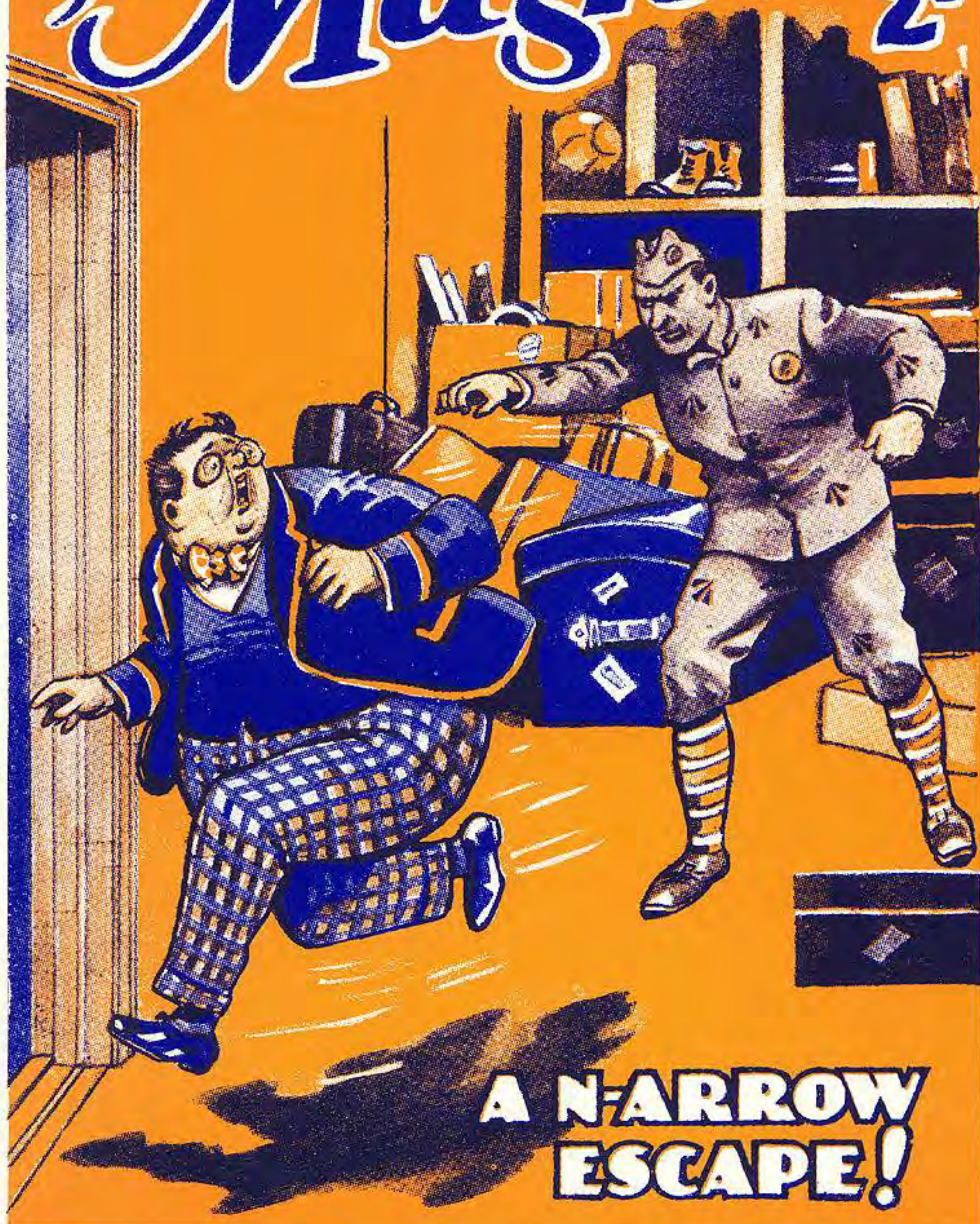


HARRY WHARTON & Co.

In another exciting
school adventure

"HIS CONVICT COUSIN!"

The Magnet 2^d



**A N-ARROW
ESCAPE!**



COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

YOU'VE all seen the "bill-o'-fare" outside the big variety theatres and noticed that the "star item" heads the list. Well, by way of a change, I am commencing my chat with a mention of the big attraction in next week's MAGNET programme. Although I have, of course, read every story written by Frank Richards, I think next Saturday's cover-to-cover yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled:

"THE CONVICT WHO CAME BACK!"

is the finest and most thrilling of all. Hunted for more than a week, James Loder, the escaped convict from Broadmoor, is still "on the run," prepared to fight fiercely for his liberty. Desperate as his situation is, he succeeds in throwing off his pursuers, only to come face to face with the man who, but for his lying tongue, would have been wearing convict clothes in his stead. What happens then I will not divulge here. To do so would be to spoil your enjoyment of the yarn. For excitement and thrills "The Convict Who Came Back!" will remain in your memory for some time to come. I do not want a single reader of the MAGNET to miss it. What's more, I want every one of you to tell your friends that if they want to read a clean, thrilling school story they cannot do better than get a copy of next Saturday's MAGNET. I have already written and complimented Frank Richards on this magnificent yarn and shall now look forward to hearing readers' candid opinions.

The "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, too, will be as bright and breezy as ever, and our clever Greyfriars Rhymester earns full marks for his "Interview," which is written around Wun Lung, the Chinese junior in the Remove.

TWO readers have written to me this week asking for particulars about **JOINING THE NAVY.**

"Angus Magnetite" wants to enter H.M.S. "Ganges," the naval training establishment near Harwich. If he inquires at his local post office they will give him a booklet giving all details regarding how to join the navy, rates of pay, and so on. Or he can, if he wishes, write to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall, London, S.W.1, for the necessary information.

Another inquirer, who signs himself "Regular Reader," of Wells, Somerset, wants to join as a midshipman. To become a midshipman he must first of all enter as a cadet. Examinations are held fairly frequently for special entry cadets, and a high standard of education is necessary. Full details can be obtained by writing to the Secretary of the Admiralty, address as above.

Bernard Griffin, of Freshwater, Isle of Wight, puts up a poser to me. He wants to know

HOW MANY BOOKS DID EDGAR WALLACE WRITE?

Phew! That's a hard one. As a matter of fact, I don't think Edgar Wallace himself (he was an old friend of your

editor, by the way) could have answered that. He wrote so many books that he lost count of them. His first book was called "Songs," and was published as long ago as 1895. I believe the last book he wrote was "The Devil Man," although he had commenced another when he died, and this was completed by one of his friends. There is a memorial plaque to Edgar Wallace at Ludgate Circus, London, set in the wall just above the spot where he used to sell papers as a boy before he became an author himself.

Fred W. Sach, of East Ham, who is very keen on drawing, has sent me a sample of his work, and wants my opinion of it. I must say that Fred shows great promise. My advice is, that when my East Ham chum leaves school he should take up a course of instruction at an art school—not an expensive matter—where his talent will be brought out. If he does this, I shall be interested to hear from time to time how he is progressing.

AS I warned you all last week, there is going to be a great rush for "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL"

and the only way to make sure of obtaining a copy of this magnificent volume is by getting a copy to-day. Some of you perhaps have never seen a copy of the "Holiday Annual." In its 256 pages you will find grand school stories of Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood, fun and adventure yarns, articles, poems, sketches and coloured plates—everything that the modern boy and girl wants. This year's volume—the finest yet published—is obtainable from all newsagents at the bargain price of five shillings. Step in now, while the going's good, and make sure of getting one of these world-famous Annuals. The "Holiday Annual" is far **TOO GOOD TO MISS!**

Talking of good things brings to my mind the spanking fine yarn dealing with the early adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., in our companion paper—the GEM. The title,

"BUNTER THE ATHLETE!"

gives you some idea of the plot. Can you imagine Billy Bunter, the prize ass of the Greyfriars Remove, taking up physical culture with a view to becoming the "strong man" of the school? Well, believe it or not, he does! And then the fun commences. Laugh? I'll say you will when you read this screamingly funny yarn.

From "22 Years Old Magnetite," of Axminster, comes a cheery letter in which he raises the idea of

BILLY BUNTER AT BORSTAL!

This reader is a law student, and he says it beats him how Billy has managed to keep out of Borstal for so long! Perhaps it's because the other Greyfriars fellows are such good sports that they have covered up all Billy's misdeeds. Incidentally, my chum has "stumped" me with a question. He wants to know

what is the longest distance cycled in one year. There are no records in existence of such long-distance cycling, although I should imagine that individual cyclists have kept their own records. Are there any of my readers who have done so? I should like to hear from anyone who thinks he can qualify for the long-distance record. This reader also asks how to tell the speed reached by a cycle. The simplest method is to cycle at full speed between two milestones and use a stop watch to record the time taken.

MAGNETITE Film Fan," of Sutton, Surrey, has fairly got me guessing. He wants to know

HOW MANY FILM STARS

are there in Britain? To decide this, one would have to know exactly what constitutes a film "star." Lots of actors and actresses who have only appeared in one or two films consider themselves to be "stars"—but the public don't always agree with them! Film companies themselves generally reckon that the "stars" are the people whose names are featured before the name of the film. People who are mentioned after the name of the film are "supporting players." That seems to be about the best way of reckoning up the stardom value of a film player.

"THE SCHOOLBOY'S OWN LIBRARY."

There will be three new numbers of this popular library on sale Thursday, October 1st—and they have my strong recommendation. No. 277—"The Scallawag of the Third!"—features your old favourites, Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars. It's a tip-top yarn, chums, and if you don't read it—well, it will be your loss. No. 278—"Follow Uncle James!"—introduces Jimmy Silver & Co., the cheery chums of Rookwood, and the story shows Owen Conquest bang in form. No. 279—"The Great Fire at St. Frank's!"—is a thrilling book-length yarn by Edwy Searles Brooks, telling of the exciting adventures of Nipper & Co., of St. Frank's. Don't forget the publishing date—October 1st. The "Schoolboy's Own Library" is published the first Thursday in every month, and the price per copy is 4d.

To wind up this chat, here are a few

RAPID FIRE REPLIES

to various queries sent in to me by readers.

What is the Greatest Speed Achieved by the Wind? ("Inquirer," of Burslem). Over three hundred miles per hour. That is the speed of some of the cyclones which rage over the West Indies.

Is there a Sea without a Shore? (B. Turner, of Newhaven): Yes. The Sargasso Sea, situated in the Atlantic Ocean, has no shore, as it is entirely surrounded by other waters.

Are Bats Really Blind? (T. Smith, of Whitstable): No, the expression "blind as a bat" is quite wrong. Daylight, however, dazzles the eyes of bats, which is why they never come out until the sun has set.

Can You Take One from Nineteen and Leave Twenty? ("Catchem," of Stockton): Yes, if you do it with Roman numerals, thus XIX is nineteen. Take the centre stroke away and it leaves XX (twenty).

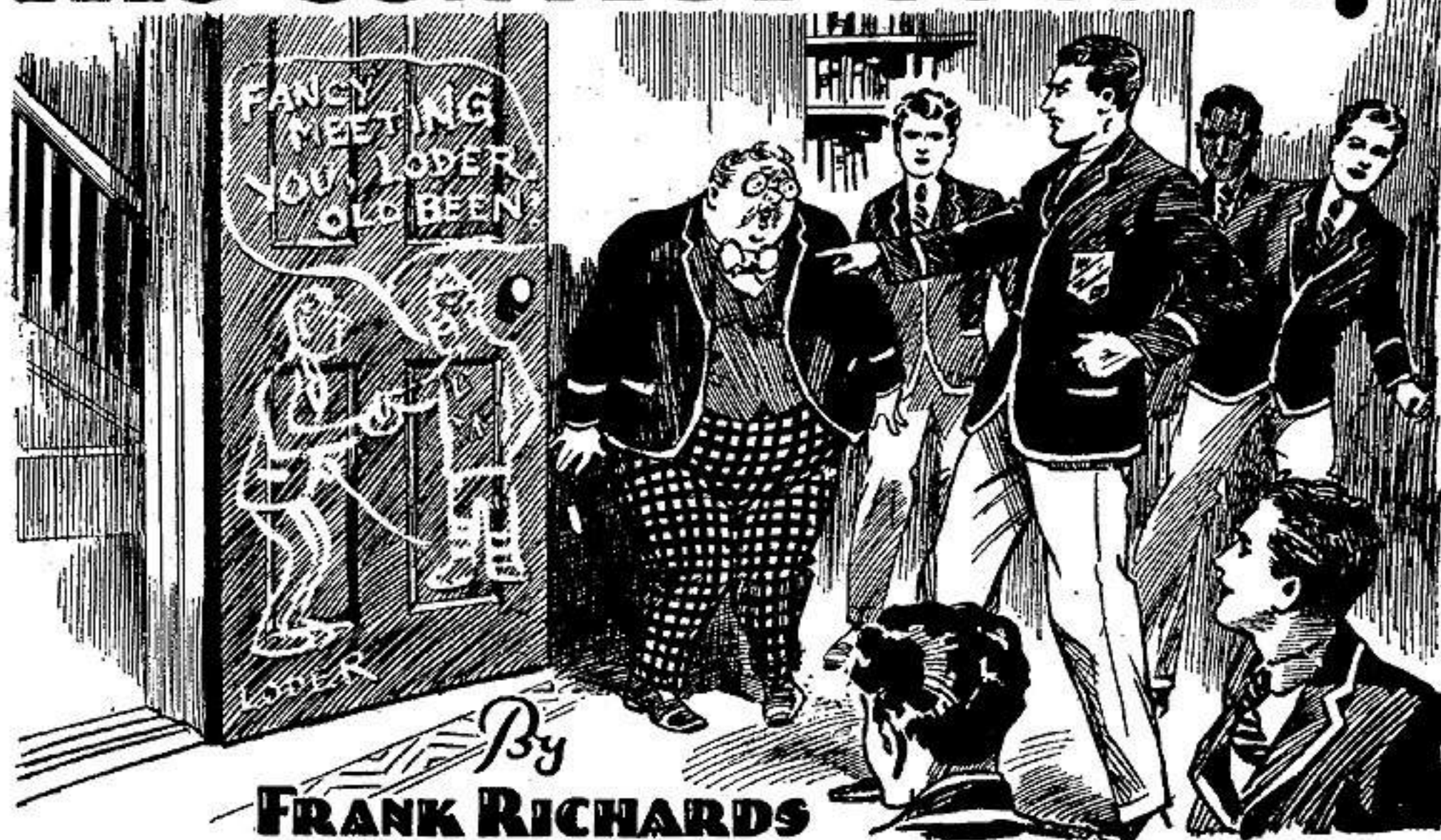
What are Newts? (Kenneth Blake, of Lower Bebington). Newts belong to the Salamander family. They feed on insects, worms, centipedes, and so on. They will live and breed in captivity easily, and for the first three weeks live on water plants, after which they become insect eaters.

Look out for another cheery pow-wow next week, chums.

YOUR EDITOR.

THRILLS, FUN and EXCITEMENT GALORE in this New Extra-Long Greyfriars Yarn!

His CONVICT COUSIN!



By
FRANK RICHARDS

One of the kicks Gerald Loder gets out of life is making Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove, "toe the line." This week, however, the boot's on the other foot . . . and the bullying prefect of the Sixth feels the weight of it!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Loder—and Another Loder!

"**S**TOP that row!"

Nine separate and distinct glares were turned on Loder of the Sixth.

Tom Brown's study, No. 2 in the Remove, was rather crowded. It often was when Browney had his wireless going.

Loder of the Sixth might call it a "row," if he liked, and no doubt some of the music might be justly so described. But the Removites, at all events, liked it, and, anyhow, it was no business of a Sixth Form man, even a prefect, to barge into the Remove passage and throw his weight about there.

Tom Brown was standing by his wireless. The Famous Five of the Remove were occupying all the available chairs in the study, as well as the coal-box. Peter Todd sat on the table. Vernon-Smith was in the window seat. Lord Mauleverer leaned on the wall, with his hands in his pockets. And even Mauly, who was never known to get into a wax, joined in the general indignant glare that was turned on Loder.

It was sheer bullying on Loder's part. Loud as the radio was, the strains of music certainly did not reach so far as the Sixth Form studies. Fellows in the Remove, the Fourth, and the Fifth, who wanted to work, might have found it a little disconcerting. But there were not a lot of fellows in any of those Forms who wanted to work after tea and before prep—and swots, anyhow, had to take what was coming to them.

Loder of the Sixth, at all events, had absolutely no cause for complaint. Nobody wanted him in the Remove quarters, and if he kept out of those quarters the radio would not reach his

ears. But there he was, frowning into the doorway of Study No. 2, and ordering Tom Brown to stop the "row."

"Do you hear me?" hooted Loder.

Harry Wharton rose to his feet. As captain of the Remove, the fellows expected him to stand up for their rights, which he was quite ready and willing to do.

"Look here, Loder—" began Harry. He spoke quietly and civilly. Gerald Loder might be a bully—he was—and he might be the most unpopular prefect at Greyfriars—he was. But he was a Sixth Form prefect, and, as such, had to be treated with tact.

"That will do, Wharton! This row can be heard all over the House!" said Loder. "Shut it off at once, Brown!"

Wharton's eyes gleamed. He knew, as every fellow in the study knew, that Loder was simply making himself unpleasant, because he was a bully, and because he was in a bad temper.

That radio had been on scores of times, and no prefect had ever bothered about it before—not even Loder. Loder, obviously, was in a bad temper. Something, no doubt, had happened to make him unusually "shirty." Peter Todd wondered whether he had found gum in his study armchair. Peter knew that he would find it there, sooner or later. Peter had the best of reasons for knowing that, as he had put it there! If he had found it, no doubt he guessed that it was some Remove man who had paid him that kind attention. Even Loder could not whop a whole Form on suspicion. But he could come up to the Remove and make himself obnoxious—and he did!

"I've told you, Brown, to shut that row off!" said Loder. He had his ash-

plant under his arm, and he slid it down into his hand.

Browney, breathing hard, reluctantly shut off the wireless. Silence descended on the Remove passage.

Loder lingered a moment in the doorway. Probably he would have preferred to use the ashplant to enforce his orders. As he had no pretext for doing so, he turned away.

"The cheeky rotter!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"The terrific tick!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Sorry, you men!" said Tom Brown. "We were just going to get the news. But I suppose—"

"Shove it on again, Browney!" said Vernon-Smith, from the window seat. The Bouncer was always reckless and up against authority, right or wrong.

But this time the Bouncer had the support of the captain of the Form and head boy of the Remove.

"Smithy's right," said Harry Wharton. "Shove it on, and never mind Loder. He's no right to interfere."

"Well, a prefect's a prefect," remarked Frank Nugent. "Still, it's too jolly thick! Let's!"

"Blow Loder!" growled Johnny Bull. "Loder can go and eat coke! If he barges in again I'll tell him so!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Shove it on, Browney!" said Bob Cherry. "We want to hear the jolly old news, you know, and it's just coming on."

"Yaas, shove it on, old bean!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Blessed if I don't!" said Brown. And he did.

It was rather reckless, but all the juniors in Study No. 2 were angry and

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indignant. If Loder was still within hearing, he was the man to come back and "whop" every fellow in the study. And if their indignation moved them to the length of handling him, the consequences would be dire. Sixth Form prefects were not to be handled by juniors.

Perhaps the Removites were rather relieved that the roar of jazz did not burst forth again. They did not want Loder to come back. It was time for the early news, and the announcer had got on to it. A carefully elegant accent proceeded from the radio, giving the news.

Even the former roar would not have reached Loder if he had gone back to the Sixth. The elegant tones of the announcer of news would not have reached him had he got as far as the middle landing on the staircase. So, really, it seemed all right.

But it was not all right! Heavy footsteps sounded in the Remove passage, coming towards the study. A fat face and a large pair of spectacles blinked in for a moment.

"I say, you fellows, Loder's coming!" squeaked Billy Bunter. And he vanished before Loder came.

