

"A TRAITOR IN THE CAMP!" Sensational School Adventure of the Greyfriars. . . . **SECRET SOCIETY!**

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No Wonder Mr. Prout Looked Black!



A TRAITOR IN THE CAMP!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

All Right for Bunter!

“WHERE will you have it?” Herbert Vernon-Smith asked that question.

And as he made the inquiry he picked up half a loaf from his study table, and took aim at a fat figure that had appeared in the doorway.

There was quite a party in Smithy's study—No. 4 in the Remove. Harry Wharton & Co. were there, as well as Smithy and his study-mate, Redwing, and Lord Mauleverer and Peter Todd. A handsome spread was on the table—one of the excellent spreads for which the Bounder was celebrated in the Remove. And the party were just going to begin, when Billy Bunter happened.

Billy Bunter blinked in warily through his big spectacles.

According to the proverb, half a loaf is better than no bread. But Billy Bunter did not seem to want the half-loaf from the Bounder.

“I say, you fellows—” he began.

“Hook it!” said the Bounder.

“But I say—”

“Blow away, old fat bean!” said Bob Cherry.

“Beast! I say—”

“The blowfulness away is the proper caper, my esteemed fat Bunter!” remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

“I say!” roared Bunter. “Look here, Smithy! Put that loaf down! Chuck it, you silly ass!”

“Right!” said the Bounder.

And he “chucked” it—not in the sense intended by Bunter!

Whiz!

Thud!

Bump!

“Ha, ha, ha!” roared the tea-party in Study No. 4, as the half-loaf landed on

BY
FRANK RICHARDS

Bunter's well-filled waistcoat, and he sat down in the Remove passage.

“Ow! Beast! Wow!” gasped Bunter.

“Have another!” grinned Smithy. He picked up a tin of sardines. “Don't move! I can just get you from here!”

Billy Bunter squirmed out of range.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Beast!” came a roar from the passage. “If you think I want to come to your measly spread, you're jolly well mistaken, see? I've a jolly good mind not to give you Loder's message now.”

“Loder?” repeated the tea-party, with one voice.

“What does that rotter want?” growled Johnny Bull.

“Blow Loder!” grunted the Bounder.

“Bless Loder!” said Peter Todd.

“Bother Loder!” yawned Lord Mauleverer.

Anyone who had heard the remarks in Study No. 4 would have guessed at once that Gerald Loder of the Sixth Form was not popular in the Remove.

The mere mention of his obnoxious name was enough to cast a cloud over the cheery tea-party.

Billy Bunter put a cautious head round the doorpost. He was warily on the watch for another missile.

“I say, you fellows, it's a message from Loder! I've a jolly good mind not to tell you now! You're to go to his study—the lot of you! He gave me eight—no, nine, names. Let's see—Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Inky, Bull, and Smithy, Redwing, Mauleverer, and Toddy! And you can jolly well go, or

not, as you jolly well please, and be blowed to you!”

And with that, Billy Bunter gave a snort, rolled away up the Remove passage, rolled into Study No. 7, and slammed the door.

“Oh, what rotten luck!” groaned Bob Cherry. “I suppose we'd better go.”

“The betterfulness is terrific!”

The Bounder gave an angry growl.

“Blow Loder! Let him rip! He's always sending for fellows to his study! Let him go and eat coke!”

Bob Cherry laughed.

“If the jolly old mountain doesn't go to Mahomet, Mahomet will hike to the jolly old mountain!” he remarked. “We don't want Loder up here after us!”

“Only some more of his rotten bullying!” growled Vernon-Smith. “The fact is, he knows jolly well that we're the chief members of the Greyfriars Secret Society, though he can't prove it. And—”

“Well, we'd better go,” said Harry Wharton. “Loder's a brute and a bully, and all the other unpleasant things in the dictionary, but he's head prefect and captain of the school—”

“Only because that old ass, Prout, is playing at headmaster while Dr. Locke's away!” snapped the Bounder.

“True, O king!” said Bob Cherry. “But that doesn't alter the jolly old fact! We've got to go, Smithy! If Loder gives us jip, the Secret Seven will give him jip afterwards and make him sorry for himself! Come on!”

The Bounder grunted angrily; but he followed the other fellows from Study No. 4. Angry and irritated as he was by the interruption of his little party, there was no help for it. When a prefect—especially the head prefect—sent for a junior, that junior had to go! And that was that!

Nine fellows trailed away down the passage to the Remove staircase, and went down.

As their footsteps died away the door of Study No. 7, farther down the passage, opened.

A fat face and a big pair of spectacles blinked out.

Billy Bunter grinned.

The last of the party having disappeared down the stairs, the Owl of the Remove crept cautiously out of his study.

In a few moments more Bunter was back in Study No. 4.

He blinked at the handsome spread on the table, his little round eyes almost bulging through his big round spectacles in his eagerness.

"Prime!" ejaculated Bunter.

But he did not linger in the study.

Bunter had reasons for believing that Loder of the Sixth would not keep the tea-party long. And he did not want to be caught in Study No. 4 when they came back.

He could not, of course, quite resist the foodstuffs. Billy Bunter never could resist foodstuffs! He grabbed a jam-tart from a dish and promptly transferred it to his mouth—to go on with!

But he did not linger. He grabbed up a bag from the study cupboard, and started packing the good things into it. He moved swiftly.

Billy Bunter's motions were seldom rapid. But there were times when he could move quickly. This was one of the times.

Stopping only for a second to cram another tart after the first, the fat Owl of the Remove cleared the table of almost everything there, filling the bag to the very brim.

Then he rolled hastily out of the study and down the passage.

He cast an anxious blink towards the Remove staircase. But there was no sign of the Removites returning yet.

He rolled away across the landing, along a passage, and descended by a back staircase, which led to a door used by the household staff.

By that door the Owl of the Remove emerged from the House.

He cut away across the kitchen gardens to a gardener's shed at a distance from the buildings, where Mr. Mumble, the gardener, kept his lawn-mower and hose and other such things.

He rolled breathlessly into the shed.

There he was safe! At all events, he hoped he was!

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter.

He wondered whether, by that time, the Removites had learned that Loder of the Sixth had not sent for them at all!

But he did not waste much thought on that!

Sitting down on Mr. Mumble's lawn-roller, he opened the bag and started on the contents. Sticky and jammy and happy, Billy Bunter was far too busy to bother his head about the fellows who had gone to see Loder.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Six for Nine!

GERALD LODER, head prefect and captain of Greyfriars, scowled over the cigarette he was smoking in his study.

His pals of the Sixth, Walker and Carne, were smoking also, but they were not scowling. They were smiling a little—perhaps amused by Loder's scowls.

"I tell you, we've got to spot them!" growled Loder.

"Whom?" yawned Walker.

"You know whom I'm speaking of!" snarled Loder. "Those young horrible scoundrels who call themselves the Secret Seven."

"Well, it's up to you, old man!" said Carne. "You're the man they're at war with, you know."

"There's a whole crowd of the juniors in it," went on Loder savagely. "A lot of the Remove, and some of the Fourth and the Shell. I've a pretty clear idea of some of their names, too. And Prout would sack them fast enough if I could get proof."

"They're pretty deep," remarked Walker. "That stunt of sticking on Guy Fawkes masks when they go ragging—"

"I'm pretty certain that that young cad, Vernon-Smith, is one of the ring-leaders," said Loder. "But it's no use telling Prout without proof."

"You've suspected nearly every kid in the Lower School, one after another," grinned Walker. "But they can't all be in it."

"I'll root them out!" said the bully of Greyfriars, gritting his teeth. "And the first one I get proof against will be turfed out on the spot. The cheeky young scoundrels! They never dared to rag Wingate when he was captain of the school. I've been ragged, tied up, inked—What are you cackling at, you silly idiots?"

Knock!

There was a knock at the door, and the handle turned.

Knowledge is power . . . at least so thinks BILLY BUNTER, when by chance he discovers the identity of the Greyfriars Secret Society. But, alas for the hopes of the tattler of the Remove, for he makes a rod for his own back!

But the door did not open. When the black sheep of Greyfriars were smoking, they took the precaution of locking the door.

Mr. Prout, who was acting as head-master in Dr. Locke's absence, trusted Loder implicitly; but his trust in that zealous prefect would have received a rude shock had he walked in and seen what was going on now.

The cigarettes disappeared as if by magic.

"My hat!" breathed Carne. "If that's old Prout—"

Walker opened the window hastily, and waved a newspaper about. The atmosphere of Loder's study was rather thick.

"Who's there?" called out Loder.

Mr. Prout sometimes came to that study for a chat with his trusted head prefect. If it was Prout, Loder had to invent some excuse for having his door locked.

But, to his relief, it was not Prout. It was the voice of Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, that answered:

"We've come, Loder!"

"Is that Wharton?"

"Yes."

"You've come?" repeated Loder, puzzled.

"Yes; we're all here."

Loder stared at his comrades. Walker was still waving the newspaper, clearing off the smoke, with the help of the chill November wind that blew in at the open window.

"Some of the fags," said Carne. "What the thump do they want? Not the jolly old secret society paying you a visit, Loder—what?"

Loder set his lips.

"I don't know what they want," he said. "But I know what they're going to get."

He picked up his ashplant, stepped across to the door, and turned back the key. The door was thrown open, and he stared at nine Removites assembled outside, waiting for admittance.

"Come in!" said Loder grimly.

The nine came in. Loder slammed the door after they were inside. The juniors looked at him, and at one another. According to the message delivered by Billy Bunter, Loder had sent for them to the study; but they could not help seeing that their visit seemed rather unexpected. They did not fail to detect the scent of tobacco, and were aware that their arrival had interrupted a smoking party.

"And now," said Loder unpleasantly—"now you're here, what may you happen to want?"

"Nothing," grunted the Bounder.

"The nothingfulness is terrific, my esteemed and execrable Loder," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"You've come here for nothing!" exclaimed Loder.

"Look here! What do you mean?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We've come here because you sent for us, Loder."

"I sent for you!" repeated Loder.

"Well, Bunter said so."

"Bunter said so, did he?" asked Loder disagreeably. "Or have you come barging into my study because you're a set of cheeky young sweeps, in want of a licking?"

"Mean to say you never sent for us!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"You know I did not," answered Loder coolly.

"We know you did—at least, Bunter told us so," said the captain of the Remove angrily. "If you mean that that fat ass has been pulling our leg, then—"

"Look here, Loder! Did you send for us, or not?" demanded Vernon-Smith. "If you didn't, we're ready to clear."

"The readiness is terrific!"

"Yaas," drawled Lord Mauleverer.

"Awfully sorry we've barged in, Loder, if you didn't want us! Let's cut, you men!"

Loder smiled very unpleasantly.

"Don't be in such a hurry!" he said.

"You've barged in here, where you're not wanted, out of sheer impudence, I suppose—the dashed cheek that I'm used to from the Remove. I don't take cheek from Lower Fourth fags! Bend over! You first, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton breathed hard, and his eyes glinted at the bully of Greyfriars. Entering Loder's study at any time, since he had become captain of the school, was rather like entering a lion's den. But really this was the limit. The juniors had been taken in by the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove, and they had had no choice but to come.

"I've explained, Loder, that Bunter gave us a message, and told us you had sent for us," said Harry, as calmly as he could.

"I've told you to bend over, Wharton!"

"We had to come!" said Frank Nugent. "Bunter said—"

"That will do! You can bend over, Wharton, or I will report you to Mr.

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Prout for disobeying a prefect! Take your choice!"

There was not much choice in the matter. Prout, since he had been acting headmaster, had had a lot of trouble with the Remove. He was not likely to display any patience in dealing with members of that Form. It was a caning from Loder, or a flogging from Prout.

The captain of the Remove said no more. Prefects had the power of the asphalt; and to defy the prefectorial authority was to ask for a flogging, and take the risk of the "sack." A headmaster was bound to support his prefects, though, certainly, he should have selected a head prefect with more judgment than Prout displayed.

Wharton set his teeth and went through it.

"You next, Cherry!"

Bob Cherry, Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh took their turns at bending over. Then came Smithy and Redwing and Peter Todd. Lord Mauleverer was left till last. Loder looked at him, and lowered the cane.

"You're not such a cheeky young sweep as this gang, Mauleverer," he said. "You can out."

Maully looked at him.

Certainly he did not want "six." But he did not want to get off better than his friends—and still less did he want to receive favours at Loder's hands.

"My dear man," said Lord Mauleverer urbanely, "that's frightfully good of you, but you're makin' a mistake. I'm just as cheeky as the rest—if it's cheek to consider you a bully and a brute and a rotter and a worm, and other things like that."

There was a chuckle from Walker and Carne. Loder's face flushed with rage.

"Bend over!" he snarled.

"Anythin' to oblige!" yawned his lordship.

Loder laid on the last six as hard as he could. Luckily for Maully, he was getting a little tired by that time.

"Now clear, the lot of you!" he snapped. "Take a hundred lines each, and hand them in after tea. Get out!"

With grim, savage faces the Removites got out. Loder slammed the door after them. Then the cigarettes were resumed. Gerald Loder was feeling in rather a better humour now.

He could not get on the track of the secret society that had given him so much trouble since he had become captain of Greyfriars. But his suspicions were strong that most of the juniors he had just caned were members of that mysterious brotherhood. And it did not worry Loder if he punished the innocent along with the guilty. Loder was feeling quite pleased and satisfied as he lit a fresh cigarette—feelings that were not in the least shared by the nine juniors who went wriggling down the passage.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Puzzle—Find Bunter!

"WHERE'S Bunter?"

"Bag him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Lynch him!"

William George Bunter, as a rule, was not much sought after in the Remove. Generally, the less fellows saw of him, the better they liked it. But just now nine members of the Form were very anxious indeed to see Bunter. They longed to see him—they yearned to see him.

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They came up to the Remove passage to look for him, on the trail of vengeance!

Had Billy Bunter fallen into their hands just then, the fat Owl of the Remove would have had the time of his life.

"He's in his study!" said Bob Cherry. "Come on!"

The door of Study No. 7 was hurled open.

Bunter had gone to his study, after delivering the spoof message from Loder; they had heard him slam the door. But he was not there now. Tom Dutton was in the study, and he stared round in surprise as a crowd of wrathful faces glared in.

"Where's Bunter?" demanded Peter Todd.

"Eh?"

"Where's that fat frog?" roared Peter, remembering that Dutton was deaf.

"What rot!" answered Dutton. "There's no fog that I can see."

"We're looking for Bunter, you silly owl!" hooted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Dutton peevishly. "Nothing to howl about if there was a fog! But there isn't. You can see from this window that it's quite clear in the quad."

"Anybody got a megaphone?" gasped Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have you seen Bunter?" roared Peter, at the full force of his lungs.

"Oh, Bunter!" said the deaf junior. "You needn't yell—I'm not deaf! I can hear you when you don't mumble."

He's gone out. He came in for a few minutes, and went out again.

"Know where he went?"

"No, I never sent him. Why should I? It's his study as well as mine," said Dutton.

The Bounder uttered an angry exclamation.

"I jolly well know where he went! We shall find him in my study—scoffing the feed!"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Nugent. "That's why—"

"Come on!"

The Bounder rushed down the passage to Study No. 4, with the other fellows at his heels. They burst into Study No. 4.

They had no doubt that the fat Owl would be there. They had guessed now why he had invented that message from Loder of the Sixth!

But again the cover was drawn blank! Bunter was not there! Neither was the feed!

"Not here!" said Redwing.

"But he's been!" grinned Bob Cherry, glancing at the bare table. "He's been—and gone!"

"The gonefulness is terrific!"

"I—I—I'll—" The Bounder fairly gasped as he stared at the denuded tea-table. "I—I—I'll burst him! I—I—I'll—" The fat scoundrel! He pulled our legs and got us lickings all round, so that he could bag the feed—"

"Well, the fat idiot couldn't have known that Loder would lick us for being sent on a fool's errand!" said Harry Wharton. "He only wanted to get us off the scene!"

"I'll smash him!" roared the Bounder.

He rushed out of the study again. Monty Newland and Wibley were in the passage, and he shouted to them.

"Seen Bunter?"

"I saw him about ten minutes ago," answered Newland. "He was carrying a bag somewhere."

"Where did he go?"

"Haven't the foggiest!"

"The fat rotter! I—I—I'll—"

"Never mind Bunter now, Smithy,"

said Harry Wharton soothingly. "We've got something else to think of. Loder—"

"I'm going to find Bunter and smash him!" roared the Bounder.

"Oh, let Bunter rip!" said Bob Cherry. "We've had whoppings from Loder for nothing, and it's time for the Secret Seven to go on the warpath again."

"Bunter will keep!" said Lord Mauleverer. "After all, the fat ass never knew that that bullyin' rotter would whop us for goin' to his study—"

"Oh, shut up, you ass!" snarled the Bounder.

"Dear old bean!" said Lord Mauleverer amiably. "Were you slummin' when you picked up your manners?"

"You cheeky fathead! You—"

"Oh, cheeze it, Smithy!" said the captain of the Remove. "We've got something more important than Bunter to think of. There's going to be a meeting—"

"I'm going to find Bunter!"

"You're coming to the meeting!"

"Blow the meeting!"

"Look here, Smithy—"

"Rats!"

The Bounder stamped angrily away. He was one of the keenest members of the Greyfriars Secret Society, and certainly he was keen on giving Loder tit for tat! But at the present moment he wanted to deal with Bunter, and Herbert Vernon-Smith was accustomed to taking his own way, regardless of other fellows' opinions.

Harry Wharton compressed his lips. "Oh, bother Smithy!" said Bob Cherry. "The jolly old society can hold a meeting without Smithy!"

"Pass the word round," said Harry Wharton, and the juniors dispersed, to pass the word round among the numerous members of the Greyfriars Secret Society.

A quarter of an hour later various Greyfriars fellows, of several Forms, strolled away from the House, singly or in twos, in the gathering November dusk. In ones or twos or threes they collected at the meeting-place at a distance from the House.

It was a full meeting of the numerous members of the secret society, and only the Bounder—still hunting up and down the House for Billy Bunter—was absent.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Unseen Witness!

BILLY BUNTER jumped.

"Oh lor'!" he gasped.

Bunter was alarmed.

In the gardener's shed, at a distance from the school buildings, the fat Owl of the Remove had felt quite safe with his purloined spread.

Nobody ever came there, so far as Bunter knew, except Mr. Mumble, the gardener; and Mr. Mumble's hours of labour were over now; his tools were put away, and he was safely off the scene.

In that secluded spot, with the dusk beginning to fall, Bunter felt secure. But he had left the door half open, to keep an eye on the path that ran through the vegetable gardens to the shed. A fellow could not be too careful!

Sitting on the garden-roller, Bunter had been very busy with the bag he had brought from Study No. 4. That bag was half empty now. Bunter, on the other hand, was more than half full.

Bunter was enjoying life.

But his joy was suddenly dashed by the sight of a Remove fellow coming up the path to the shed, through Mr. Mumble's winter cabbages. The fat Owl gave a start, his eyes almost popping



"As you're not such a cheeky young sweep as this gang, Mauleverer," said Loder, "you can cut!" "My dear man," said Mauly, "that's frightfully good of you; but you're making a mistake. I'm just as cheeky as the rest—if it's cheek to consider you a bully, and a rotter, and a worm, and other things like that!" Walker and Carne chuckled, while Loder breathed fury.

through his spectacles at the sight of Bob Cherry. And the next moment he spotted Frank Nugent and Peter Todd coming along after Bob.

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter, in alarm. "The beasts!"

How they guessed that he was there Bunter had no idea! But it looked as if they did! They were coming straight for the shed where the grub-raider sat on the roller, disposing of his plunder.

The fat junior jumped up.

Escape from the gardener's shed was impossible. There was only one way out—by the door, facing the arriving Removites. Bunter was not of much use in a foot-race at any time, and he was still less useful in that line after taking on board a heavy cargo.

