeling that Wharton did resent it. Now he knew beyond a doubt. To hand that paper to the Remove master was to hand over Harry Wharton to the severest punishment; an irksome matter for Mark, which the rebel of the Remove did not wish to spare him.

Slowly Mark Linley picked up the paper.

"You ass!" he whispered.

Wharton stared at him coolly.

Linley added the paper to the rest and passed on. He knew that his momentary hesitation had not escaped Mr. Quelch's eye. The Remove master knew that something was "on" in the Form, and guessed that it was in connection, somehow, with Wharton. He surmised that the recalcitrant junior had turned out a very bad paper intentionally. If that was the case, the vials of wrath were ready.

Mark Linley gathered up all the papers and returned to his own desk. He laid them there, arranging them in a neat pile before he took them to Mr. Quelch.

He contrived to stand with his back to the Form master, screening what he was doing from the gimlet eye.

Mr. Quelch did not see—but some of the juniors saw—that Mark swiftly slipped one of the papers out of sight under a sheet of blotting-paper on his desk.

It was done so swiftly that Mr. Quelch had not the slightest suspicion, and was not in the least aware that one paper was missing when Mark laid the pile on his high desk.

"Dismiss!"

The Removites marched out.

Only two or three fellows had seen Mark's action. Most of the Form, including Wharton, supposed that Wharton's paper was in the pile under the Form master's hand.

They wondered what on earth was going to happen when his eye fell on it.

Mr. Quelch followed his Form out. He had the stack of papers in his hand, taking them to his study to look over them.

The juniors went out into the quad.

"Harry, old man," muttered Nugent, "you've done it now!"

"Think so?" drawled Wharton.

"As soon as Quelch sees that paper, you'll be called in. He's going over them before dinner."

"What about it?"

"It means a fearful row!"

"I'm getting used to rows. Quelch has a down on me this term. I may as well give him something to bite on."

"You're up for a flogging already," said Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes; for nothing. Even Quelch can't ask the beak to give me two floggings at once. So it won't be a flogging for drawing a picture of the old ass stopping the footer with his nose."

"Perhaps not," said Bob sharply. "But it may be detentions—in fact, it's sure to be. And what about the games?"

Have you forgotten that you're captain of the Form, and that we play Higheliffe on Saturday?"

"Oh, I dare say Linley would be willing to take my place, if I have to be left out!" said Harry. "He's rather keen on that sort of thing."

Mark Linley was passing the chums of the Remove, and he heard the words—as no doubt he was intended to do. He flushed crimson, but walked on without speaking.

"That's rot!" said Johnny Bull angrily.

"Is it?"

"Yes, it is; and you know it is!" snapped Johnny.

"Well, if I know it is, you needn't trouble to tell me," said Wharton. "Let's go and punt a ball about till our lord and master calls me in to jaw me for my paper."

But Wharton, to the surprise of his comrades, and his own, was not called in. The juniors went into dinner, and Mr. Quelch, at the head of the Remove table, gave him no special attention. It was clear that the Remove master must have gone through the Latin papers, and certain that, if he had seen Wharton's paper, he must have been deeply incensed. Yet he gave no sign of it, and the juniors could only wonder.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

In Suspense!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Oh, get out!" snapped Harry Wharton.

"If that's what you call civil, Wharton—"

"Fathead! Travel!"

"I haven't come to tea," said Billy Bunter, blinking into Study No. 1, where Frank Nugent was poaching eggs over the fire, and Harry Wharton was sitting in the window seat with a clouded brow. "I mean, that isn't

what I came here for. I'm not a fellow to scrounge a tea, I hope. Still, if you fellows are standing a feed I'll join you, and leave Loder over till tomorrow. Loder will keep."

Wharton stared at him, and Nugent cast a surprised glance over his shoulder at the fat Owl of the Remove.

It was uncommon enough for a prefect of the Sixth Form to ask a Lower boy to tea. And Loder, the bully of the Sixth, was about the last senior at Greyfriars who was likely to do so. Billy Bunter grinned complacently as he saw that he had surprised Study No. 1.

"Loder's asked you to tea?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Well, not exactly asked me," admitted Bunter cautiously. "But we're rather pally, you know, and I can drop into his study if I like."

"You fat chump!" grunted Wharton. "The less you have to do with that rotter the better!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"When I want your advice, Wharton, I'll ask for it," he said, with dignity. "I know you're up against Loder of the Sixth; but he's not such a bad chap. Still, if you fellows would like me to stay—"

"We wouldn't!"

"The fact is, I shouldn't care to tea with you two," said Bunter calmly. "You have rather measly spreads in this study—hardly worth my while. And you're rather a skeleton at the feast, Wharton, old chap. You've come back this term like a bear with a sore head, and you can't expect fellows to like it. I can tell you that if you're not a bit more civil you won't see much of me in this study."

Harry Wharton half-rose, and sat down again. The egregious Owl of the Remove was hardly worth kicking.

"I think I'll trickle along and see Loder," said the fat junior. "But—" He paused.

"Oh, there's a 'but'!" grinned Nugent.

"Well, a fellow hardly knows how to take Loder of the Sixth," confessed Bunter. "After what I've done for him, he's bound to play up, isn't he?"

"What on earth have you done for Loder, you fat duffer?"

"That's telling," said Bunter mysteriously. "I'm not talking about it up and down the Remove. A fellow may have taken a message to a certain place that was out of bounds, and he may not. He may have got flogged for going there, and he may not. I'm not saying anything. Still, considering that a fellow took a Head's whipping without giving Loder away, the man's bound to do the decent thing. What do you think?"

Nugent stared at the fat Owl, and then looked at Wharton. The latter gave a sarcastic laugh.

"Bunter took a message for Loder to the Cross Keys first night of term," said Harry. "You know he was spotted there, and flogged. Loder frightened him into keeping his mouth shut. I tried to get him off the flogging, and I was a fool for my pains. You heard me tell the Head, in Hall, that a Sixth Form prefect had sent Bunter out of bounds. I've had the beaks and the prefects down on me ever since for daring to say such a thing."

He laughed.

"Well, you needn't have butted in," said Bunter.

"I won't another time," said the captain of the Remove. "I was trying

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to get you off the flogging, you fat worm!"

"What's a flogging?" said Bunter valiantly. "I'm not soft like some fellows. I can stand being whopped."

Now that the flogging was days old, Bunter did not mind it in the least. At the time he had roused all the echoes of Greyfriars School on his top note. The bully of the Sixth had frightened him into keeping the secret, but now that it was over and done with, Bunter preferred to think that he had kept "mum" from the loyalty and fortitude that were such prominent characteristics of his. He was, in fact, rather proud of that flogging now that it was safely over, and the last twinge had departed from his fat person.

"I never asked you to butt in," pursued Bunter. "Like your cheek, I think. As if I care about a flogging!"

"You burbling ass, you looked as sick as an owl!" said Frank. "I've never seen such a frightened rabbit as you looked."

"Oh, really, Nugent! But to come to the point," said Bunter, "Loder's bound to play up. It isn't every fellow who'd take a whopping to keep his secrets for him."

"Then it's true that you went to the Cross Keys for Loder?" said Nugent.

"Don't you ask any questions, old chap, and I won't tell you any fibs," answered the fatuous Owl. "I'm not going to say anything about Loder. He told me very specially not to. But after all I've done for him, you know, you'd expect a fellow to be rather friendly, wouldn't you? He said plainly that he'd make it up to me if I stood it through. Well, the queer thing is that he's taken no notice of me whatever since—doesn't seem to know that I'm at Greyfriars at all, far as I can see. Queer, isn't it?"

"Not very," said Nugent, laughing. "If you make out to Loder that you've got a claim on him, you're more likely to get six than an invitation to tea in his study."

"Think so?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Try him and see," chuckled Nugent, as he turned out the poached eggs.

"You'll soon find out."

Bunter blinked at him dubiously.

"After all, there's such a thing as gratitude," he argued. "You know Spokeshave—I mean Shakespeare—says that a thankless tooth is sharper than a serpent's child. Still, Loder's rather a beast, and I think, on the whole, I'd rather tea with my pals."

Bunter rolled into the study.

Harry Wharton rose from the window seat, took a fat ear between a finger and thumb, and led Bunter back into the passage. Bunter went queaking. The study door closed on him.

"Beast!" came in a howl through the keyhole. "I'll jolly well ask Loder to whop you! Yah!"

After which there was a sound of hurriedly departing footsteps, as if Billy Bunter feared that the study door might open again.

Wharton and Nugent sat down to tea. Harry Wharton was not in a cheerful mood. All day he had been expecting to be called into his Form master's presence to answer for his paper in third school, but the summons had not reached him. It was impossible for Mr. Quelch to overlook such an offence, and it seemed to Wharton that the Remove master was deliberately keeping him in suspense. His interview with the headmaster was due at six o'clock, too—and that was not a pleasant prospect. His face was hard and glum; Nugent's was troubled and distressed. Anyone

looking at the two would have supposed that it was Nugent who was "up" for the flogging.

The door opened, and Skinner of the Remove looked in. He had an exercise-book in his hand.

"Not gone to the Beak yet?" he asked.

"Not till six," answered Harry curtly.

"Well, I've brought you this," said Skinner blandly, holding up the exercise-book.

Wharton stared at it.

"What on earth for?" he asked.

"To pack in your bags, old bean!"

"Don't be a silly ass!" said Wharton gruffly.

"My dear man, take my tip and pack it in," said Skinner, laying the exercise-book on the table. "The Beak's got a lot of muscle for an old gent of his venerable years—I've been there, you know. You'll be glad of it when the old boy starts in with the birch."

There was a chuckle in the passage from Snoop and Stott. Harold Skinner strolled out of the doorway.

Wharton picked up the exercise-book. Whiz!

It caught Skinner in the back of the neck as he went, and he gave a howl and pitched forward on his hands and knees. At which Snoop and Stott chuckled more explosively than before.

Wharton kicked the door shut.

"The fellows seem to be enjoying it," he remarked. "I suppose it's rather entertaining for a man to be up for a flogging."

"They're not all like Skinner," said Frank quietly. "It's rotten, Harry! I wish you hadn't barged that footer at Quelch!"

"I'm glad I did!"

There was no rejoinder to be made to that, and tea in Study No. 1 finished in silence. Wharton lounged to the window and stood looking out into the quad. Frank's eye was rather anxiously on the study clock.

"It's six, Harry," he said at last.

"Is it?" said Wharton indifferently.

"You're due with the Head."

"I know."

"Quelch is to take you there," said Frank. "For goodness' sake, Harry, go to his study. He will come up for you—"

"Let him come."

"What's the good of asking for more trouble, old chap?"

"What's the good of not asking for it?" returned Wharton, with a curl of the lip. "I get it either way."

The hand of the clock crawled on. Wharton stood grimly at the study window, staring out. At five minutes past six there was a tramp of footsteps in the Remove passage, and the door was flung open and Loder of the Sixth appeared. Evidently, as the rebel of the Remove did not come to his Form master as hidden, a prefect had been sent for him.

Loder stared into the study and fixed his eyes on the figure at the window. Wharton did not turn his head.

"Wharton!" rapped out Loder.

The junior looked round then.

"Well?" he asked coolly.

"You're wanted!" snapped Loder.

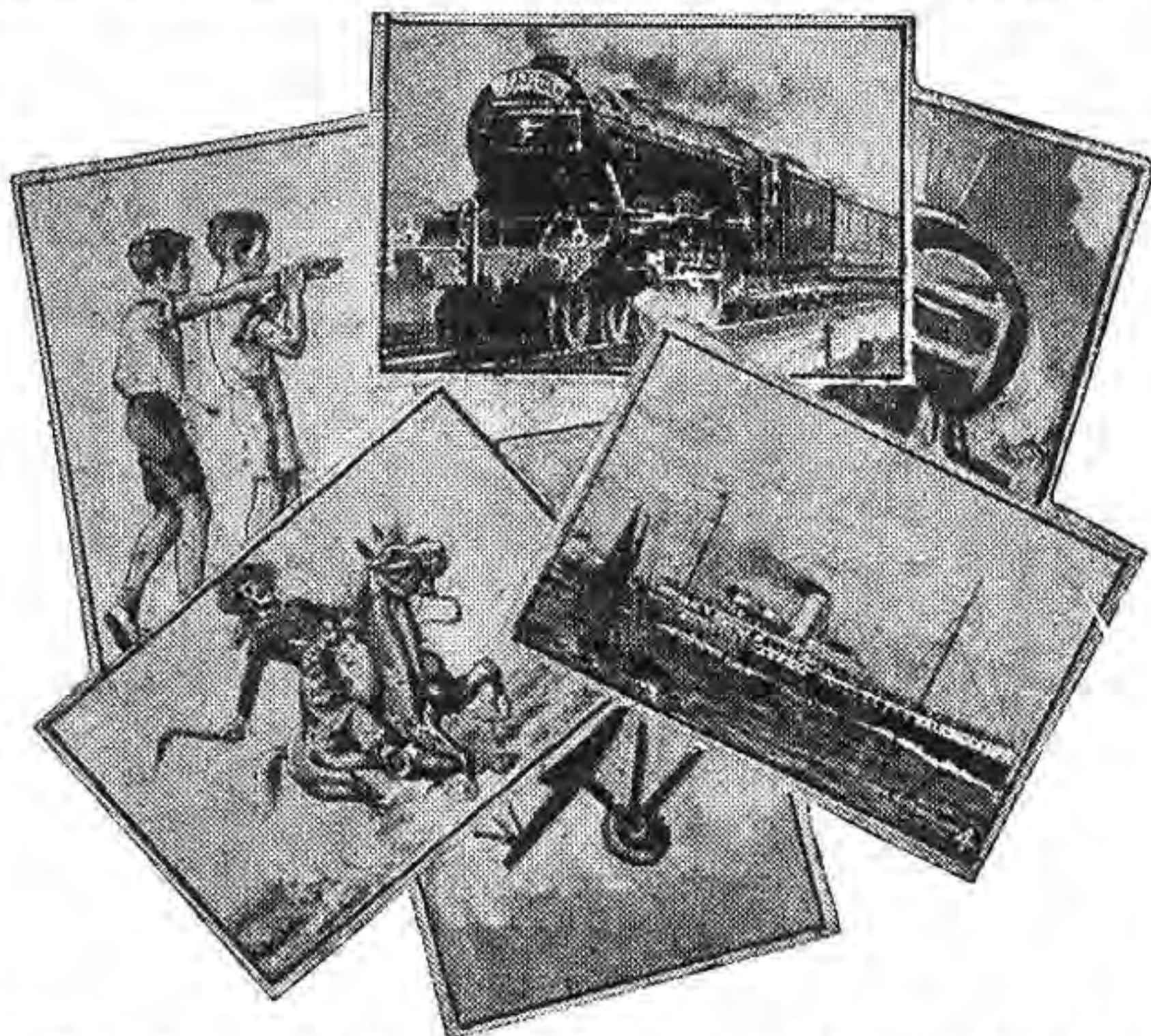
"What is it?" asked Harry. "If it's a message to the Cross Keys, Loder, I'm afraid I can't oblige. Ask Bunter again."

Gerald Loder set his lips, breathing hard through his nose. The look he gave Wharton might have scared any junior. Frank gave his chum a look, but Wharton did not glance at him. His eyes were fixed on the sportsman of the Sixth with cool mockery. It was some moments before the prefect spoke again.

"I'll deal with you later for your

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impudence, Wharton! At present I'm taking you to the Head. Follow me!"

"With pleasure," said Wharton politely. "I'll go to any respectable sort of place, Loder, but I really bar the Cross Keys!"

Loder seemed about to choke. He clenched his hands and made a stride towards the captain of the Remove. But he checked himself and turned back to the door.

Wharton followed him from the study. And many curious glances were turned on them by the Remove fellows as they went down to the Head's study.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. A Fresh Start!

DR. LOCKE fixed his eyes on Harry Wharton as the junior entered. His face was very grave and a little stern, and it grew sterner as he read Wharton's expression. The junior's manner was respectful enough. Even in his present dogged mood Wharton was not likely to be guilty of disrespect towards his headmaster. But there was a subtle touch of stubbornness in his face which did not escape the chief beak's keen glance.

Mr. Quelch was in the study. His face was grim. There was a redness in Mr. Quelch's angular nose, a trace of the impact of the footer that morning. His eyes dwelt on Wharton with grim hostility. Last term Skinner and his friends had had a gibe that Wharton was the Form master's favourite. They would hardly have fancied so now.

"Wharton," said the Head gravely, "you have been brought before me on a very serious matter—nothing less

than what amounts to an assault upon your Form master. Your Form master tells me—and I have myself observed—that your conduct this term has been strangely insubordinate—quite out of keeping with your former character. But such an offence as this—" The Head paused a moment. "Wharton, why did you do this?"

"Mr. Quelch is mistaken, sir," said Harry. "I did not do it."

"Wharton!" "I did not know that Mr. Quelch was at his window when I kicked the football, sir—nobody else saw him there till the footer was kicked—and there were a dozen of us. I don't see why Mr. Quelch should suppose that I saw him when nobody else did."

Dr. Locke looked a little perplexed.

"Mr. Quelch is of opinion that you deliberately kicked the football at him, Wharton," he said.

"I did nothing of the kind, sir! But I am not surprised that he believes so," added Wharton bitterly.

"What? What do you mean, Wharton?"

"I mean that I don't expect justice from Mr. Quelch, sir!"

That reply was followed by a moment's dead silence. The colour came into Mr. Quelch's cheeks.

"Wharton!" There was a deep note of anger in the Head's voice when he spoke again. "How dare you make such a remark?"

"You told me to speak, sir."

"Dr. Locke—" began the Remove master in a trembling voice. He broke off, his eyes glinting at the junior.

"If you make another such remark, Wharton, I shall send you away from the school the same hour," said Dr. Locke. "Take care! I will not allow any Greyfriars boy to insult the most

trusted and valued member of my staff!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. "You deny, Wharton, that you intended the football to strike your Form master?"

"I had no idea it would touch him, sir."

"Can you believe this, Mr. Quelch?"

"No, sir," said Mr. Quelch through his set lips. "I do not believe it."

"Is it your experience of this boy that he is untruthful?"

Mr. Quelch paused. He was intensely angry; his feeling towards Wharton, for the time at least, was one of intense dislike. But he was a just gentleman.

"No, sir. Hitherto I should have said that Wharton was incapable of a falsehood."

Wharton started a little. He had not expected that.

He turned to his Form master with some of the hard defiance gone from his face.

"Mr. Quelch! I give you my word, sir, that I never saw you at the window—I had no idea you were there."

"Last term, Wharton, I should have taken your word without hesitation. I cannot take it now."

The junior's face hardened again. "Very well, sir!" he said quietly.

"You kicked the ball, Wharton, precisely in the direction of Mr. Quelch's window," said the Head. "Do you tell me that that was an accident?"

"No, sir! I meant to land the ball in his study."

"You knew that your Form master was in the room?"

"I supposed he was, sir."

"You admit, then, that you were playing a foolish and disrespectful trick!"

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exclaimed the Head. "You mean that you intended to startle Mr. Quelch by dropping the football into his study, and that as he had stepped to the window it struck him by accident."

"Yes, sir."

"That is serious enough," said Dr. Locke. "Such a disrespectful trick is a serious matter. But—" He paused and looked at Mr. Quelch. "Can you accept this explanation, Mr. Quelch?"

"No doubt it is possible," said the Remove master. "My impression was that the boy saw me, and that his action was intentional. But I am prepared to leave the matter entirely to your judgment."

Perhaps a doubt was creeping into Mr. Quelch's own mind. And, though Wharton did not think so, or did not choose to think so, the Remove master was only anxious for strict justice to be done.

"If you are willing to give the boy the benefit of the doubt, sir—" said Dr. Locke.