Tom Brown's hand went to the radio. Smithy reached forward, and jerked his arm back.

"Don't!" he said.

"Oh, all right!"

And the announcer went on announcing, as Gerald Loder looked into the study again. This time his ashplant was not under his arm. It was not in his hand.

Loder clearly had not gone back to the Sixth. He had not gone down the stairs at all. Like the tick and swob he was, he had lingered on the Remove landing to hear whether that radio was turned on again, and to come back if it was. Perhaps he suspected that the gummer of his armchair might be one of the nine fellows in Study No. 2. Anyhow, nine fellows were booked for the ashplant now.

The juniors all rose to their feet as Loder stepped into the doorway. Vernon-Smith picked up an inkpot. The Bounder, at least, was ready for a row, regardless of consequences. Harry Wharton clenched his hands, and his eyes flashed at Loder.

"So you fancy you can do as you choose, and take no notice of a prefect's orders!" said Loder grimly. "I rather think—"

He broke off. He gave a violent start, and every fellow in the study gave a jump. Clearly, in that elegant accent from the announcer on the radio, came the words:

"James Loder, otherwise Convict No. 22, is still at large. Since his escape from Blackmoor Prison, a week ago, he has been seen only once—in Kent. Any person seeing or hearing anything of the escaped convict, James Loder, should communicate at once with the nearest police station."

Dead silence fell on the juniors in Study No. 2.

They all looked at Loder. The ashplant sagged in his hand. The colour wavered in his face.

It was only for a moment that the juniors saw his face, however. He turned and walked down the Remove passage to the stairs.

The announcer was going on with news from Spain. Nobody in Study No. 2 listened to the news from Spain. They looked at one another with startled, almost scared faces.

"Lots of people named Loder," said Bob Cherry, at last.

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"Lots and lots!" said the Bounder sardonically. "Would you turn as white as a sheet, old bean, if you heard of a convict named Cherry?"

"Of course I shouldn't, fathead! Tons of Cherries!"

"Loder did," said Smithy. "Looks as if he might know something about that particular specimen of the lots and lots of Loders."

Tom Brown shut off the radio. Nobody, unless perhaps the Bounder, felt disposed to defy, rag, or worry Loder of the Sixth, after that look in his face as he turned away from the door of Study No. 2. And in silence the juniors left the study, only the Bounder grinning as he went.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Who'll Go?

"I'll go!"

"What?"

said Billy Bunter. "I'll go, with said Billy Bunter. 'I'll go with pleasure!'"

William Wibley of the Remove stared blankly at Billy Bunter. So did Harry Wharton & Co.

Bunter had surprised them.

Wib had stopped the Famous Five in the quad to inquire whether any one of them felt disposed to run down to Courtfield and fetch a parcel in for him.

It was the day following the strange incident in Tom Brown's study. That incident lingered in the minds of the fellows who had been present, and in the minds of other fellows to whom some of them had mentioned it. But William Wibley was not thinking about that, or about anything except the parcel he wanted from Courtfield.

William Wibley, great chief of the Remove Dramatic Society, was busy on a new play, which the Remove were going to produce that term, under Wib's masterly direction.

Wib was annoyed that fellows bothered even about football, which, in comparison with Wib's dramatic stunts, was a trifle light as air—according to Wib. So he was not likely to bother about radio announcements, escaped convicts, or Loder of the Sixth!

Except that, at the present moment, he had to bother about Loder of the Sixth, to the extent of getting lines written for that disagreeable prefect, which prevented him from going down to Courtfield himself for his parcel.

Harry Wharton & Co. were sympathetic, and desirous to oblige. But they had to explain that footer practice came first—an explanation that simply made William Wibley snort.

Then Bunter surprisingly weighed in.

Wibley had not thought of asking Bunter. Bunter, it was true, was quite capable of walking down to Courtfield, collecting a parcel, and conveying the same to the school. But nobody expected Billy Bunter to take any trouble of any sort for any person but William George Bunter.

Surprising as Bunter's offer was, Wibley was glad to hear it. He stared at the fat Owl of the Remove, but his face brightened.

"Mean that?" he asked.

"Certainly, old fellow!" said Bunter, almost affectionately. "I'd do more than that to oblige a fellow I really like."

"Well, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "That's jolly good of you, Bunter. I'd go like a shot, Wib, old man, but footer, you know—"

"Footer's so much more important than my new play!" said Wibley, with deep, withering sarcasm.

"That's it, old chap!" assented Bob. That was, in fact, so clear, that Bob did not even notice that Wib was being sarcastic.

Bob's comrades chuckled. Wib snorted.

"I'd go myself," said Wibley, "but that blighter Loder gave me a hundred lines, and I forgot to do them. I really sat down to do them, you know, but then an idea came into my head for my play, and I started writing that instead. I can tell you fellows that the 'Hunted Man' is going to be a corker. About the best I've done for our dramatic society."

"Then it must be absolutely tip-top!" said Harry Wharton solemnly.

"The tipfulness of the esteemed top must be truly terrific!" declared Hurrece Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, never mind about that," said Billy Bunter briskly. "I'll get off at once, Wib, and get back in time for tea."

"Thanks, old chap!" said Wibley. "I'm awfully keen to get my parcel from Courtfield. I'd chance it with Loder, if nobody would go for me; but the brute's in a foul temper to-day, and I don't want six. Loder seems to have come back this term a worse-tempered tick than ever. Of all the bullying rotters, that tick Loder—"

"Shush, old man!" murmured Bob Cherry. "'Ware beaks!"

Mr. Lascelles, the games master, was passing the group of juniors in the quad. It was not judicious to let a beak hear a fellow's opinion of a Sixth Form prefect.

But Larry Lascelles walked on without glancing round, as if he had heard nothing. Wibley grunted.

"Well, never mind Loder!" he said. "Blow Loder, anyhow! I say, Bunter, if you really mean that you'll go down to Courtfield for me—"

"Glad to oblige, old fellow!" said the fat Owl.

"Bring it to my study as soon as you get back; and, look here, be careful with it!" said Wibley anxiously. "They're rather expensive things in it, you know."

"That's all right," said Bunter cheerfully. "Rely on me. I'll cut off now, and get back by tea-time. Is it to be paid for?"

"No, it's paid for!" answered Wibley. "Just walk in and tell old Lazarus that it's for me, and he will hand it over."

Billy Bunter stared in his turn.

"Old Lazarus!" he repeated.

"Yes; you know old Lazarus' shop, at the corner of the High Street."

"But old Lazarus doesn't sell tuck!" said Bunter, staring. "It's a second-hand shop—he does all sorts of things, from costumes for amateur theatricals to clocks and watches, but I've never heard that he sold tuck. You mean the bunshop, don't you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

It dawned on them now why Billy Bunter had so obligingly offered to fetch in that parcel!

"I mean old Lazarus," said Wibley irritably. "What are you driving at, Bunter?"

"Well, I never knew he had started tuck," said Bunter. "Is it a new line? He sells jolly nearly everything, but I never heard that he had started dealing in tuck. Still, if he has, all right."

"Have you gone potty?" demanded Wibley. "Old Lazarus doesn't sell tuck. Who's talking about tuck?"

"Eh! Ain't you?" ejaculated Bunter. "You said you were anxious to get the parcel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the chums of the Remove.

Evidently Bunter could not comprehend why a fellow should be anxious about a parcel unless it contained tuck.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snapped Bunter. "Look here, Wib, what's in that parcel you want from Courtfield?"

"My new costume, for my part in the 'Hunted Man,'" answered Wibley. "What the thump do you mean? Go to old Lazarus!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter, in utter disgust. "Think I'm going to walk down to Courtfield to fetch a silly parcel with a silly costume in it? Yah!"

"Why, you just offered!" howled Wibley. "Didn't you say—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

about a postal order, which he had been expecting ever since the term started. A parcel of tuck would have come in extremely useful, like corn in Egypt in one of the lean years. And it turned out that that parcel only contained rotten theatrical properties for Wib's rotten theatrical stunts.

It was no wonder that Bunter was annoyed. And he was still more annoyed when Wibley's wrathful clutch on his fat shoulder spun him round, so suddenly that his little fat legs tangled, and he sat down in the quad with a heavy bump.

"Yoooooop!" roared Bunter.

"You fat dummy!" hooted Wibley. "Look here, are you going to fetch my parcel, or not?"

"Just what I would like!" he declared.

"Mean that?" asked Wibley.

"Honest Injun!" said Skinner. "I'd like it no end, Wibley! The very thing that would make me happy!"

"Well, then—"

"Only," added Skinner regretfully, "this is my self-denial week."

"What?"

"Self-denial week!" explained Skinner. "I'm denying myself all these pleasures! Ask me again next week, old bean!"

And Skinner walked away laughing—leaving William Wibley, glaring. He had no use for Harold Skinner's little jokes.

"Hallo, Smithy!" He caught sight



"Open that parcel at once!" said the convict. Wibley untied the string, and opened the bundle. The haggard man leaned forward eagerly, to see what was revealed. Next moment, he gave a cry of astonishment and dismay as he beheld a convict's suit. "Oh!" he gasped.

"Fathead!" hooted Bunter. "Ass! Catch me fetching your rotten parcels! Go and eat coke!"

With a snort of disgust, Billy Bunter turned and rolled away. Wibley stared after him, and stared at the chums of the Remove.

"Is that fat idiot batchy?" asked Wibley. "You fellows all heard him offer to fetch my parcel—"

"Ha, ha, ha! He thought it was something for tea in the study!" roared Bob Cherry. "He can't eat your costume for your jolly old Hunted Man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, he's offered, and I'll jolly well make him go, or jolly well kick him!" exclaimed Wibley indignantly; and he rushed after Billy Bunter, while the Famous Five, still chuckling, went to the changing-room.

Billy Bunter, rolling away in a state of great annoyance, was suddenly stopped by a clutch on his fat shoulder. Bunter felt that he had cause to be annoyed. He had been disappointed

"No!" yelled Bunter. "Go and eat coke! Beast!"

"Then I'll jolly well boot you for saying you would!" said Wibley.

And he did, on the spot, with rapidity and vigour.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Woooooh!" roared Bunter, as he wriggled and fled.

Booting Bunter was satisfactory in its way. But it did not solve the problem of transport. Wibley looked round for the Famous Five again, perhaps hoping to convince them that theatrical stunts really were more important than football. But the Famous Five had disappeared.

"I say, Skinner," Wib bore down on Skinner of the Remove. He was not a very hopeful subject; but it was a case of any port in a storm. "Skinner, old chap, like to run down to Courtfield for me?"

Skinner stared blankly for a moment. He was not an obliging fellow—and it was a walk of two miles to Courtfield. Then he nodded, and grinned.

of the Bounder, wheeling out his bike. "I say, going Courtfield way?"

"No; over to Peg," answered Smithy.

"Like to run down to Courtfield instead—"

"Eh?"

"And fetch in a parcel for me—"

"What do you think?" asked Smithy, grinning. And without waiting for an answer to that question he put a leg over his machine and rode off—to Pegg. Wibley snorted.

It looked as if he would have to fetch that parcel himself, or else leave it till the morrow. Which, of course, was impossible, as he was fearfully keen to try on that new costume as the Hunted Man. He spotted Loder of the Sixth, walking in the quad with Carne, and cut over to him.

"I say, Loder—"

"Well?" rapped Loder.

"May I leave my lines till after tea? I'll bring them before prep."

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Loder scowled.
 "Yes—if you want six!" he said.
 "Not otherwise."
 The two Sixth Formers walked on. Wibley clenched his hands.
 "Oh, you rotter!" he breathed. "You rotten bully! You unspeakable tick! You beastly swab! Yah!"

Wibley walked down to the gates. "Six" or no six, he was going to fetch that parcel from Mr. Lazarus, at Courtfield; and if Loder "look it out" of him, he would find some way, somehow, to take it out of Loder in turn. Anyhow, he was going down to Courtfield—and he went!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Skinner Tries It On!

"TWENTY-TWO!"

Loder of the Sixth gave an almost convulsive start. Carne grinned.

Skinner of the Remove was speaking to Snoop of that Form.

There was no law at Greyfriars, written or unwritten, against any fellow mentioning any arithmetical number in conversation with a friend. There was no law against his mentioning it in the hearing of a Sixth Form prefect, or anybody else. If Skinner winked at Snoop, as he mentioned it, there was likewise no law against one Remove man winking at another. And if Sidney James Snoop grinned, why shouldn't he grin? There was no law against that, either.

Skinner had not been in Tom Brown's study the previous day when the radio announcer referred to Convict No. 22, otherwise James Loder. Certainly he

had not heard that announcement. Possibly one of the fellows had told him—in fact, all the Remove knew about it, as well as a good many other fellows in other Forms. The Bounder was making rather a jest of it. Still, Loder had no right to jump to the conclusion that Skinner was alluding to Convict No. 22, or that Harold Skinner had ever even heard of that elusive gentleman. Still less had he a right to jump at Skinner and take him by the collar.

But that was what he did.

Red with anger, with gleaming eyes, Loder grasped Skinner by the collar and shook him like a rat.

"Yaroooooh!" roared Skinner.

Possibly Skinner had not expected that. It was rather Skinner's way to play malicious jokes, unexpectant of the consequences. But really he thought that Loder would have a little more sense. Whether there was, or was not, any connection between James Loder, the Blackmoor convict, and Gerald Loder of the Sixth Form at Greyfriars School, it was obviously Loder's cue to affect indifference. Getting excited on the subject was as good as admitting a connection.

But Skinner, who was cool and wary himself, did not allow for Loder's sharp temper, nor for the fact that Loder had been upset and nervy ever since that startling announcement had been made over the wireless. Loder had no doubt that Skinner had uttered that number in his bearing intentionally, for purposes of cheek—as, indeed, Skinner had. Which was enough—more than enough—for the bully of the Sixth. Whether he was related to a convict or not, he was not going to be checked by a cheeky junior.

Shake, shake, shake!

"Oh! Ow! Oggh!" gurgled Skinner. "Leggo! Oh! Leggo! You bully! Leggo!"

"Loder, old man!" exclaimed Carne. He realised, if Loder did not, that it would have been wiser to take no heed.

"You young sweep!" breathed Loder. "Come to my study! Do you hear? Come to my study at once, and, by Jove, I'll whop you for your cheek!"

He released Skinner's collar.

"Follow me!" he snarled.

Skinner set his collar straight and eyed Loder malevolently. Skinner was very far, as a rule, from being a fellow to enter into a contest with a Sixth Form prefect—a really risky proceeding. But there was power in Skinner's hands now, and he was not going to be shaken like a rat, and caned to boot—if he could help it. Loder's look showed what he had to expect in Loder's study!

Snoop stepped back—rather scared. But Skinner, for once, was not scared. If Loder wanted it, he should have it, and Skinner was the fellow to give it to him.

"What are you going to whop me for, Loder?" asked Skinner in a loud, clear voice. "I suppose I'm entitled 'o know."

"I'm going to whop you for your cheek! Follow me!"

"What have I done?"

Loder did not answer that question. He made another grab at Skinner's collar, and Skinner, this time, jumped back.

"Loder——" whispered Carne.

Loder did not heed him. He followed Skinner up, with a look on his face that made twenty fellows stare round at him.

Skinner dodged. He cut across towards the elms, where his Form-master, Mr. Quelch, was walking with Mr. Capper.

Loder plunged after him.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Snoop.

"What's the row?" called out Peter Todd, coming up with six or seven more Removites.

"Loder's after Skinner——"

"Smoking again?" asked Hazeldene.

"No fear—nothing at all."

"Rot—even Loder has to have an excuse!" said Peter.

All eyes turned on Skinner. He reached the two masters, who stopped in their stately pacing and stared at him in surprise. Loder slowed down a little in his pursuit as he saw them.

"What is the matter, Skinner?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"If you please, sir," gasped Skinner, "Loder's told me to go to his study to be caned, and I don't know what I've done. So far as I know, I've done nothing at all."

"Nonsense, Skinner!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning. "Loder is a prefect, and I cannot believe, for one moment, that he would cane you without cause."

"Mayn't I know what I've done, sir?"

"I have no doubt, Skinner, that you are quite well aware of it," said Mr. Quelch. "However, Loder is here, and I will speak to him. Loder, this boy seems unaware why he is to be punished, according to his statement. You may tell me, as his Form-master, what he has done."

"He checked me, sir!"

"I never spoke to him, sir, never even saw him," gasped Skinner. "I was speaking to Snoop about the football, when Loder suddenly came up and grabbed me by the collar and ordered me to go to his study for a caning."

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"That is absurd!" said Mr. Quelch sharply. "However, there seems to be some sort of misunderstanding. Please tell me, Loder, exactly what Skinner said."

Loder breathed hard. His face was crimson and he could scarcely control his temper, even in the presence of the Form-master. But he began to realise that it would have been wiser to let Skinner "get away" with that gibe. Fifty fellows, at least, had gathered round, and all of them were going to hear the cause of the trouble.

"He knows what he said, sir!" stammered Loder. "He was making out that I have a relation who is—is—is—"

"Is what?" asked Quelch in astonishment.

"A—a—a convict, sir," gasped Loder.

"Bless my soul! Skinner, you young rascal, I will punish you myself with the greatest severity—"

"I never did, sir!" howled Skinner. "I never said a word about a convict. I don't know Loder's people, sir, and don't know whether any of them are in prison or not!"

There was a subdued chuckle in the gathering crowd. Loder's face, already crimson, seemed to become purple.

"Silence, Skinner. How dare you express yourself in such a manner?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "You are making matters worse! Loder, you may be sure that if this boy of my Form has uttered any such slander, he will be severely dealt with. I will take the matter into my own hands. But please let us be clear! Tell me exactly what Skinner said—his words, Loder."

"He—he—he said 'twenty-two,' sir!" gasped Loder. "He said it for me to hear, as I know very well."

Mr. Quelch almost jumped in his surprise. Mr. Capper raised his eyebrows.

"He said twenty-two!" repeated the Remove master. "Is that all he said, Loder?"

"Yes!" hissed Loder.

"Then what do you mean, Loder?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sharply. "Why should not this boy speak of that number, or any other, if he pleases? Are you out of your senses, Loder, or what?"

Evidently Mr. Quelch had never heard of Convict No. 22! He was going to hear now!

"It—it's the number of a convict who—who's escaped from Blackmoor, sir!" stammered Loder.

"Is it?" said Mr. Quelch. "What of it? I am sorry to see a boy of my Form taking an interest in such matters. I am far from approving of schoolboys reading newspapers—very unfit publications for the young! Nevertheless, I see no harm in Skinner's remark, Loder. What do you mean?"

"The—the—the convict's name happens to be the same as mine, sir!" panted Loder. "Of course, there is no connection—none whatever! But by a rotten chance, the convict's name happens to be Loder. That was why Skinner did it."

There was a general grin in the concourse surrounding the spot. Loder's fierce anger and excitement did not look, in the general opinion, as if there was no connection!

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch slowly. "I—I see! Skinner, you mentioned the convict's number in Loder's hearing as a gibe—a taunt—"

"Not at all, sir!" said Skinner calmly.

"I was talking football to Snoop."

"Football!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!"

"I fail to see, Skinner—"

"You see, sir, Wharton's fixed up a

pick-up!" explained Skinner. "They're playing Soccer now, sir—a pick-up, seven a side—games practice, sir! I was saying to Snoop that it would be a better practice if he played a full team each side—I'd have played, if he'd asked me, and so would some other fellows. I was telling Snoop that it would have been quite easy for Wharton to pick up twenty-two, when Loder suddenly rushed up and grabbed me."

Skinner made that explanation with a grave face.

Mr. Quelch looked at him.

Then he glanced round in the direction of the playing-fields, visible in the distance. There, on Little Side, were the Remove footballers—undoubtedly playing in a pick-up, seven a side! And twenty-two, indubitably, was the number of two elevens, added together!