He blinked round wildly for a hiding-place. After all, the beasts could not know that he was there—they were coming to look for him, that was all! If he could get out of sight—and keep out of sight—

That was easy enough! There were several large cupboards in the shed, where Mr. Mimble kept various appliances of his horticultural profession.

Bunter grabbed up the bag and backed into a large cupboard, where he had the company of a number of hoes and such implements, hanging on a rack on the wall.

He drew the door shut after him.

He would have been glad to lock it; but there was no lock. It was fastened by a wooden button, which Bunter, of course, could not handle from inside.

He held the door shut, and palpitated. It did not close very tight unbuttoned, and there was about an inch of space left open. Through that narrow aperture Bunter blinked out into the shed with a terrified blink. He

hoped that the beasts would be satisfied with a glance into the little building, and would not search. If they did, Bunter was booked for discovery!

Bob Cherry tramped in.

He did not glance towards the tool cupboard, much to Bunter's relief. His manner certainly did not indicate that he suspected that anyone was there. He stood looking from the doorway till Peter Todd and Frank Nugent came in and joined him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob.

"We're the first on the spot."

"Here comes Wharton!"

"And here comes Johnny!"

Billy Bunter scarcely breathed. He was not ten feet from the fellows gathered round the shed doorway.

But it was dawning on his fat mind now that they were not there to look for him. Not a glance was cast round—there was no sign of a search going to be made. Why the Remove fellows had come to that secluded spot was rather a mystery, but the fat Owl began to realise that their visit was not connected with his fat self.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's old Hobby!"

Hobson of the Shell came in, with Hoskins and Stewart of that Form.

Bunter was more and more surprised.

The Remove, as a rule, had little to do with the Shell. It was really very surprising for Shell and Remove to be meeting like this.

"Here we are!" said Hobson.

"All very well!" said Hoskins. "But I wish you'd fix your dashed old meetings for a more convenient time. My piano practice is due now."

Claude Hoskins of the Shell was the musical genius of Greyfriars. He was the keenest pupil of Mr. Flatt, the music master—though, as a matter of fact, he firmly believed that he could have

taught Mr. Flatt a lot of things about music.

"Oh, bother your piano practice!" said Bob Cherry cheerily.

"You silly ass!" said Hoskins. "It's not so much the practice, but I've got something I want to try over on the piano. My fantasia in D minor—"

Hoskins was interrupted by the arrival of Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth Form.

In the tool cupboard Bunter's little round eyes opened wider and wider behind his big round spectacles.

There were Fourth Form fellows present now, as well as Shell. What they were all up to Bunter could not guess—as yet! The Rag was the place for Lower School meetings, and it was strange and mysterious that all these fellows had come out of the House and gathered in a gardener's shed at a distance from the school buildings.

But there was one comfort for Bunter, uncomfortable as his present quarters were. It was clear that the meeting had nothing to do with him, and all he had to do was to keep quiet, to remain undiscovered!

Certainly, had they discovered him, and his plunder in the bag at his feet, Bunter would have been booked for a high old time. But it was plain that nobody had the slightest suspicion that he was there.

More and more fellows came in. Monty Newland and Dick Penfold, Russell and Ogilvy, Mark Lanley and Squiff and Tom Brown, Hazeldene and Wibley, Morgan and Micky Desmond, and more of the Remove arrived. Several more Fourth Form fellows dropped in. The garden shed was getting crowded.

More and more astonished, Bunter blinked at them from his hiding-place.

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Newland was standing only a couple of feet from him.

"Shut the door!" said Harry Wharton. "All here now."

"Smithy's not here!" said Wibley.

"Smithy's not coming. He's hunting after that fat scoundrel, Bunter."

"Beast!" murmured the fat scoundrel under his breath.

"What's Bunter been up to?" asked Squiff.

"Bagging a spread from Smithy's study. He told us Loder wanted us, to get us clear, and nipped in while we were gone—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All very well to cackle!" exclaimed Bob Cherry warmly. "But that bully, Loder, whopped us all round for going to his study without being sent for, though we told him that that fat villain had pulled our legs and sent us there."

Billy Bunter suppressed a chuckle.

"We're going to scrag him when we get hold of him," said Johnny Bull. "That is, if Smithy leaves him alive when he finds him."

"The scragfulness is going to be truly terrific!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Beast!" breathed Bunter.

"But what did Loder whop you for?" asked Hobson of the Shell.

"Just because he's a beastly bully. That's why this meeting of the secret society has been called," said the captain of the Remove.

Billy Bunter jumped.

He understood now.

There were two or three dozen fellows in the gardener's shed, representing three different Forms. And every one of them was a member of the Greyfriars Secret Society—that mysterious association that had been the talk of the school for weeks!

Bunter, of course, had heard all about that secret society. There was not a fellow at Greyfriars, from the Sixth Form to the Second, who had not heard of it, and discussed it, and wondered who the members were. Billy Bunter had made many guesses—some of them right, and some of them wrong. But he had never known anything, for he was the last fellow in the school whom the members would have dreamed of admitting into the secret.

"Oh, jiminy!" breathed Bunter.

He knew now!

From his hiding-place he blinked at face after face. He heard the voices as they spoke in turn. He knew the faces, and he knew the voices.

And he grinned!

These beasts had left Bunter out of their secret. They could not keep him out of it now. Bunter knew now what Loder would have given much to know.

"Gentlemen, chaps, sportsmen, and fellow members of the Greyfriars Secret Society, this special meeting has been called to deal with Loder of the Sixth, and to make an example of him!" announced Wharton.

"Hear, hear!" said the meeting.

And Billy Bunter, so intently curious that he even forgot the unfinished spread in the bag at his feet, listened with all his ears—and, though only two in number, there was quite a lot of them.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bunter!

"THAT rotter, Loder—"

Groan!—from the meeting.

"That bully, Loder—"

Groan!

"That pub-haunting, smoky, sneaking, rank outsider, Loder—"

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"Down with Loder!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen—" began Cecil Reginald Temple, of the Fourth.

"Shut up, Temple!"

"Order!"

"Only a remark!" said Temple gracefully. "We endorse and applaud all the epithets uttered by our honourable chief. But if we stop here to listen to all the unpleasant things Loder is we shall be out after lock-up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

"I move that the speech be taken as read, and that we get down to business," said Cecil Reginald.

"Hear, hear!" said Fry and Scott.

"You Fourth Form ticks talk too much!" said Peter Todd. "Shut up, and keep order! Get on with the washing, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Loder's got to have it," he said.

"We've given him jip more than once. We've got to give him more jip."

"The morefulness will be terrific."

"Look here, shut up a minute, you men, will you?" said Hoskins of the Shell.

Claude Hoskins had taken paper and pencil from his pocket. With the paper spread on Bunter's late seat, the garden-roller, he was making pencil-marks on it, the meaning of which—if any—was known to the Greyfriars musician alone. His brow was deeply wrinkled, and his eyes had a far-away look as he made those mysterious hieroglyphics.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Wharton, warmly.

Hoskins waved a pencil at him.

"Quiet! Quiet a minute, you noisy ass, while I get this down!"

"While you get what down?" howled one or two voices. "Is that some stunt up against Loder?"

"Loder!" repeated Hoskins. "Oh, don't be asinine! I've just thought of a bit for my fantasia in D minor—"

"Your which in whatter?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Kill him!" said Stewart.

"Claude, old chap—" urged Hobson.

Even Hobby, who was a great admirer of his musical chum, felt that this was not a time to indulge the artistic temperament.

Claude Hoskins did not heed. He ran a hand through his rather long hair, ruffling it, and making it even more untidy than usual, if that was possible. Then he jabbed at the paper again with the pencil, making mysterious marks. Only Claude Hoskins recognised those weird marks as old notation!

"Kick him!" roared Squiff.

"The kickfulness is the proper caper!"

"I say, I've got an idea!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Look here, Loder deserves boiling in oil, and worse. Let's kidnap him into the music-room, and make Hoskins play over his fantasia in D minor to him! If that doesn't make Loder sorry for himself, nothing will."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can't you fellows be quiet?" snapped Hoskins. "I say, I've thought of a bit that will make old Flatt sit up when I play it over to him. You know, old Flatt makes out that you can't use perfect fifths—old-fashioned ass, you know! Well, I can tell you I'm going to lard in perfect fifths all over the shop, and then—"

"Shut up!" yelled Temple.

"Sit on him!"

"Shove it down his back!"

Five or six fellows grasped Claude Hoskins. Pencil and paper were jerked away from him, inserted inside the back

of his collar, and shoved down. Hoskins roared with indignation.

"Now sit on him, if he won't keep quiet!" said Harry Wharton. "This is a secret society, not a musical society!"

"You—you—you Goths—you vandals—you Huns!" howled Hoskins. "Blow your silly old society! I only joined it because that brute Loder tore up some of my music. And now—"

"Shut up!"

"Order!"

"Keep that idiot quiet!"

"Dash it all, Claude, old man!" remonstrated Hobby. "You don't want to bother about music now! Like Nero fiddling while Rome was burning!"

"Eh! Nero never fiddled while Rome was burning!" snapped Hoskins. "Don't be an ass! There weren't any fiddles in Roman times, or for centuries after. Nero never did anything of the sort!"

"History books say he did!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"History books will say anything! He must have used a lyre, I think," said Hoskins, forgetful a moment of the musical works that were tickling the small of his back. "There were lyres in his time." Hoskins was always prepared to argue about any subject that had music in it.

"Lots of them," said Hobby. "Why, Nero was a liar himself, and so was Tigellinus, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" hooted Hoskins. "I said a lyre, not a liar! You're a fat-head, Hobby! I think it must have been a lyre—"

"Wonderful old times," said Fry of the Fourth, who suffered from a fixed conviction that he was a humorist. "You never hear of such things in our days. For instance, you never hear of a piano playing on a piano—but in Nero's time a liar could play on a lyre—"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Kick him!"

"Order!"

"Silence!"

"Gentlemen of the secret society—" recommenced Harry Wharton.

Attention was once more given to the chief! Only Claude Hoskins failed to give attention. He was attending to getting a crumpled sheet of music paper out of the back of his neck.

"Gentlemen! I was going to say—great pip! What's that?"

Clatter! Crash! Clang!

Harry Wharton broke off in startled astonishment. He stared round at the tool cupboard, from which that sudden disturbance had proceeded.

Clatter! Clang!

"What the thump—"

"Who the dickens—"

"Somebody's there!"

Clang! Clatter! Thud!

"Oh crikey!" came a startled gasp.

"Bunter!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

There was a rush to the cupboard. The business for which the secret society had met was suspended on the spot. Only Hoskins continued to grab at the crumpled paper down his neck. Everybody else rushed to the tool-cupboard, and Bob, the first to reach it, dragged the door wide open.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows, I—I'm not here—"

"Bunter!"

"Bunter here!"

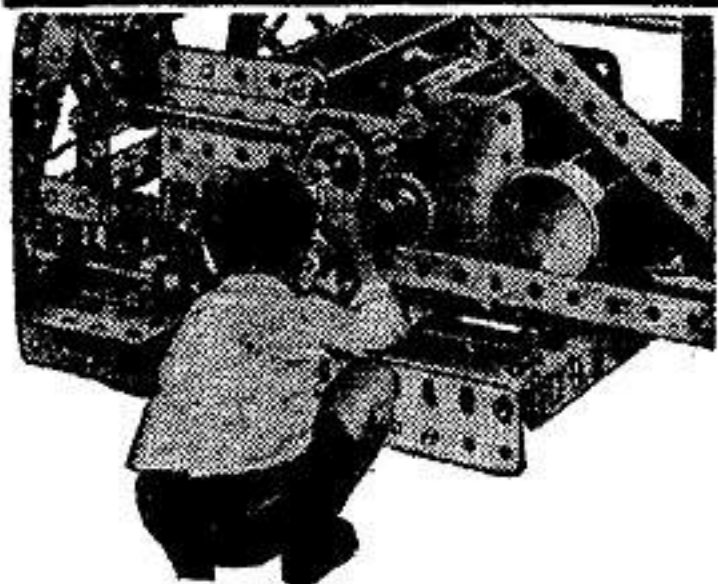
"Squash him!"

Billy Bunter was staggering in a sea of hoes, rakes, picks, sieves, and other agricultural implements.

Shut up in that cupboard so long as the meeting lasted, Bunter had naturally
(Continued on page 8.)

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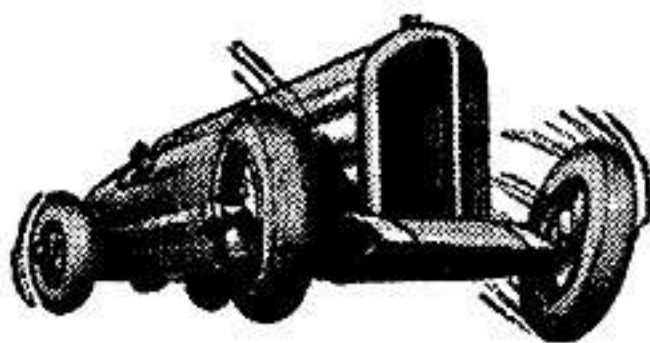
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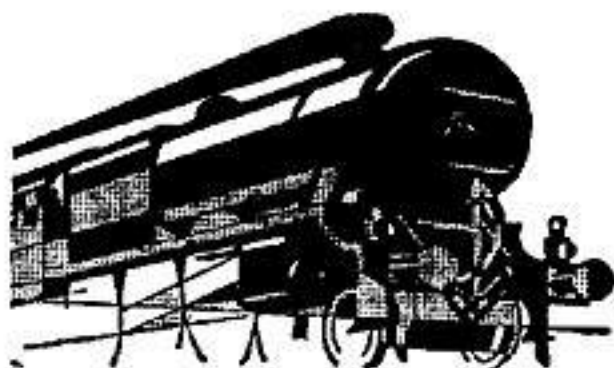
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remembered the unfinished tuck, and stooped to help himself from the bag at his feet.

Unfortunately, in the dark, he bumped into the various implements by which he was surrounded in his close quarters, and knocked them right and left.

Hoes and rakes and spades and forks clattered and clanged round the Owl of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows——"

Bob Cherry grabbed him by the collar and hooked him out. There was a fearful yell from Bunter as he spun into the middle of the shed and sat down there with a heavy bump.

"Whooooop!"

"Here's the stuff!" roared Bob, dragging the bag out of the cupboard. "This is where he was hiding with Smithy's tuck."

"Yaroooh! I say, you fellows——"

"You fat burglar——"

"I—I never put that bag there!" yelled Bunter. "I—I've never seen it before! I—I never snaffled the spread in Smithy's study! I hope I'm not the fellow to snoop a fellow's tuck! I say——"

"You fat rotter!" roared Wharton. "You got us six each from Loder, with your whoppers——"

"Kick him!"

"Squash him!"

"Jump on him!"

"Slaughter him!"

"Scrag him!"

"I say, you fellows—yaroooh! Leave off kicking me, you beasts! Woo-hoop! I say, if you kick me again, I'll yarooop! Beasts! Wow! Oh! Wow! I say, you fellows, you lemme alone, or I'll go straight to Loder and tell him!" yelled the fat Owl desperately. "I jolly well know all about you now, and

I'll jolly well go to Loder and say—yaroooooooh!"

"Bump him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Burst him!"

"I say, you fellows—yow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!" howled Bunter frantically. "Yow-ow-ow-woooooop!"

What happened during the next few minutes Billy Bunter hardly knew! It seemed to him that a lot of earthquakes were occurring all at once. What was left of Bunter flew out of the gardener's shed with half a dozen boots propelling it, and rolled on the hard, unsympathetic earth.

Gasping and gurgling, the fat Owl scrambled up, and fled for the House.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

What Bunter Knew!

"GOT him!" The Bunder's eyes gleamed.

Up and down and round about the House the vengeful Bunder had hunted for Billy Bunter, in vain. He came to the conclusion, at last, that the fat grub-raider was not in the House at all, but had gone further afield with his plunder. Still unappeased—in fact, rendered more wrathful than ever by his unavailing hunt—the Bunder was about to go out of the House and extend his search when he sighted Bunter.

The fat Owl came spluttering in at the door, and met him almost face to face!

Bunter was gurgling for breath. His collar was torn out, and his necktie was gone. His hair was like a mop. Several buttons were missing from his well-filled waistcoat.

He looked as if he had struck trouble already. Now that he had met the Bunder he was booked for some more.

Smithy made a jump at him.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, as the Bunder grabbed him by the neck. "I say, Bolsover, you beast—oh, it is you, Smithy, old chap! I say—ow! Leggo! I say, old fellow—leggo, you beast—Wow!"

"Where's my tuck?" asked the Bunder grimly.

"Leggo!" gasped Bunter. "I never had it! Besides, I'm going to pay for it—I meant to pay for it all along, of course! Not that I touched it! I never went to your study, and—yarooooooop! Leggo! Help!"

The Bunder hooked him along the passage that led to the Rag! In that apartment, where the Lower School most did congregate, he could deal with Bunter as he richly deserved.

But Bunter did not want to be dealt with as he deserved. Very much indeed he did not want anything of the kind.

He made a desperate effort, and jerked his fat neck loose. The next moment he was running for his life.

"Stop!" yelled the Bunder.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, as he flew.

"Stop him, Skinner!"

Skinner of the Remove appeared ahead of Bunter with Snoop. Both of them made a grab at Bunter.

Crash!

Bunter charged wildly. Skinner flew in one direction; Snoop in the other. They were strewn, gasping, on the floor.

The fat Owl bounded on.

"Stop!" yelled the Bunder, sprinting savagely after him.

Bunter was fleeing for the Sixth Form studies. Perhaps he felt that he would be safer in the vicinity of the prefects.

Few fellows would have ventured to carry on a chase past the doors of the Sixth Form studies. But the Bunder was always reckless and now he was angry and excited, too. He rushed after Bunter down the Sixth Form passage.

Half-way down that passage he overtook him.

Bunter gave a howl as the Bunder's grasp closed on him again.

"Ow! Leggo! I'll tell Loder! Ow!"

"You can tell Loder anything you like, you fat pilferer!" said Vernon-Smith, gritting his teeth. "Loder will give you six for grub-raiding in the studies. Tell him as soon as you like, if you want six from a prefect, before I scrag you."

"I'll tell him about the Secret Seven!" howled Bunter.

"What?"

Bunter spluttered.

"I know all about it, you beast! I was in the gardener's shed—Ow! I saw them all—Wow! I heard them say you were one of them. Groogh! You leggo my neck, you beast, or I'll tell Loder! Wow!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith did not let go Bunter. But he stared at him blankly. He was quite taken aback.

"You fat rascal!" he hissed.

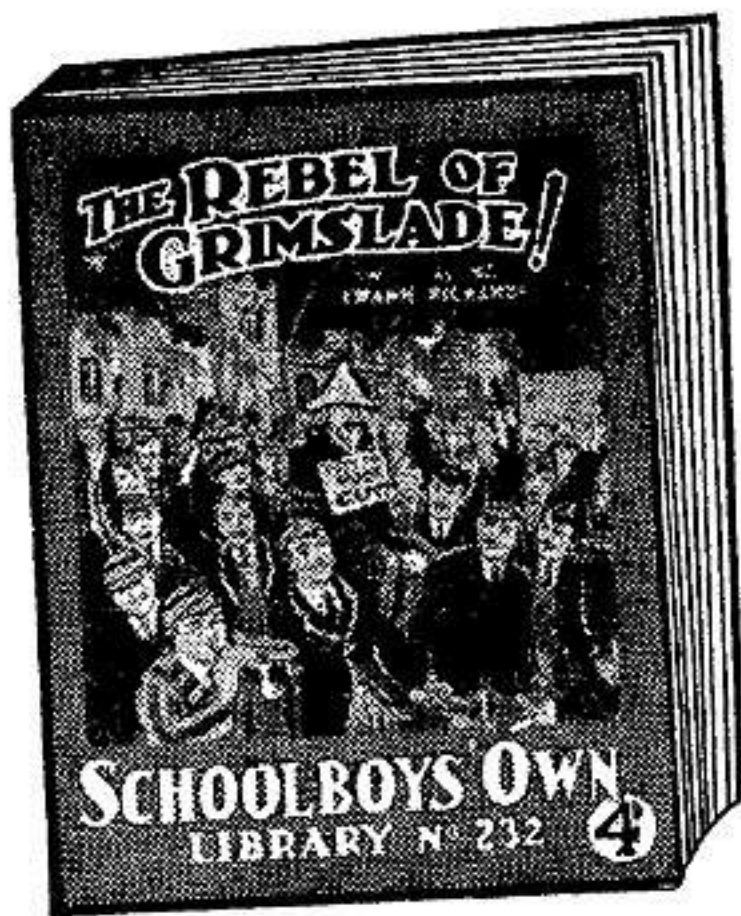
"You've been spying!"