"Quite!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Head looked relieved. His own opinion was that the junior was telling the exact truth; and that Mr. Quelch had been misled by a very natural anger.

"Very well," said Dr. Locke. "You hear what your Form master says, Wharton! The reckless prank you have admitted is a matter for your Form master to deal with; it is not an occasion for a flogging. I shall leave Mr. Quelch to deal with you."

"Go to my study, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch.

"Very well, sir."

Harry Wharton left the Head's study and walked down the corridor. Loder of the Sixth was waiting at the end of the passage. He signed to the junior to stop.

"You've been whopped?" he asked.

"Sorry to disappoint you, Loder—no!" answered Harry politely.

Loder gritted his teeth.

"So you've squirmed out of it, you wily young scoundrel," he said.

"That's it!" assented Wharton.

"You've lied yourself out of a licking!"

"I suppose you would think so," said Wharton contemptuously. "You'd hardly believe that other fellows are not lying rotters like yourself, Loder."

"Follow me to my study!" snarled Loder.

"Sorry again—another engagement!" said Wharton, and he walked away to Mr. Quelch's study.

Loder stared after him blankly. A better-tempered prefect than Gerald Loder might have been angered by this flippant sort of treatment from a Lower boy. He made a stride after Wharton—but paused, as he saw the junior turn into Masters' passage.

Heedless, apparently, of Loder, Harry Wharton went into Mr. Quelch's study and waited there for his Form master.

He had a long time to wait.

As a matter of fact, Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch were in deep consultation on the subject of Wharton; and the kind old Head, with a gentle but persistent persuasiveness, was soothing the Remove master's ruffled feelings, and leading him to take a kinder and more lenient view of his former head boy.

It was a quarter of an hour later that Mr. Quelch came in; and rather to Wharton's surprise, the frown was gone from his face.

"Wharton," he said quietly, "I have decided to accept your statement, and can only hope that it was a truthful one. I shall not cane you for the offence you

have admitted. You will take an imposition of five hundred lines."

"Very well, sir!"

"You will bring the lines to me after school to-morrow," said Mr. Quelch, "and I trust, Wharton, that from this time forward, you will make an effort to regain the good opinion I formerly had of you."

Wharton looked at him.

A sense of bitter injustice had roused all that was stubborn, all that was dogged and hard in his nature. But through the mists of sullen resentment a better feeling and a better understanding came to him as Mr. Quelch spoke gravely and quite kindly.

"I'm sorry, sir, that you changed your opinion of me," he said earnestly. "I—I'm sorry I played that silly trick with the footer this morning, sir—but I never dreamed it would touch you. And—and I apologise for my paper in third lesson, sir."

Mr. Quelch stared.

"I have not seen your paper in third lesson, Wharton! It was missing from among those Linley handed to me. I concluded that Linley had somehow lost it."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"I gather from what you say, Wharton, that your paper was an intentionally bad one," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "But as I have not seen it, and as you have offered an apology, nothing further shall be said on the subject. You may leave my study, my boy."

"Thank you, sir!" said Harry.

It was in a changed mood that the captain of the Remove left his Form master's study. Frank Nugent saw it at once, when his chum came back to Study No. 1 in the Remove.

"How's it gone?" he asked.

Wharton smiled.

"Right as rain!" he answered. "It all boils down to five hundred lines, to be handed in to-morrow."

"Good luck!" said Frank, in great relief.

"Blessed if I make Quelch out!" said Harry slowly. "I suppose the Head has talked him round—the Head's a good old bean. He's been down on me without cause, but—" he paused.

"Wash it out and start afresh!" said Frank.

"That's just what I am thinking! That cunning rotter Loder pulled his leg and got him down on me. I—I may have been a bit to blame—" Wharton caught an involuntary smile on Nugent's face, and smiled, too. "Well, look here, Frank, I'm going to try toeing the line and see how it works! And I'll turn out that impot right up to time and make it a regular peach of an impot!" He laughed. "Quelch shan't have anything to grumble at—and if he means fair play, it's all serene."

And Harry Wharton cleared a corner of the table and started on his lines at once; looking more like his old cheery self than Frank had seen him look since the first day of term. And Nugent's face was bright as he strolled away and left him to it.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Inhospitable!

BILLY BUNTER stood in the Sixth Form passage, blinking at the door of Gerald Loder's study with a dubious and hesitating blink.

Two or three Sixth Form men who passed him, stared at him expressively, as if wondering what a unrobe like a Remove kid was doing in that passage.

Bunter did not heed them.

Bunter was thinking it out!

His fat brain was not really planned

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by Nature for hard work in the way of thinking. The more he thought, the more dubious he grew.

Bunter, in his own estimation, had done a lot for Loder of the Sixth. Had he not taken a message for him, after lock-up, to the Cross Keys; and had he not kept the secret when he was flogged for that performance? Surely there was such a thing as gratitude.

Had Bunter succeeded in snaffling a tea in the Remove passage, he would not have thought of putting a strain on Loder's gratitude. But Bunter had only had tea in Hall; which was a mere bagatelle to Bunter. Toddy, his study-mate, was tea-ing out; Smithy had hurled a loaf at him when he looked into Study No. 4 in the Remove—Wharton had walked him out of Study No. 1 with a vice-like finger and thumb on his ear. Nobody in the Remove seemed anxious for Bunter to butt in to tea and annex the lion's share of what was going. It was, in fact, tea with Loder or no tea at all—neck or nothing!

Bunter was hungry; but though he was hungry, he hesitated. He had seen Loder go to his study, after taking Wharton to the Head; and short-sighted as he was, he had seen that Loder did not look good-tempered. A little later he had seen Tubb of the Third, who was Loder's fag, leave the study, wriggling as he departed—which looked as if Loder had given Tubb teco. It did not seem a propitious time for butting in on Loder. Still, Bunter wanted his tea, and he knew that Tubb had prepared tea for Loder; and after all he had done for the sportsman of the Sixth, he felt entitled to at least one spread in Loder's study. Moreover, though he had said nothing about Loder's share in the Cross Keys affair, so far, he could still tattle if he liked; and surely Loder would understand that it was wisest to be pally!

Billy Bunter made up his fat mind at last.

His intellect, such as it was, would probably have led him away from Loder's study; but his fat inside led him to Loder's door. But his fat hand was very nervous as he tapped.

"Come in!" came a snap from the study.

Bunter entered.

Loder and Walker were at tea, at the table. Both of them stared at Bunter. Loder gave an angry grunt. He had supposed that it was Wharton coming, as he had been bidden, and his ashplant was ready for Wharton. He did not look pleased to see Bunter.

"Well, what?" he snapped.

Bunter blinked at the table. There were sandwiches and jam and a cake. It was not a gorgeous spread; still, it was a spread, and Bunter was anxious to do his bit—if he could. As a matter of fact, Loder was rather short of funds these days.

The dead cert which had led him to send a message to Mr. Joey Banks on the first day of term had turned out a ghastly deception, like so many dead certs. The geegee that was absolutely certain to romp home and leave the rest of the field standing, had tailed in eleventh.

Instead of receiving a nice little sum from Mr. Banks, Loder had had to hand out a nice little sum to that frowsy gentleman; and in such matters as this it was assuredly not more blessed to give than to receive.

So far from feeling grateful to Bunter for having delivered his message in time to Mr. Banks, Loder wished that the young ass had been caught before he had delivered it!

In these circumstances there was no doubt that Bunter was leaning on a

very frail reed in relying on Gerald Loder's gratitude for services rendered.

"What does the young idiot want?" asked Walker, as Bunter hesitated to speak.

"A licking, I should think!" said Loder, reaching out his hand to his ashplant.

"I—I say!" gasped Bunter. "I say, Loder, I—I haven't had any tea!"

Loder simply stared.

"You benighted little idiot!" he said. "What the thump does that matter to me?"

"I—I thought—I—I—I thought you—you'd like me to come to tea with you, Loder!"

"Oh gad!" said Walker. "Are you taking up fags for tea-fights, Loder?"

"Not that I know of," answered Loder. "I suppose this is meant for cheek. This cheerful idiot is following young Wharton's example, I suppose, and thinks he can cheek the Sixth! I'll give him a tip about that!"

Loder rose from the chair, picking up his cane.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. "I—I

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Peter Jolliffe, of 23, High Street, Shanklin, I.O.W., has been sent a handsome pocket wallet for the following Greyfriars limerick:

Muttered Paul Prout, one day in despair,
"On my head I will soon have no hair."
So he purchased some lotion,
And now he's a notion
That he'll soon give the barber a scare!

Have you sent in your limerick yet? Follow Peter's example and win a wallet.

say, Loder, after all I've done for you, you know—"

"What?"

"Well, I took that flogging, you know, and you know what would have happened if I'd told the Head you sent me out of bounds—"

"Great pip!" ejaculated Walker.

Loder gave Bunter an almost homicidal glare.

It was true that Loder, having a touch of compunction when Bunter was flogged for his folly, had told the fat junior that he would make it up to him. But touches of compunction did not last long with Gerald Loder. He had forgotten that little trifle, and the mere suggestion that the fatuous Owl supposed that he had a hold on him roused Loder's deepest ire.

"Did you say that I sent you out of bounds, Bunter?" asked Loder.

"Eh! Y-you know you did!" stammered Bunter. "Wharrer you mean?"

"If you thought of spinning a yarn like that you should have spun it at the time," said Loder. "If I hear that you've said a single word of that sort, Bunter, I shall take you to the Head, and report you for another flogging. As a hint not to talk rot about a prefect, I'll lick you now! Bend over that chair!"

Billy Bunter blinked at him, fairly goggling through his big spectacles at the bully of the Sixth.

He did not quite know what to expect when he invited himself to tea with Loder. But whatever he had expected,

he had not expected this—though really he might have expected it.

Loder pointed to the chair with the cane.

"I'm waiting!" he snapped.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

His first thought was that he wished he hadn't come. His second was to depart as fast as his fat little legs could carry him. He made a jump for the door.

Loder strode at him, and grabbed him by the collar.

"I think I told you to bend over that chair!" said Loder pleasantly.

"Ow! I—I say, Loder— Yarooooh!" A strong arm bent Bunter over the chair. Then the ashplant swished and whistled.

Bunter roared in anticipation.

His awful anticipations were fully realised. The ashplant rang like a pistol-shot as it landed on his tight trousers.

Whack!

"Yaroooooh!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Oh crikey! Help! Yooop!"

Whack, whack!

"Whooooop! I say— Yaroooooh! Ow! Wow! Yow!" roared Bunter. "Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Oh scissors! Oh jiminy! Whooooop!"

"You can get out, Bunter," said Loder genially. "Take my tip, and don't ask for it again! I shall have an eye on you! Get out!"

"Ooooo-goooh-woodh-oooh!" gurgled Bunter, as he got out.

He wriggled down the passage, squirming and twisting, looking as if he was trying to fold himself up like a pocket-knife. He heard Loder and Walker laughing as he went.

Bunter did not feel like laughing. He groaned his way to the Remove passage, and groaned into Study No. 7; and stood leaning on the table there, still groaning. He even forgot that he was hungry and that he had had only one tea. Had he remembered it, and had he been as hungry as the Egyptians in the seven lean years, he would not have thought again of going to tea with Loder of the Sixth! Never again was Billy Bunter likely to think of asking himself to tea with Loder!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Wolf and the Lamb!

"ROTTER!" said Bob Cherry.

"The rottenfulness," said Hurree Janset Rain Singh solemnly, "is terrific!"

It was the following afternoon. A half-holiday at Greyfriars—and a fine, sunny, autumn day. That afternoon Harry Wharton & Co. had planned to bike over to Highcliffe, to see Courtenay and the Caterpillar, and join them on a spin. Naturally, they wanted to start early; in fact, their Highcliffe friends expected them rather early.

But there was, so to speak, a lion in the path. All the Co. agreed that Harry Wharton had got off easily with an impot of five hundred lines. But five hundred lines was a large order. Half the imposition had been written out the previous day. The other half remained to be done.

The lines had to be handed in that afternoon. Mr. Quelch had said "after school," which allowed Wharton plenty of time. In his new mood of seeking to placate his Form master and make a fresh start, Wharton was anxious to obey the order to the very letter.

He intended to write out that long and weary impot without a single fault, and take it to his Form master in good

time. If there was to be more trouble he had resolved, seriously and sincerely, that the fault should not be his.

His chums fully agreed. They were only too glad to see the captain of the Remove in this new mood. But it looked like mucking up the half-holiday, as Bob expressed it.

Wharton sat at the table in Study No. 1, lines running from his pen. But he was not dashing them off with the careless haste that was rather the rule than the exception in the Lower School. Every line was carefully written; which, again, his comrades were glad to see. But it made the long task longer.

Wharton looked up.

"Look here, you men, I'll chuck it if you like," he said. "I've got two hundred more to do, and I don't want to rush them. We shall be back for tea, and I can finish between tea and lock-up."

"Well—" said Bob slowly.

Johnny Bull shook his head.

"Get it done," he said. "Don't risk another row with Quelch! Might be late back, or something—puncture, or anything. It's a rotten idea to put things off!"

"Johnny's right," said Frank at once. "Wire in, old man, and we'll wait."

"Yes, that's the best idea," agreed Bob. "There's been too much trouble already; don't take chances."

"You can't keep the Highcliffe men waiting," said Harry. "I'd rather get through and finish; but you fellows cut off. You'll be riding round by Redclyffe. Well, I'll cut straight across to Redclyffe when I'm through, and pick you up there."

"That's a good wheeze," agreed Bob, who undoubtedly was anxious to get out of doors. "It won't help you for us to stand watching! More likely to bother you."

"Much more likely," said Harry, with a smile. "Cut off!"

The Co. left the study, and in a few minutes were pedalling away cheerfully for Highcliffe. It was not in a happy mood that Wharton was left alone to finish his weary task. But he had made up his mind, and he worked carefully and steadily, and did not rise from the table till the last line had been written with meticulous care, which was more than an hour later.

"Thank goodness that's done!" he murmured.

He gathered up the sheets and left the study.

The House was deserted when he went down. Hardly a fellow remained indoors on that glorious afternoon.

There was a football match in progress on Big Side, where the Sixth were playing the Fifth. On the junior ground the Shell were in a game with the Fourth. In another part of the ground Third and Second were at practice under the superintendence of Mr. Lascell.

Others fellows had gone up the river or into the woods. Billy Bunter was blinking in at the window of the school shop, with a longing but unavailing blink—being in his usual stony state. Skinner and his friends were smoking cigarettes in their study, being almost the only fellows in the House. Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, had gone out for a walk with Capper, the master of the Fourth Form.

The House seemed strangely still and silent on that sunny afternoon, as Harry Wharton went down to his Form master's study.

He tapped at the door, and, receiving

no answer, opened it and stepped in. Mr. Quelch was not there; at that moment, in fact, he was five miles from the school, walking poor Mr. Capper off his legs.

But Mr. Quelch's absence did not matter. If a junior took lines to his Form master's study, and the master was not there, he had to leave them on the desk, to meet Quelch's eyes when he came.

Harry Wharton laid his imposition on the desk, and placed a paper-weight on it, with unusual care and thoughtfulness. Leaving it there for Mr. Quelch's inspection, and thinking, perhaps, with a touch of bitterness, that even Quelch would have no fault to find this time, he left the study and closed the door.

He breathed more freely when he got out of the House. After his tiresome task, it was a sheer pleasure to get into the fresh air. He broke into a trot as he headed for the bike shed.

"Wharton!"

It was Loder's voice.

Loder of the Sixth was loafing idly about the quad, with his hands in his pockets, and a moody frown on his brow.

Wingate was playing both his chums, Walker and Carne, in the Sixth Form team, on Big Side; but Loder was not wanted. The sportsman of the Sixth would have gone over to the Three Fishers, on the river, for a game of billiards, had not that "dead cert" of a few days ago run away with all his available cash.

Loder was stony now, and in a very unpleasant temper. It quite bucked him to see Harry Wharton, cutting away with a bright and cheerful face. That bright cheerfulness was going to be clouded on the spot.

Wharton glanced round.

"Yes, Loder!" he answered quietly, coming to a halt.

His dislike of the bully of the Sixth, his scorn for him, were unabated; but he was on a new tack now. He was going to avoid trouble with Loder if he could. But it was a case of the wolf and the lamb over again. If it takes two to make a quarrel, it also takes two to keep the peace.

"I told you to come to my study yesterday, Wharton," said Loder. "You did not come. I haven't had time to see about it yet, but I'll deal with you now. Go back into the House."

Wharton stood still.

He was bound, as a junior, to obey an order from a Sixth Form prefect. In Loder's case, that meant that he was bound to submit to the bullying of a senior who disliked him.

"You hear me?" rapped Loder.

"I'm going out," said Harry quietly. "It's a half-holiday, Loder."

"You're going into the House! Go to my study and wait for me there," said Loder in his most bullying tone.

"My friends will be waiting for me at Redclyffe," said Harry. "I've promised to join them there."

"You've heard what I've said."

Wharton set his lips.

"Are you going?" demanded Loder.

"No!" said Wharton, between his teeth.

Loder grinned, an unpleasant grin. This was what he wanted. Somehow, this young sweep had escaped a flogging the day before, and seemed to be getting into his Form master's good graces again. Now he was delivering himself into Loder's hands once more.

"Very well; I shall take you to your Form master," said Loder. He was not aware that Mr. Quelch was out of gates that afternoon. "Come with me."

He dropped a heavy hand on Wharton's shoulder.

Wharton's face flushed, and his eyes glinted.

"Take your hand away, Loder!" he said, in a low, but very distant voice.

Instead of taking his hand away Loder tightened his grip. The next moment Wharton had struck the hand from his shoulder, and Loder gave a yelp of surprise and pain.

Leaving the prefect yelping, Wharton cut away to the bike shed. Almost in a twinkling he ran his machine out, and ran it along to the open gate.

There was a tramp of feet as Loder rushed down on him.

"Stop!" roared Loder.

Wharton threw a leg over his machine. He drove at the pedals as Loder rushed on. The bully of the Sixth made a fierce grab after him, missed as Wharton shot out of reach, and overbalanced.

Crash!

Loder landed on his face.

Wharton glanced back at the crash, laughed, and pedalled on, and vanished out of the gateway.

Loder staggered to his feet.

His nose had hit the earth, hard, and it felt hurt. His hands were scratched on the gravel. Blind with rage, he rushed out of the gateway after the junior, only in time to see Wharton disappearing in the distance, riding as if he were in a race.

Loder glared after him, spluttering with rage.

Wharton was out of reach. But he had, at least, a serious report to make to the young rascal's Form master—a report serious enough to re-awaken the trouble that seemed to have blown over. And Loder, in a seething state of fury, tramped away to the House and knocked at the door of Mr. Quelch's study.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Loder in Luck I

"THE old ass!"

Loder growled the words.

When Gerald Loder spoke to Mr. Quelch, or any other master, his manner was quietly respectful, and a little ingratiating. But in Mr. Quelch's absence, standing in the empty study, he spoke of the Remove master in a way that certainly could not have been called respectful.

It was irritating enough.

With his nose bruised, his hands scratched, his knees dusty, Loder had marched in to make his report, desiring that the Remove master should see those signs of damage, a proof of the insubordinate ruffianism of that rebellious member of his Form, Harry Wharton.

But the Remove master, evidently, was gone out—the report had to wait, and Loder, naturally, did not want to preserve his signs of damage till Mr. Quelch came in. He wanted to rub some ointment on his sore nose and his scratched palms and fingers. So he confided to the empty study what he really thought of Henry Samuel Quelch, scowling savagely round the room as he did so.

Then it was that his eye fell on a neat little pile of impot paper on Mr. Quelch's desk.

He knew Harry Wharton's hand; but if he had not known it, he would have known that this was Wharton's work, for a fellow's name had to be written on the top sheet of an imposition.

Loder stared at it.