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I've never heard anything about Loder's relations, sir!" said Skinner, in a very injured tone. "I've never heard anything about any escaped convict, sir, and don't know whether he's named Loder or not, or whether he's a relation of Loder's, sir! I couldn't make out why Loder was in such a temper, sir."

Loder, at that moment, would have given much for the quadrangle to open and let him fall through out of sight.

He did not even know whether Skinner was speaking the truth or not! It was quite possible that he was! Any fellow might have made such a remark as Skinner stated that he had made to Snoop.

Mr. Quelch glanced round and beckoned to Sidney James Snoop, whose grinning face was in the thronging circle round the spot.

"Snoop! What was Skinner saying to you when Loder heard him speak?" he asked.

"He was saying that he'd have played, sir, if Wharton had asked him, and that Wharton could easily have made up twenty-two, sir!" answered Sidney James demurely.

Mr. Quelch glanced at Loder's burning face.

"Evidently there was a misapprehension, Loder!" he said grimly. "I should recommend you, Loder, to make sure that an offence has been committed before you administer punishment to a junior. A prefect, Loder, is expected, above all things, to be just! It is unfortunate that a convict should have the same name as a Greyfriars boy, but it is absurd, Loder, to be unreasonably sensitive about a coincidence such as that. Skinner appears to have made a perfectly innocent remark—a remark that any boy might have made. I presume, Loder, that you will acknowledge that now."

"Oh! Yes! I—I—I—" Loder became incoherent.

"Then please let the matter drop!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning.

Loder turned away without speaking again. The two masters resumed their stately walk by the elms.

Gerald Loder tramped away to the House. He was only anxious to get out of sight—away from the stare of a hundred curious eyes. Anybody at Greyfriars who had missed the radio announcement, and seen nothing of Convict No. 22 in the newspapers, would not be left in ignorance now—Loder's own actions had made it certain that every fellow in the school would hear of James Loder, No. 22 at Blackmoor Prison!

Skinner winked at the grinning crowd when his Form-master's back was turned. Skinner had scored, there was no doubt about that.

"You awful swab, Skinner!" said

Peter Todd. "You jolly well knew about that convict—I heard Smithy telling you."

"Go hon!" said Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say, fancy a Greyfriars prefect having relations in prison! I say, do you think it's Loder's father?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, he's awfully wild about it," said Bunter. "I wonder if it's his father! I fancy it is, you know."

"You fat ass!" said Peter. "I've heard of Loder's father—he's Major Loder, a terrific old gent with a fiery eye! I saw him here once."

"Well, I suppose majors go to chokey, if they do anything," said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, what do you think Loder's father did?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder of the Sixth undoubtedly would have been wiser to pass Skinner's gibe unheeded.

Any fellow might have the ill-luck to have the same name as a convict—indeed, it was pretty certain that many fellows had, as no fellow could have a monopoly of names. Vernon-Smith had not turned a hair when a pickpocket named Smith had been "run in" at Courtfield—neither had Smith minor of the Fourth, or Smith major of the Fifth. Palmer of the Sixth did not seem unduly worried by the fact that his name had appeared in the annals of crime! Why was Loder so excited about it? Plenty of fellows thought that there was only one answer to that question!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Broad Arrows!

WILLIAM WIBLEY stared round him.

He was not alarmed—but he was puzzled.

Walking back from Courtfield—with his precious parcel under his arm—Wibley naturally took a short cut across Courtfield Common—saving more than half a mile on his walk home thereby.

There was no footpath, but a trodden track wound over the hilly common, amid scattered hawthorns, willows, and blackberry bushes, with here and there a tree in the thickets. Having left the open grass and entered that bushy, brambly tract, Wibley of the Remove certainly had no idea whatever that danger might lurk among the hawthorns and blackberries. So he was not alarmed, but perplexed, when he heard a rustle, and again a rustle, and realised that someone, hidden in the thickets, was following him, keeping out of sight.

It occurred to him that it might be Highcliffe fellows, looking for a chance to rag a Greyfriars man. But Ponsonby & Co., of Highcliffe, would have shown themselves—there was no need for them to hunt cover like this. Then he thought of a tramp, who might want to relieve him of his pocket-money in that lonely spot—as had, indeed, happened to a Greyfriars fellow before. That thought made him quicken his pace—though he had little to reward a thievish footpad, except the parcel from Mr. Lazarus. All Wib's available cash had gone on theatrical "props" of late—things which drew his cash as irresistibly as tuck drew Bunter's.

He had reached about the middle of that bushy tract on the wide common when the rustle sounded closer at hand, and a figure leaped suddenly out into his view, raising a hand as a warning to stop.

Wibley stopped—dead!

His eyes nearly started from his face as he looked at the man who had so suddenly appeared.

It was a young man—though the stubby, unshaven beard on his face, and his gaunt, haggard look, made him appear older. His face might have been handsome normally. But it was far from normal now. Sunken eyes gleamed from a starved face at the startled Greyfriars junior.

But it was less the man's haggard face than his garb that fixed Wibley's horrified attention. The mark of the "broad arrow" was on that garb, and on the cap jammed on his head.

Back into Wibley's mind came the remembrance of what he had heard of the radio announcement the previous day, and which he had forgotten. James Loder, Convict No. 22, had been seen in Kent. Wibley, in utter horror, knew that he saw him now! It was not likely that there were two escaped convicts about! This was the man of the wireless announcement!

Wibley was a plucky fellow, but his knees knocked together as he halted. The man blocked his onward way, springing suddenly from the thickets. Wibley knew that he had followed him to the heart of that bushy tract to make sure of being unseen by anyone on the common before he showed up. To turn in his tracks and cut back seemed to Wibley the only resource, though he knew it was useless, for the man could have run him down in a few moments.

"Stop! I shall not hurt you! Do not be afraid, my boy!" came a gasping, panting voice from the man in the broad arrows.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Wibley. He backed a pace or two, watching the man warily. He had no chance whatever in a scrap, and little in a foot race. But, though the man's look was terrifying, his words and the tone in his voice were reassuring.

"You have nothing to fear!" went on the man from Blackmoor. There was even a smile on his haggard face. "I am not so dangerous as I may look."

"I—I say, I—I've got nothing!" stammered Wibley. "I've got about ninepence, if that's any good!"

To his amazement, a deep flush came over the gaunt face.

"I am not going to rob you, boy," said the haggard man quietly.

"Oh!" gasped Wibley.

He had hardly expected a convict to be particular about that.

"I—I say, are you the man on the radio?" stammered Wibley.

"On the radio! Yes, I suppose it would be broadcast," muttered the man. "Yes, no doubt. Heaven help me!"

"It was announced yesterday," said Wibley. "James Loder, No. 22, of Blackmoor. I—I say—"

"James Loder, No. 22, of Blackmoor, will not harm a schoolboy," said the convict. "Have no fear."

"Jolly glad to hear it, Mr. Loder!" said Wibley. His confidence returned now. It was a startling experience, but he could see plainly enough that the man, convict as he was, had no intention of harming him. "I—I say, are you hungry?"

James Loder stared at him. Obviously he was hungry—in fact, famished. "Yes," he said briefly.

Wibley drew a packet of chocolate from his pocket. The man could have robbed him if he had chosen, and Wibley could hardly understand why a hunted, desperate convict did not. It was only prudent to keep him in that unexpectedly amiable mood; moreover, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,493.

Wibley was touched by the signs of want and suffering in his face.

Convict No. 22 almost snatched the chocolate. It was pitiful to see how he devoured it. Little as it was, it was something to a man who had not, perhaps, tasted food for days. William Wibley had a kind heart, and he would gladly have given more—convict as the man was, and whatever he might have done. He was, at all events, no ruffian or desperado, in spite of his looks.

"Sorry I've nothing more," said Wibley quite sincerely. "I—I say, what did you stop me for if—if you're not—" He did not finish. It seemed that the man was not going to rob him.

The convict pointed to the bundle.

"What is in that?" he asked.

"Only clobber," said Wibley.

"I thought it looked like clothes," the convict nodded. "That is why I stopped you, boy."

"Oh crumbs!" said Wibley.

He understood, and he was glad that the convict was twice his size and could have no possible use for Wibley's own clothes. A hunted man in convict garb, of course, wanted a change of clothes more than anything else, and obviously No. 22 had not yet been able to obtain anything of that kind. He was still in the tell-tale garb in which he had escaped from prison—tattered and torn and muddy, but easily recognisable as the official garb of a convict of Blackmoor.

"I—I say, what I've got in this bundle won't help you," said Wibley; "it's clobber for amateur theatricals at my school."

"Any kind of clothes will help me," said the convict quietly. "Boy, open that bundle! I beg you to let me take what you have there, and do not force me to the crime of robbery for the sake of my liberty."

"Oh!" gasped Wibley.

Wibley of the Remove, naturally, knew very little about convicts and their manners and customs, but it struck him as very extraordinary for a convict to object to robbery and to call it a crime. Undoubtedly No. 22 was a very unusual convict; Wibley realised that. He could have taken anything Wibley had by force if he had liked—indeed, he could have covered his tracks by pitching Wibley into the pond on the common, had the spirit moved him so to do; yet it was perfectly clear to Wibley that he was in no danger of violence.

"Open that parcel!" repeated the man. "I must have clothes—I must! If you refuse to give them, I must take them—I must!"

"But, I say—"

"Open that parcel at once!"

"Oh, all right!" Wibley could not help grinning at the knowledge of what the parcel contained—the special costume he had ordered for his character of the Hunted Man. "But they won't be any use to you."

He untied the string and opened the bundle. The haggard man leaned forward eagerly to see what was revealed.

He gave a cry—or, rather, a howl—of astonishment and dismay.

It was quite a nice suit in the bundle—but it was a suit of convict's garb, with broad arrows conspicuous. It was a larger size than Wibley's own clothes, as he had to increase his bulk to play the part of the Hunted Man in the Remove drama. Perhaps No. 22 could have squeezed into the clothes, but they would have been little use to him; except that they were new and clean, they were exactly like those he wore.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"I told you they wouldn't be any good!" grinned Wibley. "You see,

they're for a convict character in a school play."

The man stood panting. He had spotted that bundle and seen that it looked like a bundle of clothes, and so had taken the risk of revealing his presence. That risk had been taken for nothing. He panted and clenched his hands desperately. This boy, in a short time, would report that he had seen the escaped convict on Courtfield Common—and the convict would still be in the garb of Blackmoor Prison.

Wibley ceased to grin as he read the thoughts in the desperate face, but the man calmed himself.

"Do not fear me," he said in a quiet voice. "But listen, boy! You know as well as I do that I could keep you from putting the hunters on my track. Nothing will induce me to harm you; prison sooner than that. But you know it; and I ask you to say nothing—nothing for a few hours. Give me a chance! And if you think that it would be wrong, I will tell you this—I am an innocent man, the victim of a terrible mistake. Try to believe me, and give me a chance."

"Oh crikey!" said Wibley. "I—I say, I—I'm bound to mention that I've seen you. But—but goodness knows you could prevent me if you liked! I'm bound to play up, when you could knock me on the head if you wanted to. I—I say, suppose I don't say anything till—till—When?"

"A few hours," muttered the convict. "After dark I have a chance."

"After dark, then," said Wibley. "And—and—and, look here, I jolly well believe you're a decent sort of chap, though you don't look it. I jolly well hope you'll get clear—though I suppose I ought not to."

The man gave him a long look, nodded, and disappeared into the bushes.

"By gum!" said Wibley.

He tied his parcel again, picked it up, and resumed his way. He saw and heard nothing more of the man lurking in the thickets. He looked back when he emerged on the open grass, but in the hawthorns and bushes there was nothing to be seen of Convict No. 22.

Wibley walked on to the school in a thoughtful and rather worried frame of mind.

He had to keep silent till after dark. The man could have kept him silent easily enough by a knock on the head. His self-restraint in his hunted and desperate condition showed that he was, or had been, a decent man. Wibley even wondered whether it was possible that he had uttered the truth in saying that he was an innocent man. It was improbable enough; still, such things had happened. Wibley, at all events, had to keep his word. But he was worried as he walked back to Greyfriars, and he wished that he had not fetched that parcel from Mr. Lazarus' that afternoon, after all—important as it undoubtedly was.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for Billy Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter put a fat face, not to mention a fat head, in at the doorway of Study No. 1. It was tea-time in the Remove, and the Famous Five were in that celebrated study. Bob Cherry was making toast; Johnny Bull was buttering the same; Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was scraping out a remnant of jam from a jar that had seen its best days; Harry Wharton was dishing up eggs, and Frank Nugent was scanning the interior of the study



The Cliff House girls stared spellbound at Larry Lascelles and the convict locked in a desperate grapple on the verge of the precipice. For long, long minutes the fierce struggle went on, neither gaining the upper hand. "Oh!" Marjorie gave a sudden shriek, as the struggling figures stumbled. "They're falling!"

cupboard, apparently in search of some edible article that might have been overlooked.

Being all busy, the Famous Five did not display any interest in Bunter. Bunter, however, seemed interested in what was going on in Study No. 1.

"I say, you fellows!" repeated Bunter.

"The jamfulness is not terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "There is an enormous lack of jam in this absurd jar."

"That's what I've come about," announced Bunter.

"Well, if you've come for jam, you've called at the wrong shop!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Try next door."

"I mean, I'm going to stand the jam!" explained Bunter. "That's the idea! I've got a pot of jam, and I'll bring it along, see? Whack it out all round. I stand the jam, you fellows stand the rest—fair play all round, see?"

Such an arrangement was not uncommon in Remove studies. Fellows often pooled their resources for tea in the study. If one fellow stood the eggs, and another the buttered toast, and another the jam, it was, as Bunter put it, fair play all round. And a whole pot of jam was not a negligible contribution to the common stock.

Nevertheless, Harry Wharton & Co. did not close on that generous offer. They glared at Bunter.

"You fat villain," said Harry. "So it was you bagged Smithy's jam!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Better not let the old Bounder hear that you've got jam, Bunter!" grinned Bob Cherry. "He's missed a pot from his study."

"You needn't mention it to Smithy, of course," said Bunter hastily. "He's a suspicious beast. I never knew he had any jam. There was no jam in his

study cupboard when I looked in, and it was still there when I left the study, too! Not that I've been in Smithy's study, you know."

"Better tell that to Smithy!" said Nugent. "He may believe it—perhaps!"

"The fact is, I'm going down to the tuck-shop, specially to get the jam!" said Bunter. "It's not in the box-room."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! If you think I hid that jam in the box-room till Smithy gave up hunting for it, it only shows what suspicious minds you've got. I know absolutely nothing about Smithy's jam—unless Loder may have snaffled it. He came up here a little while ago, to look for Wibley. He may have pinched the jam."

"Yes, I can see a Sixth Form prefect pinching jam from a junior study!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five chortled. Loder of the Sixth, with all his unpleasant ways, really was not likely to pinch a pot of jam!

"Well, not any other prefect!" said Bunter. "But Loder's got relations in prison, you know, and that makes a difference, doesn't it?"

"Better ask Loder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I certainly shan't mention it to Loder—look how he grabbed Skinner's neck!" said Bunter. "Loder's touchy about it. I suppose a chap would be, with his father in chokey."

"You blithering bletherer," said Harry Wharton. "That jolly old convict isn't Loder's father, and you'd better not say he is. I read it up in the paper this morning, and the convict's age is given as twenty-eight."

"Oh! His brother, then, I dare say!" said Bunter. "Loder's awfully sore

about it, so it must be a near relation. But I say, about the jam! If you fellows would like me to tear with you—"

"Shut the door after you."

"I'll whack out my jam, if you whack out the other things! That's fair! Is it a go? I'll cut off to the box-room—I mean to the tuck-shop—and get it."

"Sorry," said the captain of the Remove, "we're not receivers of stolen goods in this study."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Go to Study No. 4, and whack it out with Smithy!" suggested Bob Cherry. "I'm sure he'll be interested to hear about that jam!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Cherry!" said the fat Owl peevishly. "Smithy might think it was his jam—jars of jam are much alike, and mine happens to be raspberry, the same as Smithy's, and a three-pound jar, same as his. He would very likely think it was his—"

"The thoughtfulness would probably be preposterous!" chuckled Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, look here, you fellows—"

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said the captain of the Remove. "Come into the study, Bunter—"

"Yes, old chap!"

"And hand me that poker from the grate—"

"Eh?"

"And I'll whop you for snooping Smithy's jam—"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter.

And he departed from the doorway of Study No. 1, leaving the Famous Five chuckling.

It was rather annoying to Bunter. He had only had tea in the hall, and tea in Study No. 7 so far. So he was still hungry.

Whacking out that jam, and taking a whack in the other things, in Study No. 1, seemed a good idea to Bunter. But it was clear that there was nothing doing in that study. Still, jam was jam—and the idea of sitting down to a whole pot of jam, with a large spoon, was rather attractive. Bunter decided to get a spoon from his study, No. 7, transport his fat person to the box-room, where he had hidden his plunder, and dispose of the same there. He blinked into Study No. 7 through his big spectacles.

"Hand me a spoon, Dutton!"

Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, was there. He glanced round.

"Eh?" he said.

"Spoon!" hooted Bunter.

Tom shook his head.

"I don't think there'll be one to-night," he answered.

"Eh!" howled Bunter. "One what?"

"Moon."

"You deaf dummy, I didn't say moon, I said spoon!" hooted Bunter.

"That's rot," said Dutton. "It's not dark yet, and even if there's a moon, you won't see it soon. What do you mean?"

Bunter did not answer that question. Lazy as he was, it was easier to get the spoon himself, than to explain to Tom Dutton. He rolled into the study, found a spoon, and rolled out again.

Then he rolled along the passage to the box-room stair at the end. Up that stair, Bunter carried his weight, gasping as he carried it. He arrived at the little landing outside the box-room door. Out of doors, it was not yet dark, but that little landing was very dusky, and Bunter, to his surprise, saw a gleam of light under the box-room door. Someone was there, and had the light on.

"Beast!" hissed Bunter. Black suspicion flashed into his mind at once, that it was somebody after his pot of jam. Some beast might have seen him conveying it there! There were fellows in the Remove not above pinching a fellow's jam—Bunter knew that only too well!

He turned the door-handle, and fairly jumped into the box-room.

The next moment he uttered a yell of terror.

He had expected to find some junior there—probably after the jam. His eyes nearly jumped through his spectacles as a rather bulky figure turned towards him—a figure in the broad-arrow garb of a convict, with a convict's cap on its head, and a stubbly looking face with beetling brows!

For a split second Billy Bunter blinked at that awful figure! Then he bounded out of the box-room as if he were made of indiarubber.

"Ow! Help!" he yelled as he bounded. "I say, you fellows! Help!"

There was a chuckle from the beetle-browed ruffian in the box-room. Bunter did not hear it or heed it. He leaped for the stairs. He missed the top one, and rolled down, bumping—arriving in the Remove passage in a yelling heap.

"Ow! Yaroooh! Whoop!" roared Bunter.

"What the thump—" Squiff looked out of the end study.

"Good gad, what's up?" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer, looking out of Study No. 12.

"Yaroooh! Help!"

Mark Linley and little Wun Lung stared out of Study No. 13.

"What's the matter, Bunter?" exclaimed Mark.

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"Buntsee goey pottee!" grinned Wun Lung.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "Is he after me? Keep him off! I say—yaroooh! Help! Oh crumbs!"

The fat junior scrambled up wildly, and raced down the Remove passage. And from nearly every study in the passage fellows stared after him in amazement.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Startling!

FRANK NUGENT lifted a dish of hot buttered toast from the fender. Tea was ready in Study No. 1. Down the passage came a patter of racing feet—and into the doorway of the study bolted a flying figure.

"Look out!" gasped Wharton.

Bunter happened suddenly—so suddenly that nobody had time to look out!