"I jolly well know all about it!" gasped Bunter. "Loder would like to know what I could tell him, too. Leggo!"

A door opened, and Sykes of the Sixth came out of his study. He glanced at the two juniors.

"Ragging here, you young rascals?"

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

"Come on, Bunter," said the Bouncer quietly. He let go Bunter's neck.

Sykes went down the passage to the prefects' room. But Billy Bunter was in no hurry to go.

He set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked at the Bouncer.

"You making it pax?" he asked cautiously.

The Bouncer breathed hard.

"If you're not, I've got to speak to Loder," said Bunter. "I've got something to tell Loder. He, he, he!"

The Bouncer looked at him as if he could have eaten him.

"You've been in old Mumble's shed?" he breathed.

Bunter nodded, and grinned. The fact that the Bouncer was keeping his hands off him, made it clear to him that the power was on his side now. His discovery in the gardener's shed made Bunter a fellow to be treated with tact.

"You saw the meeting?" muttered Smithy.

"What do you think?" grinned Bunter.

"You spying rascal——"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Bunter. "I suppose a fellow can walk into old Mumble's shed if he likes. I never knew it was the meeting-place of the Secret Seven. He, he, he! Pretty deep to call it the Secret Seven, and make the prefects think there were only seven fellows in it. Nearer three dozen. He, he, he! Loder would like to know their names. He, he, he!"

The Bouncer clenched his hands almost convulsively. Bunter made a swift step towards the door of Loder's study.

"You keep off, you beast!" said the fat Owl, grinning. "I'll jolly well call Loder——"

"Shut up, you fat rotter!" hissed the Bouncer.

"Shut up yourself!" said Bunter independently. "I don't want any cheek from you, Herbert Vernon-Smith! I could get you sacked if I liked, and you jolly well know it! If I told Loder what I knew——"

"By gad, I'll smash you!" panted the Bouncer.

And prudence and his temper failing him at the same moment, he made a rush at Bunter.

Bunter made a jump for Loder's door. He grabbed the door handle and turned it, and had the door opened he would have rushed headlong into the study, and doubtless Gerald Loder would have gained the information of which he was so keenly in quest.

But the door did not open. With cigarettes and banker going on in the study, it was still locked.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

There was a startled exclamation inside the study as the door handle rattled, and Bunter shoved at the door.

"What the dooce——"

"Who's there?"

Chairs were heard to scrape on the floor as the black sheep of the Sixth rose hurriedly to their feet.

But whether Loder opened the door or not, Bunter never knew. The Bouncer's grasp was on him, and he was jerked away from Loder's door handle.

He went along the passage at a run, with the Bouncer grasping him, and landing a boot on him at almost every step.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter, as he went.

"Bunter! Vernon-Smith! What—what——" It was a squeaky voice—that of Mr. Woose, the new master of the Remove—that greeted them at the corner of the passage. "Why, what—what—what——"

"Yarrah! Help! Whoop!" roared Bunter.

Never had he been so glad to see the "Squeaker."

"Vernon-Smith, what does this mean? Release Bunter at once! How dare you drag Bunter about in that manner?" exclaimed Mr. Woose.

The Bouncer reluctantly released the fat junior.

Bunter, gasping, darted away. Smithy was unable to follow him, as Mr. Woose kept him on the spot, to lecture him severely for several long minutes on the subject of horse-play in the passages.

When the Bouncer got away at last he went to look for Bunter again. But he did not find him. For the present

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William George Bunter was under-studying that wise animal, Brer Fox, and lying low.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Under Bunter's Thumb!

THE next morning there were some rather grave faces in the Greyfriars Remove.

The members of the secret society had food for thought.

So far, the secret of that mysterious organisation had been well kept.

Loder, certainly, had his suspicions, but proof was quite another matter. Mr. Prout had doubts and suspicions; but he prided himself on being a just man, and certainly could not act without evidence.

So long as the brotherhood kept their identity a secret, they were able to carry on—to the intense exasperation of Loder, the annoyance of Prout, and the deep interest of the whole school.

Now, for the first time, danger threatened.

The Paul Pry of the Remove, the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars, the tattler and chatter-box of the school, knew. He had witnessed the meeting of the

secret society; he knew the name of every fellow that belonged to it.

True, Bunter, with all his faults, was not a sneak. Not willingly would he have given the Remove rebels away.

He had as much cause as any other fellow, to loathe Loder of the Sixth. He had had his full share of the ash-plant since Gerald Loder had wielded unbounded authority.

But it was rather doubtful whether Bunter could hold his tongue, even if he wanted to. Holding his tongue had never been Bunter's long suit.

And he was the fellow to use any power that happened to fall into his fat hands. That morning, while many faces frowned, there was one that wore a grin, and that one was Bunter's.

Having had time to reflect on the matter, the fat Owl realised how very important was the discovery he had made.

Prout, the temporary headmaster, Loder, head prefect and captain, were both fearfully keen to get on the track of the Secret Seven. Bunter, if he liked, could put them on the track.

He did not mean to do so, but he could if he liked. Bunter was a power in the land now.

Most of Greyfriars wished well to the Secret Seven. Even seniors of the Fifth and Sixth wished them luck in their campaign against the tyrant of the school. Even the masters, or most of them, did not wholly disapprove of the activities of the secret society, though, of course, they could not say so. Prout, in Dr. Locke's place, was all-powerful; but that did not alter the opinion held by the rest of the staff that Prout was a pompous ass.

Prout had the fullest confidence in Loder, who was skilful in pulling his portly leg. That confidence was not shared by the staff. They regarded it as evidence of Prout's pompous obtuseness, as indeed it was.

So in the peculiar "war" that was going on at Greyfriars, the secret society had the sympathy of most of the school.

That did not alter the fact, however, that the ringleaders, if discovered, were booked for the "sack."

Their proceedings, though justified in the general opinion, had been rather lawless.

"Punching a prefect" was an offence to be punished by the sack! And the head prefect had not only been punched—he had been mercilessly ragged, time and again! He had been tied up in Prout's own chair, with his face inked! Prout only wanted proof, before he started sacking.

Fellows who could not be absolutely trusted had been carefully excluded from the ranks of the secret society. Least of all was Billy Bunter likely to be trusted.

And now he knew!

In the Remove Form-room that morning Billy Bunter grinned cheerfully. He knew why a number of the Remove fellows had worried looks.

He knew why the affair of the purloined spread had been dropped. The Bouncer appeared to have dismissed that matter from his mind. Bunter knew why.

Never had the fat and fatuous Owl felt so important!

In his podgy hands rested the power—if he liked—to get the Bouncer sacked from the school, and Harry Wharton after him, and perhaps some more of the leaders of the Form.

Bunter felt immensely bucked when he thought of it. He wasn't going to do

it—but he was going to make these fellows understand, quite clearly, that he could if he jolly well liked!

He was going to make them understand that it would pay to be civil to a fellow.

He was, in fact, going to spread himself very extensively, happy in the knowledge that he could no longer be kicked as he deserved!

"Cheer up, old chap!" he whispered to Bob Cherry in class.

Bob gave him a glare.

"I'm not going to give you away, old fellow!" said Bunter cheerfully. "Rely on me! I could if I liked!"

"You fat Owl!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Shut up, you blithering idiot!"

"Look here, you cheeky beast—"

Mr. Woose glanced round.

"Is that someone talking in class? I will not have this whispering in class! Bunter, you were speaking!"

"Oh, no, sir! I never opened my mouth! I was only saying to Cherry that—"

"Take fifty lines, Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter was silent for the rest of the lesson. But he was bursting with his own importance. As soon as the Remove were dismissed for break, he hooked on to the Bouncer in the passage.

"I say, Smithy—"

"Let go my sleeve, you fat fool!"

"Oh, really, Smithy! I say—yarrooh!" roared Bunter, letting go the Bouncer's sleeve as he was kicked.

Vernon-Smith walked on, regardless. Billy Bunter blinked after him, his eyes gleaming through his spectacles. Sack or no sack, the Bouncer was not the man to be patronised by a fellow like Bunter. Bunter, on the other hand, was not the man to be kicked with impunity, when he had so much power in his fat hands.

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "I say, you rotter, Smithy! I've a jolly good mind to go straight to Loder!"

"Shut up, you fat Owl!" breathed Peter Todd.

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter. "Think I'm going to let that beast kick me, when he's up for the sack if I chose to say a word. So are you, too, Toddy, if you come to that! You were at the meeting of the secret society yesterday. I—"

"Shut up!" hissed Bob Cherry.

Mr. Woose was coming out of the Form-room.

"Shan't!" roared Bunter. "I know all about the secret society, and—"

He broke off as he saw Woose.

Mr. Woose glanced at him. There was no doubt—no doubt whatever—that Woose had heard what Bunter had said.

To the immense relief of the Removites, he walked on, without taking any notice. Apparently Mr. Woose was not keen to learn more.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, as Mr. Woose turned the corner. "I say, you fellows, do you think he heard me?"

"Of course he did, you fat idiot!" snapped Harry Wharton.

"Well, it's your own fault!" said Bunter. "If Woose goes and tells Prout, you're for it! Serve you jolly well right!"

"I don't think Woose will tell Prout anything," remarked Lord Mauleverer. "Loder's checked him a good many times—he's checked most of the beaks since he barged into a job too big for him!"

"That's so!" agreed Wharton. "The beaks don't like the brute any more than we do! But—"

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"But that fat frump has got to hold his silly tongue!" said Johnny Bull. "Let's kick him along the corridor as a warning."

"Let's!" agreed Nugent.

"I say, you fellows, you jolly well kick me, and I'll jolly well yell for a prefect!" roared Bunter. "I can tell you, you'd better be civil! If you want Loder to know about your meeting in old Mible's shed yesterday—"

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter.

"Look here, Bunter—" began Tom Redwing.

"You shut up, Redwing! If you don't want your precious pal, Smithy, sacked, you'd better tip him to be civil to a chap! See? I've only got to say a word to get him bunked out of Greyfriars, and you jolly well know it! And you, too, Wharton! Think Prout wouldn't like to know that you're chief of the secret society, what? If Prout knew that you'd go out of Greyfriars so quick it would make your head swim! Yah!"

Harry Wharton breathed hard.

"Bunter, you fat rotter—"

"Shut up!" said Bunter.

"I—I—I'll—" gasped the captain of the Remove.

Loder of the Sixth appeared in sight at the end of the passage. He glanced up the corridor towards the little crowd of juniors.

Bunter, as he spotted him, grinned.

With the bully of Greyfriars in hearing, Bunter felt, justly, that he could carry on exactly as he liked.

"Well, what will you do, Wharton?" he demanded, in a loud voice. "If you're trying to bully a chap—"

"Shut up!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"I shall please myself about that!" retorted Bunter. "Don't be cheeky, Bob Cherry. I'd kick you as soon as look at you!"

Bob clenched his hands—and unclenched them again. Billy Bunter chuckled. The fact that every fellow there wanted to kick him and could not venture to do so amused Bunter.

"I don't want any cheek from any of you fellows," went on the fat Owl, victoriously. "Keep a civil tongue in your heads, see? If you don't treat a fellow civilly, you can't expect him to keep your shady secrets. And—"

"Loder's coming this way!" breathed Squiff.

"Well, I don't mind if he is!" grinned Bunter. "I've got nothing to be afraid of, whatever some fellows may have. Hold your tongue, Field!"

"Wha-a-at!" gasped Squiff.

"Hold your tongue!" said Bunter coolly. "Hold your tongues, the lot of you!"

The fellows round Bunter looked at him as if they could have eaten him. But they were silent. Loder of the Sixth was coming up.

Bunter grinned serenely. He had told the fellows to hold their tongues—and they were doing so! It was quite exhilarating to the fat Owl!

But he ceased to grin as Loder reached the spot, slipped his ashplant down from under his arm into his hand, and rapped out:

"Bunter!"

"Oh!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "Yes, Loder?"

"I hear that you sent some fellows to my study yesterday with a spoof message from me!" said Loder.

"Oh! I—I didn't—I—I mean—I—I wasn't— It—it was only a joke, Loder, and I—I—I didn't, either!"

"Bend over and touch your toes!" said Loder laconically.

"I—I say, Loder, it—it was only a joke!"

"Jokes on prefects are barred! I'm waiting!"

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

He bent over and touched his toes. The ashplant rose and fell, and every swipe elicited a fearful yell from Bunter. The Remove fellows looked on, grinning. For the moment Loder of the Sixth was almost popular.

Having handed out "six," Loder tucked his cane under his arm again, and walked away. Bunter wriggled and squirmed.

"Ow! I say, you fellows— Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you beasts? Wow!"

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

"Ow! Beasts! Wow!"

The juniors walked away, laughing, leaving Billy Bunter to wriggle and squirm. For once, they felt that they almost liked Loder!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Comes to Tea!

PONG! Pong! Pong!

It was the sound of a tuning-fork in a Shell study.

In that study, which was shared by Hobson, Hoskins, and Stewart, all three Shell fellows were busy. As it was tea-time, Hobson and Stewart were thinking chiefly of tea, and preparing the same. James Hobson had had a remittance that day, which he was nobly expending in a study spread. In that proceeding he had the hearty support of Stewart. But Claude Hoskins was thinking of no such trifles as tea—even a spread on an unusually magnificent scale.

While two fellows got on with preparations for the spread, Hoskins was thinking of greater things. He sat at a corner of the table, with a sheet of music-paper before him, a pencil in one hand and a tuning-fork in the other. Every now and then he banged the tuning-fork on the table, to get his note. Apparently, wonderful melodies and harmonies were running wild in Claude Hoskins' musical head. It seemed that banging the tuning-fork assisted him, somehow, to fix them down. He gave irritated grunts when his study-mates spoke. Speech, no doubt, was silver, but silence was golden when Hoskins was in the throes of musical composition.

"Ready!" said Stewart. "Chuck up that rot now, Hosky, old man!"

"You silly chump!" said Hoskins. "I say, that man Flatt is a perfect idiot! Making out that a fellow should avoid perfect fifths—"

"Tea's ready!" said Hobson, soothingly.

"Tea!" said Hoskins, with a far-away look, as if he had never heard of tea before. "Did you say tea? Oh, tea!" Hoskins brought his mighty brain down to it with an effort. "Oh, all right! It's a bit sickening I can't have the music-room all the time."

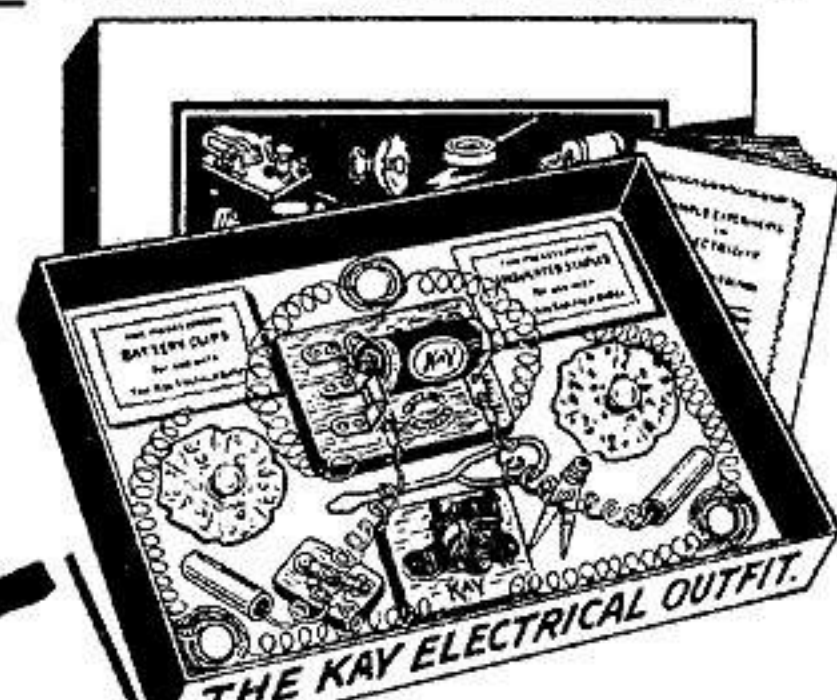
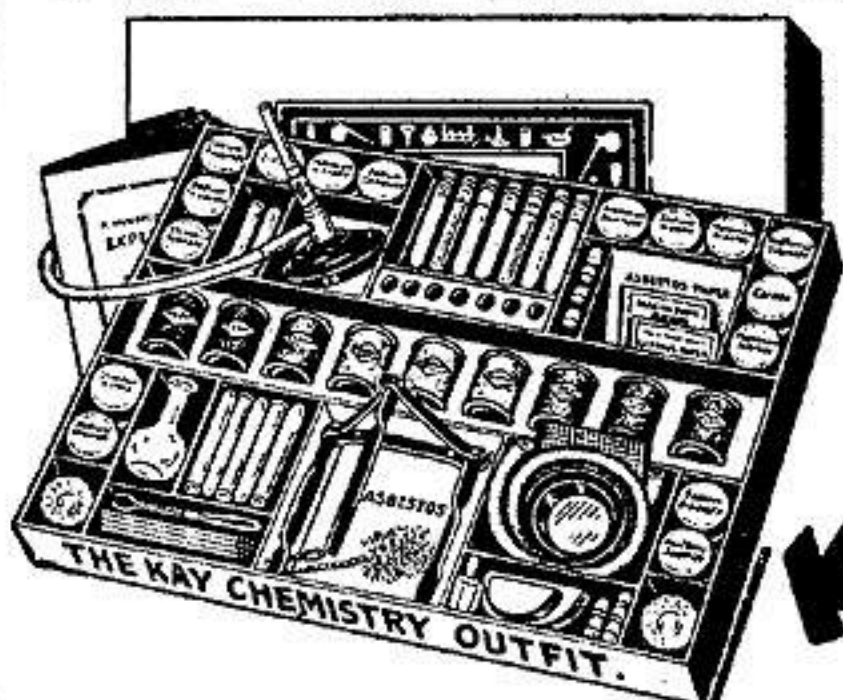
"I wish you could!" said Stewart heartily.

"Some ass is practising there now!" said Hoskins. "I've got to do the best I can in the study, with you two fellows chattering all the time. It's rather sickening. We ought to have a piano in the study."

Hobson and Stewart shuddered at the thought.

"What I really want," said Hoskins, "is an orchestra at my beck and call. That's what every composer really wants, you know. I have to manage
(Continued on page 12.)

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"Tea's ready!"

"Tea! Bother tea! Blow tea! Look here—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"What is that fat ass barging in for?" snapped Hoskins, glaring at Billy Bunter in the doorway. "Did you fellows ask him here?"

"No fear!" said Hobson. "I'll kick him out!"

"I say, you fellows, I've got something to say to you!" said Billy Bunter. "It's about the secret society."

"Don't shout, you ass!" exclaimed Stewart hastily.

"Well, I'll come in and shut the door, if you like," said Bunter airily, "or I'll talk here, just as you please."

"Come in, you gabbling gasbag!" grunted Hobson.

Billy Bunter came in, and shut the door. Evidently, the fat Owl was aware that there was a feast on in that study. Bunter's scent for a spread was wonderful.