He had heard that Wharton had "got off" with lines, though he had felt

certain that the cheeky young villain was up for a flogging. These, it was clear, were the lines.

A gleam came into the eyes of the bully of the Sixth.

When Gerald Loder disliked a fellow his methods were not very particular in dealing with that fellow. And at the present moment his feelings towards Wharton were more like hatred than mere dislike.

He stepped to the door and closed it, and then stepped to the desk. He removed the paper-weight and examined the impot.

A sneer crossed his lips as he saw how carefully and correctly the Latin lines were written. Not a smudge, not a smear not an erasure, not a single mistake in spelling or anything else. "Greasing up to Quelch!" was Loder's gibing comment. It was very

seen him go to Mr. Quelch's study, no one had seen him leave.

At a safe distance he dropped into a casual saunter and made his way to his own study.

Inside that apartment, he locked the door and drew Wharton's impot from under his coat.

There was an evil grin on his hard face.

Quelch, the old ass, had let Wharton off with lines! Wharton had left them in his study. But Quelch would not find them there. What would he think when the junior failed to hand them in?

Obviously, he could think only one thing—that the culprit, let off with what was really a light punishment, had jibbed at it and carried on with reckless disregard of authority.

And that was not all. When the

frick. Even Wharton could hardly suspect such a thing, much as he disliked and despised the bully of the Sixth. Still, a fellow could not be too careful—when he was a fellow like Gerald Loder! It was safer to affect to have forgotten the junior's existence altogether.

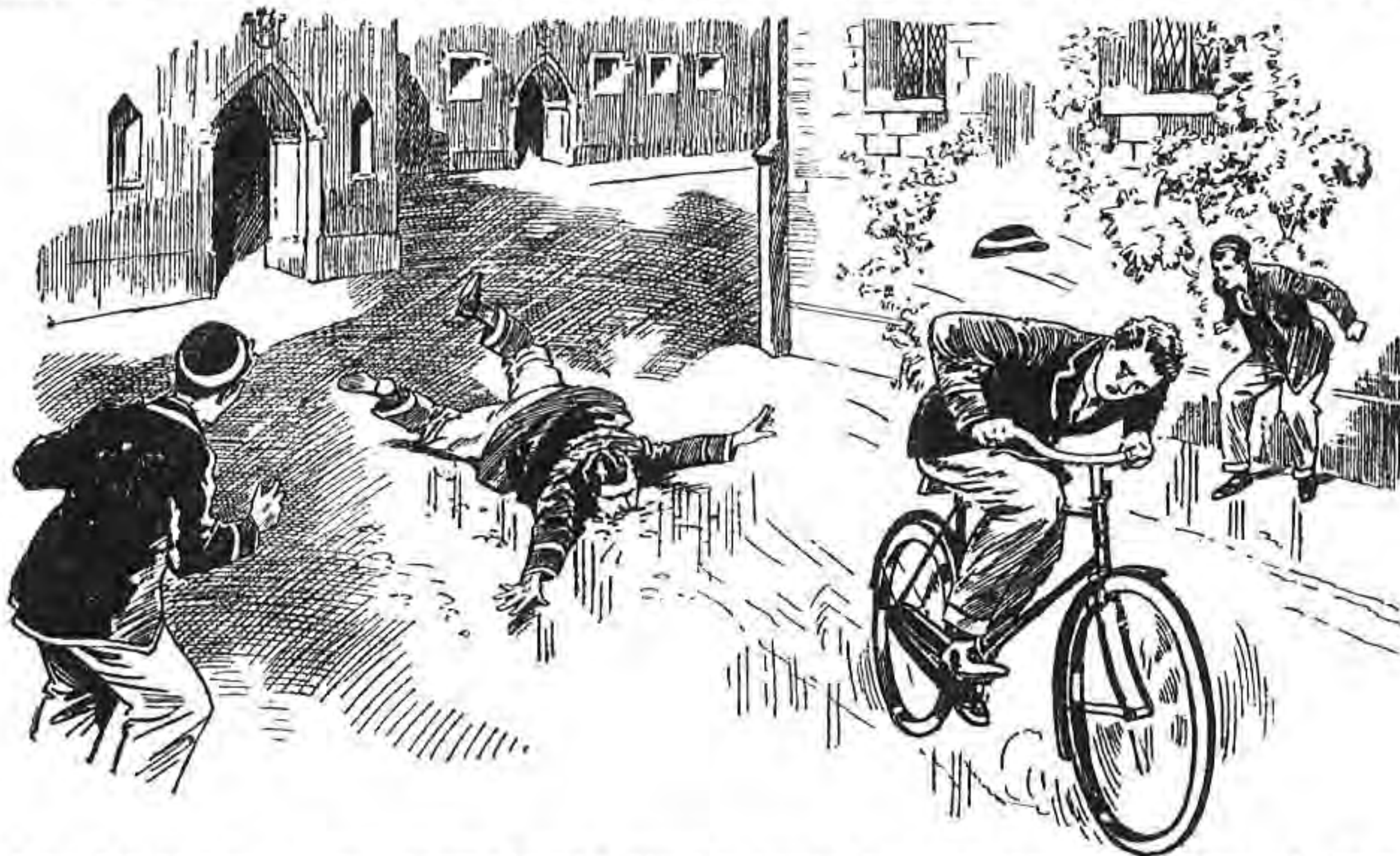
Thump!

Loder started as the knock came at his door. The door-handle turned, but it did not open.

"Hallo! Sportin' your oak, old bean?" came Walker's voice.

Loder gave a hurried glance at the ashes in the grate, then crossed hurriedly to the door and unlocked it. James Walker lounged into the study, fresh from the changing-room.

He gave a sniff. As he had found Loder's door locked he expected to find the study smelling of tobacco smoke.



Loder of the Sixth made a fierce grab after Wharton, missed the junior as he shot out of reach, and overbalanced. Crash! The bully landed on his face, hard, and Wharton pedalled on towards the gates.

seldom indeed that an impot was written out so very carefully.

It was a heavy impot. Five hundred lines of the seventh book of the *Aeneid*, from "T quoque litoribus nostris," to "saucius et quadrupes nota intra tecta refug."

Perhaps it was excusable in Wharton to leave off without waiting for a full stop. Five hundred lines was five hundred lines, and that was that! The whole of it was written so neatly, so carefully, that it could scarcely have failed to please Mr. Quelch very much, had it met his eye. He could not have failed to realise that the boy was trying to please him; and that knowledge on the remove master's part would have assured the success of the effort.

That was not at all what Gerald Loder wanted.

He picked up the papers, slipped them under his coat, and walked to the door. At the door he listened for a few moments then quietly let himself out of the study and walked quickly away.

The House was deserted; no one had

junior was called to account he would declare that he had done the lines and delivered them. Quelch was not likely to believe that statement.

Angry disbelief on one side, mutinous resentment on the other—that was what would follow. By the time the matter came to an end the young rascal would be sorry that he had pitched Loder over on his face on the gravel.

The fire was burning in Loder's grate, low. He tore the sheets of carefully-written Latin into fragments and stuffed them into the fire.

The flames leaped up.

With that evil grin still lurking on his face the blackguard of Greyfriars fed the flames with the weary task that had cost Wharton hours.

He stirred the charred remnants with his poker, watching them consume.

There was no need to report the junior to Quelch now. Trouble enough was coming to Wharton without Loder having a hand in it. In the circumstances, it was safer to keep clear. Certainly, nobody was likely to suspect a Sixth Form prefect of such a dastardly

There was a smell of smoke, but it was not flavoured with tobacco.

Walker gave his friend a rather curious look.

"Game over?" asked Loder carelessly. "Did the Fifth beat you?"

He hoped that they had!

"Not in your lifetime," answered Walker. "Glad it's over. I can tell you, I'm winded! That brute, Blundell of the Fifth, charged me over like a mad bull! Beastly ruffian! Got a smoke? I'm dying for a fag."

Loder produced cigarettes.

"What the dickens have you been burnin'?" asked Walker. "Havin' a Fifth of November on your own, or what?"

"Gettin' rid of some old papers," answered Loder. "The 'Racing Tipster' isn't the kind of literature I want to keep about."

Walker laughed.

"Oh quite!" he yawned. "Have they taken to printin' the 'Racing Tipster' in Latin?"

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"What the thump do you mean?" growled Loder, starting.

Walker pointed with his cigarette to the grate. A fragment of paper, as yet unconsumed, glimmered in the hot ashes, and words could be read on it: "hunc procul errantem—" A Sixth Form man of Greyfriars did not need telling that it was a fragment of Virgil.

Loder flushed, and hastily jabbed the poker into the ashes. The last fragment of the impot vanished.

"There was an old exercise among the lot," drawled Loder.

"Writin' out bits of the *Æneid* for an exercise?" grinned Walker. "What are you tryin' to pull my leg for, you ass? That was a kid's fist."

"I dare say some lines a fag had done for me," said Loder, biting his lip. "I remember Skinner did me lines yesterday."

"Skinner's done lines for me, but not in that fist!" grinned Walker. "What the dickens is the game, Loder?"

"Mind your own business, bother you!" broke out Loder angrily. "Have you come here to catechise me?"

"Not at all, old bean," said Walker amicably. "I've come here for a smoke and a game of nap, to try an' forget the strenuous life a bit! Trot out the wicked pasteboards."

With the door locked again, the black sheep of the Sixth sat down to their game and their cigarettes. But once or twice James Walker's glance strayed curiously to the dead ashes in the grate, and he wondered what Loder had been up to.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Sosses for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!" Billy Bunter was glad to see the Famous Five when they came in from their spin.

His ample form adorned the doorway of the House as the chums of the Remove, after putting up their bikes, came along in a cheery bunch.

They were rather late in for tea, but as tea was to be in Study No. 1 that did not matter. Bunter, having tea'd in Hall, to make sure of what was going, while there was yet time, waited for his old pals to come in, in the hope of something better to follow.

Four members of the Co. looked very merry and bright. Harry Wharton was a little grave. He expected trouble with Loder of the Sixth, and though he was not sorry that he had defied the bully of Greyfriars, he realised very clearly that Loder's report to Mr. Quelch was likely to spoil the fresh start he had tried to make. He did not, of course, expect Loder to let the matter drop.

He had told his friends nothing of it, so far. There was no need to worry them with his troubles. They had enjoyed a long spin with their Highcliffe friends and come back more than ready for tea. Still more ready was the fat Owl who greeted them as they came in.

"I've been waiting tea for you fellows!" said Bunter, rather reproachfully. "I've got the kettle boiling in your study, Wharton, and the table laid, and everything. Everything's ready except the grub; and, if you like, I'll cut down to the tuckshop and do the shopping for you."

"Good egg!" said Frank Nugent, laughing. "Cut off!"

Bunter did not cut off. Cutting off

was not much use without a supply of that essential article, cash.

"The fact is, you men, I've been disappointed about a postal order," he explained. "Otherwise, I should have had the grub ready. Did I mention to you fellows that I was expecting a postal order?"

"Did he, you men?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hasn't it come, old fat man?" asked Johnny Bull. "Blessed if I wouldn't dun the post office for it, keeping it back all these terms—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Bull! What about the shopping?" asked Bunter. "I'll change a pound note for you with Mrs. Mimble with pleasure."

"I fancy you'd get more pleasure than we should," chuckled Bob. "The shopping's done, old fat bean. I've got it in this jolly old parcel."

"I'll carry it up to the study for you, old chap," he said.

"Thanks! You might carry it into the wrong study," said Bob, shaking his head. "Come on, you men! I'm as hungry as a hunter—or a Bunter!"

The Famous Five tramped up the stairs. Loder and Carne of the Sixth were standing by the staircase, talking together, and the former's eye turned on the juniors. Wharton expected to be called, but except for a glance, Loder took no notice of him. The captain of the Remove went on his way, astonished. If Loder was letting the matter drop, it was rather a surprise.

They arrived at Study No. 1. Billy Bunter rolled in with the chums of the Remove. As he was not kicked out, the fat junior considered himself invited to tea. Anything short of kicking was as good as an invitation, to William George Bunter.

Bob Cherry dumped the parcel on the study table. The Famous Five had pooled resources for tea together, as they often did. Billy Bunter opened the parcel and smiled sweetly at the sight of sausages. Bunter liked "sosses," and at cooking them he had few equals. The things Bunter could not do were numberless as the sands on the sea shore, but he could cook.

"Prime!" said Bunter. "Six—seven—eight! Good! But what are you fellows going to have?"

Bunter, apparently, felt up to dealing personally with so small an order as eight sosses.

"Eh! We're going to have sosses," said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"One for you, if you cook the lot," added Bob.

Billy Bunter gave him a look.

One soss to Billy Bunter was like a drop in the ocean—a very small drop in a very big ocean.

Words were inadequate. Bunter could think of nothing sufficiently crushing to reply. In dignified silence he turned away and looked for the frying-pan.

There was also a cake, but it was only a pound cake, merely enough for one fellow—one Bunter, at least—to wind up tea with. But Bunter realised that all these greedy fellows were going to have cake as well as sosses. There was lots and lots of bread-and-butter, but they couldn't be satisfied with bread-and-butter—really good, healthy food, and much better for fellows, in point of fact, than either sosses or cake. Bunter felt that it was a selfish world—himself, in fact, almost the only unselfish fellow in it!

However, he cooked the sosses.

A fragrant aroma spread through the study. It was grateful and comforting to fellows who had come in from a long spin.

While Bunter, with a crimson face, watched the sosses in the frying-pan as if he loved them—as, indeed, he did—Harry Wharton told his chums of the Loder incident. He was more than half-expecting to see the bully of the Sixth every moment—it seemed impossible that Loder could overlook the matter. The juniors listened, with grave faces. That Loder was a bully and a rotter they agreed unanimously; nevertheless, a Lower boy could not directly disobey an order from a Sixth Form prefect without trouble to follow.

"Loder can't let it drop," said Frank Nugent uneasily. "I—I wish—"

"You wish I'd stopped in and left you hanging up for me at Redclyffe?" asked Wharton rather sarcastically.

"Well, yes, old chap! A fellow has to toe the line at school."

"Bunter toed the line when Loder sent him to the Cross Keys. He was flogged for it."

"That's quite different," said Frank, rather sharply.

"The differentfulness is preposterous, my esteemed chum!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his head. "But what cannot be cured must go longest to the well, as the English proverb says."

"I say, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter blinked round from the fire with a rather peculiar gleam in his little round eyes behind his big round spectacles.

"Ready?" asked Bob.

"Quite, old chap! But don't begin yet," said Bunter. "I'm going to fetch something from my study. As I'm tea-ing with you, you know—"

"Oh, my hat!"

It was so unusual for Bunter to contribute to a feed that all the Famous Five looked at him. Apparently, however, the fat Owl was in earnest. He turned the deliciously browned sosses into a dish, placed it in the fender to keep warm, and rolled to the door. In the doorway he blinked back rather anxiously.

"I say, you fellows, you won't begin till I get back with the ham and eggs, will you?" he asked.

"Buck up, then!" said Bob. "We're hungry, old bean!"

"I won't be a tick! I've only got to cut along to Study No. 7—I've got the cake there—"

"The cake?"

"I mean the ham and eggs! Wait for me, won't you?"

"Yes; but buck up, fatty!"

Bunter rolled out into the passage. The juniors stared after him. Bunter was going to contribute to the spread, which was unusual, and he seemed uncertain whether his supply consisted of cake or of ham and eggs, which was remarkable. However, they waited.

But a moment later a fat face and a large pair of spectacles blinked anxiously in at the doorway.

"I say, you fellows, you're not starting?"

Bunter seemed inexplicably anxious on that point.

"No, you ass! Buck up, though, or we jolly well shan't wait!" hooted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, all right, old chap! Mind you don't begin."

And Bunter rolled away at last.

The juniors waited.

Then through the open doorway of the study floated Bunter's voice, apparently addressing Loder of the Sixth

(Continued at foot of next page.)



The Linesman, who is an expert on Soccer, will be pleased to hear from MAGNET chums who have problems to solve. Write to him at The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

MORE than a month of the new football season has gone, and some clubs have made an excellent start—beyond expectations. Others have failed completely to fulfil the hopes of their supporters. But it must be remembered that the football season lasts eight months—not one. The placings of the clubs at the beginning of October is often very different from the placings at the beginning of May, and it is the latter placings which tell.

I have just looked up the League tables after the games of the first Saturday in October last season. The leading positions were then held by West Bromwich Albion, Bury, Southend United, and Lincoln City. Only the last-named of those four clubs finished the season as leaders of their division.

The same sort of story can be told of the clubs which made a bad start last season. After the clubs had played about nine matches each, Portsmouth and Chelsea were in the two lowly places in the First Division. Yet these clubs finished the season in the top half of the table. So club supporters should not get unduly elated or depressed, whichever the case may be, over the positions of their teams at this early stage in the season.

A TACTICAL TALK.

Many full-backs in football—experienced men as well as young players—believe that they have done their job if, in making a clearance, they have just kicked the ball somewhere up the field. Consequently, I was much interested the other day in having a chat with Bob McAulay, the new full-back of Chelsea, when he told me that this wasn't his idea at all. He believes in a full-back feeding the forwards.

A couple of years ago McAulay played for Scotland against Ireland, and before the match started he had a talk with McGrory, the Scottish centre-forward, as to how he would like to be fed "up the middle."

As a result of this chat several times in the game the full-back sent the centre-forward away with nice passes, and from one of the movements Scotland scored a goal.

That's just one little idea of how things can be done by forethought. I will give you some more tactical ideas of the star players from time to time. The notions of the men who know are worth while considering by the young players who are only learning the game.

GOAL-GETTERS.

I received a letter from a reader the other day which contained the following query: "Can you tell me how many footballers there are still playing who have scored more than two hundred goals in big League games?"

Ignoring the goals scored by players since the start of the present season, there are seven footballers still playing the game who, at the end of last season, had scored more than two hundred goals in League games.

Harry Bedford, now with Bradford, headed the list with 279 goals and, of course, you won't be surprised to learn that Dean, the centre-forward of Everton, came very near with a total of 275 goals. One or both of these players may pass the three hundred mark before the end of the present season.

The other players who have scored two hundred goals are: Hine, of Huddersfield Town, Cammell, of Middlesbrough; Hampson, of Blackpool; Harper, of

Preston North End; and Halliday, of Manchester City.

But all these players have still some distance to go before they equal the record of Steve Bloomer, who in the course of his wonderful career scored a grand total of 352 goals in League games.

TRAINING TO BE A TRAINER.

Let me introduce you to a new idea—training a boy to be a trainer of footballers. That is an experiment which is being tried by Newcastle United.

The nineteen-year-old son of Sandy Mutch, who used to keep goal for Huddersfield Town and Newcastle United, has been taken on to the staff of the Newcastle United club to be trained as a trainer. He will undergo a complete course of preparation under the eye of the experienced trainer McPherson, who now looks after the physical welfare of the Newcastle United players.

This is a sound idea, for the man with the sponge, the towel, and the mysterious bottle of "reviver" is a very valuable member of the staff of any football club. But he must know his job. On the way he "mends" a man who has been hurt may depend whether that man is fit for play in a very short time or whether the injury takes weeks to get right.

Then the trainer who knows his job in these days must also be an expert massour, as well as know exactly how to manipulate the X-ray and other apparatus which are now part of the equipment behind the scenes at most football grounds.

PLAYERS' PREFERENCES.

Many big footballers have their likes and dislikes of the different grounds on which they play—places where they do well or, on the other hand, where nothing seems to go right. The managers know this, and keep records in consequence.

For instance, when I was chatting with the manager of the Bury club the other day he showed me an interesting book. In it were details of the various matches played by the Bury Club in the past—who had won the toss, who got the goals, and so on. And I was very taken with an entry, among the details of each match, which showed which way the team kicked in the first half.