He rushed into the study at top speed, and would have been carried right across the room, by his own momentum, had not the study table been in the way. As it was, the study table stopped him. It rocked and slid as the fat Owl bumped on it and collided with Frank Nugent. A crash followed as the dish slipped from his hands and buttered toast was scattered far and wide.

There was a roar of wrath in Study No. 1.

Why Billy Bunter was putting up a lifelike imitation of an Alpine avalanche, the juniors did not know. But they knew that they had no use for it. They converged on Bunter as he stood gasping and panting and clinging to the table for support.

"You mad porpoise!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Look at that toast!" shrieked Nugent.

"Collar him! Scrag him! Spifficate him!"

"Groogh! I say, you fellows—I say—urrgh! I say, help! I say—yurrgh!" Bunter struggled for breath.

"I say—Ow! Beasts! Leggo! Keep that tut-tut-toast away—Yurrgh!"

Frank Nugent was picking up buttered toast. The first slice he slammed on the fat countenance of the fat Owl as a reward for breaking the dish and scattering the toast—and Bunter gurgled wildly as he received it.

"Woooooooh!"

"Give him some more!" growled Johnny Bull. "Plaster it all over the silly ass!"

"Urrgh! I say—Ow! Leggo! I say, look out! Danger! Fire! Murder! Convicts!" howled Bunter. "Lock the door! Keep him out! Oh crikey!"

"What—?"

"Potty?"

"What the thump—?"

"Oh lor'!" Bunter dabbed a buttery fat face and spluttered. "I say, you fellows, get hold of something—pokers, shovels, anything! Perhaps he's got a pistol—or a knife—"

"Who?" yelled Harry Wharton.

"The kik-kik-kik—" stuttered Bunter.

"The what?"

"The kik-kik-kik-convict! He—he's here! He's after me! Keep him off! Loder's relation, you know! Bar the door! Shove the table against it! Get hold of the pip-pip-poker—"

The Famous Five stared at Bunter. They almost goggled at him.

It seemed that understudying an avalanche was not a jest on Bunter's part. He was alarmed about some-

thing. He was alarmed about a convict!

According to the announcer on the radio, the escaped man from Blackmoor had been seen in Kent. He might have selected the part of that country where Greyfriars School was situated, for all the juniors knew. But really, he was not likely to drop in at Greyfriars. Even if Loder of the Sixth was a relative of his, a call was unlikely! So the Famous Five could only wonder what had bitten Bunter.

Vernon-Smith looked into the study. "What's the matter with that mad walrus?" he asked.

"He's got escaped convicts on the brain—what he calls a brain!" said Bob Cherry. "He seems to think No. 22 is taking a stroll in the Remove passage."

"Loder's been up here!" grinned the Bounder. "He may be like his dear relative to look at! Case of mistaken identity, perhaps!"

"Fathead!"

"I say, you fellows, he was in the box-room!" yelled Bunter. "He's there now, if he hasn't followed me. The convict—"

"You potty hippopotamus!" roared Bob Cherry. "How the thump could an escaped convict get into our box-room?"

"I don't know—but he's there! I saw him! Oh crikey, it made me jump!" gasped Bunter. "I say, Smithy, is he in the passage? Look!"

Vernon-Smith, chuckling, glanced up the passage. A lot of fellows were to be seen, curious to know the cause of the alarm. But No. 22 of Blackmoor was certainly not to be seen.

"Can't see any convicts, old fat bean," said the Bounder. "And only one chap who ought to be—Fishy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then—then he's still in the box-room!" gasped Bunter. "Hiding there, of course! I say, you fellows, do you think Loder let him in?"

"Loder?" yelled Bob.

"Well, being his relation, you know, he might have! Somebody must have let him in, or he wouldn't be there."

"You blithering bletherer, he isn't there!" howled Bob. "Nobody's there, unless it's some chap after the jam."

"That's what I thought it was," gasped Bunter, "and I rushed in to cop him, and—and it was the convict! I—I ran for it—"

"That part's true!" said Smithy. "Depend on Bunter running for it, if he fancied there was any danger!"

"Oh, really, Smithy! I say, you fellows, call up Quelch! Call the Head! I say, Loder oughtn't to let a convict into the Remove passage. He can have him in the Sixth if he likes."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! We may all be murdered in our beds! Suppose he's got a revolver—"

"Or a machine-gun battery?" suggested Smithy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess that fat gink is plumb loco!" said Fisher T. Fish, staring into the study. "Go to sleep and dream again, Bunter!"

"I tell you I saw him!" roared Bunter.

"Such a likely spot for convicts!" grinned Peter Todd.

"What on earth's put the idea into the fat duffer's head?" asked Harry Wharton. "He's had a scare, you can see that. Somebody pulling his silly leg?"

"I saw him!" yelled Bunter.
 "Gammon!"
 "A burly, brutal, beetle-browed ruffian—about six feet high!" gasped Bunter. "He—he sprang at me like a tiger! I—I just dodged his knife—"
 "His knife?" gasped Bob.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I say, you fellows, call Quelch! Call all the prefects! Somebody get on the telephone to the police! Oh dear!"
 "Somebody had better look into the box-room!" said the captain of the Remove. "It's some sort of a lark, I suppose."
 "It's the convict!" howled Bunter.
 "Ass!"
 "He nearly got me with his revolver—"
 "As well as his knife?" grinned Bob.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I guess I'd eat all the convicts you saw in the box-room, big boy!" grinned Fisher T. Fish.
 "Beast! You jolly well don't dare go and look, anyhow!" yapped Bunter.
 "Aw! Forget it!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess all the convicts in this hyer little island wouldn't put the wind up a citizen of the Yew-nited States, if they was there as thick as bees in a hive! I'll tell a man! I'll sure go and give the shebang the once-over!"
 And Fisher T. Fish's bony legs whisked up the Remove passage towards the box-room stair at the end.
 Fishy was not, in point of fact, of the stuff of which heroes are made. But as he had not the slightest belief in Bunter's convict, he was not unwilling to display his nerve. A grinning crowd in the passage watched the American junior whisk up the box-room stair.
 A moment later there was a terrific yell.
 Down that stair came Fisher T. Fish, flying. His bony face was white as chalk, and he ran as if on the cinder-path.
 "What on earth—" gasped Harry Wharton.
 "Great pip!"
 "The great-pipfulness is terrific!"
 "I say, you fellows, I told you so—"
 "What's up, Fishy?" yelled the Bounder.
 Fishy did not answer. He came down the passage like a runaway car, and burst frantically through the mob of juniors. He tore on to the stairs. Then a yelp came over his bony shoulder:
 "Beat it, you 'uns! Vamoose the ranch, pronto!"
 With that, Fisher T. Fish bolted down the stairs and vanished. He left the Removites staring blankly.
 "What on earth has he seen in the box-room?" gasped Peter Todd.
 "The convict!" howled Bunter.
 "You silly Owl—"
 "Well, he's seen something!" said Smithy. "He's as scared as Bunter. Come on, you men; we're going to look into this!"
 Herbert Vernon-Smith tramped up the passage. After him went the Famous Five—and the lock of Study No. 1 clicked behind them. Billy Bunter felt better with the door locked. But a dozen other Remove men followed the five. At the box-room stair they looked up.
 Smithy gave a yell.
 "Look!"
 From the dusky landing above a face stared down—dim, but easily seen. It was a stubby face, with beetling brows, surmounted by a convict cap—and the bulky figure below it was garbed in the broad arrow suit. That terrifying figure backed into the box-room; but six or seven fellows had seen it, and from all of them came the startled exclamation:
 "The convict!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprising Capture!

"THE convict!" gasped Harry Wharton.
 "The jolly old convict!" stuttered Bob Cherry.
 "He's there—"
 "Bunter did see him—and Fishy, too—he's there!" gasped Peter Todd. "How the thump did he get into the school?"
 "Ask Loder!" grinned the Bounder.
 "Oh, rot!" said Harry. "Even if he's a relation of Loder's, Loder can't be in touch with him—"
 "Catch Loder standing by a man down on his luck!" said Johnny Bull.
 "Somebody must have let him in!" said Skinner. "And the board residents at Blackmoor haven't any other relations here, so far as I know."
 "Anyhow, he's hiding there!" said the captain of the Remove. "Look here, come on! He's going to be bagged!"
 (Continued on next page.)

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"Yes, rather!"
 "I say, get hold of something first!" said Squiff. "He looks a pretty tough specimen. May be some awful burglar."

"Well, that's only sense!" said the Bounder. "He may have a stick, or a knife, and anyhow, he's sure to put up a fight."

It was, evidently, only reasonable to take precautions. There was a rush into the studies for weapons. Cricket stumps, pokers, sticks, all sorts of things were grasped. Skinner and Snoop urged that Quelch should be called; to bring up the prefects, but Skinner and Snoop were disregarded. There were plenty of fellows to handle that convict, who had had the extraordinary nerve to seek a hiding-place in the Remove box-room; and plenty of them were quite keen on it. Weapon in hand, Smithy and the Famous Five marched up the box-room stairs, and after them went Squiff, and Tom Brown, and Lord Mauleverer, and Bolsover major, Newland, and Russell, and Ogilvy, and several other fellows. Skinner and Snoop remained in the passage; ready to follow Fishy's glorious example, if the convict appeared in the offing.

The box-room door stood a little ajar. The light within had been turned off, and only a glimmer of the sunset came in at the little window, so all was dusky. Someone could be heard moving in the room.

"Come on!" breathed the Bounder, taking a tighter grip on his poker.

He threw the door suddenly wide open.

"Stand back!" came a husky voice. Backing against the glimmering window, a figure faced the juniors—the figure they had glimpsed on the landing from below. It was not, as Bunter had stated, six feet high; it was hardly taller than any of the Removites. But it looked bulky and brawny, and the stubby, beetling face was almost terrifying.

"Stand back!" repeated the husky voice, "I will shoot!"

Up went the right hand, with something in it that glistened.

Even the reckless Bounder paused.

Behind him, the Removites crammed the doorway and the landing, and the stair below.

But the Bounder, though he paused, was not daunted.

"Better not play with that popgun, my man!" he said, coolly. "You're not getting away! We've got you!"

"The gotfulness is terrific, my esteemed and disgusting friend," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "and the shootfulness would be followed by the hangfulness, which would be preposterously unpleasant."

Whiz!

Monty Newland, from further back, suddenly whizzed a cricket stump. It crashed on the object in the convict's hand and knocked it flying.

"Oh, good man!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Get him!"

There was an instant rush at the disarmed convict.

Five or six pairs of hands were laid on him at once. Cricket stumps and pokers were ready if he resisted. But he did not resist.

"You've got me, gents!" he said, in the same husky guttural voice. "You've got me! Go easy! Don't spoil my clothes!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob. "Are they particular about their clobber at Blackmoor?"

"We've got him!"

"Hold him!"

"Don't struggle!" warned the Bounder. "I'll jolly well brain you if you do."

"Go easy with a bloke!" implored the convict. "I ain't struggling, am I? You got me! You got me all right!"

"Hold him tight!" said Smithy. "He's looking for a chance to dodge, of course. Take care of that pistol!"

"Tain't a pistol!" gasped Nugent, as he picked up the fallen weapon. "It's a toy gun—like that one Wibley uses in his theatrical stunts."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bluffing us, with a toy gun!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "My hat!"

"Bring him along!" said Squiff.

"Better go quietly, my man!"

"I'm going quietly, ain't I?" growled the convict. "Look 'ere, don't you rumple a bloke's clothes! These 'ere clothes cost money."

"The Government will stand you a new suit!" grinned the Bounder. "Yank him along, you men! By gum, what will Inspector Grimes say, when he hears that the Greyfriars Remove have caught the convict!"

"Why, the fellow's grinning!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"He won't grin when we hand him over to Grimey!" said the Bounder.

"You ain't going to 'and me over to the police, young gents!" exclaimed the convict.

"What the dickens do you think we are going to do?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Well, you won't 'and me over to the coppers, I know that! You won't get me far from this 'ere!"

"We'll see about that!" said the Bounder, grimly. "Hold him tight!"

"You bet!"

Two pairs of hands grasped each of the convict's arms, as he was marched out of the box-room, and down the stairs. Round him thronged the jubilant juniors. There seemed little chance of the convict getting away.

"Oh, crumbs! You've got him!" yelled Skinner, as the triumphant party appeared in the Remove passage, with the convict in their midst.

"We've got him!" chuckled Bob.

"What a fearful looking ruffian!" exclaimed Snoop.

"Well, he's no beauty—but he seems tame enough! March on!"

Down the Remove passage the captured convict was marched. From the doorway of Study No. 6, two grinning faces were looking—those of Morgan and Desmond, of the Remove. They burst into a roar as the captured convict came along.

"Sure they've got him!" yelled Micky Desmond.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Morgan.

"Stop here!" said the convict, dragging himself to a halt outside No. 6. "No need to go any further, you men! This is my study, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Morgan and Desmond.

"Wha-a-t—" gasped the Bounder.

In sheer amazement, the Removites came to a halt.

The convict had not spoken in the hoarse, husky voice he had used in the box-room. He spoke in quite a different voice—one that was familiar to Remove ears.

"What the dooce—" stuttered Lord Mauleverer.

"Woo-Woo-Wibley!" gurgled Bob Cherry.

"Wibley!" howled the Bounder.

Hands dropped from the captured convict.

The juniors stared at him almost in stupefaction. They knew Wibley's voice—but they did not know Wibley. That hulking, beetling ruffian bore no resemblance whatever to William Wibley, of the Remove. But Wib's study-mates, David Morgan and Micky Desmond, evidently knew. They were howling with merriment.

"You—you—you're Wibley!" yelled the captain of the Remove.

"Sort of!" assented the convict. "You see, I was trying on my costume and make-up for my part in the Hunted Man, when that blithering idiot Bunter butted in—"

"You—you—"

"And I thought I'd test my make-up, by letting you all see me in it!" said Wibley, cheerfully. "Good, isn't it?"

"You potty fathead!"

"Best thing I've ever done," said Wib. "What? By the way, I wasn't going to shoot you really—"

"You cheeky chump!"

"My part in the play, you know!" explained Wibley. "I fancy I did it pretty well, what?"

"You—you—you—"

"We might have guessed, when Franky picked up Wibley's toy gun!" gasped Bob.

"Yes, you might!" agreed Wibley. "Bit dense, aren't you? Well, if Smithy's changed his mind about handing me over to the police—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll get these things off," said Wibley. "I don't suppose Grimey really wants me! What do you think Smithy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I don't want Loder of the Sixth to see me like this, or he may think a relation is calling on him—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky ass!" roared the Bounder.

Smithy had shown plenty of pluck, and plenty of determination, in capturing that convict. He had been greatly bucked by success. He was not at all pleased to discover that the "convict" was the amateur actor of the Remove, in his part of the Hunted Man.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen," said Bob Cherry. "Wibley's no end of a jolly old actor, and no end of a leg-puller, and the laugh's on his side. But he mustn't pull the leg of the Remove, and frighten Bunter and Fishy out of their senses—such as they are! Bump him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good egg! Bump him!"

"Hold on," yelled Wibley, in alarm. "Here, stop it! Don't rumple my clobber—I paid a lot for these clothes! Mind my make-up—yarrrooooooh!"

Bump!

In the grasp of many hands, William Wibley smote the floor of the Remove passage.

Then he was rolled headlong into his study, roaring. He was rolled and rumped and hustled and hustled till he hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels. When the grinning Removites crowded out of the study he sat up, gurgling for breath, with the beetling eyebrows hanging down by the corners, and stalling exuding from a dozen rents in his broad-arrow garb.

"Urrrgh!" gurgled Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wurrrrgh! You silly asses! Yurrrgh!"

The Removites roared, and William Wibley gurgled. Still roaring, they cleared off, and left him to gurgle.



Harry Wharton & Co. lifted the crippled Larry Lascelles on to the convict's sturdy back. Then Harry Wharton led the way, picking out the easiest route over the rocks, the convict following with his burden. It was hard and rough going, and the convict panted and sweated under the strain!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Every Picture Tells a Story!

HARRY WHARTON frowned. "That's rather rotten!" he said.

"The rottenfulness is preposterous!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

It was the following afternoon which was Wednesday and a half-holiday. The chums of the Remove were about to start for Cliff House School, where they had an appointment with Marjorie & Co. for a picnic on the Pike, overlooking the sea. They were looking into the Rag for Billy Bunter, who was to be a member of the picnic party.

Bunter had explained that as his sister Bessie was going with Marjorie and Clara, he had to go, too, to look after her.

Brotherly affection was not, as a rule, strongly developed in the Bunter clan, and the chums of the Remove could not help suspecting that Billy would not have considered it so urgent to look after Bessie on any occasion but that of a picnic. However, it was settled that Bunter was going. And as he had retired to the Rag, after dinner, to rest in an armchair till it was time to start, the juniors looked in for him.

Bunter was no longer in the armchair when they found him. He was getting busy. The door of the Rag was wide open against the wall inside, and Bunter was standing by it, with a chalk in his fat hand, and a grin on his fat features.

He was chalking on the door.

Bunter was no artist. There was a chalked picture on the door, which was so cleverly done that it obviously was not Billy Bunter's work. It represented a convict in broad-arrow garb,

shaking hands with a senior schoolboy, whose features bore a distinct resemblance to Gerald Loder's. The Famous Five, as they looked at it, guessed Skinner's work at once. Skinner could draw, and they had no doubt that this was his handiwork.

Bunter was adding an inscription in chalk. Evidently he had seen Skinner at work, and was adding improvements.

He was chalking a scroll, issuing from the mouth of the pictured convict, bearing the words:

"FANCY MEETING YOU, LODER, OLD BEEN!"

The fat Owl grinned round at the chums of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, look at that!" he chuckled. "Funny, ain't it? You see, when the door's shut, everybody will see it from the passage—see? He, he, he!"

"You fat chump!" said Harry Wharton. "If Loder sees that—"

"Well, he's bound to see it sooner or later," grinned Bunter. "Make him sit up—what? He, he, he!"

"He will make you sit up, you fat ass!" said Bob Cherry.

"Well, I never did it!" said Bunter. "I'm only putting in a few things Skinner forgot. You see, we don't want any mistake about the matter. We want Loder to know it's meant for him."

"We don't want anything of the kind," said Harry, frowning. "It's all rot to suppose that that convict is a relation of Loder's, for one thing; and if he is, it's not Loder's fault."

"It's Loder's fault he gave me lines yesterday," said Bunter. "And he gave Wibley a fearful whopping, and doubled his impot. Wib's got to stay

in this afternoon and write it out. And—"

"Well, he's a beastly bully, but this sort of thing is hitting below the belt," said the captain of the Remove. "Rub it out!"

"No jolly fear!"

"We're ready to start for Cliff House, fathead! Can't keep ladies waiting. Rub that rubbish out, and come on."

"I'll watch it!" said Bunter warmly. "Loder's a beast, isn't he? And he can jolly well know what fellows here think of him and his convict relations, and—"

"Shut up!" gasped Nugent, as he caught sight of a figure coming up the passage.

It was that of Loder of the Sixth.

Loder's face wore a dark scowl. Evidently he suspected something going on in the Rag. No doubt Skinner, after completing his work of art, had let fall a word or two, so that the news would reach Loder's ears. Anyhow, there was Loder coming up the passage with long strides.

Bunter, who did not see him coming, did not shut up. He saw no reason for shutting up—not seeing Loder—neither was he very willing to shut up.

"Well, I think it's pretty thick, a Greyfriars man having relations in prison!" Bunter rattled on cheerfully. "Loder ought to leave the school, really. The Head ought to give him a hint to go. Convicts, and all that—What are you making faces at me for, Nugent?"

"Rub it out—quick!" breathed Nugent.

"Shan't! Loder's going to see it."

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His CONVICT COUSIN!



FRANK RICHARDS

(Continued from page 13.)

and see what we think of his Blackmoor relations, and— Oh crikey!"