To the surprise of the Shell fellows, he drew a chair to the table and sat down. Hobson and Stewart gave him expressive looks. Claude Hoskins did not heed him. He was tapping the tuning-fork again.

"Anybody asked you to tea here, Bunter?" inquired Stewart sarcastically.

"Oh, really, Stewart—"

"Get out, you cheeky frog!" snapped Hobson.

"If my company's not appreciated I shall go!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I can go to tea in a Sixth Form study if I choose—with a prefect, too!"

"Yes, I can see a prefect asking you to tea!" said Stewart, with a sniff.

"Loder hasn't asked me exactly, but I'm jolly sure he would be glad to see me," said Bunter calmly. "If you'd rather I talked to him instead of you fellows, I don't mind. The fact is I'm feeling a bit uneasy about keeping dark your goings-on. It's a bit on my conscience. It's all so lawless, you know, and against the rules of the school. A fellow has a right to ask a Sixth Form prefect for advice when he doesn't quite know what he ought to do. I was thinking of asking Loder."

Stewart and Hobson gazed at him.

"But I was going to discuss it with you chaps first," went on Bunter affably. "We'll talk it over, over tea, if you like. What about it?"

"By gum!" said Stewart, with a deep breath. "You fat freak, if you sneak to Loder about what you spied on in the gardener's shed—"

"Oh, really, Stewart! I hope I'm not a sneak!" said Bunter. "What worries me is that this sort of thing is so fearfully against all the rules, you know! It's not respectful to Prout. And we're bound to respect Prout, as he's in the Head's place now. And—"

"Shut up!" said Hobson, breathing hard. "You can tuck into the grub, if you like, but shut up!"

"Oh, really, Hobson—"

"Shut up, I say!" roared Hobson.

And the captain of the Shell looked so dangerous that the conscientious Bunter thought he had better shut up, as bidden.

He started on the foodstuffs.

A hearty welcome was not necessary to Bunter. Anything short of being kicked out was all right for the fat Owl. And the spread was good and ample. Bunter grinned cheerfully over it.

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"Pile in, Claude, old bean!" said Hobson, jerking the absent-minded genius by the arm. "Never mind the perfect fourths now—"

"Perfect fifths, fathead!"

"Well, never mind 'em—or the extinguished sevenths—"

"Diminished sevenths, ass!"

"This ham's good!" said Hobson. "And so are the eggs! And the pie—"

Claude Hoskins allowed his attention to be drawn from the sheet of music-paper on the corner of the table, on which he had been inscribing mysterious hieroglyphics. Now that he came to think of it, he was hungry! He gave Bunter a glare and started tea.

It was time to start, really, if he did not want to be left out of the race. For, ample as the supplies were, Bunter was making a deep and rapid inroad upon them. Bunter always bagged the lion's share, if he could; and he was not a fellow to lose time on such an occasion.

Hoskins, in fact, was just in time to rescue the last slices of ham before the uninvited guest annexed them.

Bunter gave him an irritated blink. However, there were several poached eggs left on the dish, and Bunter tilted them into his own plate. This proceeding drew on him three separate and concentrated glares from the Shell fellows.

Hobson picked up the teapot, apparently with the intention of shying it at that fascinating guest. But he put it down again, and tea went on, not in a cheery or hospitable atmosphere.

Bunter reached for the plate of jam-tarts. There were only a dozen tarts. He blinked at the tarts and blinked at his hosts.

"If you fellows don't want any tarts—" he remarked.

"We do!" said Hobson, in a deep, almost sulphurous voice.

"Help yourself, and shove the dish this way," said Stewart.

Bunter gave a sniff. He was good for more than a dozen tarts! However, he helped himself, taking six. That left six for the rest of the tea-party.

Bunter's six went down like oysters.

There was still a tart on the dish, and his eyes and his spectacles turned on it hungrily.

"Like that tart?" asked Stewart, breathing hard.

"Yes, old chap—"

"Here it is, then!"

Stewart picked up the tart, reached across the table, and squashed it on Bunter's little fat nose. Bunter's table manners seemed to have exhausted his patience!

There was a spluttering yell from Bunter as he got that tart. He wanted it inside, not outside. But it was outside that he got it, and it felt horrid. He leaped up, his chair flying backwards, clutching and grabbing at jam and pastry on his fat face. The table rocked, and the teapot and the milk jug went over together.

"Oooogh! Oooogh! Grooogh! Oooogh!" spluttered Bunter. "Why, you beast, I—"

There was a howl from Claude Hoskins. He bounded to his feet. Tea and milk, beautifully mingled, were streaming over his music-paper! The mysterious marks on that paper, which meant something to Hoskins, if to nobody else, disappeared in a sea of milk and tea.

"My music!" shrieked Hoskins. "My fantasia in D minor! Look!"

"Oooogh! Grooogh! Blow your silly rot! Look at me!" gurgled Bunter.

Hoskins came round the table.

Only the day before his musical works had been crumpled, and shoved down the back of his neck! Now they were

swimming in milk and tea! He came round the table at a run and hurled himself at Bunter.

"I say—yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as Claude Hoskins' clutch fell on him. "I say—yooop! Leggo! Oh crikey! Wow!"

Bump! Bunter smote the study carpet! He roared! Hoskins sprawled over him, punching.

He punched hard, and he punched often!

He did not seem to mind where the punches landed, so long as they landed somewhere on Bunter!

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Hobson. "I say, Claude, old man—"

"Take that!" roared Claude old man.

"And that! And that, too! My music all mucked up! Take that! And that!"

"Yarooop!" roared Bunter, as he took them. "Whoop! Beast! I'll go to Loder an dsay— Leave off, you beast! Whoop!"

Thump, thump, thump, thump!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"And that—and that—and that!"

"Yow-w-whoop! Help! Murder! Fire! Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter, with a terrific effort, tore himself away from Hoskins, and bounded up. Hoskins, pitched off, rolled on the floor. But he was up in a second, and jumping at Bunter again.

Bunter jumped for the door.

He had not finished tea yet! But he was not thinking of finishing tea. He was only thinking of getting away from Claude Hoskins.

He tore the door open, and leaped for the passage. Hoskins clutched at him, and barely missed. Bunter bounded out. Hoskins bounded after him and kicked. A fearful yell floated back as Bunter did the passage at about 60 m.p.h.

"I say, Claude, old fellow—" gasped Hobson.

Claude old fellow heeded not! He rushed in pursuit of the fleeing Owl. He did not think that Bunter had had enough yet.

At the corner of the passage he got in another kick. On the landing he got in another! Then Billy Bunter, bellowing, dodged into the Remove passage and escaped.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter All Over!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Oh, buzz off!" growled Johnny Bull.

The Famous Five were in the quad when Billy Bunter rolled up to them.

They did not seem pleased to see him.

As a matter of fact, they had been discussing Bunter and what was to be done regarding that fascinating youth.

The general opinion was that he ought to be kicked—and kicked hard! Every member of the Co. was ready and willing to lend a foot for the purpose!

But they realised that kicking Bunter would not meet the case! Rather it was likely to precipitate disaster.

The Owl of the Remove held them in the hollow of his fat hand—and that was that!

Naturally they did not give him amiable looks as he came up. Neither was Bunter looking amiable.

His experiences at tea with Hobson of the Shell had not improved Bunter's temper. Bunter was wrathful.

"I've got something to tell you fellows!" snorted Bunter. "Look here, I've been kicked—"

"Oh good!" said Bob Cherry.

"The goodness is terrific!"

"Hard, I hope!" said Frank Nugent.



Clang! Clatter! Thud! There was a rush to the tool cupboard; and as Bob Cherry reached it first, he dragged the door wide open. "Bunter!" he shrieked. The fat Owl of the Remove was staggering in a sea of hoes, rakes, picks, shovels, and other agricultural implements. "Oh lor!" he gasped. "I say, you fellows, I—I'm not here! Oh crikey!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "That's what you think about it, is it? I'd better go to Loder, I suppose!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Harry Wharton savagely.

"Shan't!" said Bunter defiantly.

*Make me shut up!"

In the distance, Loder of the Sixth could be seen walking with Walker and Carne. At the window of the Head's study, Mr. Prout was looking out—frowning, as his glance rested on the Famous Five. Prout had a strong suspicion that these five fellows could have told him quite a lot about the secret society of Greyfriars if they liked!

Under Prout's eyes, and within ear-shot of Gerald Loder, it was evident that Bunter could not be dealt with as he deserved. The Famous Five eyed him, but they did not speak.

"Now shut up and listen to me!" said Bunter. "You'd better! I've been kicked! I've been treated brutally by Hobson and his gang in his study! Well, I'm not standing it! I expect my friends to back me up!"

"Go and tell them so!" suggested Bob.

"If we're friends," said Bunter, "I may keep your rotten secrets for you. If we're not, you can't expect me to keep it dark about you breaking all the rules of the school, holding secret meetings, ragging prefects, and all that!"

"You fat freak—"

"Shut up, Cherry! I'm talking! I don't like this idea of keeping shady secrets, anyhow," continued Bunter. "There's something syrupstidious about it, to my mind!"

"Something whatter?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Syrupstidious!" said Bunter firmly. "You fellows may be syrupstidious—but it's not in my line at all! Open and frank and manly—that's my style!"

"Ye gods!" murmured Nugent.

"Shut up, Nugent! But though I loathe syrupstidiousness, I may keep your rather shady proceedings dark if you treat me like a pal!" said Bunter. "I've been kicked—"

"It won't be long before you're kicked again," breathed Johnny Bull.

"Shut up, Bull. I want you fellows to back me up," said Bunter. "You back me up, and I'll back you up—that's fair play! You can lick Hoskins of the Shell, Bob."

"What!"

"I'd thrash the cad myself," said Bunter, "but he's hardly worth soiling a fellow's hands on! Are you going to lick him, Bob?"

"Hardly!"

"I tell you he kicked me—"

"I'll pat him on the back for that!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "You refuse to stand by a pal! All right! You know what to expect! Loder will lick you fast enough when he knows—"

"Come on, you men!" said Harry.

And the Famous Five walked on towards the House, leaving Billy Bunter to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

In the present peculiar circumstances Bunter was a fellow to be placated—to be treated with care and tact! But, somehow, it couldn't be done! They walked away and left him talking.

Billy Bunter glared after them with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles! With the power in his fat hands to get these fellows sacked or flogged, they had the nerve to treat him as if he did not matter at all! They passed him by like the idle wind, which they regarded not!

Bunter was not likely to stand that!

"I say, you fellows!" he roared.

They walked on.

"Don't walk away while a fellow's

talking to you!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, are you deaf? Do you want me to go over to Loder?"

Unheeding, the Famous Five went into the House! Either they had to "butter" Bunter, or take the risk of his going to Loder and revealing what he knew! That risk seemed preferable!

"Why, the cheeky ticks!" gasped Bunter, in great wrath and indignation.

"I'll show 'em! I'll —"

"Anythin' up, dear man?" drawled the quiet voice of Lord Mauleverer.

Bunter blinked round at him.

"Oh, you!" he snorted. "You're one of the gang, Mauly. I saw you in old Mimbles' shed with them! Well, you go and tell Wharton to get ready for the sack! I'm going to Loder—"

"Wouldn't you rather come along to the tuckshop?" suggested Lord Mauleverer amicably.

"Oh!" said Bunter.

"Mrs. Mimbles has some new jam-roll in."

"My dear chap, I'll come with pleasure!" said Bunter.

"Do!" said Mauly.

And Bunter did!

His wrath faded away—temporarily, at least! Jam-roll was more attractive than vengeance!

For the next ten minutes Lord Mauleverer had the pleasure—or otherwise—of watching Bunter eat! It was rather fortunate, perhaps, that Bunter had not finished tea in Hobson's study. It left him space to do justice to the jam-roll.

When the fat Owl of the Remove had filled every available inch of cargo space with that delightful comestible, Lord Mauleverer settled the little bill—which was not very little!

(Continued on page 16.)

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A TRAITOR IN THE CAMP!

(Continued from page 13.)

Bunter grabbed his sleeve with a jammy paw as they left the school shop. "I say, Mauly, old man! Did I mention to you that I was expecting a postal order?"

"I believe I've heard somethin' of the sort!" assented Mauly.

"It hasn't come yet," said Bunter.

"Keep on hopin'!" said Lord Mauleverer gravely. "It's bound to come, sooner or later, after bein' whole terms in the post."

"Oh, really, Mauly! What I mean is, it's for ten shillings!" said the fat Owl. "I suppose you wouldn't mind letting me have the ten bob now, and taking the postal order when it comes?"

"That's where you make a mistake, old fat bean!" answered Lord Mauleverer. "I should mind, very much."

"If you're going to be mean, Mauly, I—"

"Yaas. Good-bye!"

"Oh, all right! Don't forget to tell Wharton to get ready to be sacked," said Bunter. "You might mention it to Smithy, too!"

Lord Mauleverer paused. He did not speak again, but he extracted a ten-shilling note from his notecase and passed it silently to the Owl of the Remove. Then he walked away to the House.

Billy Bunter grinned. His knowledge of the Greyfriars Secret Society seemed likely to turn out rather a good thing for him, on these lines.

Mauly's face was very thoughtful as he went into the House. Bunter's idea was that, with so much power in his fat hands, he was going to spread himself more and more. Mauly's idea was that it was time that "paid" was put to Bunter, and that "paid" was going to be put to him without delay! It remained to be seen which idea was well-founded.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Mauly Knows How!

"WHAT'S going to be done?" "We are!" said Bob Cherry dismally.

Prep was over in the Remove. Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had come along to Study No. 1 to consult with Wharton and Nugent. The Bounder had joined them there. All the juniors were worried.

"Buttering" Bunter, persuading him to hold his tongue, tolerating his fat swank and impudence, was a resource of which the chums of the Remove could not avail themselves. They simply couldn't do it!

But the alternative was really alarming!

Every member of the secret society had done enough to be sacked for—more than enough! Prout, it was true, could hardly sack three dozen fellows at

one fell swoop. But it was absolutely certain that he would sack the ring-loaders if he got hold of them.

Wharton and Smithy of the Remove, Hobson of the Shell, and Temple of the Fourth were booked—if the facts came to light! The rest, no doubt, would be only flogged, but their names would be known; they would be under observation; and the game would be up! The Greyfriars Secret Society, instead of keeping their end up against the tyrant of the school, would be dishd and done—the leaders expelled and gone, and the rank and file left for Loder to wreak his grudges on. That was the prospect, unless the fellows submitted to being under Billy Bunter's fat thumb—which was unthinkable.

"I'll smash him!" muttered the Bounder, clenching his hands.

"The smashfulness would be grateful and comforting," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "but it would not prevent the idiotic jawfulness of the esteemed and villainous Bunter."

"Mauly said he would drop in after prep," remarked Nugent. "I wonder if Mauly's got an idea—"

The Bounder gave an irritable grunt. "Fat lot of ideas in that silly ass' empty head!" he said. "Rot!"

"Well, Mauly's no fool!" remarked Wharton. "But the fact is, I can't see anything that can be done! We're up against it!"

There was a tap at the door, and Lord Mauleverer came in. He gave the chums of the Remove a nod and a cheery smile.

"Chewin' it over?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Harry, "and if you've got anything to suggest, old chap, for goodness' sake get it off your chest."

The Bounder grunted again. He did not expect to hear any useful suggestion from the dandy of the Remove. Lord Mauleverer, as a rule, seemed to be chiefly occupied with the cut of his clothes, and was usually regarded, in his form, as an ass. But there were fellows who knew Mauly better.

"Go it, Mauly!" said Bob. "You've got an idea for bottling up that fat frabjous freak, Bunter!"

"Yaas."

"Oh, let's hear it, by all means!" said Vernon-Smith, without taking the trouble to conceal a sneer.

"Yaas," said Lord Mauleverer equably. "I've been givin' the old headpiece some hard work, and I fancy I've got a wheeze. Nothin' in it, I dare say, but if I'm not borin' you fellows—"

"As a matter of fact, you are!" grunted the Bounder.

"Shut up, Smithy!" said five voices in unison.

Lord Mauleverer smiled amiably.

"Majority of five to one," he said. "I'll trickle on! As the matter stands, dear men, we're at the mercy of jolly old Bunter. He's not a bad chap, in his own way—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" snapped the Bounder.

"Shut up, Smithy!"

"Not a bad chap in his own way," went on Lord Mauleverer imperturbably. "He's not a sneak, really, or doesn't mean to be. He can't help bein' a silly ass and a frabjous fathead, and a born idiot, and things like that. And havin' a little power in his hands, he can't help swankin' and makin' himself doocid unpleasant—it's the nature of the beast! But to come to the point—"

"Oh, you're comin' to a point?" asked Vernon-Smith sarcastically.

"Yaas. The point is, that Bunter can give us all away if he likes, and if

he isn't treated as he wants to be, he may howl it all out any minute. There's been some narrow escapes already. The Squeaker heard him this mornin', and Loder would have heard him this afternoon, if I hadn't stopped him in time by takin' him to the tuck-shop and fillin' him up with jam-roll. We can't go on like that!"

"What we want to know is, how can we prevent it?" growled the Bounder.

"Yaas, I'm comin' to that. There's one thing that would make even that frabjous ass Bunter jolly careful not to let out any secrets of the jolly old secret society—"

"And what's that, Mauly?" asked Harry.

"Makin' him a member!"

"Oh!" ejaculated the Famous Five together.

"You see, if Bunter was a member of the jolly old Secret Seven, as deep in the mud as we are in the mire, he would take jolly good care not to breathe a jolly old syllable!" said Lord Mauleverer. "We don't want a gabblin' ass like that in the ranks, but we've got no choice now! He's safer inside than out in the jolly old circumstances, what?"

"You silly chump!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Thanks!"

"Do you think Bunter will join up, if we ask him?" hooted the Bounder. "He wouldn't take the risk, anyhow, and now he will know exactly why we're asking him, and he will simply cackle at the idea."

"Let him cackle!" said Lord Mauleverer considerably. "Why shouldn't a fellow cackle if he likes cacklin'? I'm not sayin' it's musical, or pleasant to listen to, but—"

"Oh, don't be a goat!" howled the Bounder. "I tell you it's no use asking the fat freak to do anything of the kind."

"But I wasn't thinkin' of askin' him!" murmured Lord Mauleverer gently. "I was thinkin' of makin' him."

"Oh!" said the Famous Five again.

"I think we're justified in doin' it, as the fat idiot has spied out our little secret and is holdin' it over our heads!" said Mauly.

"Never mind that—" growled the Bounder.

"But I do mind it, old bean, I mind it quite a lot!" said Mauly calmly. "But, as I said, we're justified! Bunter's asked for it, and he's got to have what he's asked for! He's goin' to join the Secret Seven, whether he likes it or not—and he's goin' to take a leadin' hand in handlin' dear old Loder, so that he will be booked for the sack as much as anybody else if it all comes out! After which, my beloved 'earers, I think that Bunter will succeed in holdin' his tongue," concluded his lordship.

"By gum!" said the Bounder, his eyes glistening. Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances.

"It's the way—the only way!" said Bob. "Mauly, old bean, you're the jolly old goods!"

"Glad you approve," drawled his lordship. "Dear old Bunter will be in his study alone after prep. If any fellows with Guy Fawkes masks on want to see him on business—"

"How do you know?"

"Because I've asked Toddy to leave a cake in the cupboard and to take Dutton down to the Rag with him," answered Mauleverer. "I've a sort of idea that Bunter won't be gone till the cake's gone, and it's rather a big cake—I got the biggest in Mrs. Mumble's shop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By gum!" repeated the Bounder. "Mauly's no fool! You're not such a silly ass as you look, Mauly!"

"Thanks," yawned his lordship. "I'd say the same of you, old chap, if I wasn't such a stickler for the truth."

"Why, you cheeky fathead—"

"Order!" said Bob Cherry. "Let's get going! It's the only way, as they say in the play—Mauly's hit the nail on the head! Is it a go, you men?"

"It's a go!" said Harry.

"Hear, hear!"