"We have players in our team who are much more confident when kicking one way at a particular ground, than when they are kicking the other way," the Bury manager told me. Curious, isn't it?

"Yes, Loder—I'll tell them!"

Billy Bunter reappeared in Study No. 1. Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. They had no doubt that it was the expected summons to Loder's study.

"I say, you fellows, Loder says you're to go to his study," said Bunter, blinking at them.

"Only me, I suppose," said Harry, rising.

"He said all of you."

"What the thump does he want the lot of us for?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Eh? He didn't say! I—I wouldn't keep him waiting if I were you," said Bunter. "Loder gets frightfully wild if a fellow keeps him waiting."

"Oh, come on!" said Bob.

With rather grim faces the Famous Five left the study and went down the Remove staircase. Billy Bunter blinked after them from the doorway of Study No. 1. As they disappeared on the stairs the fat Owl grinned, closed the door, and made a jump for the sossos.

A moment more and the dish of sosses

was lifted to the table, and Bunter was beginning. Eight sosses went down, and then Bunter started on the cake. There was no time to lose. Probably it would not take the chums of the Remove long to discover that Loder of the Sixth had not sent for them. Bunter had not many minutes! But he made the most of them!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Is Not Eel-eved!

LODER of the Sixth was still standing by the staircase, talking to Carne, when Harry Wharton & Co. came down. The juniors looked at him and paused. According to Bunter, Loder had said that they were to go to his study. But as they came upon him en route they stopped. The two prefects did not deign to take notice of the juniors for some moments, but Carne looked round at them at last and snapped:

"Don't hang about here!"

"The desirousness to hang about is not terrific, esteemed and absurd Carne," answered Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But—"

"Well, cut off!"

"Don't you want us, Loder?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"What do you mean?" snapped Loder.

"We've come!" explained Bob.

Loder stared at him.

"You've come!" he repeated.

"Yes, here we are! Are we to go on to your study and wait, or what?" asked Bob, rather testily.

Bob Cherry was not blessed with an appetite like Billy Bunter's, but he had quite a healthy one and he wanted his tea. Hanging about at Loder's beck and call was not pleasant when a fellow was hungry and late for tea.

"Is this a rag?" asked Carne, frowning.

"Looks like it," said Loder. "The cheeky young sweeps—"

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(Continued from page 13.)

His eyes glinted at Harry Wharton. "Look here, do you want us or not?" exclaimed Harry Wharton impatiently. "If you do, here we are!"

Loder looked at him, amazed. As he had intended to let the trouble drop he had naturally supposed that the junior would be at least willing to let it go at that. But it seemed now that Wharton wanted to get on with it. Forcing trouble with a Sixth Form prefect was an unheard-of proceeding.

"So you're asking for it, Wharton," he said.

"I'm asking you what you want!" snapped Wharton. "I suppose you haven't sent for us for nothing."

"Not merely for the pleasure of our company—nice as it is!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Take a hundred lines each and clear off!" said Loder.

"Oh, my hat!"

So far as Wharton was concerned a hundred lines was a light enough penalty for giving Loder a fall behind his bike. But as the other fellows had done nothing it was rather surprising, even from Loder.

"A hundred lines!" repeated Johnny Bull, in a deep, growling voice. "And may a fellow ask what he's given lines for, Loder?"

"Cheek!" said Loder briefly. "Now cut, or I'll make it two hundred!"

"But the cheekfulness is not terrific," urged Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Where is the idiotic cheekfulness, venerable Loder?"

"You sent for us, and we've come!" hooted Johnny Bull. "And if we get a hundred lines for that, I'm going to Quelch about it."

"Who sent for you?" snapped Loder.

"You did!"

Loder stared at him, and then his face broke into a grin.

"Oh," he said, "well, I didn't send for you! Somebody's pulled your leg, I suppose. Now cut off! If I don't get those lines to-night, it's six all round for you! Clear!"

The Famous Five looked at one another, and looked at Loder, and finally went up the stairs again.

"That villain Bunter!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"Bunter!" repeated Wharton. "What's Bunter got to do with it? Loder told him to tell us—"

"Loder never told him anything. The fat villain was pulling our leg. I'll bet you the sosses are gone by this time!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Come on!" exclaimed Johnny Bull; and he raced up the Remove staircase, with the other fellows at his heels.

Crash! went the door of Study No. 1 as the juniors burst in.

"Oooogh!" came a startled gasp.

Billy Bunter jumped up from the study table.

His mouth was full of cake. It was his first bite at the cake. Its owners had not been gone so long as he had expected. But it was a large bite.

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And as Bunter jumped up, startled, a lot of it went the wrong way. Bunter gurgled.

"You fat burglar!" roared Bob. "Where's the sosses?"

"Groooogh!"

"You pernicious porpoise—"

"Urrrrgh!"

"He's scoffed the sosses!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oooogh!"

"Squash him!" roared Bob.

"Yugggh! I say, you—gug-gug—fellows—ooogh—" gurgled the unhappy Owl, struggling spasmodically with the cake. "I say—Oooogh!"

"Hold on!" said Harry, catching Bob Cherry's arm. "Loder's cad enough for anything! Let's make sure—" Wharton was deeply suspicious of his enemy in the Sixth.

"Rot!" growled Johnny Bull. "Bunter was fooling us!"

"Bunter, you podgy scoundrel—"

"Urrrrgh!"

"The fat porker heard us talking about Loder, and that put the idea into his head," growled Bob. "That's why he went out of the study, pretending he was going to fetch something from Study No. 7. I'm going to burst him!"

"Groogh!" Bunter got rid of the cake at last, and puffed and blew.

"I—I say, you fellows, wharrer you waxy about?"

"Did Loder tell you to send us to his study, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton.

He was more willing to give Bunter the benefit of the doubt than to give the same to Gerald Loder.

"Of—of course he did!" gasped Bunter. "Why haven't you been? You can't have been to the Sixth and got back already. I—I say, Loder will be waxy if you keep him waiting."

"We've seen Loder, and he says he never sent for us."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, Loder's an awful fibber, you know! You—you heard me answer him in the passage."

"We heard you pretend to answer him!" snapped Bob. "You were pulling our leg to get us out of the study. Loder wasn't there at all."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Bump him!"

"Hold on!" said Wharton. "Loder's cad enough to play any rotten trick on this study!"

"Yes, that's it!" exclaimed Bunter, in great relief. "I say, you fellows, I think you might take a fellow's word. I suppose you'd rather take my word than Loder's."

"I would!" said Wharton.

"Rot!" bawled Johnny Bull. "It was all spoof! Is Bunter going to tell us next that Loder scoffed the sosses?"

"Yes—exactly!" gasped Bunter.

"What?" ejaculated Wharton.

He was, perhaps, willing to believe almost anything of Loder of the Sixth, but he could not quite see even Loder "scoffing" sosses in a junior study.

"Loder scoffed the sosses?" repeated Bob Cherry, almost dazedly.

"Yes," gasped Bunter. "As—as soon as you were gone, he—he came into the study, and—and scoffed the sosses."

"Oh crikey!"

As the juniors had found Loder at the foot of the stairs, they were not likely to believe that statement. Even Wharton's prejudice against the bully of the Sixth was not quite strong enough for that.

"You—you—you Ananias! You—you Munchausen! You Washington! You fearful, frightful, frabjous fibber!"

gasped Bob Cherry. "Loder's never been near the study. We saw him downstairs!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean Walker!"

"You—you—you mean Walker?" stuttered Nugent.

"Yes, old chap, Walker of the Sixth. He marched into the study as bold as brass, and—and scoffed the sosses!"

"Let's take him to Walker's study, and tell Walker," said Johnny Bull.

"Good! Let's!"

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean it wasn't Walker! It—it was the—the cat!"

"The cat!" yelled the juniors.

"Yes, the House dame's cat! You know how that brute of a cat is always nosing into the studies! Well, I saw it sneak into this study, and—and scoff the sosses!"

"Well, my hat!" said Bob. "I suppose he'll tell us it was the Head, next. Sure it wasn't the Head, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nunno, old chap, it—it wasn't the Head, it was the Loder—I mean the Walker! I—I mean the cat! I—I'd complain about that cat, if I were you! I'd go to Quelch and say—Yarooop! Bump!"

In the grasp of many indignant hands, Billy Bunter smote the floor of Study No. 1. He smote it hard.

"Now up-and him, and shake the sosses out of him," said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oooogh! I say, you fellows—Whoop! I never ate the sosses! Yoop! Leggo my legs, you beasts! Don't crack my napper on the floor, you rotters! I say, I'll pay for those sosses when my postal order comes! Honest Injun! Yaroooh!"

"Shake 'em out!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yurrrrrgh!" came in agonized tones from Billy Bunter, as he was held upside down, his fat features going red, his jacket fluttering about his podgy neck, and his fat hands clawing the air wildly. "Oooogh! Whoop! I say! Gurrrrgh!"

"Shake!" chuckled Bob.

The juniors shook. Billy Bunter squirmed like a fat jelly. There really was no hope of shaking the sosses out of Bunter—that was only a little jest. But the up-ended Owl was shaken as if that really was the intention of the Famous Five. He gasped and gurgled and guggled horribly.

"Urrrrrrggghh!"

"I'm afraid those sosses are gone for good," remarked Bob Cherry. "But give him another shake!"

"Yurrrrrgh!"

"Now roll him out!"

Bump! Billy Bunter landed in the passage. The door of Study No. 1 closed on him, and he was left to gurgle.

Harry Wharton & Co. sat down to tea, minus the sausages. Bread-and-butter filled up the cooing void and there was still the cake to wind up with—only a quarter of it gone. But as the juniors were about to start on what remained of the cake the door opened, and Billy Bunter put his head in.

"I say, you fellows, have you finished the cake?" A hurried blink snowed Bunter that the cake was still there. "I say, Wingate wants you! In his study."

"What?" roared the Famous Five.

"He's just told me—you're to go to his study at once!"

"Well, my only hat and sunshade!"

gasped Bob Cherry. "Does the benighted owl think that that chicken will fight twice?"

Apparently Bunter did. "I say, you fellows, I wouldn't keep Wingate waiting, if I were you!" he urged. "He gets waxy if a fellow keeps him waiting. I—I'll stay in the study, and—and take care of that cake for you."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows had better cut off!" urged Bunter. "You can't keep the captain of the school waiting—"

"I say, you fellows—oh crikey!" A cushion, hurled by an unerring hand, smote Billy Bunter suddenly on his extensive equator.

He disappeared from the doorway. There was a bump in the passage.

"Owl! Wow!" "Now come in again, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry. "I've got the kettle ready for you."

"Beast!" Bunter did not come in again. Bunter did not always know when he had had enough; but this time he knew. He had had the cushion; and he did not want the kettle. He rolled away; and the cake in Study No. 7 was finished without the assistance of William George Bunter.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bitter Blood!

"WHARTON!" "Adsum!" Mr. Quelch was calling the roll in Big Hall.

Several fellows noticed that his glance dwelt on Harry Wharton as he called the name of the captain of the Remove, and that the expression on his face was grim.

Wharton observed it, and his lips set. The glance was brief; Mr. Quelch went on calling the names. But it told Wharton that his Form master had something to say to him after roll-call. What was it now, he asked himself bitterly. Even Quelch could have found no fault with his impot. Loder, perhaps, had reported him, after all, though he seemed to have let the matter drop. But if that was the case, Quelch had had plenty of time to send for him before last calling-over. Anyhow, there was something to come—Wharton knew that.

The roll was finished, and the school dismissed. As the Remove went out, a prefect called to Wharton and told him to go to his Form master's study.

Wharton left his friends and proceeded there. His brow grew darker and darker as he waited. In a few minutes he heard the voices of Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout in the passage—Quelch had stopped to talk to the master of the Fifth—or, more probably, Prout had stopped Quelch to talk. Wharton continued to wait; his angry impatience growing, yet resolved not to err in his conduct when Quelch at last came in. He had honestly resolved to try his hardest to get on better terms with his Form master; and he said to himself bitterly that if there was going to be trouble, it should be plain that it was Quelch who wanted it.

Mr. Quelch came in at last. He gave the waiting junior a frowning glance.

"Wharton," he said severely. "I am surprised at this! You are well aware that you were given a light punishment, considering your offence. Am I to understand that you have deliberately set yourself to flout authority?"

Wharton looked at him in sheer bewilderment. Then doggedness grew in his face.

"Have I done anything?" he asked quietly.

"That is an impertinent question, Wharton, as you are perfectly well aware of your fault!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"If you are referring to Loder, sir—"

"I am not referring to Loder." "Then I don't understand you, sir," said Harry.

"Take care, Wharton! You were directed to bring your imposition to me after school to-day. You have had ample time to complete it. Yet not only have you not brought it to me, but you have offered no explanation, not even taken the trouble to proffer any excuse. What do you mean by this?"

"I could not give you the lines when you were not here, sir."

"Do you venture to call that an excuse, Wharton? Do you pretend not to know that, if I should not be here when lines are brought to me, the task should be left here on my desk?"

"Of course I know that, sir."

"Then what do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, raising his voice. "What has my absence this afternoon to do with the matter?"

Wharton was bewildered again; then, as he thought of a possible explanation, he smiled. Apparently, Mr. Quelch had not found his lines on the desk yet; but as they were there, he had only to look! Certainly he would look rather a fool, if he found them there now. In the circumstances, Wharton was prepared to enjoy seeing him look a fool.

"If you will look on your desk, sir—" said Harry.

"What do you mean, Wharton? Do you suppose that I have sent for you, without having ascertained that your lines are not in this study?"

"I suppose so, sir, as they certainly are in this study," answered Wharton coolly.

"They are in this study?" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly.

"Certainly, sir."

Mr. Quelch gave the junior a long look, and then stepped to his desk without speaking. Wharton's manner was so cool and assured that he fancied he might have made a mistake and overlooked the lines.

But a rapid search of the desk revealed that the imposition was not there. He turned to Wharton again, with set lips.

"Your lines are not here, Wharton."

"I put them there, sir."

"I repeat that they are not here!" said Mr. Quelch more loudly.

"And I repeat that I put them there, this afternoon, before I went out," said Harry Wharton.

There was a pause. Wharton's face was set hard, and his eyes gleaming. He had placed the impot there; he knew that; he remembered having put the paper-weight on the sheets. Now that he looked at the desk, he could see that they were not there now. The lines had been put out of sight—by whom? Nobody came to that study but Mr. Quelch and the boys of his Form—and on a half-holiday no boys came there.

Mr. Quelch had found the lines there when he came in—he must have found them—it was impossible that he had not found them! Black and bitter suspicion

and distrust were in Wharton's mind. The man had taken a dislike to him—he had had a down on him since the term started. As the junior had resolved to give no offence, offences were to be invented!

It was an unworthy suspicion—but it came into Wharton's mind. He would have driven it away, had any other explanation been possible. But he knew that he had placed the lines there—and Quelch said that he had not placed them there! What was he to think?

The look was long—the silence deep! The colour came into Mr. Quelch's face as he read the expression on Wharton's—cool, obstinate, defiant, and scornful. The Form master's face set like iron.

"You are attempting to deceive me, Wharton!" he said, at last.

"You know that I am not!" answered the junior.

"What?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

Such an answer from a junior made him doubt the evidence of his ears.

There were masters at Greyfriars who were careless in the matter of lines; but Mr. Quelch was not one of them. Mr. Wiggins, the Third Form master, could have his leg pulled to almost any extent by the fags of his Form. He was an absent-minded gentleman, and he had a great faith in boy-nature. Young rascals in the Third would coolly tell Wiggins that they had handed in lines they had never written, and poor Mr. Wiggins would think that perhaps they had, and that he had forgotten. But nobody in the Remove ever ventured to play that game with Quelch. He was not absent-minded; he had a frightfully retentive memory; it was a sheer impossibility to pull his leg. Now it seemed to him that, for the first time, it was being tried on; and in a particularly impudent and offensive way.

Mr. Wiggins might have shifted lines from his desk and forgotten what he had done with them. Not so Mr. Quelch! He knew perfectly well that Wharton's impot had not been in his study when he came in.

Harry Wharton stood cool and steady, his eyes on his Form master's face, a touch of scorn in his look that was hardly to be tolerated by a master. His heart was beating rather fast; but he was cool as ice.

Mr. Quelch seemed to have some difficulty in finding his voice. His words rapped out like bullets when he spoke at last.

"Wharton! I have warned you to take care! Have you the audacity to tell me that you left your lines in this study?"

"I don't need any audacity to tell you the truth!" answered Wharton. "I left my lines in this study."

"They are not here."

"Not now," agreed Wharton.

"Then where are they?"

"You should know better than I, sir!" answered Wharton, with cool hardihood.

Mr. Quelch gasped.

"Wharton! Do you venture—do you dare—to hint, to imply, that I have found your lines here, in spite of my statement?"

"I've said that I put the lines on your desk."

(Continued on next page.)

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desk," said Harry Wharton. "I went out afterwards, and know nothing more than that. If you did not find them in the study, it means that somebody came in and took them away."

"That is a ridiculous suggestion."

"I know it is," answered Wharton coolly.

"You did not place them here, Wharton."

"I did!"

"I say that you did not!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"And I say that I did—and I shall tell the Head so!" said Harry Wharton. "And I believe that the Head will see justice done."

Mr. Quelch seemed to be choking.

"Wharton, this insolence passes all bounds! I will hear no more—unless you have the decency, the self-respect, to confess to me at once that you have not written your imposition, and that you have lied to me impudently."

"I shall do nothing of the kind."

"Then I shall report you at once to your headmaster, and I have little doubt that you will be expelled."

"I'm ready to go to the Head!" said Harry Wharton stubbornly. "I left the lines here, and you know I did—"

"Wharton!"

"You may be able to get me expelled, but you will not make a liar of me!" said Harry Wharton, between his teeth. "I shall tell the Head the truth, as I have told it to you. I left the lines in this study."

"That is false!"

"It is not false, and you know it is not."

"Upon my word! Go!" Mr. Quelch pointed a trembling finger to the door. "Wretched boy, go—go at once! I shall see you again in the presence of your headmaster! Go!"

Harry Wharton walked coolly out of the study. It was conflict now, bitter conflict, and he knew that his fate trembled in the balance. But his face was cool, his manner unconcerned as he strolled into the Rag with his hands in his pockets.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Boy Against Master!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry's cheery voice greeted the captain of the Remove as he came into the Rag. Most of the Remove were there before prep.

"What did Quelch want?" asked Frank.

"Trouble!" answered Wharton, with a laugh.

"Loder—"

"Not Loder this time. Dear old Quelch on his own," said the captain of the Remove. "He's coming out! I always knew he was a rusty old file and a crusty old stick, but I never knew he was a scoundrel before!"

"Harry!"

"Wha-a-at did you call Quelch, old bean?" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

Mauly was reposing his elegant limbs at full length in an armchair, and looked as if he was too lazy to move if the house caught fire. But as he heard Wharton's wild words he leaped to his feet like a Jack-in-the-box.

"Wharton, old man!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, with an anxious glance at the door. Had the ears of authority heard that word it would have been the "sack," short and sharp, for the junior who uttered it.

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Every eye in the Rag was on Wharton, staring. He seemed to have electrified the whole crowd.

Wharton was cool and composed. But the fellows, looking at him, could see the indignant bitterness in his face.

"Gone mad, old chap?" asked Mauleverer.

"Not at all. I said what I mean," answered Harry.

"For goodness' sake, what has happened?" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"I'm up for the sack, that's all."

"The sack!" shouted a dozen voices.

"Just that."

"But what for?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"For calling Quelch a liar."

"You—you—you called him—" Bob fairly stuttered. "If you did, you're up for the sack, all right; and you jolly well deserve it."

"Thanks," said Wharton, unmoved. "I shall get what I deserve, then, if the Head believes Quelch, and not me."