Bunter broke off as Loder of the Sixth strode in, with a furious face. The chalk dropped from Bunter's nerveless fingers, and his jaw dropped at the same moment, his fat knees knocking together.

"Oh lor'!" he groaned.

He was fairly caught.

Loder had heard what he was saying. And now that he was inside the Rag, he saw what was chalked on the door.

The Famous Five stood silent and dismayed. They were very far from approving of Skinner's gibes on this painful subject. Loder was generally loathed. Still, this was outside the limit, in the opinion of the Famous Five.

Loder's face, as he looked at the chalked picture, went from red to pale, and from pale to red again. Whether No. 22 of Blackmoor was his relative or not, this kind of thing was distinctly unpleasant.

"You young rotters!" he panted. "You cheeky young scoundrels!"

"I—I say, I—I never did it, Loder!" squeaked Bunter. "I—I say, I—I found it done, and—and I—I never touched the chalk."

"You've just dropped it!"

"I—I mean, I—I only picked it up."

"You're all in this!" said Loder, with a furious glare at the Famous Five. "Well, we'll see what your Form-master thinks of it. We'll see whether you can lie yourselves out of it as Skinner did yesterday."

"We had nothing to do with it, Loder," said Harry Wharton quietly. "We've only just come into the room, and—"

"Don't tell me lies! Keep them for Quelch!" snarled Loder. "I'm going to fetch your Form-master here to see what you've done!"

"We've nothing to do with it!"

"And—and I haven't, either!" gasped Bunter. "I never put those words on it, Loder! All these fellows are witnesses. They saw me—"

"Leave that exactly as it is till Quelch comes here!" said Loder. "You'll go to the Head for a flogging for this!" He made a step to leave the Rag, and then stepped back. "No, I won't trust you. You'd have it rubbed out by the time Quelch got here, and tell him lies. Here, Walker!"

"Hallo!" answered Walker of the Sixth, from the distance.

"Come here!"

James Walker came into the Rag, looking surprised. He stared at the chalked door, and grinned. But the grin faded from his face at Loder's fierce look.

"I say, that's pretty thick!" said Walker. "I'd give the whole crew six all round, Loder."

"I'm going to fetch their Form-master

to see it. Wait here and see that they don't touch it while I'm gone."

"Oh, all right!"

Gerald Loder stamped out of the Rag. Billy Bunter blinked uneasily at Walker, who was grinning again now that his pal Loder was gone, and jerked a handkerchief from his pocket. Bunter was anxious for that work of art to cease to exist before Mr. Quelch could view it.

Walker reached out, and cheerfully smacked the fat Owl's head.

"Leave that alone!" he said.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"You fags know anything about that convict sportsman?" asked Walker. "Is he really a relation of Loder's?"

"We don't know anything about him, and don't care!" answered Harry. "And we had nothing to do with that silly rot on the door."

Walker grinned.

"Better tell Quelch that," he remarked. "Loder seems to think you had."

"And we're not waiting here!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "It's a half-holiday, and we're going out."

"You're not going out yet," said Walker. "You're going to stay here till Loder brings your beak!"

"We're due at Cliff House," said Harry. "And we really had nothing to do with that, Walker."

Walker shrugged his shoulders.

"You're staying here!" he said.

"Look here! Goodness knows where Quelch may be, and how long Loder may be getting him here!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "We can't keep the girls waiting at Cliff House. We've jolly well got to start!"

"Do!" said Walker. "I'll jolly soon stop you!"

Walker planted himself in the doorway.

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut up, you fat idiot!" growled Bob. "Why didn't you rub it out when we told you, you fat fooler?"

"Beast!"

"Look here, Walker—"

"Chuck it!" said Walker.

The Famous Five exchanged glances. They were very much disposed to up-end Walker, and walk over him, and start. But Walker was a prefect, and up-ending a prefect was a fearfully serious matter. They realised that there was nothing doing, in fact, and that they could only wait till their Form-master came, even if it meant Marjorie & Co. starting without them. And as Mr. Quelch was not, so to speak, hung up on a nail, to be taken down when required, they could not tell how long they had to wait.

In the distressing circumstances there was only one solace, which was to kick Bunter. Which they accordingly did—with the result that Mr. Quelch, when he did arrive at last, was greeted by the sound of fiendish howls waking every echo of the Rag.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Not Guilty!

HENRY SAMUEL QUELCH rustled into the Rag, with a grim brow. Loder followed him in, breathing fury.

Mr. Quelch, evidently, had listened to the tale of woe. The glance he gave those six members of his Form, as he entered, was almost scarifying. Then he fixed his eyes on the chalked picture on the door.

Grimmer and grimmer grew his brow.

"Who did this?" he inquired, in a deep voice. "Bunter! Loder tells me that you had the chalk in your hand."

"Oh! No, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never touched it!"

"There is chalk on your fingers, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

"They were all in it, sir!" hooted Loder. "Am I to be insulted like this, Mr. Quelch, because a man escaped from prison happens to have the same name as myself? The man is no connection of mine—I had never even heard of him—"

"That is quite immaterial, Loder! No boy in my Form shall insult a Sixth Form prefect without undergoing the severest punishment!" said Mr. Quelch. "You may safely leave this matter in my hands, Loder. This is an outrage, and the perpetrator shall be taken before Dr. Locke, and I shall request the Head to administer a flogging."

"Ow! I never!"

"Silence, Bunter! Obviously, part of this is your work, no other member of my Form would spell 'bean' with two E's. But I cannot believe that so stupid and clumsy a boy could draw such a picture. It is done by a more skilled hand than yours. Wharton, is this your work?"

"No, sir!"

"Which of you drew this picture?"

"Not one of us, sir!" said the captain of the Remove. "We saw it when we came to this room, to call Bunter to come over to Cliff House with us."

Loder gave him a savage look.

"Mr. Quelch is not likely to believe such barefaced lies, Wharton," he snarled.

"It is the truth," said Harry, with a contemptuous glance at the bully of the Sixth. "Our Form-master knows that we should not tell him lies."

"If you give me your word, Wharton—"

"I do, sir."

"I am bound to accept Wharton's word, Loder! I am assured that he would not stand before me and utter falsehoods."

"Thank you, sir!" said Harry. "And I'm quite sure, sir, that Bunter never did it, either. He couldn't draw like that."

"Or lor'! It wasn't me, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I saw it there, sir, and—and just picked up the—the chalk! I never chalked those words on it, sir! And it was only a joke, too! I—I thought Loder might be—be amused, sir."

Loder did not look amused.

"You may be silent, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "I am quite aware of your part in this disgraceful proceeding, and I shall cane you for it, and detain you for this half-holiday."

"Oh crikey!"

"But the perpetrator shall be found, and taken to the headmaster for a flogging!" said Mr. Quelch. "I hope that it may not prove to be a boy in my Form."

Loder ground his teeth.

"They were all in it, sir! I heard them discussing it as I came to the room. I knew something was going on here, and found them, and heard them—"

"You did not see any of these boys chalking this disgraceful nonsense on the door, Loder?"

"It was done before I got here! Bunter had the chalk in his hand—"

"I shall deal with Bunter! There is no reason to suppose that these other boys were concerned in the matter, and I am bound to accept their assurance on that point."

"Then I shall go to the Head, sir!" roared Loder. "If you are going to let those young scoundrels off—"

"What?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I think you forget yourself, Loder. How dare you raise your voice to me? I repeat, how dare you?"

"Cheese it, old man!" whispered Walker.

But Loder was too infuriated to "cheese" it.

"I'm going to the Head!" he shouted. "I'm going to report those lying young rascals to the Head!"

"You may please yourself about placing the matter before Dr. Locke, Loder. As you desire to report boys of my Form, for a fault of which I am convinced that they are not guilty, I will accompany you. Wharton, you will remain here for the present. Bunter, go to my study, and wait for me there."

"I—I—I say, sir—"

"Go!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

And Billy Bunter quaked, and went.

Loder tramped away furiously down the passage, Mr. Quelch whisking after him, with frowning brow and rustling gown. Walker strolled away, grinning.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Looks like getting to Cliff House for that jolly old picnic on the Pike, doesn't it?"

"It do—it does!" groaned Nugent.

"Well, we've got to wait!" said Harry. "It was that tick Skinner did it, of course! But he won't be spotted."

"Loder's a fool and a rotter!" growled Johnny Bull. "Quelch knows we were telling the truth, and the Head will know, when Quelch tells him. The old bean won't send for us."

"We've got to wait, all the same! Blow Loder!" growled Bob Cherry. "I say, I'm rather beginning to think that jolly old convict really is a relation of his. Why is he so frantic about it?"

"Looks like it, by gum."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Quelch."

The Remove master had not been long with the Head. The juniors eyed him rather anxiously, as he came back.

"You may go, my boys!" said Quelch, kindly. "Dr. Locke was quite satisfied with my assurance that I accepted your word on this subject."

"Thank you, sir!" said Harry.

"You may take a duster and obliterate that obnoxious picture before you go!" added Mr. Quelch.

Bob Cherry took a duster, and the obnoxious picture was duly obliterated. Then the Famous Five, at long last, were able to get away. They sprinted down to the bike-shed for their machines and started for Cliff House.

Billy Bunter, after all, was not a member of the picnic party. Billy Bunter, in Mr. Quelch's study, was undergoing "six," and from Quelch's window, loud yells were wafted across the quad, indicating that Bunter was not enjoying the process.

After which, Bunter was taken to the Form-room, where Mr. Quelch kindly provided him with an exercise in deponent verbs, to keep him busy till five o'clock.

He had Wibley's company in the Form-room, if that was any comfort. William Wibley was wading through lines for Loder.

For these two members of the Remove it was not a happy half-holiday. Which, no doubt, was some comfort to Loder of the Sixth, and consoled him a little for the escape of his other victims.

"That beast Loder!" mumbled Billy Bunter, over his deponent verbs.

"That rotter Loder!" hissed Wibley, over his Latin lines.

"Bother the beast!" groaned Bunter.

"Blow the brute!" growled Wibley. "I'd jolly well make him sit up, if I could!" moaned Bunter.

"I'd jolly well make him sit up—and I can!" said Wibley. "Let him wait a bit—that's all! I know how! Let him jolly well wait!"

"I say, old chap, what are you going to do?" asked Bunter, eagerly. "I say, I'll help, if—if if there's no risk, you know. That's important."

"There's risk—and you're too fat-headed to help!" answered Wibley.

"Yah!" grunted Bunter.

And he settled down wearily to deponent verbs—while Wibley scribbled endless Virgil, and Harry Wharton & Co. arrived, rather breathless, at Cliff House, to learn that the picnickers had started an hour ago!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Picnic on the Pike!

BESSIE BUNTER, the plump ornament of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School, came to a halt, gasped for breath, and fanned her fat face.

It was a warm afternoon for September, and Miss Elizabeth Bunter, like her brother Billy, at Greyfriars, had a considerable weight to carry. Moreover, Miss Bunter was also carrying a picnic basket up the rugged slopes of the Pike.

She halted, and plumped it down on a boulder and gave a grunt that was an echo of Billy's!

Marjorie Hazeldene was carrying another picnic basket. Clara Trevlyn had camp-stools, a tea-making outfit, and other impedimenta. Neither Marjorie nor Clara showed signs of fatigue after a mile walk, though most of the mile was upward. But Bessie Bunter seemed to have had enough—or a little more than enough.

"I say, you girls!" gasped Bessie.

"Oh, come on!" said Clara.

"Only a quarter of a mile farther, Bessie!" said Marjorie encouragingly.

"You can do a quarter of a mile!"

"I could do five miles, easier than either of you could!" retorted Bessie.

"Then get a move on!" said Clara.

"That basket's heavy!" said Bessie.

"I'll scratch Billy for not coming. I'd have made him carry the basket."

"Easier to carry it yourself than to make Billy carry it!" said Clara. "Anyhow, your brother isn't here, so come on."

"I can't understand Billy not turning up!" said Miss Bunter. "He's generally keen on a picnic. Of course, he's lazy! But why haven't the others turned up, either? Lazy lot!"

"Might have been detained, or something!" suggested Marjorie gently. "I'm sure they would have come if they could. If they're able to come, after all, they'll follow on."

"Fat lot of good that will be, after I've carried the basket!" said Miss Bunter warmly. "What is wanted is somebody to carry the basket."

"Oh, come on!" said Clara.

"Why not stop here?" suggested Bessie. "If the boys are coming, it will be less distance for them to follow—see?"

"But it's such a nice spot up by the cave!" said Marjorie. "A lovely view out over the sea—"

"I've seen the sea before!" grunted Bessie. "Besides, what is there to look at in the sea? Only a lot of water!"

"But there's nowhere to camp here!" urged Marjorie.

Grunt, from Bessie!

The track winding up the steep sides

of the Pike was rugged and rocky, narrow and irregular. So far, the girls were on the inland side, with a view chiefly of rugged rocks and boulders and stunted thickets. Farther on, where the path wound round the seaward side of the Pike, there was a glorious view of the North Sea, and ships far out on the blue waters. Even Bessie admitted that the present spot was not ideal for camping. But anything was better than walking.

"Will you come on, Bessie?" asked Miss Clara. "Don't be such a slacker!"

"Cat!" said Bessie.

"Well, I'm going on!"

"Stop!" hooted Bessie. "I can hear the boys coming! They can carry the things, if we wait for them to come up."

"Oh, wait a minute, Clara!" said Marjorie.

There was a ringing of footsteps on the stony track from below. Someone, as yet out of sight, was coming up the Pike, hidden from view, for the moment, by the rugged rocks and ridges.

The Pike was a solitary place; its steep slopes attracted few walkers, so it seemed probable to the Cliff House girls that those footsteps heralded the arrival of their Greyfriars friends. They waited and watched, and an athletic figure came swinging into view.

But it was not a Greyfriars junior. It was a Greyfriars master—no other than Larry Lascelles, the games master.

Larry, evidently, was filling his leisure hours, that sunny afternoon, by climbing the Pike. It was a good climb, if a man went to the summit, where a glorious view over land and sea was his reward.

All the girls knew Mr. Lascelles, and as he sighted them the young master smiled and raised his hat.

"I say, you girls, let's ask him to carry the things, as he's going up!" squeaked Bessie.

"Cheese it!" said Clara.

"Rot!" said Bessie. And as Mr. Lascelles came on, the plump schoolgirl from Cliff House called to him: "I say, Mr. Lascelles!"

"Yes?" said the games master of Greyfriars, halting.

"Are you going up past the cave?" asked Bessie.

"Yes; much farther, I hope!" answered Mr. Lascelles, with a smile.

"We're stopping at the cave," said Bessie. "If you're going that way—"

"Dry up, Bessie!"

"Shan't! If you're going that way, Mr. Lascelles, would you mind carrying this basket as far as the cave?"

Larry Lascelles laughed.

"I shall be very glad!" he answered.

"Pray hand it to me. Yours, also, Miss Hazeldene. And yours, Miss Trevlyn!"

"Oh, rot! We're not going to load you like that!" said Clara.

"My dear child, I shall carry the things quite easily," said Mr. Lascelles, and he took the three lots and marched on with them.

The Cliff House girls followed, Bessie grunting with satisfaction.

"Jolly lucky he came up, isn't it, you girls?" remarked Miss Bunter. "I thought of hiring old Giles' donkey to carry the things up, but Mr. Lascelles is quite as good as the donkey, or better."

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Clara, while Marjorie suppressed a laugh.

Bessie's words were quite audible to the obliging young man who was carrying the luggage. Marjorie and Clara could not help wondering

whether Mr. Lascelles felt flattered at being considered as good as Giles' donkey!

"After all, men ought to make themselves useful," continued Miss Bunter thoughtfully. "They're not very ornamental, are they?"

"Shut up!" murmured Clara. "Mr. Lascelles can hear you!"

"Oh, Mr. Lascelles is quite nice-looking!" said Bessie cheerfully. "In fact, I think him rather handsome!"

"Be quiet!" murmured Marjorie.

"Well, he is, you know!" said Bessie. "I heard Miss Bellew say so—to Miss Bullivant, too! The Bull just snorted. Miss Bellew gave me lines for listening. As if I was listening, you know! It's not a thing I would do—not like some girls. Miss Bellew said—"

"Be quiet!"

"She said—"

"Shut up!" hissed Clara.

Mr. Lascelles quickened his pace. The girls had to put on speed, to keep their property in sight.

"I say, don't walk so quick!" gasped Bessie Bunter. "I say, I'm out of breath! I say, call out to that silly idiot not to hurry, Marjorie!"

"Put it on!" said Clara.

"Urrgh! Cat! Oooogh!"

The bright blue sea burst into sight as they wound round the side of the Pike. Mr. Lascelles halted, on a level plateau of rock, facing the sea. In front of it was a sheer drop of twenty feet or more to the lower slopes. Behind it was a steep cliff, in the face of which a dusky cave opened. Beyond, the path wound on and upward, steeper and steeper. But this was the destination of the picnic party.

The Greyfriars games master set down his luggage, raised his hat to the Cliff House girls, and walked on. He disappeared round a corner of rock as Bessie came up, panting.

"Ow!" gasped Bessie. "I'm out of breath! What did that silly idiot hurry for? What did you silly duffers hurry for? Now I'm out of breath! I shall sit down and rest while you unpack."

"Do!" said Marjorie.

"It's beastly sunny here!" said Bessie, blinking round through the spectacles that were so like her brother Billy's. "I say, let's step into the cave. It's shady in the cave."

"Oh, all right."

The baskets were carried into the mouth of the cave. It was wide and open, though, deeper in the cliff, it narrowed, and was very dark and shadowy. Clara unpacked the tea-making outfit, and set up the spirit-stove. Marjorie unpacked the baskets. Bessie Bunter sat on a boulder and watched them through her big spectacles. Once or twice she gave an uneasy blink into the dusky depths of the cave.

"I say, you girls, did you hear anything?" she asked. "Do you think there's somebody in the cave?"

"Rot!" said Clara.

"Well, I heard something—"

"Only the wind!" said Marjorie. "There's never anybody here, Bessie."

"Well, there might be a tramp!" said Bessie.

"I can see a tramp climbing up here, to camp in a cave!" sniffed Clara. "Don't be an ass, Bessie!"

"Don't you be a cat!" said Bessie. "Somebody's been in this cave; you can see his footmarks."

"Rubbish!"

"Well, look!" snorted Bessie.

Clara declined to turn her attention from the spirit-stove, which was giving a little trouble, as spirit-stoves often do. But Marjorie looked round, and she

uttered a little exclamation. The floor of the cave, sheltered by the high arch of rock overhead, was dry—but the open Pike was very muddy in many places from recent rain. The girls' shoes had left a good many marks. But Bessie's fat finger was pointing to muddy tracks that led farther up the cave—farther than the girls had gone, and which disappeared into the gloom. And the tracks, which were those of a good-sized pair of boots, were obviously left by a man.

"Oh!" ejaculated Marjorie.

She stared at the signs on the cave floor, and then into the darkness ahead. Either someone was there, or had been there very recently.

"Bother the wind!" said Clara pettishly. "I can't get this beastly thing to light! Come and hold your hat, Marjorie."

"I think there is someone in the cave, as Bessie said, Clara."

"Well, we haven't bought the cave! Come and hold your hat, and keep the wind off this putrid stove."

"Oh, all right! But—"

"Rubbish!" said Clara.

Bessie Bunter jumped up.

"Look here, I'm not going to stay here if there is a tramp!" she squeaked.

"A tramp won't eat you, unless he takes you for an oyster!" said Clara over her shoulder. "And if he does take you for an oyster, you can tell him not to judge by appearances, can't you?"

"Cat!"

"There goes the match again—it's beastly windy here! Oh, blow! Hold your hat to keep the wind off, Marjorie! That's better—"

"I say, you girls, if it's a savage tramp—"

"Oh, dry up!"