And a "go" it was.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Brother Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER was alone in Study No. 7 in the Remove. He had not lingered there to give a little extra attention to prep!

Bunter, in fact, had finished prep before either Toddy or Dutton. Prep never claimed an undue amount of Billy Bunter's attention.

Even when Mr. Quelch was at Greyfriars Bunter often let it slide. And under the milder rule of Mr. Woose he let it slide very often.

Bunter remained alone in the study for a much more important reason than prep. He had seen Peter Todd place a cake in the study cupboard. And he could scarcely believe in his good luck when Toddy went down, after prep, taking Tom Dutton with him—and leaving the fat Owl alone with the cake!

That cake did not remain long in the cupboard!

Bunter only waited till his study-mates were gone before he transferred it to the table and commenced operations on it.

What Toddy had intended to do with that cake Bunter did not know; but he concluded that it was intended for a study supper. There was not likely to be much left of it by the time Toddy returned with a supper-party, if that was the case.

Certainly, Bunter did not guess that that cake had been deliberately planted in Study No. 7 to keep him there after the rest of the Form had gone down to the Rag.

Bunter lived, moved, breathed, and thought cake just at present. It was a large cake—a luscious cake—a scrumptious cake! It was so large that there was actually enough for Bunter! Life seemed to the fat Owl worth living, as he travelled through that cake.

But he was not destined to reach the end of his travels uninterrupted. The study door opened suddenly before he was half-way through the cake.

Bunter blinked round.

Then he jumped.

The passage outside was dark; the light there had been turned off. A little bunch of fellows appeared in the doorway, every one with his face covered by a Guy Fawkes mask.

As the startled Owl blinked at them they surged into the study, the last man in closing the door behind him and locking it.

"I—I say, you fellows—" gasped Bunter, in alarm.

He jumped up.

There were seven fellows in the bunch—all masked in grotesque Guy Fawkes masks! Bunter did not need telling that they were the Secret Seven of Greyfriars.

He blinked at them, his eyes bulging through his spectacles.

"Seize him!" said one of the masked juniors in a deep voice.

"I—I say—" gasped Bunter.

Two of the masked fellows stepped to Bunter, and pinned him by his fat arms.

The Owl of the Remove wriggled.

"Look here, you beasts, no larks!" he exclaimed. "I jolly well know who you are! I'll yell for a prefect, see?"

"Gag him!" said the deep voice.

Bunter opened his mouth for a yell. Instantly a chunk of the cake was jammed into it.

He did not utter the yell. He gave utterance only to a horrid gurgle.

"Gurrrrggh!"

"Bind him!"

"Urrrrggh!"

The fat Owl plumped into the arm-chair. He gurgled and wriggled as his arms and legs were tied to the chair.

"Urrgh! I say, you fellows—Gurrrgh! Beasts! Urrgh!"

"Silence!"

"Wurrrrggh!"

"William George Bunter!" said the deep voice. "You are in the hands of the Secret Seven. Brother No. 2 keep your hand over his mouth!"

"What-ho!" said Brother No. 2.

"If you yell out, Bunter, you will get damaged! That's a tip!"

"Urrgh! Beast! Wurrrgh!"

"You have spied on the secrets of the Secret Seven!" went on the deep voice. "You know too much! You know what happens on the films to people who know too much!"

There was a chuckle from under the masks.

Bunter gurgled.

Billy Bunter was a great film-goer. He was very keen on films. He had often longed for the life of a film hero, which was ever so much more exciting than real life.

But he was glad, at the present moment, that it was real life, and not films. He knew what happened to people on films, who "know too much." They came to very sticky ends.

"On the films," went on the deep voice, "you would be slain without mercy for having spied out our mysterious secrets. But we shall not slay you!"

"You silly idiot!" gasped Bunter.

"Brother No. 4, have you got the compasses?"

"I have!"

"Stick them into Bunter!"

"I—I say—" gasped Bunter.

"Have you anything to say, spy and traitor, before the compasses are stuck into you?"

"Owl! Yes!"

Keep off, you beast!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I say, you fellows, I jolly well know who you are! I—I mean, I—I don't know who you are—I haven't the faintest idea! The—the fact is, I wasn't in Mimble's shed yesterday—" "What?"

"I—I—I mean, I—I never saw anybody there—I didn't recognise a single fellow at the meeting!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—don't know anything, and I'm not going to tell anybody what I know, either!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I say, you fellows, you can take off those masks, and—and let's be pally!" gasped Bunter. "I'll whack out my cake! There! It's a scrumptious cake—I had it from Bunter Court to-day in a hamper—"

"Silence!"

"Beast!"

"William George Bunter, you are going to be put to the torture."

"Ow!"

"There is only one way you can save yourself—that is by becoming a member of the secret society! Are you willing?"

"Oh lor'! No fear!" gasped Bunter. "Prout will sack any man he finds out that belongs to the secret society! I'm not going to do anything of the sort, I can jolly well tell you!"

"Stick the compasses into him!"

"Yaroooooh!"

A hand was promptly clapped over Bunter's large mouth. The sharp point penetrated about the millionth part of an inch.

But it was enough for Bunter! He wriggled in fearful apprehension. But for the hand gripping his mouth, his yells would have awakened all the echoes of the Remove passage.

As it was he could only gurgle. But he gurgled horribly.

"Let him speak! Bunter!"

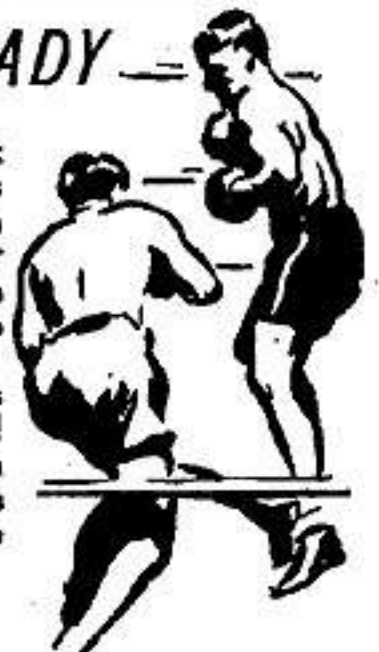
"Oh lor'! Leggo! Keep those compasses away, you beast! Wow!"

"Will you become a brother of the secret brotherhood?"

(Continued on next page.)

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"Ow! Yes! Rather! Anything you like!" gasped Bunter. "Keep those compasses away, blow you!"

"Will you take the oath of the Secret Seven?"

"Oh dear! Yes! Anything!"

"Repeat after me—'I swear to be a faithful and loyal brother and member of the Greyfriars Secret Society, to obey the orders of the chief, and never to reveal the secrets of the brotherhood!'"

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Stick the compasses into him!"

"Hold on! I'm ready! I sus-sus-swear to be a royal—I mean loyal—mother and brember—I mean, brother and member—of the Greyfriars S-Secret Society!" stuttered Bunter. "I—I—I'll swear anything you like!"

"That will do!" said the chief. "You are now a member of the secret society, William George Bunter! You will take part in the next proceedings of the mysterious brotherhood. Are you ready?"

"N-n-not quite!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'll be ready in—in about ten minutes! I've got to speak to a fellow in the Rag——"

"That fellow can wait!"

"I—I mean, I've got some lines to take to Woose! He gave me fifty lines in class to-day."

"That's all right! Woose always forgets a fellow's lines."

"What—what I mean is, the lines are for Loder! Loder never forgets a fellow's lines! I—I've got to go to Loder before dorm!"

There was a chuckle.

Although he had just undertaken to become a loyal brother and member of the secret society, it was clear that Bunter was only too anxious to get out of the study, and out of the clutches of the brotherhood.

It was equally clear that his loyalty to that mysterious association would have lasted until he got out of their clutches, and no longer.

It was not Bunter's intention to take part in any of the perilous proceedings of that secret association—if Bunter could help it.

But, as it happened, Bunter couldn't help it!

"I—I say, you fellows, leggo!" gasped Bunter. "I say, untie me, you know! I've really got to see Prout——"

"Prout?"

"I mean, Woose—that is, Loder——"

"They can all wait!" said the chief. "At present the brotherhood requires your services. Yesterday, Loder gave six each to certain members of the Remove! Loder is going to get six himself!"

"Oh crikey!"

"And you are going to hand them out!"

"What?" gasped Bunter.

"You are going to give Loder six!"

"You—you—you silly idiot!" gasped Bunter. "It's the sack for whopping a prefect! Think I want to be sacked?"

"Stick those compasses into him!"

"Hold on! I—I'll whop Loder, if you like!" gasped Bunter. "Oh lor! I—I'll do anything you like! I—I want to whop Loder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I'm keen on it! I say, keep those compasses away!" groaned Bunter. "Release him!"

Bunter was untied from the armchair. He cast a longing blink towards the door.

But there was no escape for Bunter! "Put on his mask!"

A Guy Fawkes mask was produced

and fastened over Billy Bunter's fat features. His spectacles gleamed through the eye holes. Then a roomy old coat was enfolded round his fat figure.

The light was turned off.

The door opened, and Bunter was led out into the dark passage.

For a moment he entertained a wild hope of being able to dodge away there, and make his escape.

But the Secret Seven evidently did not quite trust that new member of the brotherhood. Two of the brethren held his arms in a grip from which Bunter had no chance of getting loose. Bunter was led down the passage.

"I—I say, you fellows——" he gasped.

"Silence!"

"Look here! You lemme go, or I'll yell!"

"Stick those compasses——"

"Hold on! I—I mean, I—I ain't going to yell! I—I ain't going to say a word! Oh lor!"

And the new brother of the mysterious brotherhood was silent—just in time to escape the business end of the compasses.

THE TWLEFTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Surprise!

GERALD LODER cut the cards. "Your deal, Hilton!" he remarked.

Cedric Hilton of the Fifth Form nodded, and took the pack. Price of the Fifth lighted a fresh cigarette.

The three were in Hilton's study in the Fifth. Poker was the game after prep.

Had Mr. Prout cast his eyes into that study just then, those eyes would probably have started from Prout's plump face.

Poker was not a game of which Prout would have approved. Neither, it was certain, would he have approved of cigarettes!

Prout would have had the shock of his life! It would have been borne in even on Prout's obtuse brain, that his trust and faith in Gerald Loder were quite misplaced.

But Prout was not likely to suspect that his trusted head prefect was playing poker in a Fifth Form study! Loder had no fear on that score. He felt safer in Hilton's study than in his own.

Prout had a way of dropping into Loder's study for an affable and lengthy chat, which was rather disconcerting to a fellow who had so many shady secrets to keep. Once or twice Loder had only got a pack of cards or a racing paper out of sight just in time. Once or twice he had feared that Prout would sniff a flavour of tobacco in the room.

In Hilton's study all was safe. Prout was not likely to drop in there.

Loder had always been rather "thick" with Price of the Fifth. They were birds of a feather. Hilton had rather kept him at a distance, Wingate's influence being good for his rather weak character. But since Wingate had gone, and Loder had become captain of the school, all that was changed. Little as Prout suspected it, Loder was a thoroughly bad influence in the school, and fellows of uncertain principles were likely to be led far astray by him.

Hilton, as he dealt the cards, with a cigarette sticking out of his mouth, did not look much like the fellow with whom "old Wingate" had been friendly. His pal, Price, and his new friend, Loder, were helping him on the downward path about as fast as he could go.

Most of the Fifth, after prep, were gathered in the games study, at the end of the passage, or had gone down to Hall. Some of them knew, or suspected what went on in Hilton's study, and shrugged their shoulders contemptuously over it. Coker of the Fifth had passed Loder in the passage when he came up, with an inimical glare, and a snort of scorn. Which Loder affected not to notice, but which he stored up in a memory which was very good for such things. Later, the scornful Coker was going to be sorry for that snort!

Now, however, Loder was only thinking of the game in hand. He was winning money from Hilton, who was wealthy as well as careless. And money was very useful to Loder, who owed more than he could pay to certain shady characters at the Three Fishers.

Hilton dealt the cards, five to each player. They took up their "hands," and examined them.

It was then that an interruption happened.

The door-handle turned.

The door did not open. The young rascals had taken the precaution of turning the key before they sat down to their game.

Rap!

It was a sharp knock on the panels.

Loder, Hilton, and Price started to their feet. That sharp knock was authoritative, and sounded like Prout!

Loder changed colour. Price became quite pale. Only Hilton smiled sarcastically at the startled, scared looks of his companions.

"Who's there?" called out Price, in a faltering voice.

Rap!

"It's not Prout!" breathed Loder. "He would answer!"

Rap!

"Who's there?"

Rap!

Whoever was there, did not seem to choose to answer. He went on rapping on the panels.

Loder gritted his teeth.

"Some fellow larking, to startle us!" he muttered. "But—get those things out of sight!"

Cards and cigarettes were swept into a drawer of the table. Fellows who were in danger of being expelled for what they were doing, could not be too careful.

Loder stepped towards the locked door.

"Who's there?" he called out again.

Rap, rap!

His eyes gleamed.

"It's some fool larking!" he muttered. "That dummy Coker, as likely as not! By gad, I'll make him sorry for it, whoever it is!"

"Some fag!" muttered Price.

"I don't care whether it's a fag or a senior, I'll whop him all the same!" said Loder, between his teeth.

He glanced round the study to make sure that all guilty articles were out of sight. Then he quietly unlocked the door, and waited.

Rap!

As the rap came again, Loder suddenly opened the door and strode out, to catch the rapper in the act!

He met with a surprise.

It was dark in the Fifth Form passage—some unknown hand had turned the light off.

But the light from the study glimmered out on a bunch of strange-looking figures—with Guy Fawkes masks over their faces.

Loder bumped into them.

They were ready for him.

In an instant he was grasped, and



Billy Bunter turned the nearest corner, which led into Masters' Passage, at top speed. It was rather unfortunate, for Mr. Woose was coming out of his study at that moment. They met at the corner and crashed! "Oh, goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Woose, as he received the full force of Bunter's charge. "Yaroooh!" wailed Bunter.

hurled back headlong into the study. He staggered across the room, and went down with a howl and a crash.

Hilton and Price stared on, dumb-founded.

The masked juniors rushed in. The door was closed and swiftly locked. There was a crowd of them. Hilton and Price had heard of the Secret Seven of Greyfriars, though this was their first experience of that mysterious body. But there were more than seven in the crowd that had invaded the Fifth Form study. With three seniors to deal with the members of the secret society had come in strong force.

"Look here!" gasped Hilton.

He got no further.

Three fellows rushed on him, and he went over, struggling, in their grasp. Four or five piled on Loder and pinned him down as he strove to rise. Three grasped Price and up-ended him.

Price was no fighting man. He hardly resisted at all. But Hilton put up a desperate struggle, though it did not avail him. Loder struggled and fought like a wildcat. He knew now that the secret society must have been keeping watch on him, and knew that he was in Hilton's study in the Fifth, where he was safe from Prout, but by no means safe from the Secret Seven. He struggled frantically; but his struggles were brief.

A duster was crammed into his mouth. A cord was knotted round his arms. He lay wriggling, panting, gurgling, on the floor.

Price was quickly served in the same way. And Hilton, breathless and furious, was very soon in the same helpless state.

Then there was a breathless chuckle from the dozen fellows who had invaded the study.

"Got 'em!" said a voice.

"Good egg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder glared up at the masked faces. He had suspected before that there were more than seven members of the mysterious association that had assumed the name of the Secret Seven. Now he had proof of it. But who they were was as deep a mystery as ever. The Guy Fawkes masks, securely tied on, completely hid their identity.

Some of them seized Hilton and Price, and dragged them into a corner of the room, and dumped them down there out of the way. Evidently the secret society members were not there to deal with them. It was Loder they wanted. Hilton and Price had been secured to keep them from giving trouble.

Loder wriggled with apprehension.

The masked juniors gathered round him. But they did not touch him. They seemed to be waiting.

But they did not have to wait long.

There was a tap at the door. Loder realised that more members of the secret society were coming. It was going to be a "full house." He chewed savagely on the duster, and Hilton and Price stared on dumbly as one of the masked fellows stepped to the door and unlocked it to admit the newcomers.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Whopped—by Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!" groaned Bunter.

"Quiet!"

"But I say——"

"Keep those compasses handy!" Bunter was quiet.

From the bottom of his fat heart the Owl of the Remove wished that he had never made that interesting discovery in the gardener's shed. Or alternatively, as the lawyers say, he wished he had not "swanked" and thrown his weight about on the strength of that discovery.

But it was too late to wish either now.

He was in the hands of the Amalekites.

Swearing loyalty to the mysterious society would not, perhaps, have bothered Bunter very much. But he realised that he was going to be dragged into the perilous deeds of the society—even to the extent of "whopping" a Sixth Form prefect—the sentence for which was the sack.

Once he had done that he was as deep in the mud, as any other member of the secret society in the mire. His own safety, as well as that of the secret society, would depend on holding his extensive tongue.

It was his own fault; he had asked for it—in fact, begged for it. There was no other way of shutting up Bunter; and Bunter had to be shut up.

In the dark he hardly knew where he was going. Lights had been turned out to screen the movements of the Secret Seven. Stairs and passages that were generally lighted till bed-time, were now plunged in darkness.

That circumstance should really have drawn the attention of the prefects. But there was much slackness among the prefects these days.

Loder was card-playing; Walker and Carne were smoking in the latter's study in the Sixth. Other prefects, though rather more respectably occupied, were undoubtedly slack. Slackness

had spread all through the Sixth, under Loder's rule. In fact, the whole school was getting slack.

But dark as it was the masked juniors found their way easily enough. Bunter did not need to find his—he was led with a grip of iron on either fat arm. He blinked round him dizzily through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Silence!"

"I say, this beastly mask is tickling my nose!"

There was a suppressed chuckle.

"I say!" hissed Bunter.

"You'll get tickled with these compasses if you don't shut up!"

"Beast!"

Bunter shut up again.

He was led on by a dark landing and a dark passage. He heard a whisper in the gloom. He fancied that it was Temple's voice, but he could not be sure.

"All serene! Go ahead!"

"They've got him!"

"You bet!"

"Good egg!"

Bunter wondered whether it was Loder whom "they" had "got." He was soon to learn.

His conductors marched him up the passage. They stopped at a door and one of them tapped.

The door was immediately opened.

The seven marched in with Bunter. Another fellow followed—the fellow who had whispered in the passage that it was "all serene." That fellow closed the door and locked it again.

Bunter blinked round through the eyeholes of his mask. He recognised Hilton and Price glaring from their corner, and knew that he was in a Fifth Form study. He blinked at Loder of the Sixth lying on the floor.

The study was a rather large one; but it was crowded now—not to say crammed. Twenty juniors were a large and numerous company for any study.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

Evidently it was a gathering in force of the secret society. More than half the fellows whom Bunter had seen in the gardener's shed were there.

Hilton and Price glared; but they did not speak. They could not, with dusters tied over their mouths.

Neither could Loder speak. He, too, could only glare. His glare told of the deadly fury that raged in his breast. But the fury of the bully of Greyfriars appeared to have no terrors for the cheery brotherhood.

Loder understood now why his captors had been waiting. They had been told off to secure him in Hilton's study, and keep him till the others arrived. The late-comers, though Loder did not know it, had been engaged with Billy Bunter. Now they were on the scene—with Bunter—and the proceedings proceeded.

Loder's eyes glittered from one to another.

But he could recognise nobody.

Some of the masked juniors were wearing old coats, and he guessed that that was to cover from sight garments that might have been identified.

Lord Mauleverer's elegant attire might have given him away—so might Cecil Reginald Temple's handsome waistcoat. Undoubtedly the ample proportions of Billy Bunter's plump person would have betrayed him, but for the fact that he was enveloped in an old coat too large for him. He understood now why he had been made to put on that coat before leaving his study. He hoped that Loder would not spot the glimmer of spectacles behind the eyeholes of the mask. For he knew why

he was there. He was there to whop Loder.

He shivered at the thought. But he knew that he had to do it. He was not prepared to argue with a pair of compasses in a firm hand.