"You couldn't have called Quelch a—"

"Not that jolly old word, I'm too polite," drawled Wharton. "I only told him that he knew I was telling the truth about my lines when he pretended that I hadn't taken them in. It was as good as calling him a liar, and that was what I meant."

"But—but—" stuttered Bob. "I don't get you. Didn't you leave the lines in his study before you came out this afternoon?"

"I did!"

"Well, then, what's the rumpus?"

"Quelch says I didn't."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Why should Quelch say you didn't, if you did?" asked the Bounder, with a very curious look at Harry Wharton.

"Because he's got a down on me, I suppose, and wants to get me sacked."

"Rot!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, that's how it stands," he said.

"I left my five hundred lines in his study. Quelch says they weren't there. Perhaps a daylight burglar dropped in and bagged them. Probable, isn't it?"

"Don't be an ass!" growled Johnny Bull. "If Quelch says they weren't there, they weren't there."

Wharton gave him a steely look.

"Does that mean that you agree with Quelch that I was lying when I said I took them in?" he asked.

"I'd as soon believe you a liar as Quelch," answered Johnny Bull calmly. "If you weren't a hot-headed ass you'd know as well as I do that Quelch would be boiled in oil before he'd tell a lie about a fellow."

"One of us has told lies—Quelch or I," said Harry. "I say the lines were there. Quelch says they were not."

Johnny Bull rubbed his nose thoughtfully. It was rather a problem. There was a buzz of excitement in the Rag. Harry Wharton, glancing round, could see that he was alone in his belief. Even Skinner & Co., who were "up against" Quelch on principle, laughed at the idea of the Remove master being capable of an act of baseness. That he had a "down" on Wharton that term was no secret, and many fellows were of opinion that Wharton had given him at least some cause for it. He might err on the side of severity, but that was the limit.

A bitter, sarcastic smile came over Wharton's face.

"Say what you think, my dear old pals," he said, looking at the Co. "Our kind master is a paragon of perfection and I'm in the wrong, as usual. You saw me writing the lines and taking

a jolly lot of care about them. I had the rotten thing three-parts done when you left me this afternoon. You fancy that I chucked the impost away instead of taking it to Quelch, just for the amusement of telling lies about it. Is that it?"

"Don't be an ass," said Bob. "I can't make it all out. I know you took the lines in, if you say you did. But what's become of them?"

"Better ask Quelch that."

"Draw it mild, old bean," said the Bounder. "You can't imagine that Quelch shoved them out of sight to make out that they weren't there."

"I can't imagine anything else."

"Well, that's rot!"

"Utter rot!" said Tom Redwing. "You wouldn't think so if you were cool, Wharton."

"I'm cool enough," said Harry. "I'd be glad to hear of any other explanation. I don't like thinking such a thing of any man. The lines may have taken unto themselves wings like riches, and flown away. Think that's likely?"

"It's not a joking matter," said Frank. "If the lines weren't there they must have been shifted. But who the dickens would go into a Form master's study and take away a lot of lines?"

"Echo answers who," said Harry, laughing.

"Anybody see you taking them in?" asked the Bounder. "Some fellow might have seen you and played a rotten joke. You know anything about it, Skinner?"

"You silly ass!" howled Skinner.

"Nobody saw me taking the lines in," said Harry. "Everybody, so far as I know, was out of the House. I didn't pass a single soul between the Remove and Quelch's study or after I had left his study, till I got out of the House."

"Still, lots of fellows knew you had lines," said Smithy. "Somebody may have played a trick. It sounds a bit thick, but I don't see any other explanation."

"I do."

"Oh, you're an ass! Some fellow whose back you have put up lately—"

"I haven't put any fellow's back up, that I know of," answered Wharton, "and I know jolly well that no Greyfriars man would sneak those lines from Quelch's study to get me into a row."

"It sounds awfully thick," said Bob dubiously. "But if the lines weren't there—"

"They were there!" said Wharton.

"If Quelch says they weren't—"

"I've told you what I think of Quelch."

"You're not going to tell the Head that, I suppose?" asked Bob, with angry sarcasm.

"I am!"

"You're going to tell the Head that Quelch is making him a false report about a Lower boy!" gasped Bob.

"Exactly!"

"Then you're mad!"

"Good-bye, Wharton, in case I don't see you again before you're bunked!" called out Skinner.

One or two fellows laughed. But most of the juniors were too startled and too concerned to heed Skinner's little jest. Harry Wharton's inflexible resolve was to be read in his face, and his friends were deeply alarmed. It was absolutely certain that any fellow who called a master a liar would be turned out of Greyfriars School on the spot. And that, evidently, was Wharton's intention.

"For goodness' sake, Harry—" Nugent's voice was beseeching.



"Shake the fat loozler!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Yurrrrrggh!" came in agonized tones from Billy Bunter, as he was held upside-down, his fat features going red, and his fat hands clawing the air wildly. "Oooogh! Whooop! I say—gurrgrh!"

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"What do you want me to do? Am I to tell the Head lies—confessing that I never did what I know I did? I know I left the impot in Quelch's study. Do you want me to tell Dr. Locke I didn't?"

"No. But—"

"One of us is lying—unless the lines evaporated into thin air! The Head's no fool, and he will have to judge which is the liar. That's all."

"Somebody must have pinched the lines—"

"Quelch says that that is a ridiculous suggestion, and I agree with him there. It's between Quelch and me, and the Head will have to judge! If I'm sacked it won't be the end of it. My people will take it up, and it will come before the governors. I know my uncle will stand by me, and he's on the governing board. Quelch won't find it so easy as he thinks to get rid of a fellow he has a down on."

"Wharton!" Wingate of the Sixth looked in at the doorway of the Rag. He gave the captain of the Remove a grim, stern look. "I've come to take you to the Head, but I heard what you said."

"I don't mind," answered Harry coolly. "I'm ready to say it before all Greyfriars; to shout it out if you like."

"You're getting rather free with your accusations, I think," said the Greyfriars captain. "A few days ago you were saying that a Sixth Form prefect sent a junior boy out of bounds—"

"I'll say it again, as it's true."

"Now you seem to be making some accusation against your own Form master."

"I'm going to make it to the Head when I see him."

"Well, you're going to have the chance," said Wingate dryly. "But I warn you to be careful what you say, if you don't want to be turfed out of the school."

"I shall be quite careful to say that I put my lines in Quelch's study, and that Quelch knows it as well as I do, though he pretends that he doesn't!" answered Harry Wharton, deliberately raising his voice so that it could be heard all through the Rag and beyond.

Wingate gasped.

"That will do! Come with me."

"Quite ready!"

Wingate led the captain of the Remove away, nothing doubting that he was leading him to the Head's study to be sacked. And no fellow in the Rag could doubt it, either. And in a very few minutes Wharton's wild words were repeated all over the school; and in all Greyfriars there was one expectation—that when Wharton left the Head's study it would be to go to the railway station in charge of a master to see him into the train for home.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Not Good Enough!

JAMES WALKER, of the Greyfriars Sixth, had a worried look.

Walker looked so worried that many fellows, who knew Walker's little ways, wondered whether he had recently had news that his favourite horse had come in eleventh.

But Walker of the Sixth was not thinking about horses. Under the influence of his pal Loder, Walker was a good deal of a blackguard, but when he was among better fellows Walker was a better fellow himself. His character was rather like a blank page for other fellows to write upon. At bottom he was far from being a "bad hat" like his pal, and Walker would have jibbed most emphatically at many things which Gerald Loder would have done without turning a hair.

All Greyfriars knew that Harry

Wharton was "up before the beak," and knew why he was up. Sixth Form prefects, already rather down on him, generally agreed that the cheeky young sweep ought to be sacked, that he was going to be sacked, and that the sooner he was sacked the better. Walker was a prefect, and by no means friendly to a junior whom he regarded as a cheeky fag. But in this matter Walker did not, and could not, agree with his fellow-prefects.

He heard the talk in the prefects' room without joining in it. He felt worried, and looked as worried as he felt. He strolled away, and heard a group of Fifth Form men in the passage discussing "that cheeky young tick Wharton" with general condemnation. Walker stared at them gloomily, and passed on. He went to his own study, but did not remain there.

He was haunted by the memory of what he had seen in Loder's room that afternoon. He had wondered at the time what Loder was "up to." Now he wondered no longer; he dreaded to think that he knew.

He did not want to face Loder's cool, hardy stare; his mocking sneer. He was a good deal afraid of Loder. But—

That young idiot Wharton was up for the sack! He was a cheeky little tick, and Walker did not like him. But—

The mad young ass had said—practically shouted out for all the school to hear—that his Form master had gone to the Head to make a false report about him. He deserved to be sacked for saying such a thing, even for believing such a thing. But—

There were too many "buts" in the case for Walker to let it take its course. He drifted aimlessly about his study for a time, and then, as if making up his mind suddenly, he framped out, went

along to Loder's room, and entered resolutely.

Loder was in his study. He knew what was going on, but he preferred to keep out of the discussion. He had expected and hoped that serious trouble would follow his dastardly trick, but he had not dreamed that it would go so far as this. The reckless young ass had played into his hands. Not a twinge of remorse came to Loder's hard heart. The junior who knew too much about him and his ways, who had once made him tremble with the terror of exposure—that junior was up for the sack, and the sooner he went, the sooner Loder would breathe quite freely.

He gave Walker a cheery nod as he came in. He was quite in a good humour; he felt that he had reason to be.

But the expression on Walker's face made him glance a second time at the prefect curiously.

"What's up?" he asked.

"It can't go on, Loder," said the other in a low voice.

Loder looked astonished—as he felt.

"What can't go on, ass?" he asked.

"About—about young Wharton!"

"Wandering in your mind?" asked Loder pleasantly. "What are you drivin' at, Jimmy—if you're drivin' at anything? You might let a fellow know."

Walker's glance had turned to the grate. A fire burned there; it was a cold day. But there was no trace of the heap of papers that Loder had burned in the afternoon. Loder had taken care of that.

As he followed Walker's glance Loder started. Like a flash he read what was in the other's mind.

He rose to his feet.

"Well, what?" he asked, in a low tone of menace. "What have you got into your head now, you fool?"

"It can't go on," said Walker hesitatingly and yet stubbornly. "It's too awfully thick, Loder. Dash it all, the kid's going to be sacked!"

"I hear that he's as good as called his Form master a liar! A fellow would naturally be sacked for that."

"What was the poor little beast to think?" muttered Walker. "He doesn't know that his impot was lifted."

"Nobody knows that, I think. What on earth has put that silly idea into your head, Jimmy?"

Walker backed away a little. Loder's face was hard, his eyes glinting like steel. He was the stronger character of the two, and James Walker knew that he was afraid of him. But there was a limit; and Walker, irresolute as he was by nature, stuck to his guns.

"Look here, Loder, don't beat about the bush," he said. "I don't want to row with you—we're pals—"

"You seem to be heading for a row," said Loder.

"I tell you it can't go on, and it shan't! You're down on that little tick, I know, and I don't say you're wrong. I don't like him any more than you do. He's checked me often enough. But—"

"Put it plain."

"Well, there's a limit, and I won't have it!" flared out Walker. "I saw you burning a pile of impot paper this afternoon, and saw Wharton's fist on a bit of it—a bit of the *Aeneid*! It's too thick! It—it's foul! I tell you that I dashed well won't have it, so there!"

"I told you that I was burning old racing papers."

"I didn't believe that at the time, and told you so."

"I believe some old lines got mixed up with the papers. Wharton's done lines for me at times. Nothing surprising if I chucked some of his old impots into the fire."

"You said Skinner at the time."

"Did I? Well, if you saw Wharton's fist, as you fancy, there must have been some old lines of Wharton's, too."

"If that's the truth, Loder—"

"Frozen truth!"

"Then you don't mind if I mention the matter outside this study?"

Loder set his lips hard.

"No need to mention it, that I know of," he said.

"I thought not," said Walker.

"Well, I'm not the man to give a pal away, but you must see the kid through

somehow. If it comes out that you were burning a stack of papers in Wharton's list, at the time his impot mysteriously vanished, you know what everybody will think. Loder, it's too thick; and I won't stand for it!"

Loder did not answer; but his teeth gritted, and his eyes glittered at Walker of the Sixth.

"I think you must be mad!" went on Walker. "A fag's trick—a rotten trick on a junior, to land him in a row with his beak—and you a prefect! Dash it all, Loder, ain't you jolly well ashamed of yourself?" Walker spoke warmly. "Why, if the school knew—"

"You're making a silly mistake," said Loder evenly. "And you're goin' to hold your tongue, Jimmy, so that nobody else will make the same mistake."

Walker turned to the door.

"If Wharton's sacked, I go straight to the Head, and tell him every word!" he flung over his shoulder. "Mind, I mean that—every syllable! I'd be ashamed to look a decent chap in the face again if I let it go on! Gerald Loder, you're a dashed rascal and a rotter!"

With that Walker tramped out of the study, and shut the door after him, with a bang that rang the length of the passage.

Loder, with set lips and gritting teeth, stood staring rather blankly at the door after Walker had gone. Jimmy Walker, his pal, more or less his dupe, meant every word he uttered—the thing was too rotten, and he would not stand for it. Loder could not undo what he had done; but if he did not save Wharton from the result of his rascally trickery, there was danger ahead, and it might prove to be Loder of the Sixth, not Wharton of the Remove, who was sacked from Greyfriars. Gerald Loder had plenty of food for thought now.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Help from the Enemy!

WINGATE tapped at the door of Dr. Locke's study and opened it. The Head and the Remove master were there—the former grave and stern, the latter agitated with an agitation very unusual in the calm, self-contained master of the Lower Fourth.

"Wharton, sir!" said the Greyfriars captain.

"Send him in, Wingate!"

Harry Wharton entered, and Wingate closed the door and walked away, with a frown on his brow. He was "down" on the rebel of the Remove, like most of the seniors, and, like the rest, he fully expected to hear that Wharton had been sacked. Last term he would have been sorry to hear it; now his opinion was the sooner the better.

Wharton was perfectly cool and collected as he stood in the presence of his headmaster. He took no notice whatever of Mr. Quelch. The stern gaze of Dr. Locke had no effect on him. Certainly he did not look like a fellow who was guilty, or in fear. He knew that he had left the whole school in a buzz behind him—that almost every fellow thought that he was going to be sacked, and that he deserved it. But he was cool as ice, and that coolness was far from pleasing the Head.

"I can scarcely credit what Mr. Quelch has told me, Wharton," said Dr. Locke. "Is it really possible that you, a boy in the Remove, have ventured to cast doubt on your Form master's word?"



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Wharton paused before he replied. In the bitterness of his heart, he believed that a master who disliked him was bent on getting rid of him from the school. He believed that Mr. Quelch had found his impot where it had been left. It seemed impossible that he had not found it. But he realised that he had to be careful in speaking to his headmaster. What he believed, or suspected, was not evidence. What he had to state was the actual fact as he knew it. And he was wary. Believing, as he did, that he had an enemy in his Form master, he knew how necessary it was to be on his guard.

The Head's sternness relaxed a little as he paused.

"I hope that Mr. Quelch may have misapprehended your meaning, Wharton," he said, more gently. "You cannot have meant what Mr. Quelch supposed you to mean."

"The boy's meaning was perfectly clear, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "I had, and have, no doubt of it."

"Speak, Wharton!"

"I can only tell you what happened, sir," said Harry, quietly and steadily. "This afternoon I placed five hundred lines on Mr. Quelch's desk, for him to find when he came in. Mr. Quelch says that I did not. I say, and repeat, that I did!"

"No lines were in my study, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. "The boy's statement is false!"

"It is not false!" said Harry. "The lines were there!"

"Be silent! If you placed the lines there, Wharton, as you say, how do you account for the fact that Mr. Quelch did not find them?"

"Am I to speak plainly, sir?"

"Certainly!"

"Then I believe that Mr. Quelch did find them, sir."

"Dr. Locke—" said Mr. Quelch, in a choking voice.

"Upon my word!" said the Head. "Is it possible that you dare to utter such words in my presence, Wharton?"

"You told me to speak plainly, sir," said Harry, unmoved. "Mr. Quelch seems to have taken a dislike to me this term. It may be my own fault. I suppose I can't judge of that. But—"

"This is incredible!" said the Head. "It is incredible and shocking! Miserable boy! You dare to suggest—"

He broke off. "Has it not even crossed your mind that, if you indeed placed the lines there, they may have been removed by some person before your Form master's return?"

"Mr. Quelch himself said that that suggestion was ridiculous, sir. I think he is right."

"I still regard the suggestion as ridiculous, Dr. Locke," said Mr. Quelch. "Who could, and would, commit such a senseless action?"

The Head pursed his lips.

There was a long silence in the study. Minute followed minute, while the Form master and the junior waited for the Head to speak.

Mr. Quelch, in his anger and indignation and distress, had formed the worst possible opinion of his former head boy. But the Head was calm and unprejudiced.

Shocked as he was by the junior's miserable suspicion of double-dealing on the part of a master, he could see, as Mr. Quelch could not, all that was in favour of the boy. He could see, in fact, that Wharton really and sincerely entertained that suspicion, and that could only be founded upon the fact that he was indeed telling the truth about the lines. Had he not

placed the lines in the study he could not, of course, entertain such a suspicion. But evidently he did. It followed that the lines had been placed in the study, and that somehow they had mysteriously disappeared before Mr. Quelch came in.

It was a difficult, as well as a painful matter, and the Head was long silent—thinking. He spoke at last:

"You say that you placed your lines in your Form master's study, Wharton? Can you say that anyone saw you do so?"

"No, sir. There was nobody about the House. I did not pass anyone till I left the House."

"There was not likely to be a witness to what never occurred," said Mr. Quelch bitterly.

"It is not unusual, sir, for the House to be deserted on a half-holiday," said Harry. "But though no one saw me take the lines to Mr. Quelch's study, my friends can prove that I wrote them."

Mr. Quelch started a little.

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"Four fellows saw that I had written more than three hundred of them before they went out this afternoon," said Harry. "They knew that I was staying in to finish them before I joined them at Redclyffe."

"If it transpires that Wharton actually wrote the lines, Mr. Quelch, what will be your opinion?" asked the Head.

Mr. Quelch's lips set bitterly.

"My opinion will be, sir, that Wharton never finished the lines after his friends were gone, and that he deceived them as he sought to deceive me."

Wharton's lips curled.

"That is Mr. Quelch's opinion of me, sir," he said. "I have done nothing to deserve it, that I know of. Last term he would not have said so."

There was another long pause.

This time it was Mr. Quelch who broke it.

"I must say, sir, that I do not believe a single word Wharton has uttered. I do not believe that he took lines to my study—I do not believe that he went near my study at all. That is my fixed opinion!"

Tap!

The door opened, and Loder of the Sixth appeared. The Head made an impatient gesture.

"Loder, I am engaged now—"

"Excuse me, sir," said Loder respectfully. "I believe I can throw some light on the matter you are dealing with, sir."

Three pairs of eyes turned on Loder of the Sixth!

"In that case, Loder, you may speak," said Dr. Locke. "I shall be very glad to hear anything bearing on this matter."

"I understand, sir, from what fellows are saying all over the House, that there is some question whether this junior, Wharton, took some lines to his Form master's study this afternoon."

"That is the case, Loder."

"Well, sir, as a prefect, I am bound to speak," said Loder. "To that extent I can corroborate Wharton's statement—I saw him going into his Form master's study this afternoon with an impot."

"Bless my soul! Are you sure of this?" exclaimed the Head; while Wharton stared blankly at his old enemy, and Mr. Quelch fairly gasped.

"I am quite sure, sir!" said Loder.

"Wharton! At what time do you state that you went to your Form master's study?"

"About half-past three, sir."

"At what time did you see Wharton there, Loder?"

"It would be about half-past three, sir," said Loder. "I did not notice the time exactly, but it would be about that."

"You noticed that he had an imposition with him?"