"I'm not going to stay here to be robbed and murdered!" howled Bessie.

"I'll go and call Mr. Lascelles to come and search the cave—"

"Do not be alarmed!" came a voice from up the cave. "Please do not be alarmed, and do not call anyone. I will not hurt you!"

"Ow!" shrieked Bessie.

"Oh!" gasped Marjorie.

"Oh crumbs!" stuttered Clara.

The three girls stared blankly into the shadowy interior of the cave. From the shadows a figure emerged, and their hearts almost ceased to beat as they saw the brand of the broad arrow on his tattered garb.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

An Extraordinary Guest!

JAMES LODER, No. 22 of Blackmoor, stepped out of the encircling gloom into the sunlight of the cave-mouth.

Marjorie & Co. stared at him in horror. They had heard nothing at Cliff House of an escaped convict, and they were taken utterly by surprise by that terrifying apparition.

Tattered, gaunt, stubbly, haggard, looking twenty years older than his age, James Loder, of Blackmoor, was not a reassuring spectacle. Bessie Bunter, almost fainting with terror, clutched hold of Marjorie and Clara for support. Marjorie and Clara tried to pull themselves together but they could barely repress a scream of terror.

But the convict halted at a little distance, and made reassuring gestures. The wretched man was only too conscious of the horror his looks must inspire in the terrified schoolgirls.

"Do not be alarmed!" he repeated. "You are safe—quite safe! I would not hurt you for worlds! I will not come

near you—please do not be frightened! You have nothing to fear!"

"Ow!" squeaked Bessie. "Go away! Ow!"

"Who—who—who are you?" stammered Marjorie. Her voice was husky.

"I am a very unfortunate man, my dear young lady! I am afraid that appearances are against me, but I beg you not to be alarmed."

"You are a—a—a—" Marjorie faltered.

"I have escaped from prison," said No. 22 quietly. "Yes. But I give you my word, I will harm no one. I would not have let you know I was here, though I am starving, if you had not found it out."

"Ow!" moaned Bessie. "Ow! Go away! Ow!"

"I will go away!" said No. 22. "This is my last refuge, but now it is discovered I will go! I will take any risk rather than alarm you! But—one of you spoke of someone—if there is anyone at hand, I do not wish to be seen—will you allow me to remain a few minutes till the coast is clear? But if you are afraid of me, I will go at once."

Marjorie smiled tremulously.

She realised that there was nothing to fear. Terrifying as the convict looked, his voice was low and pleasant, his manner reassuring. A man in his terrible situation might have been expected to think only of himself—yet it was clear that he was thinking chiefly of the alarm he had caused the school-girls.

"Did you say you were starving?" breathed Marjorie. "We have food here—we came for a picnic."

No. 22 looked at her.

"My dear young lady," he said, "yesterday a schoolboy gave me a bar of chocolate. It is all I have tasted for four days."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bessie Bunter.

Even Bessie realised that there was no danger by this time. And Bessie Bunter could feel for anyone who had not eaten for days. The bare thought of it made her shudder.

"I—I say, let him have some of the grub, you girls!" gasped Bessie. "We've got lots, as the boys are not coming."

"If you would show me so much kindness—" said No. 22.

"Yes, rather!" said Clara Trevlyn.

Clara had quite recovered. There was a glimmer of amusement in her eyes. This was a tremendous adventure: a thrilling tale to tell in the studies at Cliff House. Certainly, an escaped convict, as a rule, was likely to be a rather dangerous character—about as safe to approach as a tiger in the jungle. But it was quite plain that this particular convict was not dangerous. Far from being ferocious, his manner was utterly apologetic.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Clara. "Fancy picnicking with an escaped convict! Babs and Mabs will wish they had come when we tell them."

Convict No. 22 smiled—a smile that was very pleasant, in spite of the haggard gauntness of his face.

"May I sit down?" he asked.

Marjorie smiled and nodded. James Loder, No. 22, sat down on a boulder, still keeping his distance.

"Wait a tick while I make the tea!" said Clara.

She filled the kettle from the water-bottle, and set it on the spirit stove. Marjorie unpacked sandwiches, and handed them to the convict.

He grabbed the sandwiches—and then, with a deep flush overspreading his gaunt face, checked himself.

"Don't wait for us!" said Clara. "Go ahead!"

He smiled again, and went ahead.
"I think I'll begin, too!" said Bessie Bunter.

And she did.
There was an ample supply in the two baskets. The Famous Five and Billy Bunter had been expected to join in that picnic, and the Cliff House girls were "standing" it. So the supply was extensive. If the juniors arrived, after all, from Greyfriars, there would be short commons for them. But as they had not joined up, Marjorie and Clara had no doubt that they had bagged a detention for the half-holiday.

No. 22 ate, and ate, and ate. If Billy Bunter had been there, he could hardly have done better.

And as he ate and ate, a glimmer of colour came into his pale cheeks, and a renewed brightness into his haggard eyes.

Miss Clara made the tea, and a cup was handed to the extraordinary guest at the picnic.

"Blessed if I know whether we're doing right or not!" remarked Miss Clara. "But, dash it all, it can't be wrong to give a hungry man food."

"That's all right, Clara!" said Bessie Bunter. "If he was still in prison, he would be given food, of course. Fancy going without food!"

"You are not doing wrong, my dear children!" said No. 22. "To feed the hungry is always right, even if they are sinners."

"Right as rain!" agreed Clara.
"I say, have some of the jam tart," said Bessie hospitably. "There's lots! And it's jolly nice."

No. 22, smiling, accepted jam tart.
"Another cup of tea?" asked Clara.
"Please!"

"I say, have you really been in prison?" asked Bessie Bunter, blinking at James Loder curiously through her big spectacles. "I say, what was it like?"

"It was very unpleasant!" said No. 22 briefly.

"Did they give you enough to eat?"
"The fare was not so good as this," said No. 22. "Neither was the company anything like so agreeable."

"I say, what did you do?" continued Bessie. Now that her fears were completely relieved, Bessie gave way to the inquisitiveness that was the besetting sin of the Bunter tribe.

"Nothing!" said No. 22.

"Oh, draw it mild, you know!" said Bessie. "People don't get sent to prison for nothing."

"A mistake was made, my dear young lady! Such a thing happens very seldom, but it happened, unfortunately, in my case."

Bessie winked.
"Of course, you would say that!" she remarked.

"Shut up, Bessie!" said Clara.

"Well, it's gammon, of course!" said Bessie. "Still, you don't seem a very bad man! I say, what's your name?"

"Guests mustn't be asked questions at a picnic, Bessie!" said Clara. "If you keep on bothering our guest, I will put some jam on your hair."

"Well, I expect his name's in the papers," said Bessie. "I expect it's all over the place, only we're not allowed to read newspapers at Cliff House."

"My name is Loder," said No. 22 quickly. "James Loder! As you say, it is in all the papers."

"Loder!" repeated Bessie. "I know that name! There's a chap at Greyfriars named Loder—my brother Billy says he's a beast. Is he a relation of yours?"

"If he was, my dear young lady, I

should not be likely to claim relationship in my present circumstances!" said No. 22. "Loder is not an uncommon name."

"I say, what were you before—'hem—before—'"

"Shut up, Bessie!"

"Shan't!"

No. 22 laughed. The whole party were quite at their ease now, strange and almost incredible as it seemed to the Cliff House girls to be picnicking on the Pike with an escaped convict.

"I do not mind telling you," said James Loder, "I was a games master in a school before I had bad luck."

"A games master, like Mr. Lascelles!" said Bessie. "I say, you're fearfully old for a games master, aren't you?"

James Loder laughed again.

"Perhaps I look more than my age at present," he said. "You see me under very unfavourable circumstances. I am twenty-eight."

"Oh crikey!" said Bessie in astonishment. "You look about fifty now." She blinked at James Loder. "Still, you look younger now you've had something to eat, and a cup of tea. I say, you do want a wash and a shave."

"I forgot to bring my soap from Blackmoor!" said No. 22 gravely. "And I unfortunately omitted to pack my dressing-case before I left."

The Cliff House girls laughed.

The change that had come over the haggard convict was amazing. Years seemed to have dropped from him; though it was still hard to believe that that grimy, stubbly, gaunt face was the face of a youth of twenty-eight. But in his manner there was something very frank and boyish.

"But you haven't told us yet what you did!" said Bessie inquisitively.

"Shut up, Bessie, you little idiot!" said Clara.

(Continued on next page.)

(1)

Jack Wingate, you know, is the brother
Of George, our most popular skipper.
They're not in the least like each other;
In every way George is a ripper,
But Jack of the Third's rather weak.
His nature is full of surprises:
He isn't a rotter or sneak,
But he likes what his brother despises.

(2)

And that is a matter for wonder
That brothers should differ so queerly;
They're often whole oceans asunder,
Opposed to each other, or nearly.
The Nugents are this way inclined
(The Todds are not brothers but cousins),
The Boleovers, too; you will find
You can think of examples by dozens.

(3)

Now George, than whom no one is finer,
Knows perfectly well of the leaning
To recklessness shown by his minor,
But doesn't much like intervening.
He keeps a wide eye on the group
With whom his young brother's frequenting,
And when he gets close to the soup,
He's jerked back at once to repenting.

(5)

Then answered this human disaster:
"I say, I want someone to mention
To Wiggins"—the name of his master—
"That I'm too knocked out for detention.
Just ask the old fatted to step
Along here, and I'll show him my bruises.
And then he will let me off prep!"
I went off to make his excuses.



(8)

Said Wingate to me: "Fetch some water,
And iodine, too!" And I hurried,
While Jack was resigned to the slaughter
And Wiggins looked on, rather worried.
Then George bathed the bruise with great
care,
And lo and behold, the thing vanished!
He rubbed, and the bruise wasn't there!
The beastly black bruise had been banished!

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

Last week our long-haired poet gave a glowing account of George Wingate. Now read what he has to say about

JACK WINGATE,

(Wingate minor), of the Third Form, brother of the Greyfriars Captain.



(4)

I ran across Jack in his study
Just after the football was over;
He sat there exhausted and muddy,
Like a wreck on the Goodwins at Dover.
A bloodstained old rag round his knee,
Another one binding his elbow,
With bruises both frequent and free.
"Great Scott!" I said. "Not feeling
well, do?"

(6)

Old Wiggins was quite sympathetic—
He's a kind, unsuspecting old stager.
And I, feeling still energetic,
Went off to inform Wingate major.
Said I, "Your young brother's been hacked
At footer and bruised pretty badly.
He's a hospital case, that's a fact!"
And I shook my head slowly and sadly.



(7)

He strode off and left me to follow.
We found his young minor explaining
To Wiggins, with groans deep and hollow,
How badly his bruises were paining.
He stopped, and he gave me a glare
When I brought in old George for
the visit.
He gritted his teeth in despair.
That's really not gratitude, is it?

(9)

He pulled off the bandages gory,
And no single wound was revealed!
It's true, though it sounds like a story.
The wounds were miraculously healed!
To George and old Wiggins in vain
Jack looked, for their hearts were now
steel ones.
I went—when I saw him again
He'd got some more wounds on him—real
ones!

"Shan't! I dare say it wasn't anything very bad, because you seem really quite a nice man!" said Bessie, blinking at No. 22.

"No, it was not very bad," said James Loder. "It was nothing at all, though I am afraid you cannot believe that."

"Well, it's rather steep, isn't it?" said Bessie.

"Very!" sighed James Loder.

"Well, if you didn't do it, what were you supposed to have done?" asked Bessie. "What was it that happened?"

"A robbery happened, Miss Bunter."

"At the school where you were games master?" asked Bessie.

"Yes."

"Where was that?"

"In Devonshire."

"But if you didn't do it, did somebody else?" asked Bessie.

"Evidently."

"And who was it?"

The flash that came into James Loder's eyes startled the Cliff House girls. Evidently Bessie's question had brought a bitter recollection to his mind. He did not answer; but rose from the boulder on which he was seated.

"I thank you, my dear young ladies!" he said. "Although I fear that you cannot believe me, it is an innocent man you have saved from the pangs of hunger. Now I had better go. You cannot, and must not, keep secret that you have seen me here—and this is no longer a hiding-place for me."

"I say—" began Bessie.

The convict lifted his tattered cap, stepped out of the cave, and disappeared from sight.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Fight on the Pike!

LARRY LASCELLES started—so suddenly that he almost lost his footing on the high, rocky ledge where he was standing.

Since leaving the Cliff House girls at the cave, the games master of Greyfriars had clambered up, higher and higher, on the steep Pike, the way growing steeper and steeper at every step.

He was still at some distance from the summit when he stopped on the narrow ledge, to get his breath for the still steeper climb to the top and to look at the vast panorama of sea and land spread about him.

The ledge where he had stopped was almost directly over the mouth of the cave, though a considerable distance higher up the Pike.

Looking from it, the games master had a wide view of the North Sea, rolling bright and blue in the September sunshine. Casually, his glance fell on the rocky slopes below him, and on the plateau in front of the cave.

It was then that he started, or, rather, jumped, at the sight of a startling figure below—a figure in tattered broad-arrow garb.

"By gad!" ejaculated Mr. Lascelles, staring down at the figure.

The Cliff House girls had heard nothing of an escaped convict, but Larry Lascelles had. Even if he had never heard of the escape from Blackmoor, he would have known what the man was as he looked down at him. The broad arrows told their own tale.

"By gad!" he repeated.

His jaw set grimly.

The convict had appeared suddenly in

view from the rocks below. It occurred to Mr. Lascelles that he might have seen, or heard, the Cliff House girls, and have been startled out of some hiding-place. Certainly it did not occur to him that No. 22 was leaving the cave after picnicking with Marjorie & Co.!

Of James Loder, No. 22, of Blackmoor, Larry Lascelles knew nothing, except that he was an escaped convict—whom it was every law-abiding citizen's duty to help the police to recapture. Larry was a kind-hearted man; and probably he would have approved of the picnickers' hospitality to a starving wretch. But he would never have dreamed of allowing him to escape—and he did not think of it now.

His mind was made up on the spot.

He had set out that afternoon to climb to the summit of the Pike. That was washed out now. He turned back and descended.

It was a dangerous path for putting on speed; but he had no time to lose, and he leaped nimbly from rock to rock, ledge to ledge, coming down the steep like a chamois on the Alps. It had taken him a good half-hour to climb to the ledge above the cave—but the descent occupied less than a tenth of that time. It was a matter of a very few minutes before he leaped, panting, on the plateau in front of the cave—and at a short distance he spotted the broad arrows. James Loder, No. 22, had gone to the extreme verge of the rocky plateau, where it dropped away sheer to a lower slope twenty feet down. He was kneeling by the edge and peering over.

It was possible for an active man, with a nerve of iron, to clamber down the precipice; and that, perhaps, was in the hunted man's thoughts. It would be known that he had been seen in the cave, and he would be searched for there; and it was probable that he was thinking of getting away by a way that would leave no trace for a pursuer.

But the sounds made by Larry Lascelles in his hurried descent from above caught his ear and he looked round. He sprang to his feet as the games master of Greyfriars came in view on the plateau.

A blaze came into his eyes.

Straight at him, across the rocky level, came Larry. The hunted man gave a look to right and left. There was no escape for him—except by clambering down the precipice, and he had no time for that. He stood, with blazing eyes and clenched hands, facing the games master of Greyfriars, his lips drawn back from his teeth in a fierce snarl. He looked, at that moment, very unlike the soft-spoken, apologetic fugitive the schoolgirls had seen in the cave.

"Stand back!" he muttered, between his set teeth.

Mr. Lascelles came to a stop, within a few paces of him. There was, for a moment, compassion on his face as he read the haggard desperation in the convict's. But that did not alter his determination.

"You are James Loder, the escaped convict from Blackmoor Prison!" said the greyfriars games master quietly. "It is my duty to secure you."

"Hands off!" muttered No. 22. "I want to harm no one—but I warn you that I will fight for my liberty."

"That is as you choose!" said Mr. Lascelles. "I shall, at all events, do my best to secure you, as is my duty, or any man's."

He stepped grimly towards the convict.

No. 22 backed a pace, and then another pace. But he could go no further, without stumbling over the edge of the precipice.

He faced the Greyfriars master savagely.

"Come on, then!" he snarled.

And, as Larry Lascelles' hand was outstretched to grasp him, he closed with the games master, and they struggled.

There was a cry from the cave.

The sound of the struggle caused the Cliff House girls to look out, and they stared at the two figures, locked in a desperate grapple almost on the verge of the precipice.

"Oh!" exclaimed Marjorie, catching her breath. "It is Mr. Lascelles—"

"I—I wish he hadn't seen him!" breathed Clara. "But—but—"

"He's got him!" said Bessie Bunter. "Oh crikey!"

There was a clattering of feet on the rock, a fierce panting of breath. The Cliff House girls watched spellbound.

Larry Lascelles was strong and sturdy. The convict seemed a powerful man. For long, long minutes, the fierce struggle went on, neither gaining the upper hand.

Marjorie gave a sudden shriek.

"Oh! They're falling!"

The struggling figures stumbled on the edge of the precipice. In a flash, before either could make a movement to save himself, before they could even unlock their fierce grip, they had disappeared over the edge, vanishing from the horrified eyes of the schoolgirls.

"Oh!" panted Clara. "They will be killed!"

Bessie Bunter screamed loudly. Marjorie and Clara ran across to the edge of the plateau.

Peering over the dizzy verge, they looked down.

Twenty feet below, the two figures, still locked together, had struck the lower slope and were rolling downward. Larry Lascelles had been underneath when they struck. The girls had a glimpse of his face, and it was white as chalk. They could see that he was hurt.

Bessie was still screaming. But Marjorie and Clara, in horrified silence, watched.

The two figures separated as they rolled down the rugged slope below. It was a steep slope of rough rock, leveling out some distance down. The convict reached the level first, and they saw him bound to his feet.

He must have been badly shaken and bruised, but otherwise, he seemed unhurt. It was not so with Mr. Lascelles.

He rolled on the level and lay where he came to a stop. The girls saw him make an effort to rise and sink back again. The sound of a groan floated up to their ears.

Convict No. 22 stood panting.

His eyes were savagely on his enemy for some moments, in expectation of a further attack. But as he saw that the games master of Greyfriars lay helpless, his expression changed.

He dashed his hand across his brow and stepped towards Mr. Lascelles. Larry looked up at him quietly.

"You're hurt!" panted the convict.

"My leg's broken!" answered the games master in a steady voice. "I am at your mercy now."

"You asked for it—my liberty is all I have!" muttered the convict. "Heaven knows I'm sorry you're hurt—you should have left me alone—"

"It was my duty to secure you, if I could," answered Mr. Lascelles. "and that duty I should still do, if I were able. I am helpless now."



"Come out, you young fool!" snarled Loder. He dragged the curtain aside—his cane ready in his hand. The next moment he staggered back, with a startled cry. It was not a Greyfriars junior he saw standing there—but a bulky figure in convict garb. "Silence!" hissed the disguised Wibley. "Silence, on your life!"

Convict No. 22 stood looking down at him, panting for breath. The struggle and the fall had told on him. He panted, and panted.

From above, Marjorie and Clara looked down, with pale faces. Bessie Bunter was still screaming. There was a scrambling of footsteps on the path up the Pike, and a powerful voice came through Bessie's shrill shrieks:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's up?"

"Bob!" exclaimed Marjorie.

The two girls turned from the edge of the cliff as the Famous Five came on the plateau and ran across to them with surprise and alarm in their faces.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Convict—and Good Samaritan!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. had left their bikes at the porter's lodge, at Cliff House, and followed up the Pike.

They were an hour behind time, owing to Loder of the Sixth, which could not be helped. But they knew that the picnic was to take place at the cave, half-way up the Pike, and they tramped up the winding path to join Marjorie & Co. there.

They had almost reached the plateau in front of the cave, facing the sea, when Bessie Bunter's terrific screaming reached their ears, and they put on speed, racing the last hundred yards of the way.