"Gentlemen of the Greyfriars Secret Society!" The deep disguised voice of the chief was speaking. "You are here to witness the introduction and initiation of a new member."

"Hear, hear!"

"The new member will prove his good faith and loyalty by whopping Loder, who asked for it yesterday."

"Hear, hear!"

"I advise the new member not to speak," went on the chief, as Bunter opened his mouth. "Loder may remember his voice, and take him to Prout to be sacked."

Bunter's mouth shut promptly.

It shut tight!

Silence was not really one of Bunter's gifts. But he was silent now. The barest chance of Loder recognising his voice and calling him to account for it afterwards was enough for Bunter! Wild horses would not have dragged a word from him while he was in Loder's presence.

"Loder!" said the deep voice.

Gerald Loder glared.

"Yesterday you whopped nine Remove men for nothing! Now you are going to be whopped in your turn!"

The bully of Greyfriars wrenched at his bonds frantically.

"You may learn in time not to be such a beastly bully! We're trying to teach you, Loder—trying our hardest to educate you!"

Hilton of the Fifth grinned. He was feeling very uncomfortable, but he was beginning to find this scene rather amusing. Price looked on with apprehensive eyes, fearful that his own turn might be coming.

"Are you ready, Loder?"

Gurgles!

"Turn him over!"

Loder was turned over.

He wriggled wildly, face down, on Hilton's expensive carpet.

"The new member will now whop Loder!" said the deep voice. "If he doesn't put plenty of beef into it, stick the compasses into him!"

"Hear, hear!"

A handsome malacca cane, belonging to Hilton, was placed in Billy Bunter's fat hand.

"Go it!" said the deep voice of the chief.

Bunter hesitated.

Certainly he had no objection to whopping Loder, so far as they went! Loder had whopped him only that day! Bunter, like most of the Lower School at Greyfriars, would have given almost anything to whop Loder.

But the possible consequences dismayed him! Likewise, whopping Loder made him definitely and unescapably a member of the secret society, as deeply interested as the rest in keeping the secret! That meant that the power he had so unwisely wielded would depart from his fat hands!

Instead of holding it over other fellows' heads that he could give them away if he liked, he was going to live in dread of being found out himself!

But there was no help for it!

As he hesitated, a hand was stretched towards him, holding a pair of compasses.

Up went the malacca, and down it came on Loder's trousers with all the beef there was in Bunter's fat arm.

Whack!

It was a hefty swipe! It made Loder wriggle horribly, and a gurgle escaped

the duster that was crammed in his mouth.

Whack!

Bunter realised that he was "for it" now! There was no getting out of whopping Loder. So he felt that he might as well derive all possible satisfaction from whopping him! After all, there was very considerable satisfaction in whopping Loder!

Whack, whack! The cane went up and came down, and Bunter exerted himself. He might have been beating carpet, by the way he laid it on!

Whack, whack!

Loder gurgled, and wriggled, and writhed, and almost foamed! The whopping itself was painful enough! Worse than that was the humiliation of being whopped by a fag! Worst of all, was its happening under the stare of Price and the mocking eyes of Hilton. He knew that before dawn this scene would be the talk of all the senior studies.

"That's six!" said the deep voice. "That will do! Loder, you've had your six, and I hope it will do you good! If you want any more, you've only got to go on being a bully and a rotter and a worm!"

Gurgles!

"What about Hilton and Price?" asked another voice. "Better give them a few while we're about it!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Rag the study!" said the chief.

"Good egg!"

Hilton had been grinning. He ceased to grin now. Nearly twenty fellows, all setting to work at once, did not take long to wreck the study. The carpet was jerked up, and draped over Loder, Hilton, and Price. Everything in the study was overturned on the carpet as they wriggled under it. A few minutes sufficed.

The light was turned off.

Then the door was opened and the chief peered out cautiously into the passage.

There was a gleam of light under the door of the games study in the distance. But the passage was dark.

"Cut!" said the chief briefly.

There was a scampering of feet, and the secret society were gone. Loder & Co. were left wriggling and gurgling under the carpet.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter is Wanted!

"**P**ROUT looks waxy!"

"The waxfulness is terrific!"

"Now I wonder," said Bob Cherry reflectively, "what's made Prout waxy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Every fellow at Greyfriars, the next day, noticed that Prout looked "waxy."

There was no mistaking the fact that Prout was fearfully enraged.

It leaped to the eye!

From the Sixth to the Second, all the Greyfriars fellows knew that Prout was wild with wrath.

Everybody, of course, knew why!

The secret society of Greyfriars had been a thorn in Prout's side ever since he had assumed the headmastership. More and more had they added to their offences! Now the climax had come!

Prout's head prefect—the trusted prefect whom he had, by his own lofty authority, appointed captain of the school—had been "whopped"—whopped like a fag!

The story was all over Greyfriars! By dinner-time everybody knew!

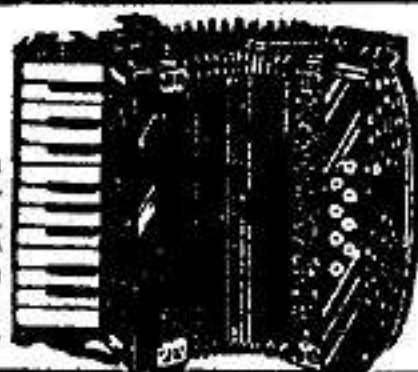
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(Continued on page 22.)

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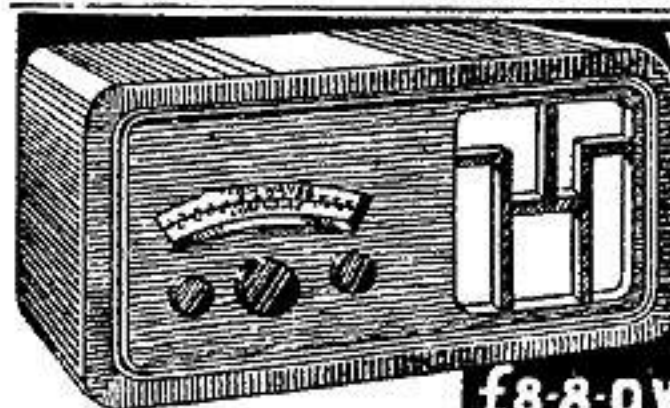
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stairs, where the cook and the maids discussed it. Gosling, the porter, talked it over with Mimbie, the gardener.

Seldom, or never, had there been such a thrilling sensation in the school.

Prout's brow was like thunder that day.

Whopping his head prefect was a personal insult to Prout himself—almost as bad as a whopping administered to his own portly and pompous person!

It was the limit!

The fellows knew that Prout had held a Masters' Meeting, whereat he impressed upon his staff, at great length, the importance of discovering the young rascals, the young ruffians, the young wretches who had done this thing.

It appeared, from what Prout explained, that his head prefect, Loder, had gone to a Fifth Form study, to discuss football matters with two Fifth Form men!

While they were discussing those football matters they had been set on by a gang of lawless juniors, and Loder had been caned—thrashed—whacked on his trousers!

And the study had been wrecked! And every junior concerned in those wild and whirling proceedings had to be discovered, expelled, or flogged!

The beaks listened to Prout—they had to listen so long as he filled the place of their absent chief. But there was no enthusiasm.

Some of them could have told Prout that his precious head prefect deserved all he had received, and more. Some of them surmised that it was business not so harmless as a football discussion that had occupied Loder and Hilton and Price. All of them could have pointed out that such things had not happened when Dr. Locke was there!

But nobody argued with Prout. He talked till breath failed him, and then the meeting broke up—with a good deal of shrugging of shoulders on the part of the beaks. It was improbable that Prout, in his hunt for the secret society, would get much assistance from his staff.

Prout's waxy looks drew smiling attention from all the school. But even Prout did not look so thunderous as Loder.

That day Loder of the Sixth was like a bear with a sore head, only more so! Never had Loder's ashplant had so much exercise as it had that day.

Loder had always been a bully. He had always liked whopping fellows. But now he was positively dangerous. Merely being within his reach was reason enough for Loder to administer a swipe with his ashplant.

Billy Bunter that day regarded him with absolute terror.

If Loder found out who had whopped him—

Loder was not likely to find out! Only one member of the secret society was a tattler; and that member had now the most powerful of reasons for keeping his extensive mouth shut!

Billy Bunter, for once in his fat life, was able to keep a secret!

If the facts came to light, the fellow who had whopped Loder was absolutely certain to get it right in the neck! The secret of the secret society was safe with Bunter now! All the king's horses and all the king's men could not have dragged a syllable from him!

Bunter, that day, kept at a safe distance from Loder of the Sixth.

The merest glimpse of Loder in the offing was enough to send the fat junior scuttling round the nearest corner.

It was absolutely certain that Loder could have no suspicion of Bunter, who was about the last fellow at Greyfriars

he could have suspected of having administered that whopping in Hilton's study. Even Bunter realised that. But he was fearfully uneasy all the same.

Every minute he dreaded to hear Loder's voice call "Bunter!"

And what he dreaded, happened, when he came in from the quad at tea-time. Loder was standing by the stairs, talking to Walker, when the fat Owl came in, and he glanced round and called:

"Here, Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove gave him one startled blink and bolted.

Loder stared after him.

"Bunter!" he shouted.

The fat Owl heard him; but, like the gladiator of old, he heeded not! He put on speed.

"You young ass, come here!" called out Loder, and he made a stride after Bunter.

Bunter turned the nearest corner, which led him into Masters' Passage. He turned it at top speed.

It was rather unfortunate for Mr. Woose that he was coming away from his study just then to go to Masters' Common-room to tea!

They met at the corner!

Bunter did not see him till he crashed.

"Oh! Goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Woose, as he received the full force of Bunter's charge.

He flew!

Bunter sat down.

"Oooogh!" he gasped.

Bunter sat—and Mr. Woose sat! They blinked at one another and gasped. Loder, striding round the corner the next moment, stumbled over Bunter.

"What the thump—" he ejaculated.

"Ow! Keep off! Leggo!" yelled Bunter. "It wasn't me!"

Mr. Woose staggered up.

"Bunter! How dare you—Bunter—groogh—I am quite, quite breathless—I have had a very, very painful shock—I—I—"

"Yaroooh! Keep him off!" roared Bunter. "I never did it! I wasn't there! It wasn't me! Help!"

"What ever is the matter with the boy?" exclaimed Mr. Woose. "Loder, release Bunter at once! I will not allow boys of my Form to be chased—frightened—persecuted—"

Loder, grasping Bunter's fat shoulder, heaved him to his feet. Bunter wriggled frantically in his grasp.

"I tell you it wasn't me!" he shrieked. "I say, leggo! You beast, leggo! Oh crikey! Help!"

"Loder!" squeaked Mr. Woose. "I demand to know, at once, why you were pursuing this boy of my Form along the passages. What has Bunter done?"

"Nothing, sir!" answered Loder. "I haven't the faintest idea what's the matter with the young ass! I called to him—"

"Leggo!"

"To ask him—"

"I didn't—"

"—if he would like to come to tea in my study!"

Bunter jumped.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Woose. "You are a very foolish boy, Bunter! You have given me a very, very painful shock! Please be more careful!"

Mr. Woose went on his way, gasping. Billy Bunter blinked at Loder of the Sixth, his eyes almost bulging through his spectacles. He realised that there had been a misunderstanding.

Loder was not after him for that whopping in Hilton's study. Loder was going to ask him to tea! Really, that was so unexpected that Bunter could not have been supposed to be able to guess that one!

Loder released his fat shoulder. He

was not, as Bunter had feared, looking ferocious. He was quite genial!

"You young ass!" he said. "Look here, my fag's getting rather a spread in my study! If you'd like to come, cut along."

"Oh! Yes! Rather!" gasped Bunter.

He was amazed! Good-natured prefects sometimes asked juniors to tea. But Loder was not that sort of a prefect.

Still, if Loder was changing his manners and customs, to the extent of asking a fellow to a study spread, Bunter was not the man to discourage him!

With his terrors quite dismissed, the fat Owl of the Remove rolled along to the Sixth Form passage with Loder.

Tubb of the Third, Loder's fag, was getting tea in that study. He had poached the eggs, and opened the jar of jam, and was making the toast. Tubb knew that somebody was coming to tea, but he supposed that it was Walker or Carno, or some other senior. He stared when Bunter rolled in.

"Make some more toast, Tubb!" said Loder. "Bunter will want more than that."

Tubb of the Third breathed hard.

Fagging for a Sixth Form man was bad enough! But fagging for a Remove fellow was the limit! It was an insult to the dignity of a Third Form man!

Loder, perhaps unaware that Third Form men had any dignity to consider, threw himself into the armchair, and told Bunter to sit down. Tubb, suppressing his feelings with difficulty, made more toast.

As he told the other "men" in the Third Form-room afterwards, he came "jolly near" telling Loder what he thought of him. Fortunately for Tubb, he did not come nearer than "jolly near."

Tea was ready at last, and Tubb was told that he could cut. He shook his fist at Loder from the passage before he departed—carefully closing the study door first, however!

"Pile in, kid!" said Loder hospitably.

Billy Bunter did not need asking twice! There was a mountain of buttered toast, there was a dish poached eggs; there was a whole jar of jam, and there was a cake! Why Loder was doing this was an absolute mystery to Billy Bunter! Obviously Loder could not have the faintest suspicion that it was his guest who had landed that "six" on him the previous evening!

But—for whatever reason—Loder was doing it! He was standing Bunter a feed! And Bunter was not the man to neglect a feed!

He was amazed, but his amazement did not affect his appetite! Loder told him to pile in, and he piled in! And the rate at which the foodstuffs disappeared was remarkable.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Dead Secret!

BILLY BUNTER lost no time.

He was not the fellow to lose time when there was a feed on.

But he had another reason for pressing haste now! He had a lurking fear that Loder might change his mind.

All that day Loder had hardly come near any junior without giving him a swipe! Bunter had lived in terror of hearing his voice! And now, Loder was smiling genially and standing him a feed!

It was altogether too remarkable for Bunter to feel easy in his fat mind. He would not have been surprised, at any moment, to see the genial grin fade



"Bunter, you've said that it wasn't Vernon-Smith or Wharton who whopped me," roared Loder, picking up his ashplant and swishing it. "You've as good as admitted that you know who did it. Now you're going to tell me, otherwise you know what to expect!"

from Loder's face and to see him pick up his ashplant!

Really, he could not trust Loder! He felt like the wise Trojan of old, who feared the Greeks when they came with gifts in their hands!

But, for the present, all was calm and bright!

Bunter gobbled—and Loder continued to smile genially! That the bully of the Sixth had some motive for this unwanted hospitality even the obtuse Owl could guess. But he could not guess what the motive was.

He gobbled.

It was not till Bunter slacked down—which was not till most of the foodstuffs had disappeared—that Loder came to the point.

"Have some more jam, old chap!" he said. He was calling Bunter "old chap." "Don't spare the tuck!"

"Right-ho!" gasped Bunter. Really, he did not need telling that. Bunter had never been known to spare the tuck! He had some more jam!

"I've been wanting a little chat with you, Bunter," went on Loder casually. "You're a rather keen fellow—you keep your eyes and ears open, what?"

"Yes, rather!" assented Bunter. "Precious little goes on in the Lower School that I don't know about, I can tell you."

"So I thought," agreed Loder, "and, of course, you've heard all the talk about a secret society among the juniors."

A spoonful of jam stopped half-way to Bunter's mouth! He blinked at Loder over it! He understood!

"Prout thinks," went on Loder, in the same casual way, "that the leaders of that gang are in the Remove!"

"D-d-does he?" gasped Bunter.

Forgetful even of jam, he cast a

blink through his spectacles at the door. Loder, perhaps understanding what that uneasy blink implied, shifted his chair a little to come between the door and Bunter. If Loder's guest was thinking of a sudden and hurried departure his escape was cut off.

"A sharp fellow like you is bound to know something about it," went on Loder agreeably. "I dare say you've got a pretty clear idea who the fellows were who ragged me in Hilton's study last evening."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "No—yes! I mean—Oh lor'!"

"In fact," said Loder, "I've no doubt that you could give me the name of the very fellow who whopped me while the others were holding me, if you liked."

Bunter gazed at him in sheer terror. Certainly he could have given Loder the name of the fellow who had whopped him, if he had liked. In the circumstances, however, he did not like.

"They keep these things pretty dark," said Loder. "But, of course, they're talked of up and down the junior studies. A fellow—especially a keen fellow like you, Bunter—gets to know things. What?"

"Oh, no! N-n-not at all," stammered Bunter. "Oh, no!"

"Of course, anything you mentioned here would be in confidence," said Loder agreeably. "Nobody would hear a word about it outside this study. I should take it as a friendly action, Bunter, if you could give me the tip."

"Oh lor'!"

"Have some of the cake, old fellow," said Loder.

But Billy Bunter did not touch the cake. For once he had no appetite for

cake. All he wanted was to get out of Loder's study.

Good as the spread had been, he wished from the bottom of his fat heart that he had never come there.

Loder was still smiling and genial. But it was clear that he was in quest of information, and meant to have it. He suspected that the Peeping Tom of the Remove might have found out something. If so, he meant that Bunter should pass it on.

As a matter of fact, he was right. Bunter had found out quite a lot. But for Lord Mauleverer's masterly suggestion, adopted by the secret society, the fat Owl might have babbled out all he knew!

Now his lips were sealed.

Not only was he a member of the secret society himself, but it was his fat hand that had wielded the cane on Loder.

Bunter could not tell him that.

Loder, in fact, little dreamed what he was asking.

He waited, still smiling, though the smile was wearing a little thin. Bunter could only blink at him in silent dismay.

He knew that Loder meant to have an answer—that if he didn't get one his geniality would drop from him like a cloak. And then—the ashplant lay on a chair near at hand.

"Try the cake, old chap!" said Loder.

"I—I— The—the fact is, I—I'm not—not hungry," stuttered Bunter. "I—I mean, I've got to go to Moose. I mean, I've got some lines to do for Monsieur Charpentier—a French imp— for Mossoo, Loder."

"That's all right. I'll ask him to let you off."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,393.

"What—what I mean is, I—I've got to catch the post with—with a letter to my Mossos—I mean to my father. It's rather important." Bunter staggered to his feet.

"Sit down," said Loder quietly.

Bunter dropped into the chair again. There was a tone in Loder's voice which hinted that geniality was on the very edge of petering out.

"Now, I'm depending on you to help me—in fact, to be friendly, Bunter," said Loder. "I'll make it worth your while, in one way and another. I've got an idea that the fellow muffled up in a coat, with a mask on, who whopped me last evening was Vernon-Smith. Is that right?"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter.

"Was it Wharton?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then who was it?"

"Oh lor'!"

"You've said that it wasn't Vernon-Smith or Wharton," grinned Loder. "That's admitting that you know."

"Oh crikey! I—I mean very likely it was Vernon-Smith, and—and Wharton," stuttered Bunter, realising that he had been trapped into an admission. "I—I mean—that is to say, I—I don't know anything about it, Loder. I—I say, I've got to see my minor in the Second—"

"Never mind your minor in the Second."

Loder rose from his chair, picked up his ashplant, and swished it. Bunter watched him in terror.

"You've as good as admitted that you know, Bunter. Now you're going to tell me. I want the name of the fellow who handled the cane last night. Never mind about the others. I won't ask you anything further. I want the name of just that one fellow."

"Oh crikey!"

"Are you going to tell me?"

"I—I— Yes—no! Oh lor'!"

"I'm sorry to have to whop you, Bunter," said Loder grimly. "I'm sorry to say that I shall have to lay it on hard. But a junior who refuses to answer a question put to him by a prefect knows what to expect. Stand up, and bend over that chair!"

Bunter stood up, but he did not bend over the chair. His fat knees knocked together as he blinked at Loder.

There was little doubt, or rather no doubt, that the terrified fat Owl would have blurted out all he knew, but for one consideration. It was his own fat safety that was at stake now.