"Yes, sir—rather a large one, I thought."

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head.

"I hope I have done right in coming to tell you this, sir," said Loder smoothly. "The fellows are saying that the lines were not found, and that looks to me as if some thoughtless fag has been playing tricks. I am quite certain that Wharton left them there, for when I saw him a few minutes later he was coming away without them."

Wharton could only stare.

Why his old enemy should be speaking in his favour was an utter mystery to him. If the bust of Socrates on the Head's bookcase had spoken up for him it could hardly have astonished him more.

"I may add, sir," said Loder, "that I have no very high opinion of Wharton, and that I have had occasion lately to punish him, as a prefect, but I thought myself bound to tell you what I knew of this matter, sir."

"Most certainly!" exclaimed the Head. "You have done your duty, Loder, and I am deeply, extremely obliged to you."

"Thank you, sir!" said Loder smoothly, and he left the study and did not scowl till the door was closed after him.

There was a deep silence in the study when he was gone. Mr. Quelch, intensely and bitterly incensed as he was, had no thought of doubting the word of a Sixth Form prefect, especially of a prefect who, he knew, disliked the junior in whose favour he had spoken. The Head did not dream of doubting it, neither for the moment did Wharton. It was taken as established now that the lines had been placed in the Remove master's study.

Dr. Locke coughed.

"It appears, Mr. Quelch, that Wharton spoke the truth in the first place."

Mr. Quelch nodded—he could not speak.

"Some foolish, thoughtless boy must

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have removed the lines—there is no other explanation.”

Another nod.

“In view of the fact that Wharton was speaking the truth, and that he was accused of falsehood, can you forgive him for his unjust, miserable, wicked suspicion regarding yourself, if he expresses his regret fully and wholeheartedly?”

There was only one reply for the Remove master to make.

“If the boy withdraws and apologises—”

“He will do that, frankly and fully, in my presence, or he will leave Greyfriars this hour!” said the Head.

He looked at Wharton.

“If I have done Mr. Quelch an injustice, sir, I am sorry for it,” said Harry Wharton.

“That is satisfactory,” said the Head. “You may go.”

The “if” in Wharton’s sentence had not struck the Head, but it had struck Mr. Quelch very forcibly. The junior left the study with his suspicion unaltered—he knew that. And if Mr. Quelch had disliked the boy before, his dislike was tenfold intensified now.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

“I SAY, you fellows, here he comes!” squeaked Billy Bunter.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!”

“My esteemed Wharton—”

“What’s the verdict?”

“Sacked?”

“Bunked?”

There was a breathless crowd in the Rag. Harry Wharton strolled coolly into that apartment with his hands in his pockets. Certainly he did not look like a fellow who had been “bunked.”

He laughed lightly.

“Is it all right?” asked Bob Cherry, staring at him blankly.

“But what—how—”

“It turns out that a Sixth Form prefect saw me taking my lines into Quelch’s study this afternoon.” Wharton laughed again. “He came and told the Head so! Quelch had to bite on it.”

“Well, my hat!”

“Thank goodness!” said Frank Nugent, with a deep breath. “What splendid luck! What prefect was it—most of them were in the football—”

“It was Loder!”

“Loder!” yelled Bob.

“Jolly old Loder!” answered Harry.

“Loder of the Sixth came and saved you from the chopper?” exclaimed Bob.

“Are you pulling our legs?”

“Not at all!”

“Then he can’t be the bad hat we’ve always believed! Blessed if I shouldn’t have expected Loder to leave you to it!”

“Same here! Never more surprised in my life! But it’s so.”

“Oh, draw it mild!” protested Lord Mauleverer. “Loder was bound to say what he knew, and it was decent of him, down on Wharton as he is!”

“Fancy Loder bein’ decent!” grinned the Bounder. “And some ass said the age of miracles was past.”

“But what on earth became of the dashed lines, then?” exclaimed Johnny Bull. “Quelch never found them.”

“Didn’t he?” sneered Wharton.

“You know he didn’t, as he said he didn’t!” growled Johnny Bull.

“I know nothing of the kind,” said Wharton coolly. “I know he’s had to admit that the lines were there—he couldn’t call a Sixth Form prefect

a liar, like a kid in the Remove. The beak thinks that some silly fag must have sneaked the lines from the study before Quelch came in. He’s welcome to think so. I don’t!”

“Oh, rats!”

“The ratfulness is terrific!”

“You’re an ass, Wharton!”

“Possibly,” drawled Wharton. “I know I’ve had a narrow escape of the sack—and I know I did nothing to ask for it. I’ll believe that some fag sneaked those lines when Quelch spots the man! It’s up to him to spot him! If there’s a fag going about Greyfriars bagging lines from beak’s studies, to get fellows into rows, he ought to be nailed. I don’t believe it myself.”

“Who the dooce could it have been?” said Lord Mauleverer.

“Who, indeed?” said Harry, laughing. “Nobody, old bean. We’re learning Quelch’s little ways with fellows he dislikes—that’s all.”

“You’re wrong, Wharton,” said Mauly quietly. “I’m not one of those intellectual chaps, and I own up I haven’t half your brains, but I tell you you’re a fool to think anything of the sort of Quelch! And I’ll tell you this, too—you ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself for thinkin’ so!”

“Hear, hear!” said several voices.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

“Thanks!” he said. “I’ll keep my own opinion, all the same, and I can tell you that I shall keep an eye open on Quelch after this! I’m not going to be turfed out of Greyfriars because the dear man doesn’t love me any more!”

Wharton strolled out of the Rag, leaving the fellows in a buzz behind him. He was keeping his own belief, but he was alone in it.

All the other fellows were wondering who could have “sneaked” those lines, now that it was established beyond a doubt that the lines had been there.

Everybody wanted to know; and it was soon clear that the Head wanted to know, too.

That evening, there was a regular inquisition on the subject.

Masters and prefects were on the trail of the unknown and mysterious fag who had played the trick.

It did not occur to them that the trick had been played, not by a fag at all, but by one of the Sixth Form prefects, who was engaged, like the rest, in rooting out the delinquent!

No discovery was made.

If some fellow had “sneaked” into Quelch’s study in his absence and taken Wharton’s impot away, nobody had seen him.

Wharton told the fellows sarcastically, in advance, that no discovery would be made; and it had to be admitted that he was right. Still, it was not surprising that, on a fine half-holiday, when the House was deserted, some young rascal had found an opportunity of entering a study unobserved.

There was no news on that subject; but after prep that night, there was news on another subject. It was rumoured that there had been trouble in the Sixth—that a prefect had punched another prefect’s nose—and that the two, formerly pals, were no longer on speaking terms.

And when Walker, with a nose like a tomato, was seen to pass Loder in the passage with a scowl, and without a word, that rumour was confirmed.

Gerald Loder had done as he had had no choice but to do, in the affair of Wharton’s lines; but his rage was deep and bitter.

But for Walker’s intervention, he had little doubt that Harry Wharton would have been expelled; but Walker had intervened and Loder had had to play up.

It was gall and wormwood to Loder to be driven, personally, to save the junior behind whom he longed to see the gates of Greyfriars close. And in his rage and resentment he had fallen out with Walker of the Sixth. Hence Walker’s tomato nose, and a bruise over Loder’s own eye—and the chilly atmosphere of unfriendliness that reigned between them.

It fell to Loder of the Sixth to see lights out for the Remove that night. In the dormitory many interested eyes fixed on the bruise on his brow—a silent proof that the rumour of his trouble with James Walker was not unfounded.

Harry Wharton gave his old enemy a very curious look. The more he thought over the matter, the more he was astonished. Either he had misjudged Loder, or there was something behind it that he could not understand. Why had the bully of the Sixth, the fellow who was always trying to catch him out, spoken up for him and saved him from the chopper? Certainly, if he knew facts in favour of an accused boy, it was his duty to speak; but Wharton, at least, never expected much in the way of duty from Gerald Loder. It seemed to him, at all events, that it was up to him to thank Loder for what he had done; and at lights-out he had the opportunity.

He came towards the prefect, as he lounged, scowling, in the doorway of the Remove dormitory.

“Loder—” he began.

“Get to bed, you young rotter!” snapped Loder, without waiting to hear what he had to say.

As a matter of fact, it was only with difficulty that Loder was able to keep his hands off the junior. He had not been able to keep them off James Walker.

“I only wanted to say—”

“I’ve told you to get to bed!”

“Very well!” said Wharton, compressing his lips. Loder was evidently not in a mood to receive his acknowledgments.

Loder had his ashplant under his arm. He slipped it down into his hand. He was yearning to lay it on Wharton; and he remembered that he had a pretext.

“Wharton! Hold on a minute,” he said, with an unpleasant glitter in his eyes. “This afternoon you disobeyed an order to go into the House. You caused me to fall when you got away on your bicycle. You may fancy that you can carry on here as you like—you seem to fancy so—but you’re going to learn differently.”

Wharton looked at him steadily.

“Are you raking that up now, Loder?” he asked quietly. “I’ve seen you several times since this afternoon, and—”

“Bend over that bed!” Loder pointed with the cane.

Wharton hesitated.

“Or perhaps you’d rather I took you to your Form master?” added Loder satirically.

Wharton drew a deep breath. Just at present his Form master’s study was to him like the den of lions to Daniel of old.

Frank Nugent gave him an imploring look. His chum was in trouble enough already, without defiance of a prefect and its results added.

Loder’s eyes glittered. He would

have been glad enough to take Wharton to Mr. Quelch—in that gentleman's present mood.

Quietly Wharton bent over the bed.

The Remove fellows looked on in silence as Loder laid on the "six." Into that six he put all his beef. The lashes of the cane fairly rang through the dormitory.

Wharton rose, his face white and set. Loder tucked the ashplant under his arm. He was feeling better now.

Nothing was said in the Remove dormitory till the lights were out, and Loder was gone. Then there was a buzz.

"Did it hurt, old bean?" called out Skinner.

"My hat!" said the Bounder. "I've never seen even Loder lay it on like that before! What's the matter with the brute?"

lines in Quelch's study on his way to the bike shed. Loder had been nowhere near the House! Loder had not seen him take those lines to Quelch's study, as he had stated to the Head!

It was a falsehood! Loder had come to the Head's study and told a deliberate lie—to save the junior he hated! He had not seen what he said he had seen—he could not have seen anything of the kind! Why had he lied?

Why? Wharton knew, in a flash of illumination. It was Loder who had stolen the impot!

There was nothing else to think!

Loder would have been glad to see him sacked. Yet he had told a lie to save him from the sack! Fear of the discovery of what he had done, fear, perhaps, of being told upon by some fellow who might have seen him—that had been Loder's motive.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

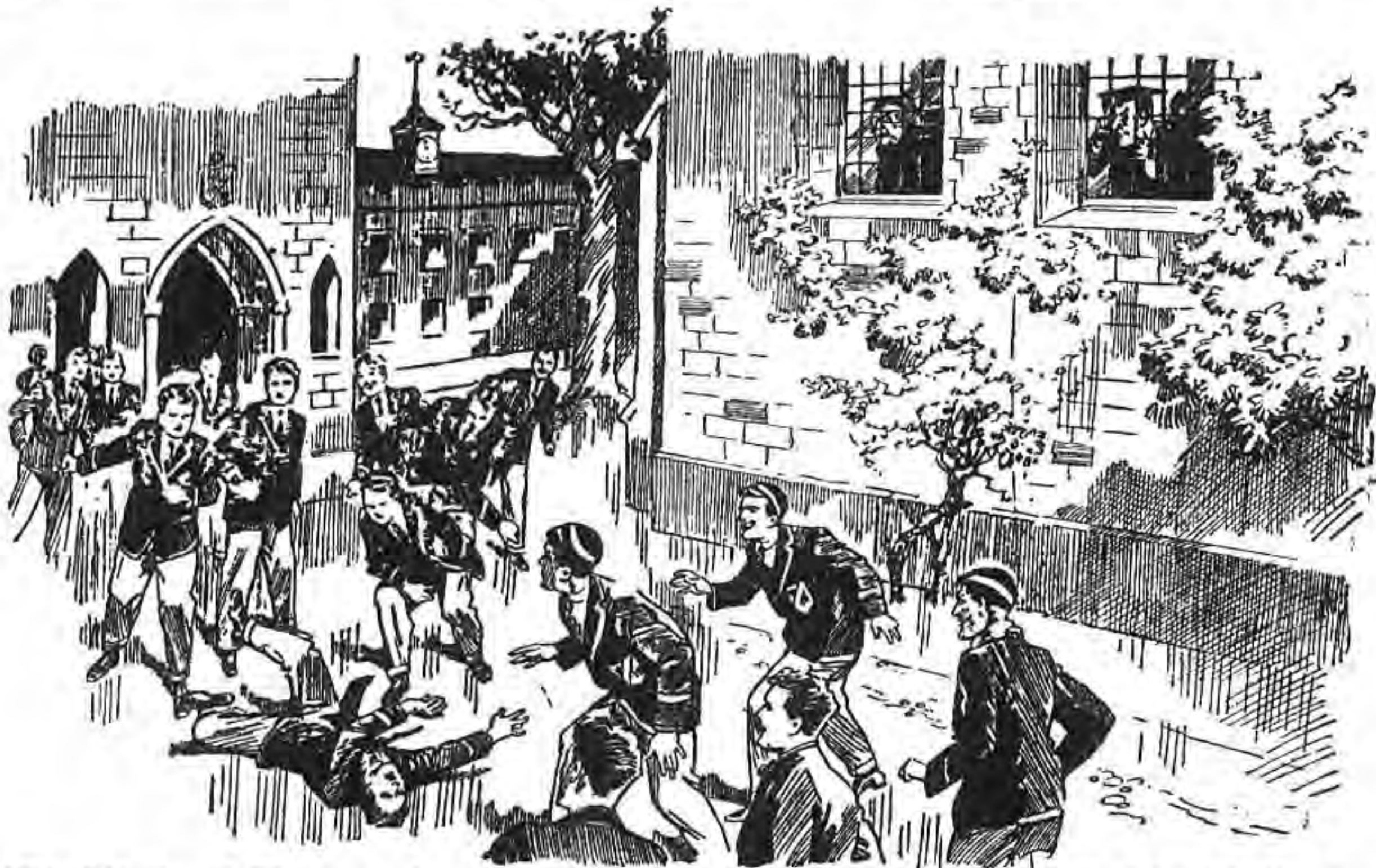
The Last Straw!

"MIND your eye, old man!" The Bounder whispered that good-natured warning to Harry Wharton, at the door of the Remove Form room the following morning.

The Remove were gathered there; and Mr. Quelch was coming up the passage. And Mr. Quelch's face was at its grimmest.

Wharton smiled faintly, but he did not answer.

Quelch, as he came up, glanced at his Form, and for a single instant his eye rested on Wharton with a cold glitter in it. Then he opened the Form-room door, and the juniors went in to take their places.



With all his strength Wharton struck, and his clenched fist crashed into Gerald Loder's face. The bully of the Sixth went down on his back, and there was a roar in the quad. Under the eyes of the headmaster and many fellows, a prefect had been knocked down by a junior!

"Walker's given him a blue eye and he's taken it out of Wharton," said Peter Todd.

"I suppose that's it! Queer, though, after going to the Head to speak up for Wharton. Can't make the rotter out."

Wharton did not join in the talk; neither did he sleep as soon as the other fellows. He was hurt—the bully of the Sixth had meant, viciously, to hurt him. He was thinking, as he turned restlessly in bed.

Loder loathed him as much as ever—more than ever! After letting the episode of the afternoon drop, he had raked it up again, as an excuse for a caning. Yet in the interval he had taken the trouble to speak up for the accused junior in the Head's study, and undoubtedly done him a service. It was not easy to elucidate. But as Wharton thought it over, there came a glimmering of light into his mind.

He started up in bed.

"My hat! The—the villain!" he gasped.

He remembered! He had run into Loder in the quad after leaving his

He had lied to the Head, to save Wharton! He must have had a powerful motive! That was it! He had plotted the whole thing and weakened at the finish.

Wharton's eyes flamed in the darkness of the dormitory. He knew now! There was no other explanation of Loder having come to the Head with a lie on his lips. Now that he remembered that Loder could not possibly have seen him going to Quelch's study, as he had stated, he knew that Loder had lied—and he knew the reason.

"The hound!" breathed Wharton.

Then another thought came into his mind. In view of what he now believed, what became of his suspicion of Mr. Quelch—of double-dealing on the part of the Form master?

Wharton's face burned with shame.

Quelch had been hasty, unjust, distrustful. But he had not done what the junior had been foolish enough, mad enough, to suspect that he had done.

It was late before Wharton slept that night.

Mr. Quelch went to his high desk. The juniors sat down; but as the Remove master turned to his Form, Wharton rose in his place.

Mr. Quelch gave him a look.

"You may sit down, Wharton!" he snapped.

"If you please, sir," said Harry, very respectfully, "I should like to offer you an apology before all the Form."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch, with uncompromising grimness.

"I am very sorry, sir, that I answered you as I did in your study last evening."

"Indeed!" repeated Mr. Quelch, in the same tone.

All eyes were on Wharton now. Skinner winked at Snoop. Skinner's opinion was that the captain of the Remove realised that he had bitten off more than he could chew, and was getting out of it as fast as he could!

"I know, sir, that I must have offended you very much," went on Wharton.

He had made up his mind to do the right thing, so far as he could, and he was not daunted by Quelch's grim, steely stare.

"Do you indeed realise that, Wharton?" said Mr. Quelch icily. "I should hardly have expected it of you!"

Wharton coloured.

"I am sorry, sir. I am ashamed of having allowed such a thought to come into my mind," he said, in a low voice. "I know now that you did not find my lines in your study—I know that I ought to have known it was so when you said so. I am truly sorry, sir."

Mr. Quelch's face did not relax.

He had been too bitterly wounded for that. His honour had been brought into question; he had been suspected, if not openly accused, of double-dealing! Had Wharton spoken as he was now speaking, in the Head's study, it might have produced some effect. Now it was too late. Too much bitterness had accumulated.

"I am glad, Wharton, that you have the decency, at least, to offer this public apology!" said the Remove master; "and I can only hope that you are speaking sincerely, and not seeking to delude me."

Wharton's lips set. But he made another effort.

"I am more sorry than I can say, sir! I was hoping that you would forgive me, and forget what I said."

"I can do neither, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch coldly. "Such a suspicion on your part is, in my opinion, evidence of a bad heart. I cannot forget your offence, and I cannot ever trust you again. If you are speaking sincerely, I am glad, but I doubt your sincerity. You may sit down and be silent."

Wharton sat down without another word.

"Quelch is too old a bird to be caught by chaff!" Skinner whispered to Snoop, and Snoop nodded and grinned.

Morning school went on its accustomed way. Mr. Quelch took no particular notice of Wharton; but when he had to speak to him his manner was dryness itself.

That morning, at least, Harry Wharton was a model pupil. His "con" was the best in the Form, but did not elicit a word of commendation from his Form master. He was quiet, obedient, respectful, obviously doing his best to placate the master who was justly angered.

But long before second lesson was over he knew that it was in vain. The Remove master was adamant. He had been wounded to the quick, and he could neither forget nor forgive. From his Form master, henceforth, Wharton had justice to expect—bare justice—for Mr. Quelch was a just man. For the rest, he had to expect chilly dislike and cold suspicion.

Wharton's heart was heavy enough. He had done wrong, and he knew it; but deep regret did not wash out the wrong. And yet, going over the matter in his mind, he could not see that he was to blame so much as Mr. Quelch evidently thought.

The first fault had been Quelch's—he had accused the boy, harshly and unjustly, of falseness. He might have remembered that, in condemning the junior,

It was impossible now to set the matter right—between him and his Form master there was a gulf fixed. And it was the doing of Loder—a Sixth Form prefect who had been dastard enough to play a trick of which a mischievous fag would have been ashamed—Loder, his enemy, his unscrupulous

enemy. It was difficult for Wharton to think of Loder without his eyes burning with anger.