Bessie, standing by the cave, was screaming, as if for a wager. Marjorie and Clara were at the edge of the plateau, which extended some distance before the cave. They turned as Bob Cherry shouted. The puzzled juniors raced across to them. Nobody seemed to be hurt, and they could see no cause of alarm, but it was clear that there was something very much amiss.

"What is it, Marjorie?" exclaimed Bob anxiously.

"What's happened?" panted Wharton.

Marjorie pointed to the edge of the plateau.

"Mr. Lascelles—and the convict—they have fallen over! Mr. Lascelles has been hurt—"

"Good heavens!"

In a moment, the Famous Five were on their hands and knees at the rocky verge, peering over.

They could see Larry Lascelles, stretched below, with a face like chalk, set with pain. Over him bent the tattered, gaunt figure of a man in broad arrows.

The first impression of the juniors was that the convict was attacking, or about to attack, the fallen games master. But a second glance showed that that was not the case.

No. 22 was lifting the fallen man and placing him in an easier position, to ease the injured leg.

His voice, husky and broken, reached the amazed ears of the juniors.

"I'm sorry—sorry! Why couldn't you have let me alone? I'd rather have let you take me—rather than this! I've got to help you—I can't leave you here! What can I do?"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"That—that's the convict we heard about on the radio on Monday!" gasped Frank Nugent. "No. 22—it must be!"

"James Loder!" said Harry. "He's trying to help Lascelles! Blessed if I should have expected—"

"He's a queer customer for a convict!" said Johnny Bull.

"By gum, he is!"

"The queerfulness is terrific!"

Mr. Lascelles was speaking, but his faint voice did not reach the juniors.

They heard the convict's deeper voice reply:

"You're hurt—badly hurt! I can't abandon you! The game's up for me! It had to end, sooner or later! I shall carry you down! You can't lie here—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" shouted Bob Cherry.

The man in broad arrows started, and stared up. Mr. Lascelles' colourless face was turned towards the juniors, looking down from above.

"We're coming down!" shouted Bob. "It won't take us long to reach you!"

The Famous Five backed from the edge of the precipice. There was a way down, at a little distance, by returning along the lower path and clambering across the rocks. Harry called out quickly to Marjorie.

"We're getting round to them, Marjorie! Lascelles seems to be knocked out—we shall have to carry him down to the road! Can you get down to Pegg, and get a trap or a cart or something, ready on the road?"

"At once," answered Marjorie. "Hurry!"

The juniors ran for the path.

They disappeared from view, and Marjorie and Clara went back to Bessie Bunter, who was still waking the echoes with a series of wild shrieks.

"Do be quiet, Bessie!" exclaimed Clara, taking hold of a plump arm and giving Miss Bunter a shake.

"Aren't they killed?" asked Bessie.

"No, duffer—Mr. Lascelles is hurt, but the other man's all right. Anyhow, kicking up a row doesn't help."

"Cat!" said Bessie.

However, she ceased to shriek, which was a relief.

"I say, where are you going?" exclaimed Bessie, as the two girls hurried away.

Marjorie looked back.

"We're going down to Pegg, to get the trap from the Anchor, to take Mr. Lascelles back to Greyfriars."

"What about the baskets?" exclaimed Bessie. "What about the food? There's still a lot left—"

"Eat it, and the baskets, too!" hooted Clara.

"Cat!"

Marjorie and Clara ran down the path. Miss Elizabeth Bunter, left on her own, ejaculated "Cats," and then returned to the scene of the picnic. Clara's advice seemed to her good, so far, at least, as the food was concerned.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. were scrambling, in hot haste, over the rugged slopes of the Pike, to reach, by a roundabout way, the spot where Mr. Lascelles and No. 22 had fallen.

They lost no time, but it was more than a quarter of an hour before they were able to reach the spot.

They fully expected to find the convict gone when they arrived there. But Convict No. 22 was not gone. Convict as he was, a desperate fugitive from the law, he had not abandoned the man who had been injured in attempting to capture him. He was kneeling on one knee, supporting Larry Lascelles against the other, when the Famous Five came breathlessly up.

He glanced round at them.

"Help me!" he said briefly. "We must get him down to the road! Help me to get him on my back!"

The juniors, hardly knowing what to do in the strange circumstances, looked at Mr. Lascelles for instructions.

The games master of Greyfriars smiled faintly.

"My leg is hurt!" he said. "I am afraid it is broken! I cannot move! Perhaps you lads could help me down to the road."

"That's why we've come, sir!" said Harry. "But—but this man—"

"You know who he is, I imagine!" said Mr. Lascelles. "Do not interfere with him. He cannot escape for long, in any case."

"Do you refuse my help?" asked Convict No. 22.

"You must be out of your senses, James Loder!" said Mr. Lascelles. "If you seek to escape, you have no time to lose. I cannot stop you, and I will not allow the boys to do so. Go!"

The convict shook his head.

"I shall carry you down to the road," he said stubbornly. "You will go more easily on my back than carried like a bundle by the boys."

"That is certainly true," said Mr. Lascelles, "but—"

"That is enough!" snapped James Loder. "Help him on my back." He stooped to take the burden.

Mr. Lascelles made the juniors a sign to obey. They lifted him on to the convict's sturdy back, bent to receive him. Convict No. 22 was evidently a powerful man, for Larry Lascelles was no lightweight. The convict took the weight steadily.

None of the juniors, of course, could have carried the games master singly. They could have carried him down, by combining their efforts, but it would have been extremely difficult over the rugged, sloping rocks, and certainly very painful for his crippled limb. On the convict's broad back, he was carried easily, and with as much comfort to him as was possible. As it was, he had to set his teeth to keep back a groan of pain.

Harry Wharton led the way, picking out the easiest route over the rocks, the convict following with his burden, the

other fellows doing what they could to help.

It was hard and rough going, and the convict panted and sweated under his burden. But he did not stop for a moment till they reached the path down the Pike.

There was still more than half a mile to go, before the nearest point on the road could be reached. Convict No. 22 set down his burden for a few minutes to rest.

"Leave me here!" said Mr. Lascelles. "I can remain here, while the boys go for help."

The man shook his head.

"You want a doctor's care at once," he answered. "You know that as well as I do. It is my fault, and I shall not abandon you."

"It is not your fault!" said Larry Lascelles. "And if I had known more of you, I think I should not have sought to capture you. Convict or not, you are a white man."

Convict No. 22 made no answer to that. For five minutes he rested, breathing hard and deep. Then, at a sign from him, the juniors lifted Mr. Lascelles on his back again, and he tramped down the path.

Harry Wharton & Co. went with him in silence. The whole thing was amazing to them. They had taken it for granted that the escaped convict was a savage ruffian, to be hunted like a wild animal. It was hard to believe their eyes, as they saw him struggling manfully under his heavy burden, risking, or rather throwing away, his last chance of escape in the service of the man who had sought to recapture him for Blackmoor.

It seemed an endless time before the panting, almost exhausted man staggered into the road at long last.

The trap from the Anchor was already there; Marjorie and Clara had had ample time, and they were waiting with the trap. The ruddy-cheeked ostler from the Anchor, who held the reins, stared at the man in broad arrows, with his eyes bulging from his ruddy face.

The Famous Five lifted Mr. Lascelles into the trap. Convict No. 22 panting, reeled against the vehicle, his strength utterly spent. The driver gazed at him as if mesmerised.

"Drive to Dr. Pillbury's, in Friardale, George!" said Mr. Lascelles, when the juniors had made him as comfortable as they could, on rugs in the trap.

"Yessir!" gasped George, still amazedly eyeing the convict.

"You boys will inform the Head of what has happened!" said Mr. Lascelles. "That is, when you return to the school."

"Certainly, sir!" answered Harry.

The convict, still panting, drew himself away from the trap, as George gathered up the reins. He cast a quick glance up and down the road. There was no one in sight.

"You will not interfere with that man, my boys!" said Mr. Lascelles.

"No fear, sir—not after what he's done!" said Bob.

"I must thank you, James Loder!" added Mr. Lascelles. "Whatever you are, you are not a bad man! Give me your hand before I go!"

Convict No. 22 looked at him.

"A convict's hand!" he said.

"A helping and friendly hand!" said Mr. Lascelles quietly. And he gave the hand of Convict No. 22 a grip, and then the trap bowled away.

Convict No. 22 stood staring after it a moment. The schoolboys and school-girls stood watching him, in silence, curiously. A cyclist appeared on the road, from the direction of Pegg. Convict No. 22 gave a start, ran across the

road, and disappeared into the wood on the other side.

He was gone from sight in a second. "Well!" said Bob Cherry, with a deep breath. "This beats Banagher!"

"The beatfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Johnny Bull rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"That chap's a convict," he said. "Goodness knows what he's done! But he's not a bad sort! We've got a Loder at Greyfriars worse than that one!"

And the juniors chuckled.

"And what about the picnic?" asked Miss Clara. "If you fellows want any tea, you'd better get a move on, before Bessie scoffs the lot."

"We've got to report to the Head!" said Harry doubtfully. "But—but I suppose there's no hurry—"

"None!" said Miss Clara, decidedly.

"None, I—I think!" said Marjorie.

"Put it plain!" said Johnny Bull. "As soon as we take in the news, the Head will get on the phone to Inspector Grimes. I think that man ought to have a chance, after being such a brick to Larry. And I think Larry didn't mean us to hurry, either, by the way he put it. Let's go and scoff that jolly old feed—if Bessie's left any to scoff."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Let's!" he said.

And they did.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Loder Listens!

"L ODER!"

"James Loder!"

"You've seen the convict?"

"What's he like?"

"I say, you fellows, was he anything like Loder of the Sixth?"

"Is he caught?"

"Tell us about it."

Gerald Loder, of the Sixth Form, gritted his teeth. He was standing under the old Greyfriars elms, with a letter in his hand, which he had been reading for the tenth or twelfth time. Voices floated to his ears, from a crowd of fellows in the quadrangle.

Harry Wharton & Co. were the centre of the crowd.

They had returned to the school, and made their report to the Head—who, as Johnny Bull predicted, immediately got on the phone to Inspector Grimes at Courtfield. But the Greyfriars fellows already knew that Mr. Lascelles had been knocked out, as there had been a telephone message from Dr. Pillbury's house at Friardale, where the games master was staying for the present. It was known that his leg was badly injured, and that he would not be able to carry on at the school again that term. Everybody, of course, wanted to know all about it, and as the Famous Five had been on the spot, they were in great request for news.

Nobody noticed Loder of the Sixth, leaning on the trunk of an elm, the letter in his hand. But every word came to his ears.

"Oh, the rotter, the rotter!" muttered Loder.

He was thinking of James Loder. It was a far cry from Blackmoor, in the west, to Kent, in the extreme south-east; why could not Convict No. 22 have fled in some other direction? A miserable chance had led his fleeing footsteps in the direction of Greyfriars School—where his name was known!

That name, uttered on the radio, had struck Gerald Loder like a blow in the face. For though he had never seen the man who bore it, he knew that he had a relative of that name.

Major Loder, his father, was rich. But he had relatives who were far from wealthy, and among them was his Cousin James—a man ten or more years older than himself, whom he had never even met.

He knew, and cared, nothing about James. He had hardly ever given him a thought. All he had heard of James was that he had some sort of a position in a West-Country school, and that there had been some trouble.

What the trouble was his father had never told him, and he had never inquired, or cared to inquire; but he knew, by some sort of instinct, that it was bad trouble, and the less said about it the better.

He had little doubt, or none, that James had gone to the bad, and that it behoved the family to have nothing whatever to do with him, and even to forget his existence, if possible.

Loder was not the kind of fellow to concern himself about a man who was down on his luck, whether he had gone to the bad, or was a victim of circumstances; and he had found it quite easy to dismiss his Cousin James entirely from his mind.

The radio announcement had reminded him, very disagreeably, of the forgotten James.

Instantly he knew what he had never known, or cared to know—that James had gone to the bad with a crash.

He knew it, or, at least, he did not doubt it; but, hoping against hope, as it were, he wrote at once to his father for information. The letter in his hand was the major’s reply.

It gave him no definite information; but he could read it easily enough between the lines. It ran:

“Dear Gerald,—The less you know of your Cousin James, the better. He has disgraced his family, and his name, and that is enough. Never speak of him, or think of him. With regard to the radio announcement you mention, dismiss it from your mind. The name is not an uncommon one. And no one will dream of connecting such a character with you.

“Your affectionate father,
“H. LODER.”

Loder crumpled the letter in his hand. He knew perfectly well what it meant; he had known from the first. His father would say nothing definite; but if No. 22 had not been his Cousin James, obviously the major would have said so plainly at once. He knew, for a certainty, that James Loder, No. 22, of Blackmoor, was his cousin. As for the old major’s opinion that no one would connect such a character with him, he knew that the thought had passed through every mind at Greyfriars.

He did not realise that that was largely his own fault.

A bully could not expect to be liked. He would never have heard that radio announcement in Tom Brown’s study at all, had he not been playing the tyrant. Even had there been no connection between him and the escaped convict, the similarity of name gave fellows a chance for hints and innuendoes, and there were fellows who would have made the most of it. But there was a connection, and Loder had as good as admitted it, by his bitter and vindictive anger on the subject. It had never even occurred to him that a fellow like Skinner of the Remove could ever give him trouble. But a fellow like Skinner had a chance now.

With the letter crumpled in his hand,

Gerald Loder listened to the buzz of voices in the quad.

He had hoped every hour to hear that the man from Blackmoor had been recaptured, or, at least, that he had been traced in another county. And this was what he heard—that the man had been seen only a few miles from the school—that Greyfriars juniors had seen him—that the topic, which he had hoped might die away, had become an item of news that thrilled all Greyfriars.

He gritted his teeth in helpless rage. The man, if he had a rag of decency, would have kept clear of his cousin’s school. He could have fled in a dozen directions. But he had to remember that James Loder, whether he had a rag of decency or not, probably did not even know that his young Cousin Gerald was at Greyfriars School—probably hardly remembered the existence of a cousin he had never seen. The rich Loders kept their distance from the poor Loders, and it was quite unlikely that James knew to what school his rich uncle’s son had been sent, which, in the circumstances, was rather unfortunate, but could hardly be laid to James’ account.

Not that Gerald Loder cared, or wanted to be puffed to the hapless man who had disgraced his family name. His only feeling towards him was one of bitter hatred, for the harm he had done, wilfully or not.

Billy Bunter’s excited squeak came to his ears, through the buzz of voices.

“I say, you fellows, can’t you tell a chap? If you’ve seen him, you jolly well know what he looks like! Is he like Loder of the Sixth?”

Loder almost trembled as he listened for the reply to that question. His Cousin James was ten or twelve years older than he, but it was likely enough that there was some family resemblance. And five Greyfriars fellows had seen the man. It was absolutely rotten luck.

He almost gasped with relief as he heard Harry Wharton’s voice, in reply to the Owl of the Remove.

“Not in the least!”
“Oh, really, Wharton! I say, are you sure of that?” asked the fat Owl, in a disappointed tone.

“Quite, fathead!”
“Not the least little bit like our jolly old Loder?” asked the Bounder’s mocking voice.

“Well, it wasn’t easy to see exactly what he looked like,” said Harry. “He had more than a week’s beard on his face, and he was grimy all over, and fearfully gaunt and haggard.”

“He would look jolly different if he was pushed up!” said Bob Cherry. “But horrid as he looked, he struck me as rather a good-looking man in ordinary times.”

“Oh, nothing like Loder, then?” said Bunter.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I don’t see any reason to suppose that he’s a relation of Loder’s,” went on Harry. “Only Loder’s getting into such a fearful temper about it. And that’s nothing, really, as he has a rotten temper, anyhow.”

“He looked knocked all of a heap when he heard it on the radio in Browney’s study,” said Peter Todd.

“Well, yes; but that’s really nothing—”

“It would be a jolt for any fellow,”

said Frank Nugent. “There may be convicts named Nugent; but I shouldn’t like to hear of one wandering about here.”

“Well, Loder’s jolly touchy about it!” said Skinner. “A chap can’t mention twenty-two footballers without Loder going off at the deep end.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“The fact is, he’s not a bad chap,” said Harry Wharton. “Of course, he must have done something pretty bad to be a convict at all. I suppose there’s no getting out of that. But look at what he did to-day! Larry tried to catch him, and busted his leg, and the man carried him down the Pike on his back. He might have run into a policeman while he was doing it, and his game would have been up. He can’t be bad.”

“He busted Larry’s leg for him!” said Wibley.

“Well, yes. But, dash it all, a man can’t be expected to give in while he’s got a kick in him. Larry knew the risk he was taking. And I can tell you, he owes the man no grudge for it.”

“Larry’s a sportsman,” said Bob. “It was rough luck on Larry; and he was doing quite right to grab an escaped convict, if he could. Still, you can’t be surprised at the man putting up a scrap; and they fell over the cliff quite by accident. And the jolly old convict carried him down the Pike on his back afterwards.”

“A queer bird for a convict!” said Vernon-Smith. “What the thump did he do that for?”

“Well, he must be a decent man, of sorts, or he wouldn’t have done it,” said Harry. “Even a convict isn’t all bad, I suppose.”

“The badfulness does not seem to be terrific,” remarked Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

“Can’t see our jolly old Loder doing it—what?” grinned the Bounder.

“Well, hardly.”

“Better go to Loder’s study, and tell him about it,” suggested Hazeldene. “It may make him proud of his relation.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“But where’s the man now?” asked Tom Brown.

“He dodged into the woods,” answered Harry. “He can’t get away for long, I suppose. I—I suppose one ought not to want him to, considering what he is. But—but after what he did for old Larry, I can’t help wishing he’d get clear. I don’t believe he can have done anything very bad before he went to Blackmoor.”

“They don’t sent a man to Blackmoor for nothing,” said the Bounder. “It must have been pretty serious.”

“Anybody know what it was?” asked Squiff.

“I say, you fellows, let’s ask Loder! I suppose he knows all about it,” said Billy Bunter. “You go and ask him, Wharton.”

“I can see myself doing it!” said the captain of the Remove.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Loder’s jolly dangerous these days,”

(Continued on next page.)

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said Bob Cherry. "He wanted to have us up before the Head this afternoon, but Quelch put the kybosh on him. The fact is, I rather think that they sent the wrong Loder to Blackmoor."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"Oh, my hat! Look out!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "Here comes Loder!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Loder of the Sixth came striding from the elms. A sudden silence fell on the crowd of juniors. The trunk on which Loder had been leaning had been between them and the prefect, and they had not had the remotest idea that the bully of the Sixth was at hand. They knew now.

Loder's face was pale with fury as he came up. Every word he had heard had been as bitter as gall to him; but it was upon the Famous Five that his bitterness was concentrated; and that because they were the fellows who had seen his Cousin James. Bob's thoughtless remarks had given him a chance.

"Cherry!" he snarled.

Bob's face was crimson.

"Yes, Loder!" he stammered. "I—I say, I'm sorry! I never saw you—never had an idea you'd hear me. Only a joke, Loder."

"You think that a joke?" asked Loder venomously. "Do you think your headmaster would call it a joke to suggest that a Greyfriars prefect ought to be sent to Blackmoor?"

"I—I never meant exactly—"

"I know what you said!" snapped Loder. "Follow me to my study."

Bob drew a deep breath.

"You ought not to have heard what I said, Loder!" he answered. "You've no right to take any notice of it."

"I've told you to follow me."

"Oh, I know you're going to lick me!" exclaimed Bob contemptuously. "You've got a chance, and you're going to make the most of it. Well, listeners never hear any good of themselves!"

Bob followed the bully of the Sixth into the House.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wibley's Wheeze!

WILLIAM WIBLEY looked into Study No. 1 in the Remove.

What he beheld there was not cheering to the view.