Loder was going to whop him for refusing to tell him who had handled the cane in Hilton's study. But it was quite certain that he would have whopped him harder had Bunter told, and followed it up by marching him off to Prout to be sacked.

"Bend over that chair, Bunter!"

"I—I—I say!" groaned Bunter.

"I—I say— Yaroooh!"

Loder grasped him by the collar, and bent him over the chair.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Now perhaps you'll answer," said Loder grimly. "You'll cough up all you know about the secret society, Bunter, or I'll take the skin off your back."

"Oh lor'!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Bunter wriggled and roared. Loder was laying it on hard. Persuasive methods having failed, he was using more drastic measures. And it was fairly certain that those measures would have been successful, had the hapless Owl dared to speak. But he did not dare.

Whack, whack!

"Whoop! Yooop! Help!" roared Bunter.

"Stop that row!" snarled Loder.

"By gum, I'll make you squirm if you don't cough it up! Are you going to tell me who caned me last night in Hilton's study?"

"Owl! Wow! Leggo! Wow!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooh!"

Whack, whack!

Bunter tore himself away with a frantic effort. He dodged, yelling, round the study table.

"Yow-ow! Beast! Keep off!" yelled Bunter. "Oh crikey!"

Loder dashed round the table after him; Bunter dashed round ahead. For

a few moments they chased one another round the table. But that could not last. Loder's grip was on the fat junior when Bunter bolted wildly for the door. In sheer desperation he gave a wild backward kick, and Loder caught it on his shin.

"Wow!" roared Loder.

He let go Bunter, dropped the cane, and danced on one leg, clasping the other with both hands, yelling.

Bunter did not stop to watch the dance. He tore open the door, and fled for his fat life.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Unparalleled!

PPRICE of the Fifth came into Loder's study about an hour later. He stared at Loder, who was sitting in the armchair, with a trouser leg turned back, rubbing a bruised shin with embrocation.

Loder scowled at him. Stephen Price was rather a pal of his; but the bully of Greyfriars was in a mood to scowl at friend or foe.

"Damaged?" asked Price, with a faint grin.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Loder.

The Fifth Form man laughed, came into the study, and shut the door. He took a crumpled slip of paper from his pocket.

"I fancy this will interest you, Loder," he remarked.

"What the thump do you mean?"

"Look at it!" grinned Price.

Loder looked at it. On the slip was written in "print" letters:

"WOODSHED AT SEVEN!"

"Woodshed at seven," read out Loder. "Is that a joke, or what? What the dickens—" Then his expression changed. "By gad! Where did you get that, Pricey? It looks—"

"I fancied it would interest you," said Price. "I picked it up in the quad a few minutes ago. A junior ran into me in the dark, and nearly barged me over. He cut off before I could see who he was; and I saw this lying on the ground. There's no doubt that he dropped it—may have had it in his hand. Looks like a tip—what?"

Loder's eyes gleamed.

"Nothing to do with me, of course," said Price. "I'm not a prefect. But as they wrecked my study, and as we're pals, I thought—"

"Thanks!" said Loder.

"I don't think there's much doubt what it means," remarked Price. "That's the way, I suppose, that they pass the word round when they're holding one of their precious meetings, to plan one of their rags."

"I found out that they met in the Remove box-room," said Loder. "But they got wise to that, and chucked it. I've never been able to spot their meeting-place since. But Gosling's woodshed is kept locked—they can't get into it without getting the key—"

"I've spoken to Gosling since I picked up that paper," grinned Price. "I find that the key of his woodshed is missing. Somebody pinched it from the door while he was in the shed."

"By gad! That settles it!" said Loder. "Gosling never goes there after dark, of course, and it's right out of the way. If they've pinched the key, they can get in when they like. Lock-up's before seven now, but those young scoundrels think nothing of breaking House bounds. They've got out by a window more than once, to play their tricks. By gad!"

Billy Bunter knows a good thing!



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Loder's eyes were blazing now. Price gave him a nod, and left the study. He grinned as he went. He had an idea that the unknown young rascals who had ragged his study, were going, shortly, to be made to feel extremely sorry for themselves.

Gerald Loder forgot the bruise on his shin, as he sat with the tell-tale slip of paper in his hands. Its meaning was clear enough—it could only mean one thing. The Greyfriars Secret Society was holding a meeting, and word had been passed round among the members. The place of meeting was Gosling's woodshed, and the time was seven.

After tea, and before prep, it was easy for fellows to slip quietly out of the House by some window in an obscure spot. Since they had been rooted out of their old meeting-place, the Remove box-room, they had found a new place—and it was Gosling's shed. The fact that the key was missing made it plain enough.

"By gad!" said Loder.

He grinned. He had them now! He had them in the hollow of his hand! Likely enough they had heard of what had happened to Bunter in his study, and his attempt to extract information from the fat Owl. Quite likely the meeting was called to discuss that episode, and to plan some lawless retaliation.

And chance at last had placed an unmistakable clue in his hands! In the paper itself there was no clue—the "print" letters gave no indication of the writer, and Price had not recognised the fellow, in the dark, who had dropped it. But the information it contained put the whole gang into the hollow of Loder's hand.

The secret society were going to be rounded up at last!

If they were cornered in Gosling's woodshed there could be no doubt. They had to break House bounds to be there at seven. It would not be much use their denying why they were there!

Loder chuckled. He had them at last!

There was a painful twinge in his shin, but he did not heed it now. He thought the matter over, and then went along the passage to speak to Walker and Carne. After which he repaired to the Head's study to see Prout.

This was a matter for the temporary headmaster to take in hand personally. Prout wanted proof, clear proof, before he sacked a man. He was going to get the clearest proof now!

He found Mr. Prout with a frowning brow.

"I trust Loder!" boomed Prout, before he could speak—"I trust that you have been making every effort to discover the young rascals—the iniquitous and rebellious young rascals—who committed such an unparalleled outrage last evening!"

"Yes, sir!" said Loder. "And I think I have a clue to them now, sir! Will you please look at this slip of paper? It was picked up in the quad by a senior, who brought it to me."

Prout blinked at the slip.

"Bless my soul! What does this mean, Loder?" he asked. Prout's powerful brain was not quick on the uptake.

"I've no doubt, sir, that it means that a meeting of those young rascals is to take place in Gosling's woodshed at seven. I have ascertained that the key of the woodshed is missing, so Gosling has been unable to lock it up as usual."

"Upon my word!" Prout glanced at the clock. "It is nearly seven now, Loder. If you are right—and I have

no doubt that you are right—the rebellious young rascals are even now leaving the House surreptitiously for the purpose of holding this—this outrageous meeting!"

"I'm sure of it, sir!"

Prout rose to his feet.

"Loder, you have done well! You have justified my confidence in you! I shall proceed personally to the spot, Loder, as soon as the iniquitous young rascals have assembled, and catch them in the act. In the very act, Loder!"

Prout breathed hard and deep.

It was a great satisfaction to him to think of catching the Greyfriars Secret Society in the very act of holding a lawless meeting, and thus ascertaining

GREYFRIARS CARTOONS

By Harold Skinner.

No. 24.—MARJORIE HAZELDENE, Harry Wharton & Co.'s girl chum at Cliff House.

Skinner had to be careful with this one. Any attempt to "guy" Marjorie would have certainly earned him a ragging from the Remove. Hence this more-or-less serious effort.



The health of Miss Marjorie now
Let us drink in the best ginger-beer;
She's a pal in a thousand—and how!
She's a girl in a million—hear, hear!

Cliff House is the school she adorns,
She's friendly with Wharton & Co.,
But me she invariably scorns,
And I can't think why that should be so.

their identity beyond the shadow of a doubt.

"An example will be made of the ringleaders, Loder! They will be expelled immediately from the school."

Loder was glad to hear it.

"All the rest will be flogged in Hall!" continued Prout. "Every one shall be severely punished! This lawless association shall be stamped out—it is my duty to stamp it out! The utmost severity will be exercised—the very utmost!"

Loder smiled.

"You will follow me, Loder, with three or four of the prefects," said Prout. "As it will be very dark, and the spot is secluded, no doubt some of the young rascals may attempt to escape. This must be prevented."

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

"I shall give them time to assemble," said Prout. "At a quarter-past seven, Loder, I shall leave the House, and you will follow me with Walker, Carne, Sykes, Bancroft, and Parkinson, of the Sixth Form. You will warn them to bring pocket-lamps or torches, and to take every care that none of the—the young miscreants escape from custody."

"Very good, sir!"

Loder felt as if he was walking on air as he left the Head's study. Prout was entering into this as keenly as Loder himself!

In less than half an hour the secret society of Greyfriars would be secret no longer—the whole brotherhood would be cornered and captured. And the ringleaders—among whom Loder was fairly certain that Vernon-Smith and Harry Wharton would be found—would be turfed out of the school!

No wonder Loder was feeling bucked.

At a quarter-past seven Mr. Prout issued forth from the House. After him went Loder, Carne, and Walker, in a mood of keen anticipation. Three more prefects—Bancroft, Sykes, and Parkinson—followed, not so keen, by any means, to bag the secret society. But they had no choice about obeying their headmaster's orders.

Prout stalked away majestically, with the six seniors following on. By that time there could be no doubt that the meeting was assembled. Loder would have given ten to one in quids, that the Famous Five of the Remove, among others, were already in Gosling's woodshed.

He was quite unaware that those five cheery youths were, at that precise moment, in Study No. 1 in the Remove, looking down from the window!

No light was on in that study, and the Famous Five were invisible, if Prout & Co. had looked up—which they did not do!

But in the light from the lower windows they had a view of the party leaving the House.

"They're going!" whispered Nugent.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Prout's with them!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Oh, my hat! Have they got Prout?"

"Look!"

"Prout, too!" murmured the Bounder, joining the five at the window.

"Oh crumbs! This is too rich!"

"The richness is terrific!"

"If Prout goes in first—" breathed Harry Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The party below disappeared from sight in the darkness of the November evening. Utterly unaware that their departure had been watched from an upper window by the very fellows they expected to catch in the woodshed, Prout & Co. marched on.

Gosling's woodshed was at a distance from the school buildings. It was in rather a secluded spot. And it was very dark.

Not a gleam of light came from it, as Prout advanced with his army. If the meeting was taking place, it was apparently taking place in the dark. Prout had expected to see at least the flicker of a candle.

Still, a light from the woodshed, if seen, would have aroused suspicions, so no doubt the young rascals were holding the meeting in the dark! So, at least, it seemed to Prout and his followers.

Within sight of the little building, Prout motioned to the prefects to surround it. Not a fellow inside was to be allowed to escape!

(Continued on page 26.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,393.

CAPTAIN CRIMSON!

By
Morton Pike.

WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

In spite of the activities of Dan Hickerman, an Excise-officer, Tom Roke, the most daring smuggler in Essex, succeeds in landing many a rich cargo. In consequence of this, Roke, while in Dunkirk, is handed a valuable diamond, known as the Chandar Noor, to be delivered to a Mr. Percival, of East India House. Having been told that two Asiatics are anxious to gain possession of the diamond, Jack Lennard and his chum, Billy Jepp, agree to accompany Mr. Percival to meet Roke and take charge of the diamond. Reaching Bradwell Point late at night, the trio await the arrival of Roke's lugger.

(Now read on.)

The Theft!

"UGH!" shivered Mr. Percival. "I would rather be in that snug parlour at the Black Boar, Master Billy! This is indeed a desolate hole! Hark! What was that cry?"

"Only a plover, sir," said Jack Lennard. "You haven't learned our noises yet."

"I hope I never shall if this is the way you learn them," snapped the nervous little man. "London is the place for me, and I shall be right glad to be back there again!"

"With half a million in your honour's pocket! There's a clump of tamarisks over there. They'll keep off the wind, and we'll wake you when it's time."

Mr. Percival vowed nothing would induce him to close an eyelid, and he sat down with his fat fingers tightly gripping the stock of the pocket-pistol old Mr. Falcon had lent him. Five minutes later, however, the warmth of the cloak and the rippling of the wavelets found him not only sleeping soundly, but snoring into the bargain.

Jack was right, and at one o'clock in the morning the faint creak of cordage came on the breeze.

He opened the lantern, and Billy thrust a blue-light into the candle flame, and then waved the spluttering thing above his head for a moment before extinguishing it at the water's edge.

Then he took the lantern from Jack's hand, and, with the aid of his three-cornered hat, let the pale yellow gleam show three distinct times seawards. Two answering lights made reply out of the darkness, and Billy repeated his signal.

"It's Tom, right enough," he said; "better rouse the old gentleman."

Before Jack could reach the sleeper, Billy heard the slither of a keel on the muddy foreshore. A moment later and someone came splashing towards him.

"That you, Ben?" hailed a low voice. "Something wrong?"



While Mr. Percival slept, Mozuffur's hand slid between the rumpled pillows and withdrew the valuable stone!

"No; it's Billy Jepp, and everything's as right as roses—until you make Widewater, where you'll find Hicky waiting for you!"

"Let him wait, Billy!" said the smuggler, with a chuckle that mystified the listener. "He's welcome to all the cargo he'll find aboard. We're running in empty this trip."

"Odds life, but you've surely brought something back with you, Tom?"

"Never you mind, young feller-me-lad!" said Tom Roke, chuckling again. "Why have you called me ashore, that's what I want to know?"

"We'll let Mr. Percival answer that question, Tom."

"Why, that's the very name of the gentleman I want to see!"

"And here's the gentleman himself!" grinned Billy, as they heard what sounded like a scuffle a few yards away and an angry shout of:

"Stand back, ye black-snouted thieves! Back, or I fire!"

Mr. Percival, having been roused suddenly from his troubled slumbers, thought himself faced by the two natives, and flourished the loaded pistol dangerously, though luckily he had forgotten to put his finger on the trigger.

"This is Tom Roke, sir," interposed Billy.

The words brought Mr. Percival back to his senses.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, in a loud voice. "You have a packet for me, my man, from Mr. Frazer, in Dunkirk?"

"That have I. But if your honour wants the whole county to know it, why,

in the plague's name, didn't you bring a trumpet?"

"Don't bandy words with me, sir—hand over the packet!" bellowed the little man. "And here's a guinea for your pains. Frazer had orders to pay you at the other end. I presume he has done so?"

"Ay, Mr. Frazer is always a gentleman!" said the young smuggler, with marked emphasis. "And so generous was he that you may keep your guinea, sir. I only trust you may keep the packet as well, and not meet 'Captain Crimson' on your way back. Here's your precious parcel!"

Thrusting a small washleather bag, sealed at the neck, into the outstretched hand, Tom Roke turned proudly on his heel and tramped back to his boat.

"There's an insolent dog for you!" exclaimed Percival, who was evidently accustomed to very different treatment from those he regarded as his inferiors. "Bless my soul, and who is 'Captain Crimson' pray?"

"The most daring highwayman in the world!" replied Jack. "No one knows who he is, or was; but, seriously, sir, might it not be safer, all things considered, if Billy or myself hid the packet in our boots, in case we encounter him?"

"What, part with the Chandar Noor now it is once in my possession?" growled Mr. Percival, putting the packet in his coat pocket. "No, young man, certainly not!"

"Very well, as you wish. As time is flying, we'd better get to our horses."

More than once Mr. Percival tried to break the silence on the way back, but Jack and Billy gave him no encouragement. Neither of them liked the man after the supercilious manner in which he had treated their friend Tom, and both were glad when they saw a light shining at the Abbey Farm, which they reached about an hour before daybreak.

Mr. Falcon unbarred the door to them.

"I have it!" cried Mr. Percival, waving his hat in triumph.

So eager was he to feast his eyes on the famous Chandar Noor that he could hardly wait until their host had led them into the abbey parlour, which had been the monks' refectory in the days of old, before he broke the seals and drew the precious stone from its wrappings.

It was the size of a hen's egg, and as he held it under the candle-light in trembling fingers it flashed and gleamed, and shot forth dazzling rays of colours.

"I have seen nothing like it in my life!" exclaimed Mr. Falcon, wishing to take the stone in his own hands.

But Mr. Percival declined to let go of it.

"You will sleep here to-night," said Mr. Falcon. "I have a secret hiding-place, where the stone shall rest among my own few treasures until Billy sends a chaise for you to-morrow. It is worth a monarch's ransom, in very truth, and you must borrow a couple of Hickerman's dragoons to escort it to London."

"I thank you for your hospitality, and the dragoons I will have!" cried Mr. Percival, wrapping the diamond up again. "But this will repose beneath my pillow—though I'd sooner doze here by the fire till daybreak, for that matter."

"Nay, nay; my humble guest-chamber is at your service, and my black boy shall sit outside your door. I shall feel much easier, though, if you will place 'The Light of the Moon' in my strong-room. The responsibility for its safety is enormous."

"You have been very good, Mr. Falcon," said the obstinate little man loftily. "The company will not forget your help. But I alone am responsible for the stone."

Mr. Falcon bowed, shrugging his shoulders at the same time, with a glance at Jack and Billy.

Like them, he was beginning to change his opinion of the fat, little gentleman, who had become so inflated with the idea of his own importance now that he had secured what he came for.

Never had Mr. Percival been so near death as he was when the grey dawn came stealing through the mullioned windows of the guest-chamber above the refectory.

One of those windows was open, and while Jung poised a dagger over the snorer's heart, Mozuffur's deft fingers, with their pink, almond-shaped nails, slid with scarce a disturbing movement between the rumpled pillows! A moment later the valuable stone was clutched in his hand.

Some startled birds flew out of the clinging ivy roots when those two dusky forms climbed to the ground without a sound, and half an hour after that the world awoke, and Mr. Percival awoke with it!

The Footprints in the Mud!

THE open window and the prints of a pointed slipper on the garden bed beneath, told all too clearly what had happened, and Mr. Falcon, in a bed-robe of flowered silk, drew himself up a little stiffly.

"You would not take my advice last night although I urged it," he said. "Were I twenty years younger, well and good, but I am an old man, and lame. I can do no more for you, Mr. Percival, the fault is your own, and the town constable your remedy, if it be not too late already."

The wretched man, finding bluster of no avail, burst into tears. When at last he succeeded in dressing himself, he hurried away to the town, where the first person he encountered was Dan Hickerman, by no means in the best of tempers.

"Oh, sir, I have been shamefully robbed!" he cried, recognising the Excise-officer.

"And so have I," said Hickerman. "You're not the only one!"

"But my loss is so great that I will give a thousand guineas for its recovery!"

"Bah, sir! That is nothing to mine!" growled the Excise-officer savagely,

Star Items In

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YOUR EDITOR.

licking his boot with a heavy whip. "I have spent the night in the saddle, and all my men with me, watching these cursed mudbanks for five miles down the river, so that not so much as a wild duck could have come over without our seeing it. Yet what do I find when I draw off at sunrise, but Tom Roke's lugger at her old moorings, empty, and the knave laughing in my face—though we had sure word that he would come in with contraband the value of which would have made your thousand guineas look mighty small. I'd give anything to learn where Roke ran his cargo last night!"

Mr. Percival clasped his hands and groaned aloud, then hastened along the quaint street for Silas Catchpole's house to which the angry riding-officer directed him.

Meanwhile, Billy Jepp, having rubbed down the horses, had climbed into the loft, where he lay down on the sweet-smelling hay to sleep.

Jack Lennard was not so fortunate. Much as he longed for bed, he dare not betray the fact that he had been out all night. Stifling his yawns as best he could, he went through the hollow mockery of breakfasting with the family, envying his chum in the hay loft across the way.

But news spreads quickly in a little town like Widewater, and the slumbers of Master William Jepp were not to last very long.

"Billy!" called the innkeeper from the stable door. "Where are you, Billy?"

"Why, what's the matter, father?" came a reply from above as a tousled head showed itself through the square opening.

"Don't rightly know, but they say that stout gentleman who was here with Mr. Falcon has been robbed," said old man Jepp.

Billy was down the ladder in a trice. "Never the diamond, father?" he cried.

"I can't tell you that," said the innkeeper. "But whatever it be, Hickerman says he's offering a thousand guineas reward for those two black rascals."