"Wharton!"

Frank Nugent nudged his chum anxiously. Wharton came out of deep thought; he had forgotten, for the moment, where he was. He crimsoned.

"I have spoken to you twice, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch, in a steely voice. "Will you give me your attention or not?"

"Yes, sir. I'm sorry—"

"You are very liberal with apologies, it seems, Wharton," said the Remove master, with biting contempt. "I will ask you to make no more—I do not believe in your sincerity. But I require you to give me your attention while in class. I will not allow any boy in this form to disregard me."

The barest justice—only the very barest! Mr. Quelch was just; but he was implacable.

"Since the beginning of this term, Wharton, you have shown a contempt of authority which will not be allowed to continue. You will not be permitted to disregard your Form master, or to waste the time of the Form. You will take two hundred lines, Wharton."

"Very well, sir!" said Harry, in a low voice.

It was a dreary morning to the captain of the Remove. He was careful not to be in fault again—very careful. But he had the feeling all the time that Quelch's eye was on him; that the slightest fault, passed over in another fellow, would be picked upon at once. He breathed more freely when the Form was dismissed for break.

"Quelch's got his rag out to-day, and no mistake," remarked Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five went into the quad. "You've got his back up, old man."

"The uptulness of Quelch's esteemed back is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh dismally.

"I've done all I can!" said Harry.

"Quelch may get over it in time," said Frank Nugent hopefully. "After all, he's a jolly good sort, in his own way."

"He's not making it easy for me."

"That's your own fault, old chap," said Johnny Bull. "Keep that in mind when you feel bad about it."

"It's not my fault, but Loder's!" Wharton's eyes burned. "That cad—that cur—has done this! I tell you fellows I'm as certain that Loder took those lines from the study as if I'd seen him doing it!"

The Co. looked uncomfortable.

"It's too jolly thick!" said Bob. "The man's a brute—a rotter—anything you like, but—but—"

"I tell you I know it!"

"Well," said Johnny Bull, in his slow, thoughtful way, "you can't know it—you can only suspect it. And after your suspecting Quelch, and finding out that you were a silly ass, I think you ought to be jolly careful how you start suspecting other people."

"If Loder had done it, old chap, why should he have come to the Head and spoiled his own game?" said Frank.

"Because the cur was afraid! He dared not let it go on to the finish! I shouldn't wonder if he was seen—"

"He would take jolly good care he wasn't!"

"Somebody may have known something. He had a row with Walker last night—perhaps Walker knew. Anyhow, it was Loder, and I know it," Wharton spoke with passionate conviction. "That cur, that disreputable blackguard, who ought to have been kicked out of Greyfriars long ago—that rotten rascal Loder—"

"Shut up, for goodness' sake!" gasped Bob Cherry, catching Wharton's arm.

Loder of the Sixth was coming directly towards the chums of the Remove—perhaps looking for trouble.

It was too late for Wharton to "shut up" if he had wanted to. Loder had heard him, as well as a dozen other fellows. The prefect's face was almost green with rage.

"Wharton!" Loder choked. "What—what did you call me?"

Wharton turned on him. Believing what he did—or, rather, knowing what he did—the anger and scorn that surged up in his breast broke all control. His eyes flashed at the bully of the Sixth.

"What did I call you?" His voice was clear and ringing. "I'll repeat what I called you, Loder—a rotten rascal!"

"Harry, old chap—" panted Frank.

"Let me alone! The cur's asked me, and I'm telling him!" Wharton's voice rose. "Loder took those lines from Quelch's study yesterday, to land me in a row with Quelch—he knows it! I'll tell him so, and I'll tell all Greyfriars! And I'll tell the whole school that he's a coward and a bully and a rotten rascal!"

Fifty fellows, at least, heard Wharton.

Fellows crowded to the spot, staring, almost gasping. Loder stood almost gibbering with rage.

It was such a scene as had never before been witnessed in the old quadrangle of Greyfriars School. Mr. Quelch was looking out of his study window in amazement; the Head was looking out, doubting whether he heard aright the ringing words that reached his ears. Heedless of all, Harry Wharton faced his enemy of the Sixth, mastered by his scorn and indignation, and utterly reckless now.

Loder gasped.

"You—you young villain! I shall take you to the Head at once—you young scoundrel! Come!"

He grasped at Wharton's shoulder.

"Hands off, you cur!" shouted Wharton.

"Wharton, old man—" panted Bob Cherry.

"Harry—"

Wharton did not heed his anxious, almost terrified chums. His blood was boiling. As Loder's grasp tightened on his shoulder he struck at the prefect's arm, and Loder released him with a howl. Wharton's eyes gleamed at him.

"Keep your paws off me, you cur!" he said.

Loder was leaping at him the next moment.

Steady as steel Harry Wharton faced him. He had forgotten that he was a junior, and Loder a prefect. He had forgotten the surging crowd that stared on blankly, the masters' faces at the study windows. He had forgotten everything but that his base and unscrupulous enemy was before him, and laying hands on him.

With all his strength he struck, and his clenched fist crashed into Gerald Loder's face, sending him spinning backwards.

Crash!

Loder of the Sixth was down on his back!

One of his eyes was closed—he sprawled dazedly, panting. There was a roar in the quad.

A Sixth Form prefect had been knocked down by a junior, in open quad, under the eyes of all Greyfriars—under the eyes of the headmaster staring from his study window. There was a roar, followed by a breathless hush.

(Continued on page 28.)

THERE ARE THRILLS GALORE IN THIS AMAZING STORY—

THE RED FALCON!

By ARTHUR STEFFENS



The Huntford Arms!

THE inn was set back from the road with a broad patch of grass in front of it on which stood a signpost, whose sign, newly oiled, swayed noiselessly in the wind.

It was such a nice-looking inn, with its many gables, its overhanging half-timbered front, and the broad, high arch with shut, iron-studded oak doors which led into the stable-yard, that Hal and Jerry pulled up as they came to it, and urged their horses to the closed front door.

Overhead, the moon kept peeping out from the fast-racing clouds.

"The Huntford Arms," said Jerry, reading the name on the front of the inn. "H'm, let me see! I believe Peter Davey set this place on his list of inns whose landlords we can trust, Hal."

"To be sure he did!" answered Hal.

"H'm, the Huntford Arms! Is not the name strikingly familiar, boy?"

"It reminds me of the Earl of Huntford, the villain whose lying evidence sent us to the hulks, Jerry."

"The same," said Jerry, walking his horse past the shut doors of the inn, and then swinging it on to the grass plot and looking up at the gently swinging sign. "And what have we here?"

Hal Lovett looked up at the sign. The post and frame had been freshly painted, as had the signboard itself. And here, upon a background of blue

were five falcons, all jessed and belled and hooded, as if they were set upon a shield.

The jesses, or leg straps, were flying loose, and there were bells upon the falcons' legs. The hoods were plain to see even in the moonlight. And as he recalled the exactly similar device which Hal bore in a tattoo mark upon his chest, Jerry drew in his breath in a sharp, clear whistle. Then he pointed at the slowly swinging sign.

"By thunder, Hal, look at that!"

Hal was looking, his eyes wide with wonder.

"The Falcon!"

"Ay, the Falcon, boy! But not red as you bear it. There are five of them up there. And the place is called the Huntford Arms."

Jerry whipped the paper containing the list of friendly landlords who might afford the adventurers safe shelter out of his pocket and examined it by the light of the moon. It was quite bright enough to read by, and in the bold black scrawl he saw "Huntford Arms. Dick Temple—proprietor. Friendly. Use my name."

"Hal," said Jerry, as he urged Galloper to the front door, "here's where we are going to stay, no matter what comes of it."

The inn was furnished with an iron bell-pull besides a heavy wrought-iron knocker. The door was thick and strongly made. Diamond paned win-

READ THIS FIRST.

Convicted of robbing the Earl of Huntford of a diamond star, Hal Lovett and Jerry McLean are conveyed to the convict hulk *Ethalion*, anchored at Woolwich—Hal to serve a sentence of seven years and McLean to await deportation. As the result of a prearranged plan, the convicts fire the ship, and Hal and Jerry escape in the blackness of the night, eventually reaching Blackheath, where they stay at an inn named the Swan With Two Necks. Later, they are forced to flee from Bow Street Runners, and Hal and Jerry take to the road. They make an enemy of Colonel York, a highwayman, who shadows them, determined to be revenged.

dows looked out from the stout walls of the building. The musical ring of the bell told, too, that it was not a common one.

Jerry set it pealing until the whole house must have echoed to the sound. Then, reaching over from the saddle, he set the knocker clattering with din enough to wake the dead.

Under cover of this noise, the horseman who had followed them approached, drawing his horse back into the shadow of some trees a little way along the road.

A catch rasped open. A window swung wide. Then out came the night-capped head of a red-faced and somewhat angry-looking man.

"In the devil's name, what's amiss?" he cried, looking down at the two horsemen.

"We have been travelling long, and need shelter for the night," explained Jerry McLean.

"Then you can go and get it somewhere else," answered the man at the window, and he pulled the frame inwards and snapped the catch.

Jerry laughed. He could sympathise with the worthy landlord, whose house was closed, and whose rest had been disturbed; but he and Hal had to have shelter. And so he started ringing and banging again, until at last the front door of the inn swung open and the landlord, arrayed in hastily donned clothes, confronted him, holding up a gleaming lantern.

His eyes flashed fire as he glared at the two horsemen, taking stock of them from top to toe.

"You can't stay here," he protested. "My inn is full—"

He broke off as he noted the quality of the horses and saw the pistol holsters and the swords which dangled beside the riders, and his manner changed.

"Perhaps my friend Peter Davey's name will serve as recommendation," remarked Jerry McLean.

The effect of the name was magical.

"Peter sent you. Why, then, gentlemen, you shall have the best my house affords. By your leave I'll go round and open the yard doors."

The landlord left them, and a minute later, bolts were shot back, a key was turned, a bar removed, and the yard doors swung open.

The landlord shut and barred them again the moment the horses were in, and then showed Jerry and Hal to two horse-stalls set apart from the rest.

"Your horses will be safe from prying eyes here, gentlemen," said mine

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host, and he waited whilst they unharnessed their steeds, and gave them a rub down before leaving them to their rest. Then the landlord led Hal and Jerry into the house. "I'll have you called at your convenience, and breakfast shall be served in a private room. I take it you do not wish to be seen?"

"I would be better," McLean confessed.

"And your names, gentlemen?"

McLean gave them, and the landlord shot swift, critical glances from one to the other. A wave of colour deepened the hue of his sun-tanned and rubicund face.

"McLean and Lovett," he muttered. "Two convicts who escaped from the hulk Ethalion. Why, sirs, word came that one of you had robbed Mr. Cosgrave of his horse at the Swan With Two Necks. It may ruin me if it becomes known that I have sheltered you. But if Peter Davey sent you, 'tis good enough."

The landlord led the way into a cosy sitting-room, struck tinder, and lit a taper, and set some candles aflame in there. Then he closed the door.

"'Tis as well I left the servants sleeping," he said, in a tense whisper. "You are safe with me and the missus and the stable-boys, gentlemen, but I would not answer for some of the others. My lads will tend to your horses, but they will not show them. Maybe you'll be leaving my house to-morrow after dark?"

"We'll meet your wishes in whatever way you please," answered Jerry McLean, smiling at the landlord.

"I'm not for driving you forth," muttered the landlord, as he looked nervously around as if he were afraid of being overheard, "but you and your friend might as well have sat upon a keg of gunpowder as have come to this dangerous place."

"The Huntford Arms," said Jerry. "And why is it so called, and what is the significance of those five falcons on your swinging sign, Mr. Temple?"

"Don't muster me," said the landlord, making a nervous grimace. "My name's plain Dick to you. I have many friends among the gentry of the road, and I have helped many a poor devil to escape arrest in my house. But the house is named the Huntford Arms because it belongs to the Earl of Huntford, gentlemen, and that sign, the five falcons—those make up the Huntford Arms."

"Ah! And you know how we came to be arrested and tried and sentenced to the hulks, eh, Dick?" said Jerry McLean.

"Because of the Earl of—"

"Because of a cheating, lying dog, be he earl or no earl!" said Jerry, in a hissing whisper. "The earl framed my pal Hal here, Dick. I tried to save him from the Runners. For that they would have transported me for life, and sent this lad to the hulks for seven years. And so the Falcons are the earl's blazon, eh? Does he live near here?"

"The great hall is not five miles away," said the landlord, his lips twitching nervously.

Jerry unbuttoned Hal's coat and waistcoat, and swung the clothes aside; then, signing to Hal to remain still, whipped open the fine cambric shirt the younger man wore.

And there, on Hal's bare flesh, the red falcon was revealed.

"Does that bear any semblance to the falcons on your sign, Dick?" Jerry asked.

"Damme—what's it mean?" asked the landlord, staring at the red falcon with bulging eyes.

"That is what Hal and I have yet to discover," said Jerry, with a grim smile, as he let the shirt fall to. "To my thinking it was not chance or luck that brought us to your inn to-night, friend, but fate. Your earl laid a trap for my friend which clapped us both in gaol. But now we're out of it, and intend to take to the road for a living, Dick. We're warmly clad, and have fine horses to ride, and the world is wide. With friends like you and Peter Davey to help us, we ought to steer clear of the Runners long enough to make things pretty hot for your precious earl."

Richard Temple's lips tightened viciously.

"Thomas Burbidge, Earl of Huntford, is no friend of mine," he murmured raspingly. "I loathe the sight of him, and I hate the very sound of his name. But, gentlemen, the hour is late, and I would suggest that you go soon to bed."

Dick Temple showed his nocturnal visitors up a narrow winding stair to two bed-rooms high in the roof of the inn, and there he left them.

Before he turned in, Hal Lovett, who was still unduly wakeful, in spite of the night's adventures, opened wide his window and leant upon the sill.

Below him was the plot of grass. And on a level with his head the swinging sign. The five falcons rocked to the urge of a gentle wind and the white ribbon of the road swept on until it lost itself in a bend among some trees.

Eagerly Hal looked left and right, but no living thing was to be seen. The lurking shadow of Colonel York had gone.

Trapped in the Inn!

THE bright sunshine brought Hal Lovett out of bed soon after the inn was astir. He filled his lungs with pure air at the open window and took in again the pleasant scene about him.

The painted falcons on the sign had been splendidly done, and his first impressions of the inn were heightened as he studied it, for it was indeed a beautiful building.

A rap came on the door, and a girl's voice called to him. Hot water was brought, but Hal preferred to wash under the cold clear water of the pump if he could discover where it was.

So, without saying a word to Jerry McLean, who was humming a tune as he dressed in the adjoining room, Hal scampered down the winding wooden stairway, and, peering here and there outside the building, made out a pump which stood in a stone-paved square at the house-end of a beautiful garden.

Tossing down the towel he had brought with him, Hal bared himself to the waist, and then worked the handle of the pump until the water was gushing in a steady stream.

Under the gushing water, Hal thrust his curly head and his naked body, loving the feel of the ice-cold water upon his flesh.

Again and again he set the pump handle working, occupying himself so thoroughly that he did not hear the clatter and rumble of a barouche and four, which, with postilions up, came

thundering to the inn door, and, having discharged its solitary passenger there, swept on its busy way into the stable-yard.

But there was one who did witness the arrival of the barouche, newly come from London town—Jerry McLean, who was peeping out of the top window. And as he looked the blood drained in Jerry's face and rushed to his pounding heart.

"The Earl of Huntford, by all that's wonderful!" muttered Jerry, as he watched the elegant figure of the nobleman swing into the inn, and noted the sword which jutted out beneath the cloak the traveller wore.

Jerry McLean raced into Hal's room next door, but found it empty.

"Mercy save us, where is the boy?" he muttered.

He made his way out on to the landing, and there saw a maid in a bob cap who blushed and said:

"If you are looking for your friend, sir, he lately went down to wash at the garden pump."

"The dooce he did?" growled McLean.

Jerry hesitated but a moment, and then, darting into his bed-room, snatched up a pistol, which he rammed into his pocket, and his sword, which lay on the top of a chest of drawers there. Then Jerry pounded down the winding stairs.

Which was the way to the garden pump? Jerry looked this way and that, and so caught sight of the broad back of the earl as he, with cloak over arm, strode into a sunlit morning-room with mine host, Dick Temple, bowing at his heels.

"I'll have my breakfast now, and see that it is worthy of the house," Jerry heard the earl say in the polished musical drawl which had made him shudder when he had listened to Huntford giving his lying evidence at the Old Bailey—the evidence which had resulted in his and Hal Lovett's conviction.

Dick Temple muttered something, bowed himself out of the room, and almost tumbled against Jerry who was standing close against the wall with a finger to his lips.

The landlord, his eyes wide with fright, hurried on.

Jerry peeped into the room and saw the earl strolling languidly in the direction of the windows. These were thrown wide open, as also were two french windows which led out into the garden.

The earl was taking snuff, his figure relaxed, his eyes straying over the lovely scene before him. Then Jerry heard the noise of a creaking pump handle, and the rush of falling water, and he saw the earl stiffen. The figure of the man seemed to grow suddenly taut as if one had screwed it up from within.

A moment later the Earl of Huntford went striding out through the open french windows, a hand upon his sword-hilt.

Jerry McLean leapt into the room. He ran to the french windows and peered out. And then he saw why the earl had stiffened, and knew that deadly trouble was brewing.

Hal Lovett, naked to the waist, was standing beside the dripping pump, a towel in both his hands with which he was massaging his bare back.

The fine stalwart frame of the lad had never before showed to such advantage.

The smooth rippling muscles, indicative of great strength, might have been chiselled by a master sculptor.

And on the bare white flesh the red falcon stood out more vividly than any of the five birds on the swinging sign that marked the Huntford Arms. The tell-tale mark revealed the boy's identity as certainly as if he had shouted aloud his name.

Hal's face was turned away from the inn. He was looking down the open lawn and at the fine rose-borders that framed it. He did not see the Earl of Huntford stalking him with his hand upon his sword-hilt.

It was not until the earl was within six strides of him that he knew a stranger was near. And then the earl hissed out in a low and deadly whisper:

"The Red Falcon! Hal Lovett, condemned convict and felon escaped from the hulks, I arrest you! Stand where you are while I summon help, for, believe me, should you attempt to move I'll spit you like a partridge!"

The blade of his naked sword flashed in the morning sunshine, and he lunged with it until the prick of the point made Hal leap back.

There the man and the boy stood, looking into each other's eyes. The earl was evilly handsome, with cold, cruel eyes. His clothes were exquisite, and diamonds flashed in his cravat and on the third finger of his left hand. His bared teeth were faultlessly white.

"Lovett, the gaolbird, the diamond-stealer, the convict!" he went on, turning the words over and over in slow utterance as if he loved to hear them. "The Wych Street gallows brat! The highway robber and footpad! Ho, there! Ho! Temple, send out your men and apprehend this villain, or I shall kill him where he stands!"

Again he made a lunge with his sword at Hal as if he intended to split him then and there, and again the boy leapt back.

But at this juncture Jerry McLean jumped between them, sword in hand.

Jerry had thrown down the sheath of the heavy, clumsy weapon, and he now faced the Earl of Huntford as grim and set in purpose as the earl himself.

"Never mind thrusting at the unarmed boy, Huntford," said Jerry almost gaily. "Try your skill upon a man. Defend yourself, you lying, treacherous dog, or I'll cleave you where you stand and do something worth hanging for!"

"Ah!" The Earl of Huntford lowered his sword and bent it almost double on the ground. His eyes were glittering evilly, like a snake's. "The other rascal—Jerry McLean, the escaped convict!" he grated. "This is a lucky morning for me. I shall see you hanged, you murderous villain!"

The earl stood lazily biting at his lips, his eyes cast down.

Then suddenly he lunged forward with his sword, and had not Jerry foreseen the move he must have been run clean through by the darting weapon.

But Jerry whipped the blade of his sword down and cut the darting blade aside.

An instant later the two were fighting a desperate battle in which Jerry must die should the earl obtain the advantage.

Hal wanted to interfere, but Jerry waved him back.

"Up to your room, lad, and get into your clothes!" he cried. "We must get out of here!"

Hal hesitated, and in that moment, as the men circled round, the earl fencing with the skill of a master, and Jerry cutting at the small blade with his

clumsy sword, McLean managed, with an awkward stroke, to beat the earl's sword down. Then he leapt in close, and, seizing the earl by the wrist, twisted it, forcing him to loose his hold.

Jerry swung the man round with one arm, gripping him as if in a vice. Then he struck the earl on the chin with the hilt of his sword, and sent the man's senses reeling. Next moment he lifted him bodily and carried him into the morning-room.

Jerry snapped the windows shut and fastened them. He tore up a tablecloth, and with the strips tied the earl hand and foot and gagged him. Finally he pitched the helpless man into a cupboard in the hall outside and turned the button on the door.

Then Jerry ran up the winding stairway and into his bed-room, to pocket

HALT HERE FOR A LAUGH!



Negro Walter (handing cakes to diner): "Which one do you want, sir?"

Diner: "The chocolate éclair."

Negro Walter: "Dat ain't no chocolate éclair, sir; dat's my thumb!"

A splendid penknife has been sent to N. Thomas, 2, Hawkesworth Street, Anfield, Liverpool, for the above joke. If you've not yet won a penknife, send along a joke to-day.

his second pistol and to put on his hat and cloak.

As he again reached the passage Hal joined him, similarly clad.

Jerry glared at him, whispering hoarsely.

"We've got to get away now! It will mean a dangerous ride in broad daylight, and the Runners may be near for all we know. But we've got to risk it. What fool's fancy took you down to the pump, boy?"

Hal opened his mouth to answer, but at that moment came a hue and cry along the road, and, rushing back into Hal's bed-room and peering out of the window, the two adventurers saw a whole hunt of horsemen riding towards the inn, some in grey, some in green, some in hunting pink, and all of them splendidly mounted. And in their midst, unbelievable sight, they recognised the stalwart figure of Colonel York, the highwayman, now unmasked, but recognisable because of his horse and the clothes he wore.

As Jerry and Hal looked out, the hunt closed in upon the Huntford Arms. A man who rode in front put a hand to his mouth and sang out:

"What-ho, the inn there! You've highwaymen within!"

At which identical moment Colonel York, pointing to the two faces at the top window, cried out:

"There they are! Seize them! They are Hal Lovett and Jerry McLean!"

And the whole hunt came swarming to the doors of the Huntford Arms.

A Lucky Escape!

CRIMINALS mostly consist of two types; one, the man who, through his extravagances and recklessness, is forced from the paths of honesty; and, two, he who takes to thieving and lying or worse from choice because there is nothing but bad in him.

Colonel York, the notorious highwayman, belonged to the latter class. His record was more than bad. He was without scruple or mercy.

Colonel York was the shadow who had trailed McLean and Harry Lovett to the Huntford Arms. There he had waited until he was satisfied that the two friends were going to stay the night before riding away.

York did not go very far. Opening a five-barred gate belonging to a farm near by, he sought a barn, and, forcing an entry, fed his horse with hay before throwing himself down on some clean straw to rest until daybreak.

At dawn he was up and doing. Leaving the barn, he was about to mount and ride away, when a gaping yokel in a smock confronted him.

"What be you a-doing in varmer's barn?" asked the rustic, pointing a pitchfork menacingly.

"Sleeping," York answered gaily, as he presented a pistol at the yokel's head. "Put down that fork, friend, and tell me who's the leading squire in this neighbourhood."

"S-s-squire C-c-chivey," stammered the frightened rustic. "He lives at the Home House alarng the road."

"Then I'll go see the squire," said York, urging his horse past the yokel. "And you go to the house and tell your farmer that two highwaymen are staying at the Huntford Arms. I'm an officer of the law. I traced them there. I'm going to rouse the countryside and we'll surround the inn and take them there."

Leaving the rustic to do just as he pleased, York rode along the road and boldly approached the Home House, a handsome and well-kept manor set in a spacious park. York asked to see the squire, but was denied by the butler, who had doubts of him.

York knew how to pitch his tale, however, and five minutes later he was telling the squire, who was at breakfast, about the two highwaymen who were staying at the Huntford Arms.

"How do I know your story is true?" asked Squire Chivey, as he eyed York suspiciously. "Who are you?"

"My name is Dukes," lied York. "I am a retired major—King's Own Light Dragoons. The Earl of Huntford is my friend. I happened to be in court at the Old Bailey when these two rascals were tried for robbing the earl at Drury Lane Theatre. They are two of the men who escaped from the convict hulk Ethalion. Their names are McLean and Lovett—"

"Dear me and bless my soul!" gasped the squire, puffing out his fat round cheeks. "I had heard the scoundrels were loose—and in Kent. But how the dooce did yah come to know they were staying at the Huntford Arms?"

"I was there last night when they arrived, and I instantly recognised them," York rejoined.

"Then splinter me, we'll go and take 'em! There's no time for us to get in touch with the police. I am a magistrate of the county, major. If you'll do me the honour, we'll ride together and rouse the gentry of the neighbourhood, surround the inn, and apprehend the two rascals before they are awake."

Within ten minutes, the squire's horse was at the door. Within half an hour, messengers having been dispatched to every big house in the neighbourhood, horsemen were bearing down upon the Huntford Arms from all directions.

It was this crowd whose noisy approach drew Jerry McLean and Hal Lovett to the upper windows of the inn after Jerry's dramatic duel with the Earl of Huntford.

As he saw York pointing at them and heard his shout, McLean put an arm round Hal and drew him away from the window.

"That scoundrel York has betrayed us, Hal," he said. "Those men have not come to hunt the fox, but to capture us; but, by thunder, hey, if we can only gain our horses, we'll lead them such a dance they'll never forget it."

McLean led the race down the winding stairs. A glance at the front door of the inn showed him two portmen holding a heated argument with Squire Chivey.

"It's useless your denying they are here," blustered the squire. "They were seen in the house last night. Open those stable yard gates and let us through. Where's the landlord?"

The landlord, as it happened, was standing that very moment at a door leading out into the yard and beckoning to Jerry and Hal to hurry.

Jerry halted to buckle on his hanger as he came up with the worthy fellow.

"I shan't forget what you have done for us," he said. "But there's an entire hunt outside. How the deuce are we going to get away?"

The landlord pointed to the stable yard.

"Your horses are ready," he whispered. "Ride away through the garden and out past the big walnut tree. There are open fields behind, with a hedge and ditch or two, but they won't stop you."

McLean seized and pressed his hand. "Peter Davey sent me to a true friend when he sent me to you," he said. "We'll not forget."

"What have you done with the earl?" the landlord bawled after him through cupped hands. "I saw you fighting."

"I tied him up and bunged him into a cupboard," McLean answered back, as he ran to where Galloper was being held ready for him by a grinning ostler. Into the ostler's palm McLean dropped a gold coin.

The lad then swung Bow Street Beauty nearer to Hal and nodded approvingly as he saw with what grace and ease Hal gained the saddle.

The way out of the yard into the garden at the back of the inn was open. McLean rode away at once ducking his head under a crossbeam as he called out:

"You can open the yard gates now, Joe!"

The ostler strode very lazily to the yard front gates, shot back the bolts, and then slowly pulled a half gate open.

Squire Chivey, in his eagerness, very nearly rode him down.

"Scoundrel!" he said, threatening the ostler with his riding crop. "Where are the highwaymen?"

"Doan't know," answered the ostler, with a sheepish grin.

"You lying rascal," yelled Squire Chivey, catching sight of his quarry disappearing behind the inn, "there they go!" Hand to mouth he roared out: "Tally-ho! They're away! Hull-oa! Hull-oa! There they go!"

(Hal and Jerry need all the luck that's going to get clear, don't they, chums? Be sure and read next week's instalment of this gripping serial. And look out, too, for six more FREE picture stamps in this issue!)

THE REBEL OF THE REMOVE!

(Continued from page 24.)

Loder sprawled and panted. Harry Wharton stood over him with clenched fists and blazing eyes. He had knocked Loder down, and he was ready to knock him down again.

The Head's window opened. His face was pale with anger. Never had the Greyfriars fellows seen such a look on Dr. Locke's face before.

"Wingate!" The Head's voice rang sharply. "Wingate! Take that junior—take Wharton and lock him in the punishment-room!"

"Yes, sir." Wingate of the Sixth had come up, scarcely believing what his eyes saw. He grasped Wharton's arm.

For a second Wharton turned on him fiercely, his hands clenched. But he unclenched them and dropped them.

"Come!" rapped Wingate—and he fairly dragged the junior away.

A buzz of wild excitement followed them to the House. They disappeared from the sight of the crowd in the quad. Loder picked himself up. His eye was rapidly blackening—he held his hand to it as he limped breathlessly to the House. The quad hummed and buzzed with excitement—it was the sensation of the term at Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton did not come to the Remove Form room for third school. The rebel of the Remove—the mutinous junior who had knocked down a Sixth Form prefect—was under lock and key. And the Greyfriars fellows wondered whether they would see him again before he was sacked from the school.

THE END.

(The next yarn in this grand new series, chums, is better than ever. Make a note of the title: "HARRY WHARTON DECLARES WAR!" It will appear in next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET which will also contain six more free picture stamps. Order your copy NOW!)

GROSE'S 8, New Bridge Street, LUDGATE CIRCUS, London, E.C.4.

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Complete with 2 Cues, 3 Turned Balls (guaranteed unbreakable), Marking Board, Spirit Level, Rules and Chalk. **COMPLETE LIST FREE.**

BE TALL Your Height increased in 14 days or Money Back. Complete Course, 5/-. Booklet free privately. **STEBBING SYSTEM, 28, Dean Road, LONDON, N.W.2.**

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A British Produced weapon upholding all the traditions of BRITISH WORKMANSHIP. Positively the most accurate MACHINE-MADE pistol ever produced at the price. Beautifully finished. Shoots with great force and penetration, being made entirely of BEST STEEL. It will wear for ever. Unrivalled for indoor and outdoor use. Target and Rat Shooting.

Price, gun blued, 8/6 each. } With supply of
Price, plated, 9/- each. } Darts and Slugs.

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FINE FREE GIFT!—50 FRENCH COLONIALS, UNUSED, VARIOUS, TO BUYERS from Approvals. (Usual discount.) Send 1ld. stamp. — **MILLER (U.S.), 9, Lynton Road, Kilburn, London.** (Abroad Gift only, send 1/- P.O.)

All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, **UNION JACK SERIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.**

LOST!

Yesterday morning, two gallons of liquid glue. Master Snoop says he saw a suspicious carrier sneaking off with it, and what I says is this here, I lay my hands on that carrier, I'll limb him!—Will any young gent able to give information kindly call on

WILLIAM GOSLING, Porter's Lodge.

No. 2 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

October 8th, 1932.

THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

EXTRA GOOD EDITION

FOUND!

The Perfect Hair Fixative! SNOOPFIX gives the hair a delightfully smooth appearance. Price 6d. per bottle. Guaranteed fresh—made only yesterday afternoon!

THE SNOOPFIX LABORATORIES, No. 11, Remove Passage.

"SOME" BUS SERVICE!

Defying Death at One Mile per Hour

COMPLAINANTS having been received of the alleged inefficiency of the bus service operating between Highgate and Courtfield via Greyfriars, our Special Representative was sent to find out the truth.

Trotting down the lane to the nearest ticket-inspector's shelter, he found an aged ticket-inspector sleeping soundly on a bench. By inserting a pin in this official's leg he was able to wake him up and ask him when the next bus would pass.

The aged ticket-inspector looked somewhat surprised.

"Are you waiting to catch it, then, young gent?" he asked.

"Certainly, old bean—that's why I'm here!" our Special Rep. grinned.

The ticket-inspector stroked his venerable beard.

"Lemme see, it's Monday, isn't it?"

"You're not far out, old sport—it's Wednesday, as a matter of fact!"

"Must have slept longer than I intended!" the ticket-inspector remarked.

"I was going to say you'd got a couple of days to wait, but if it's Wednesday, then there'll be one along any hour now!"

"My hat! Truly with service you run, don't you?" our Special Rep. asked.

"When did the last bus pass?"

"The ticket-inspector shook his head.

"I don't remember off-hand, young gent—about a month ago, I should say at a guess!"

The conversation was interrupted just then by the appearance of an ancient vehicle driven by a pair of rather dazed-looking earhorses.

"Ah! This is it!" the ticket-inspector exclaimed excitedly. "You're just in time, young gent!"

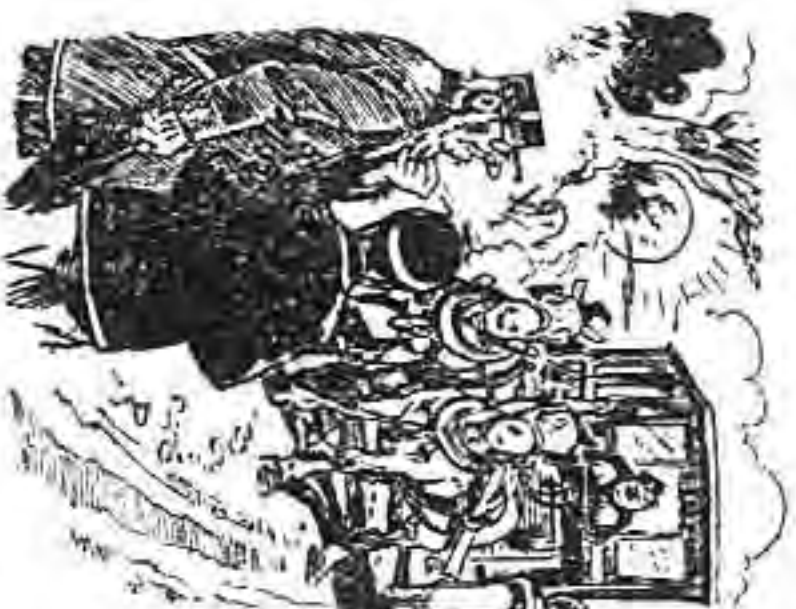
"But—but I always imagined it was a motor-bus!"

"So it is, but they keep a couple of horses with it in case they break down or run out of petrol!"

Having made that little explanation, the ticket-inspector blew a shrill blast on his whistle and woke up the conductor, who was sleeping on the platform of the bus. The driver, who was sitting with his back to the horses having his dinner,

also looked round and promptly choked with excitement at the sight of a passenger. "Look here, haven't you ever had a passenger before?" asked the "Herald."

The conductor grinned sleepily. "We did 'ave one once, sir." He stayed



LET'S BE DEMOCRATIC

Prefect-Politician's Proposals

Loder of the Sixth is thinking of being a politician when he leaves Greyfriars. With a view to getting his hand in, he has just drawn up a revised Constitution for Greyfriars, based on the latest ideas from Russia, Germany, and Italy.

Here are some of Loder's big ideas:

"The school captain is to be chosen from Loder and any other individual who has the nerve to stand against him."

"The election is to be by secret ballot, Loder having the right to inspect all votes before they are placed in the ballot-box."

"Anyone voting against Loder will be violently assaulted by hired bullies and have his study wrecked."

"If the voting results in Loder being elected, Loder will be promptly appointed captain."

"If the voting results in Loder being defeated, Loder will be promptly appointed captain."

"All the same."

AS OTHERS SEE THEM

What I Think of Billy Bunter

By PETER TODD

Fellows often ask me why I put up with Bunter. The answer is, firstly, because interrupting him with a cricket stump keeps me in exercise during my legal studies, and, secondly, because I like excitement; and anyone who lives near Bunter gets excitement in plenty!

And, after all, there's a hopeful way of looking at Bunter.

It's true that he talks of Bunter Court and titled relations and postal orders—none of which ever existed. But in a way this simply shows what a brilliant imagination he's got!

I cheerfully admit that he'll cut enough for six and then turn up with the Oliver Twist trick. But this, after all, points to what's called malnutrition, or something. It's a disease rather than a character!

Provided he's interrupted with a cricket stump hard and often, Bunter is quite a nice fellow. I shall never make him a useful or honest or industrious or modest—not all the cricket stumps in the world would do that for Bunter! But I can jolly well keep him in the place—and do so!

As for excitement—well, come along to Study No. 7 any evening you like and see this procession of visitors! Fellows who have had their crickets phoned, fellows whose crickets have been phoned, and fellows whose crickets have been phoned through the doorway in an undulating stream! If it's the heating you're needing, No. 7 will supply your want!

Apart from that, I put up with Bunter because he's funny. If we were all truthful and honest and industrious and modest, life at Greyfriars would be a pretty drab affair. But with a fat, fraudulent, lazy, boastful old Auntie like William George on the scene, we're sure of at least one good laugh a day!

Long live Bunter!

Draught Players! Attention!

Would you like some brand-new draughts entirely free? If you would, we advise you to sit under the new ventilators in the Form-room and you'll get all the draughts you ever wanted!

To Win Lung, Remove Form

Why you no breathe? Me sanded no more like a mee or potted late till y' leave! Me advise y' to sit under the new ventilators in the Form-room and you'll get all the lung y' want!—Audie Mite, Peking.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Mr. Quick states that if ever he is made headmaster, he will put an immediate stop to the carrying of monograms on desks.

This will be his initial step as headmaster, so to speak!

CHARGE OF THE FLIGHT BRIGADE

Sixth-Formers' "Smashing" Show

COMING out from morning classes yesterday, we were confronted with the unusual sight of Wingate and North of the Sixth climbing a tree, each with a sort of glorified kite on his back. A crowd of Sixth-Formers stood under the tree, examining a weird pulley arrangement which had ropes trailing from the tree-top and a couple of big levers which they seemed to operate. What the merry diabolists is it? was the query that was raised on all sides.

The Sixth eyed us disapprovingly and didn't condescend to explain.

A number of brilliant suggestions were made. Skinner opined that they were rigging up a set-piece for the fireworks display on November 6th. Ogilvy ingeniously suggested that they were going tree-printing, and that the kites were to be used as signals in case of emergency. Tom Brown thought they were rehearsing a film. Johnny Bull blurted out that they were probably suffering from mass-madness.

When Wingate and North had reached the top they arranged themselves comfortably in their respective kites and Walker ran round the bottom of the tree, yelling:

"Stand back, you kids! Give us plenty of room!"

"We're ready!"

"Walker called out:

"Ready?"

"We're ready!" came an answering yell from the Sixth-Formers, who had by this time divided into two parties.

"Then hoove!"

Everybody hooved at the ropes. The two levers shot out, Wingate and North

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GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT.

DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM

Hard what the Head said when he walked into our booby-trap, deer readers? A birth in hand's worth two in the—Whooooosh!

It's a funny thing, but if ever I burn the candle at both ends, my pater's bound to get waxy!

WE BUY I.O.U.'S

Sell out your old I.O.U.'s for spot cash, boys! Best prices paid! Quotations given for anybody's I.O.U.'s!

SAMPLE PRICES:

I.O.U.'s from Lord 10s. 11d. per £1

Manuscript 2s. 6d. " £1

" from Skinner 1d. " £10

" Bunter

Full price list on application.—FISH & CO., Bankers and Plumbers, No. 14, Remove Passage.

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Dear Editor,—I apprehend that Bunter's principal characteristic is a diurnal predisposition to circumferential aggrandisement. An agglomeration of alimentary contents renders this explicable physiologically.—Yours truly, ALONZO TODD.

(Apparently Lonzy means that Bunter's greediness makes him fatter every day!—Ed.)

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