"Then it is the diamond!" exclaimed Billy, very wideawake now. "I don't care a straw about Mr. Percival, but I'd like that reward!"

"And I wouldn't mind the half of it," cried a voice from the door, and Jack Lennard came running in.

"Don't you wish you could get it," chuckled the old man. "The birds have flown, though, long since!"

Mr. Jepp returned to the inn, still chuckling, leaving Billy and Jack looking blankly at one another.

"Serve him right—he ought to have taken Mr. Falcon's warning," grunted Billy, scratching his head.

"Hold on a minute!" whispered Jack. "When you and I left the Abbey Farm it wasn't far off daylight, remember, and Percival discovered the robbery as the sun rose. Those natives know perfectly well that they'd never get away with the prize, dressed up as they were. They'll hide somewhere, Billy, until dark. You and I have got to find them!"

Billy's eyes suddenly flashed like the diamond had done, at the thought of that big reward.

"Witham's only five miles. But suppose they've caught the London coach already?" he ventured dubiously.

"We'll find that out before old Catchpole raises the hue-and-cry!" was Jack Lennard's answer. "Which are the freshest horses in the stable? We must take pistols with us, too!"

Jack's house being immediately opposite to the Black Boar on the other side of the street, it was necessary that they should wait until his father, Dr. Lennard, had started on his daily rounds to visit his patients.

Billy Jepp kept watch, and half an hour later saw the doctor ride past the archway.

There was a broad grin on his face when he told Jack the news.

"There's nothing to laugh at," cried Jack testily.

"Oh, yes, there is!" retorted Billy. "I've got an idea. You know how it rained yesterday afternoon—well, those niggers have left the marks of their shoes in the mud—queer, pointed prints no one could mistake. Let's make for the Abbey Farm and pick up the trail there!"

Sure enough, on the soft farm road the two chums discovered tell-tale footprints leading from the gate along the narrow lane westward. These they followed for two miles, eventually turning up a crossroad which they knew would bring them out on the high land above Danbury.

The last print ended at the edge of the common. After that the short turf told them nothing. Halting their mounts, they looked about them.

(It doesn't look as if Jack and Billy are going to reap that rich reward of a thousand guineas, does it, chums? But who knows? Be sure you read next week's nerve-tingling chapters of this popular Old Time story!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,398.

A TRAITOR IN THE CAMP!

(Continued from page 25.)

The half-dozen Sixth Formers separated, to take up strategic positions, to cut off the escape of the young rascals if they attempted to bolt!

Then Mr. Prout advanced to the door. His elephantine tread could hardly have failed to give the alarm to the occupants of the woodshed, if that shed was occupied!

Not a sound greeted his ears.

No doubt the young rascals had heard him, and were aware that they had been discovered, and were now in a state of breathless confusion and terror!

Prout smiled grimly at the thought.

He arrived at the door.

It stood a few inches open.

Still there was no sound, no movement within. Loder, picturing a gang of young rascals overcome with terror, grinned. If they fancied they were going to escape discovery by keeping quiet they were mistaken.

The Greyfriars' Secret Society was doomed! The whole bunch of rascals were going to be caught like rats in a trap! It was, indeed, a pleasing thought to Gerald Loder. It meant expulsion, swift and sure, for his enemies!

"Show a light here, Loder!" said Prout.

Loder turned on a pocket torch.

Prout pushed open the woodshed door and stopped in.

Grash!

Swqooosh!

Splash!

What happened Prout hardly knew.

Loder, in his startled amazement, almost dropped the torch.

"Grrrgh!" came from Prout. "Wurrgh! What—what is this? Is—is—is this tar? TAR! Gurrgh! I—I am smothered! Wurrgh!"

Loder stood transfixed. The gleam of his torch revealed Prout, staggering in the doorway of the woodshed, with thick black tar streaming all over him, and a tar-bucket bonneting his head!

There was a hurrying of footsteps as the other prefects ran up, and all their torches were turned on the startling scene.

Prout staggered and gurgled, and groped at the bucket on his head!

"What—" gasped Sykes.

"A—a—a booby trap!" stuttered Walker.

"That's Gosling's tar bucket—" gasped Carne.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Urrgh! Groooogh! Oooch!"

Prout got the bucket off, and it crashed to the ground. His face was revealed—as black as the ace of spades!

Tar clothed him like a garment! He was of the tar, tarry!

The prefects gazed at him in horror! Loder's eyes bulged from his head.

The truth flashed into his startled brain now. There was no meeting in the woodshed! There was nothing in the woodshed but a booby-trap!

That slip of paper was a "spoof."

That idiot, Price, had picked it up, as he was intended to pick it up! The young villains had known that he was hand-in-glove with Loder, and would bring it to him!

The whole thing was a trick—a booby-trap for Loder—and Prout had got it!

There was no mistake about that—Prout had got it!

He had got it bad!

He lived, moved, and had his being, in black, sticky, clinging tar! He breathed tar! He blinked tar! He gurgled tar!

"Wurrgh! Urrgh! Gurrgh!" gurgled Prout.

Sykes flashed his light into the woodshed.

"Nobody here!" he said.

"N-n-nobody there!" gasped Prout.

"Good gad! A-a-a trick—groooogh—a prank—urrgh— Loder, you fool!"

"Mr. Prout—"

"You idiot!"

"Sir!"

"You dolt!"

Prout forgot even his dignity. He gurgled tar and fury! He raged! He raved! He roared!

"Fool! Idiot! Dolt! A trick—a trap—and you have led me—gurrgh!"

Smack!

Loder staggered back with a wild howl as the infuriated Prout smacked his head. He barely dodged another enraged smack and fled. Prout, just then, was not safe at close quarters!

That evening Mr. Prout was busy.

He was busy scraping off tar!

Loder, utterly disconcerted, and dismayed, had only one consolation. He went to Price's study in the Fifth, where he gave Price of the Fifth such a terrific thrashing that the wretched Price was still groaning over it at bed-time.

In the Remove, on the other hand, all was merry and bright!

At prep, in the Remove studies, fellows chuckled and chortled, as if prep were one of the most entertaining things in the world. They had seen Prout come in—tarry! And while Prout was scraping off tar, and Loder of the Sixth was thrashing Price of the Fifth, the sound of merriment woke the echoes of the Remove passage from end to end.

THE END.

(Now look out for the next yarn in this exciting series. It's entitled: "THE SCHOOLBOY SLEUTH!" and is, without doubt, one of Frank Richards' finest stories. See that you order next week's MAGNET in good time!)

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If you think it is, come and see me. I'll be delighted to give you a sock (on the jaw) for nothing.—P. BOLSOVER, Study No. 10, Remove.

ENGAGEMENTS CANCELLED

Tom Brown regrets to announce that he is compelled to cancel all engagements for a few days, owing to being confined to the sanatorium with a severe chill caught in the Form-room through receiving a freezing glare from Mr. Woose.



THE NEW Greyfriars Herald



No. 113 (New Series.)

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

December 1st, 1934.

INQUIRERS PLEASE NOTE

The rumours that we are running a series of cat-fights in this study are quite incorrect. The fact is Nugent has just started to learn the violin.—H. WHARTON, Study No. 1, Remove.

OLD "BLOOD AND THUNDERS"

should be sent to Mr. Prout. His bald patch is extending, and a few "hair-raising" stories should do him a world of good!

INKY'S BIRTHDAY GUIDE

This week: PETER TODD

The esteemed and propitious Peter Todd is an excellent and idiotic example of the difference the stars can makefully cause between two persons whose likeliness outwardly is simply terrific. The esteemed Peter and his honoured and fatheaded cousin Alonzo are so two-peafally alike that even their kinsmen cannot tell them apartfully. Yet inwardly, they are as the esteemed poles asunder!

The stars that were risefully in the ascendant on the day of the honoured Peter's birth were those indicating ambition, hard-workfulness and esteemed shrewdness. A special aptitude for the hair-splitful arguments of an honoured and unscrupulous lawyer is indicated, and evidence of this already exists in the swotful hours of study the esteemed Peter puts in at the Law. You may be sure, my esteemed and idiotic readers, that this will muchfully increase before his schooldays are over!

I am gladly delighted to say that the honoured Todd is likely to be a credit to his esteemed and ridiculous profession. Unless something interferes with his Destiny, he will always be diefully straight and honest, and a popular chap good-sportfully. Such is his starful Fate—and a not-too-badful one, either!

GOOD COMPANIONS IN STUDY No. 11.

Gratters to the lads of No. 11 for winning the "Good Companions" Contest! Our old pals Skinner and Snoop and Stott certainly sprang a surprise on the Remove by running away with this event!

But perhaps you don't know what I'm talking about? Maybe if you're not in the Remove you've not yet heard of the "Good Companions" Contest? Well, I can give you the idea in a pretty short space. Briefly, Mr. Quelch has a freak friend, Professor Piffle, who spends his life encouraging Youth to Get Together and become One Vast Brotherhood and all that kind of stuff. Just to give the movement a filip at Greyfriars, Professor Piffle offered a prize to the occupants of the Happiest Study in the Remove, and one night last week he unexpectedly trotted round to do the judging.

He couldn't have turned up at a worse moment. Wharton and Nugent were just throwing out an aspiring poet who wanted to contribute a 100-stanza poem to the "Herald," Bolsover and Dupont were having a dust-up in No. 10, Peter Todd was slaughtering Bunter in No. 7. Minor rows and disturbances were going on in nearly every study in the Remove passage!

But eventually he came to Study No. 11. And there, what a scene of peace and contentment met his glad eyes! Skinner, with a contented smile playing around his lips, was sitting in the armchair studying Livy; while Snoop and Stott, beaming beatifically, were playing ludo on the study table with their arms round each others' necks!

The destination of the prize was not in doubt for one moment after that. Professor

MAKING A MAN OF HIM!

By DICKY NUGENT.

Dr. Birchmell, the revered and awe-inspiring Head of St. Sam's, was sitting at his desk, perusing his grimy copy of the works of Julia Szezer, when there was a sharp tap on the door which caused him to start violently.

Crash, Bang, Wallop! "Come in, fathead!" called out the Head, when he had recovered from the shock.

A tall, military-looking gentleman obeyed the summons. Dr. Birchmell recognised him immediately as Kernal Blade, the father of Blade of the Fourth.

Kernal Blade was frowning slightly.

"Rather an unusual greeting from a gentleman of your standing, 'Come in, fathead,' isn't it, my dear sir?" he inquired stiffly.

"Please accept my apology, kernal," grinned the Head. "Despite the fact that this is a blue room, I was in a brown study when you knocked, and your sudden arrival put me all of a dither. I should, of course, have said 'Trot in, idjut'!"

"Duzzent sound much better to me, sir!" snorted

Kernal Blade. "However, we will let it pass, and proceed to the object of my visit. Dr. Birchmell, I am worried about my son."

Dr. Birchmell stroked his beard, and eyed the visitor narrowly.

"You are not, I trusted, dissatisfied with his progress, kernal? He receives the best of instruction. We teach him mathymatticks—twice two are five and so on, you know. We teach him joggrafy—Paris is the capital of Germany and all that kind of thing. We teach him history—William the Conqueror defeated the Armada, et settera. While as to grammar, there isn't nothing what he hasn't been taught correct."

Kernal Blade nodded moodily.

"That is probably true, sir. So far as nollidge is concerned, I am satisfied that he is receiving a first-class education. What worries me, however, is not that, but his morals. Dr. Birchmell, I am sorry to say that my son is becoming a thorough-paced young rascal!"

"You don't say!" cried the Head.

The kernal shrugged. "It is a fact. I have received information from undeniable sources to the effect that he smokes, and plays cards for munny!"

"You have taken a wait off my mind, Dr. Birchmell," he said. "With your reputation for high principuls and

Dr. Birchmell, aghast at the revelation.

"Natchurally, I am very worried about it. Dr. Birchmell, I appeal to you—will you promise me that you will set my son on the straight and narrow path again?"

"Well, really, my dear sir—" began the Head, apparently a little dewbious at taking on that onerous task at a minnit's notice.

Kernal Blade leaned forward and tapped the Head on the knee.

"If you suxceed in doing it, Dr. Birchmell, I will cheerfully make you a present of a fiver!" he said.

The Head started slitley, and a greedy eggsspression came into his somewhat shifty eyes.

"A fiver, eh?" he remarked, rubbing his hands together. "Now you're talk-

ing, kernal! I mean, of course I will do it with plezzure even without the reward!" he added hurriedly, as the kernal registered disapproval.

Kernal Blade smiled once more.

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Kernal Blade smiled once more.

"You have taken a wait off my mind, Dr. Birchmell," he said. "With your reputation for high principuls and

lightly conduct, you are the one man in the world to save my son. I leave the matter in your hands with every confidence—and if you suxceed, you can absolutely rely on that fiver!"

"Kernal Blade, it is as good as done already!" cried the Head, shaking hands with his visitor as the latter rose to go. "Call at this time to-morrow, and I will tell you how I have got on!"

That nite, after prep, Dr. Birchmell sent for Blade of the Fourth.

Yung Blade was quite a good fellow at hart, though addicted to gambolling.

Apart from the fact that he had the face of a rat and the furtive ways of a criminal, he looked a tipical carefree yung Briton. Sizing him up, the Head felt sure he could soon make a man of him. He decided to set about it there and then; and he set about it in his own pekular way.

"Sit down, Blade," he ordered; then, with a slite leer, he went on: "I am told, Blade, that you are a bit of a bold bad lad."

Blade turned garstly white and culledered furiously at the same time in his embarrassment.

"Well, sir, I—I—" he stammered.

"Tut-tut! Don't think for a moment that I am going to punish you for it," said the Head reassuringly. "As a matter of fact, Blade, on the strict q.t., I am a bit of a dark horse myself. At times I smoke and gambol on cards with the utmost abandon. That is why I have sent for you. I feel that we have much in common and should get to know one another better. Have a smoke?"

"G-g-rate pip!" stuttered Blade, almost fainting at the sight of the huge cigar the

Head handed him. "Are you serious, sir?"

"Never more so!" said Dr. Birchmell, cheerfully. "You'll enjoy that. It's one of my own special favourites—Flor de Drainpipe. Match?"

"Th-thank you, sir!" Blade puffed away at the big cigar.

"Now, what about a little gambol?" said Dr. Birchmell. "Do you play ha-penny nap or banker?"

A hawk-like look came into Blade's dial. He rather fancied himself at card games, and if the Head was really "on the level" he saw a chance of making a nice little sum of munny out of him.

"Yes, sir, I play occasionally," he said. "If you feel like a little flutter with me, I'll oblige you, with plezzure."

"Done!" cried the Head. "Here's a pack of cards!"

Dr. Birchmell then sat down opposite Blade, and started dealing out the cards. There was a strange grin on his face as he did so, and Blade would not have wondered at it, had he known the reason.

The fact was that the Head had secretly marked the cards beforehand so that he knew every one of them. To make assurance doubly sure, he had also placed Blade with his back to a mirror in which he could see his cards reflected! The dice were loaded against the Fourth Former with a vengeance!

After five minnits, Blade had lost a shilling. After ten minnits, he had lost five shillings. Soon, he had lost all his munny and was gambolling desperately in his other possessions. A pen-nife, several conkers, a sticky piece of toffy, some cigarette-pictures and a magnifying glass quickly followed the cash.

At last, he had reached the end of his resources. At the same time the Head's cigar began to take effect, and Blade's face turned a vivid green.

"Feeling seedy, Blade?" grinned the Head. "Come—a rorty dog like you should be feeling merry and bright. Have another match, my boy—your cigar is going out! Your deal, I believe!"

Blade staggered to his feet, his face garstly.

"I—I can't go on!" he mumbled. "If this is what it's like to be a rorty dog, I'm giving it up for the future, sir! I've lost all my munny, and I've got a fearful pain, and—"

Blade broke off suddenly, and made a dash from the room, moaning and groaning as he went. And the Head sat down in his chair again amid the ruins of the hektik evning, and larfed fit to bust!

"I fancy that has cured Blade of any desire to be a gay dog in the future!" he said to himself. "I've never earned an easier fiver in my natcheral!"

Dr. Birchmell was right. Blade's eggssperience had cured him—for the time being, anyway—of all desire to be a rorty dog and a bad lad. A five minnits talk between him and his pater on the following day convinced the latter that that was so, and he was delighted to hand over a crisp, ruffling fiver to the man who had achieved the mirracle.

Needless to say, Dr. Birchmell was delighted, too.

"I will see that the munny is given to the most deserving charity I know," he said. And as soon as the kernal had gone, he made a bee-line for the tuckshop and spent it on feeding his face!

ALONZO TODD bleats—

AM I A HYPNOTIST?



I must confess, my dear schoolmates, that I have never been more perturbed and disconcerted than by the strange sequel to the recent study I have made of hypnotism.

Up to last evening, my progress had been undoniable.

It is only three weeks since I picked up a handbook on hypnotism at a second-hand bookshop in Courtfield, and commenced to practise in front of a mirror in the study. Within a few days I was achieving phenomenal success.

I tried out my skill on Skinner. As soon as I had explained to Skinner that I was endeavouring to hypnotise him, he fell under the 'fluence with extraordinary rapidity, and carried out my orders that he should sing, dance, and then do a handspring without the slightest hesitation.

Greatly encouraged, I experimented similarly on Trevor. I was able to hypnotise him and compel him to do my bidding without the slightest difficulty.

Skinner and Trevor then very kindly assisted me by bringing other fellows along to be hypnotised. Despite the fact that they seemed to derive a considerable amount of amusement from the affair, they all fell under the 'fluence as soon as I switched it on.

By this time I had come to the conclusion that nothing was beyond me in the way of exercising hypnotic influence over others. Even the strongest, I felt, would submit willy-nilly to my dominant will.

Accordingly, when I came across Loder brutally twisting the aural appendage of a Second Form juvenile, I had no hesitation in standing boldly before him and submitting him to the same process that had already proved so successful in other cases.

I gave him a piercing look and made a few passes in front of his face.

"Loder!" I then commanded. "You will leave off hurting that youth immediately, and proceed to the headmaster's study to confess!"

I then stood quietly by for Loder to obey. But now comes the surprising part of my story. Instead of rushing to obey my hypnotic order, Loder turned on me, seized me by the scruff of my neck and planted one of his pedal extremities forcibly in the rear portion of my anatomy, causing me to be precipitated violently through the air for a distance of several yards!

The 'fluence had failed completely! I am at a loss to explain the extraordinary failure of a power which had previously seemed unconquerable. It seems utterly inexplicable.

Am I hypnotist or am I not?

At the time of going to Press, the answer is quite beyond me!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



Fisher T. Fish is an adept at "hot" American tap dancing, and offered to give "Removites" lessons—at a fee. His first "class," held before classes in the Form-room, ended abruptly when Mr. Woose entered. After a caning, "Fishy's" dancing was in a "class" by itself!

William Wibley earned the congratulations of the Head by presenting before sick fags in the school "sanny" an extremely bright and up-to-date Punch and Judy performance, with dialogue written and voices imitated by "Wib" himself. The fags voted the show had "punch."

An injured thumb keeping "Squiff" out of the Remove KX Hazeldene deputised in goal. After giving a poor display in the first half, he threw himself into the game and saved the Remove from defeat by a masterly exhibition. "Hazel" is like that—a fellow of moods!

Harold Skinner is very interested in advertising art, and it will not be surprising if with his well-known fair he is responsible for some of the posters of the future. "Skinner" will have to learn to "run straight" himself before "painting the finger" for others, though!

People come from a distance to see the old Priory in Friardale Wood. Fisher T. Fish set up as a "guide," retelling weird historical stories to visitors for a fee—but the Head's caning he received when discovered made "Fishy" feel more like a "ruin" than the Priory itself!

Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith, the financier, is very proud of his son Herbert's keenness and sagacity, and has big plans for him. When handling millions "Smithy" will doubtless seize chances as coolly as he now does on the Soccer field. His shots always find the net!