Bob Cherry was leaning on the table, his usually ruddy face quite pale. Wharton and Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh were with him—sad and silent and sympathetic. Bob was uttering no sound. He was not the fellow to make a fuss about a whopping. But it was very clear that the whopping he had had in Loder's study was rather a record.

"Had it bad?" asked Wibley.

Bob nodded, without speaking.

"That rotten bully!" said Johnny Bull, breathing hard. "He's taken it out of Bob. He'd have been glad to serve us all the same! Listening behind a tree, the rotten cur!"

"He jumped at the chance!" said Bob, in a low voice. "It's because he's wild about that convict. He doesn't like us having seen him. I've had six—as if the brute was beating carpet! I'll make him sit up for it somehow!"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I've rather thought it was mean of Skinner, making so much of the convict," he said slowly. "But if Loder's going to carry on like this we'll let him have the convict back for it."

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

"Good egg!" said Wibley. "That's what I've come to speak about. I had

six from the brute yesterday—and doubled lines to-day. And I know a way of making that beastly tick tired of ragging the Remove."

Bob made no remark; neither did his comrades look enthusiastic. They were going on the warpath; there was no question about that. But they placed great reliance on themselves, and very little on William Wibley.

Wibley grinned rather sarcastically.

"Like to hear it?" he inquired.

"Oh, carry on!" said Wharton.

"You know about my new play, the Hunted Man—"

"Bother your new play!" said the captain of the Remove. "Blow your Hunted Man! Take your amateur theatricals away, and bury them!"

"I've got that convict costume—the one you saw me in yesterday," con-

Wibley.

"Shove it on the fire!" said Johnny Bull crossly. "Think we want to hear about that rot now?"

"Yes," said Wibley calmly. "I suppose you remember that when you saw me in the box-room in that outfit you took me for the convict—"

"Run away and play!"

"If Loder had seen me he would have thought I was his jolly old relation," went on Wibley. "What do you think?"

"Well, he didn't see you, you ass! Ring off!"

"He's going to see me!" said Wibley.

"Fathead! Are you going to invite Loder to see our play, when it comes off?" asked Nugent. "Blow the play, anyhow! Bless the play!"

"If you'd shut up a minute, and use your ears, instead of your chins, I'd tell you all about it!" said Wibley.

"Go and tell some other study!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Bless, and blow and bother your silly theatrical stunts!"

"And shut the door after you!" said Bob.

William Wibley gave a snort. It was clear that there was a plentiful lack of enthusiasm in Study No. 1.

"Blow away, Wib, old chap!" said Harry. "We really don't want to hear about amateur theatricals now."

Instead of blowing away, Wibley shut the study door, with himself on the inner side of it. Wibley had come there to expound his wheeze, whatever it was, and he was going to expound it.

"Give me a minute to explain," he said. "You can shut up for a minute, even in this study."

"You cheeky ass!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Buzz off!"

"I've been planning it while I was doing my lines in the Form-room this afternoon," said Wibley unheeding. "It's the stunt of the term—the catch of the season—the real big noise."

"Rot!"

"The rotfulness is terrific!"

"Loder's never heard of that outfit, and at the present moment he's got convicts on the brain!" said Wibley. "You fellows took me for the convict in that outfit; so will Loder! But Loder won't play the giddy ox, like you fellows did—trying to catch the convict. He won't want his jolly old relative handed over to the police in Greyfriars."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Goodness knows what he would do if he saw you in that rig and took you for James Loder!" he said. "Only, he would jolly well skin you when he spotted it was you."

"I'm chancing that," said Wibley. "It's a bit risky, perhaps. But that's the game. Loder's going to meet his relation this evening—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"He's going to find Convict No. 22 hiding in his study—"

"Oh crikey!"

"What do you think he will feel like, finding his Blackmoor relation at Greyfriars?" asked Wibley.

The juniors chuckled. Even Bob Cherry's anguished face melted into a grin.

"By gum! If you had the nerve—"

said Johnny Bull.

"Tons of it!" said Wibley cheerfully. "There's not a lot of risk, if James is really a relation of Loder's. He's absolutely certain to keep him dark if he can—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's the stunt!" said Wibley. "I fancy it will make that rotten bully sit up a little more than by putting glue in his inkpot. What?"

"But you don't know that James is really a relation of his," said Harry. "And if he isn't, Loder will jump at the chance of getting the man taken. He may collar you—"

"Can you see Loder collaring a desperate convict?" asked Wibley.

"More likely to hide under the bed!"

"Well, yes; I suppose so!" admitted the captain of the Remove. "You looked a pretty desperate character in that convict outfit. Loder would be scared stiff if he took you for the genuine article—and I suppose he would, the same as we did."

"No supposing about it—he will!" said Wibley calmly. "And when I've got him where I want him I'll make him sorry for the whoppings he's handed out. I'm jolly well not going to be whopped because he's got relations at Blackmoor!"

Wibley had got the Famous Five interested at last. No longer bidding Wib to buzz off and blow away, the chums of the Remove entered into a deep discussion on the subject.

That Loder of the Sixth had to be made to suffer for his sins was passed unanimously. And Wibley's remarkable wheeze seemed like the real "goods," if Wib had the nerve to carry it out. And on that point there was no doubt. Wib cared nothing for risks, when there was a chance of displaying his powers in the theatrical line.

There could be no doubt that the convict get-up which had deceived the eyes of the Removites, who knew Wibley so well, would pass muster with Loder of the Sixth. It had been rather damaged by the handling the juniors had given Wibley, but that mattered nothing; a hunted convict would naturally look a little tattered.

Before prep that evening a good many Remove men were let into the secret; and over prep there were a good many chuckles and chortles in Remove studies.

After prep the japers prepared for business.

It was settled that Loder was to make the convict's acquaintance in his study. For Wibley to get to Loder's study in the Sixth unobserved, got up as a convict, was, of course, impracticable. But there was a very easy way out of that difficulty.

Wibley was going to take the outfit to Loder's study in a bundle, and do his dressing and making-up on the spot.

A Remove fellow carrying a bundle to a Sixth Form study was not, of course, likely to draw any special attention.

Only it was necessary to make sure that Loder was not there at the time. That was not difficult. Loder was not likely to stay in his study all the evening.

Peter Todd was dispatched to the prefects'-room to ask Wingate a



"Look out of the window and see if the coast's clear!" grunted the convict. Loder leaned out of the window and looked. As he did so, the convict suddenly grasped the sash and slammed it down on the prefect's back, pinning him securely. Loder struggled to heave up the sash, but he heaved in vain!

question about junior games practices. He came back with the news that Loder was in the prefects'-room.

A minute after that news was received Wibley cut down the Sixth Form passageway with a bundle under his arm, and disappeared into Loder's study.

Silently he locked the door after he was inside.

After which, Harry Wharton & Co. kept a wary eye on the door of the prefects'-room. Wibley wanted ten minutes clear—and if Loder made a move to go back to his study under that period, the juniors were prepared to delay him by any measures that might be needed!

But, as it happened, Loder remained more than half an hour in the prefects'-room. Long before then William Wibley was through, and Loder's study door was unlocked again.

When the bully of the Sixth appeared in sight, half a dozen juniors watched him with smiling faces. Loder glanced round at them, scowling.

"Wharton!" he snapped. "Less noise there! Take a hundred lines!"

Harry Wharton breathed hard. But he answered meekly:

"Yes, Loder!"

Loder would have preferred a less meek answer, as an excuse for wielding the ashplant. He scowled at the captain of the Remove, and stalked away to his study. And the chums of the Remove grinned at one another as they heard his door slam.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Awful for Loder!

GERALD LODER threw himself into his armchair, sorted out a cigarette, and lighted it. He scowled blackly through the smoke of the cigarette.

In the prefects'-room, of course, no allusion had been made to James Loder and the rumour that he was related to Loder of the Sixth. Great men of the Sixth Form were not likely to "chip" on such a subject.

All the same, Loder had noticed, or in his touchy manner had fancied that he had noticed, that the seniors were thinking about it. He was almost sure that he had seen Sykes wink at Gwynne when the convict was mentioned in connection with Larry Lascelles' accident. Wingate and North had been laughing over something—and what could it be, except Loder's personal affairs?

Whether the other seniors were thinking of it, or not, Loder certainly was; and he could not help fancying that it was in every other fellow's thoughts also. He went to his study in a black and savage temper. But he drew a little solace from the memory of the tremendous whipping he had given Bob Cherry.

He would have liked to give the Famous Five all the same, not because they had given any offence, but because they had seen James Loder, and talked about him in the quad. The mere mention of the name was, to Loder, like a red rag to a bull! Anyhow, he had had a pretext for whopping one of them, and he would not be long in finding pretexts for whopping the others.

He gave that important matter his deepest thought as he sat and smoked in his study. But his reflections were interrupted by a rustling sound in the bed-alcove.

Sixth Form studies were bed-rooms as well. Loder's bed was in a deep alcove in the wall, curtained off in the day-time.

That curtain, rustling and stirring, showed that somebody was hidden in the alcove by the bed.

Loder, as he noted it, threw his

cigarette into the grate, and rose to his feet, with a glitter in his eyes.

He picked up the ashplant from his table, and stepped towards the bed-curtain.

Someone was there, and he had no doubt that it was some junior, who had come to the study to play some trick, and who had dodged out of sight when he entered. Bob Cherry, very likely, or one of his friends!

Loder gloated in anticipation. Even a truculent bully like Loder had to have some excuse for laying on the cane. He could not have had a better excuse than this—ragging in a prefect's study!

It was not Wharton—he had seen him as he came along. One of the other young rascals! Anyhow, it was somebody—somebody he could whop, somebody upon whom he could wreak his savage temper, somebody who fancied that James Loder might be a relative of his!

"You can come out of that!" said Loder. "I can hear you, and I know you are there! Come out of it, you young scoundrel!"

There was no reply, and the curtain ceased to stir.

"You young fool, I tell you I know you are there!" snarled Loder. "Come out of it, I say!"

And as there was no answer and no movement, he grabbed the curtain with his left hand, and dragged it aside—the cane ready for a whop!

The next moment he staggered back with a startled cry. The cane sagged in his hand.

It was not a Greyfriars junior he saw standing there! It was a short but bulky figure, in the repulsive broad-arrow garb, with a grimy and stubbly face and beetling brows.

Loder staggered back two or three
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paces, in his alarm and astonishment, his jaw dropping.

The "convict" made a sudden bound, and placed himself between Loder and the door.

"Silence!" he hissed. "Silence, on your life!"

Never had William Wibley played a part more dramatically in all his theatrical stunts in the Remove.

Loder gazed at him, with dropping jaw.

He was not thinking of giving the alarm. He was overwhelmed with horror and dismay and dread.

The convict—there, in his study at Greyfriars! In his wildest imaginings he had never dreamed of anything so bad as that! James Loder—at Greyfriars!

That it was Convict No. 22 he could not, of course, doubt—any more than the Removites could have doubted when they cornered him in the box-room!

As he had never even seen the man, he was, of course, quite unaware what he might look like. And a grimy, stubbly, beetle-browed convict was just what he expected of James.

He gazed at him speechlessly.

"Silence!" repeated the convict, in a hissing voice. "I am a hunted man—hunted for liberty and life! I will not be taken alive!"

Loder gasped for breath.

Then the convict, watching his face narrowly, gave a sudden, dramatic start.

"Gerald!" he exclaimed.

This was a sheer chance shot on Wibley's part, for he knew nothing whatever about the Loders, and had not the slightest knowledge whether James was related to Gerald or not. Only, like the other fellows, he thought it probable, from the way Loder had acted.

Chance shot as it was, it struck right home!

Loder gave a choked gasp.

"You—you—you're James!" he panted.

It was an admission! Certainly, if unrelated to Convict No. 22, Loder would not have been likely to speak of him, or think of him, as James!

"I am James!" assented the Remove convict. "You know me?"

"Oh!" breathed Loder. "I—I—I know who you must be, of course! How did you know me—you've never seen me before. I've never seen you till now. You—you villain, have you come here to disgrace me?"

It was that thought that was uppermost in Loder's mind; so much so, that it excluded even fear of the convict. But for that unfortunate relationship, no doubt Loder would have been scared by the discovery of a desperate-looking convict in his study. But in his horror of the man being seen in the school, he did not even think of danger from the ruffian.

"I am a hunted man!" said the beetle-browed ruffian, in a husky voice. "I must have help! Blood is thicker than water!"

Loder started, as if he had been stung.

"You—you—you think I will help you? Are you mad? I'd give a year of my life to see you safe back in prison!" he hissed, between his teeth.

"Do you wish your—your relation to be seized here before all your school? Do you wish them to know?"

"They don't know you're my cousin, you villain! They will not believe you if you tell them!"

Wibley grinned under his make-up. He could not help it, at the thought of Loder admitting, to a Remove junior, that James Loder, Convict No. 22, was his cousin!

Loder gave him a black and bitter look.

"You came here for help! You picked my study!" he breathed. "Oh, you villain! How did you get into the school? How could you have got in? You must have been seen. Did you get in by the window? Yes; that was it. I dare say you were used to such

tricks, you scoundrel—thief and rascal! Go the way you came! Get out by the window, and go!"

"And that is how you speak to your—your cousin?"

"You are nothing to me! Will you go?"

"I will not go!" The convict shook his head. "This study is a good deal more comfortable than—than Blackmoor. I'm staying here."

"Are you mad?" hissed Loder. "Do you think you can stay here? As soon as you are seen, you will be taken. Any fellow may come in any minute. If you've got a grain of sense, drop from the window, and go! It's dark in the quad—you've a chance of getting clear."

"I'm staying here!" repeated the convict stubbornly.

"Can't you see you're asking for it?" panted Loder shrilly. "You'll be found here and arrested!"

"I'm at the end of my tether. This is my last refuge. I'm staying here."

"You can't! Look here! I'll turn off the light, and open the window, and—and give you a chance."

"You'll do nothing of the kind! Is this what you call hospitality to a relation—a cousin—you've not seen for years?" demanded the convict indignantly.

"I've never seen you at all till now, as you know, you villain!" groaned Loder. "Will you go?"

"No, I won't!"

"Your last chance!" said Loder hoarsely. "Go, or I'll yell out that you're here, and your game's up!"

"You mean that?"

"Every word!" hissed Loder.

"Then carry on," said the convict. He grasped the door handle, and threw the study door wide open. "Yell as loud as you like! Let all Greyfriars know that your cousin from Blackmoor is here! Yell!"

Loder did not yell. He gave a gasp of horror; bounded at the door, shut it again, and turned the key in the lock.

At any cost, he had to keep that awful visitor dark—to prevent Greyfriars from learning, if he could, that his relative from Blackmoor was in his study.

Somehow or other he had to get rid of the ruffian—get rid of him unseen and unheard. But, above all, he had to prevent other Greyfriars fellows from seeing him, and learning who and what he was.

He gave a gasp of relief when the study door was shut and locked.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

A High Old Time in Loder's Study!

WILLIAM WIBLEY grinned cheerily under his make-up. Wib was enjoying this, though Loder was not.

Wibley was still feeling some twinges from Loder's cane. Really, it would have paid Loder not to have laid it on quite so hard, when he had given Wibley of the Remove "six." Wibley was getting his own back now. And he was not done with Loder yet by a long way.

It was still nearly an hour to dorm. For that space of time, Loder of the Sixth was going to enjoy the company of his relative from Blackmoor!

Having locked the door, Loder stood with his back to it.



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"Will you go?" he panted.
 "No!" answered the Remove convict. "What about supper?"
 "Supper?" gasped Loder.
 "Do you think I've fed on the fat of the land since I got away from Blackmoor?" demanded the convict. "Have you anything to eat in your study?"

"N-no!"
 "Then go and get something. I'll wait here."

If looks could have slain, the career of the amateur actor of the Remove would have come to a sudden termination at that moment. Loder did not answer; but he crossed to his study cupboard. As a matter of fact, he had supplies there, having intended to ask his friends, Walker and Carne, to supper. And, as another matter of fact, Wibley was aware of it, having looked into the cupboard.

With his brain in a whirl, Loder handed out the foodstuffs, and set them on the table.

What he was going to do—what he could possibly do—he had no idea; only he hoped to keep that ruffian quiet, and persuade him to depart by the window before his presence was discovered. Once he was gone, the sooner the police got him the better—but not in Loder's study, with the whole school in a buzz of excitement.

He had no doubt that the convict was hungry. No. 22 must have been on short commons during the days he had evaded capture since his escape from Blackmoor.

But if he was hungry, the convict seemed very particular for a hungry man. Neither did he seem to have learned polished table manners at Blackmoor.

Loder set a meat pie on the table. The beetle-browed ruffian sniffed at it.

"What's that?" he snarled.
 "A—a—a pie! It's—it's a jolly good pie!" stammered Loder.

"It's not good enough for me. Find me something better!"

The convict picked up the pie, and hurled it, with a terrific crash, into the grate.

Crash! Smash! Clatter!
 The dish went into a dozen pieces! The pie scattered all over the fender.

Loder jumped. That crash must have been heard at a distance along the Sixth Form passage.

"I want something better than that!" snorted the convict. "Now, then, buck up! I've told you I'm hungry!"

"For goodness' sake be quiet!" panted Loder. "If you're heard here you—"

"What do I care?"
 "Do you want to be found here, and arrested?" hissed Loder.

"You seem to be more anxious about me than I am about myself!" sneered the convict. "You're an affectionate cousin, Gerald."

The look Loder gave him was not affectionate; but there was no doubt that he was more anxious for No. 22 than No. 22 seemed to be for him.

"Now, then, trot it out!" said the convict loudly.

"Lower your voice, for goodness' sake!" breathed Loder. "I tell you, any fellow may come along the passage, and—"

"I'm waiting!"

Loder ground his teeth. He handed out a dish of ham. Again the convict sniffed at the fare, picked up the dish, and hurled it into the grate.

Crash! Clang! Clatter!
 "That's not good enough," he said. "You'll have to do better than that,

Gerald. If you can't find me something decent, I'll go along the passage and look in at another study—"

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Loder.
 "I dare say your friends will stand me some supper, when I mention that I'm your cousin."

"Quiet!" gasped Loder.
 "Is that a pot of jam you've got there? Hand it over!"

Loder, trembling with rage and apprehension, handed over the pot of jam. The convict sniffed at the jam.

"That's whiffy!" he snorted. "We had better stuff than that at Blackmoor!"

Crash!
 The jam-pot smote the wall of the study, smashed, and fell in fragments on the floor. Jam streamed down the wall, and over Loder's carpet.

"You—you mad ruffian!" panted Loder. "I tell you—"

There was a tap at the door, and the handle turned. Loder was thankful that he had locked it.

"Hallo!" It was Wingate's voice. "What's the row here, Loder? Accident, or what?"

Evidently the crashing and smashing had been heard along the passage. Loder made the convict a frantic sign to be silent. The perspiration trickled down his face.

"N-no—no. It's all right, Wingate!" he called out. "I—I—I dropped something. It's all right."

"What the dickens are you locked in for, Loder?"

"Oh, leave me alone!" snapped Loder. "I suppose a man can sport his oak if he likes? I tell you it's all right!"

Wingate was heard to go back down the passage.

Loder gave the man from Blackmoor a furious glare.

"Will you be quiet now? If Wingate guessed that you were here, your game would be up? Do you want to be taken by the police in my study?"

"I'm waiting for supper!" snarled the convict. "Shut up, and hand out the grub!"

Loder handed out what was left. But it did not seem to meet with the approval of that extraordinary convict.

He picked up a cake, and pitched it across the study. A plate of biscuits followed it, crashing. Then a jar of marmalade landed on Loder's clock, and they dropped into the fender together.

Crash! Smash!
 "What the thump are you up to, Loder?" It was Walker's voice this time at the door. "Breaking up the happy home?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" howled Loder. "Leave me alone!"

Crash!

A ginger-beer bottle flew across the study, and banged on the door.

"What the thump!" he gasped. "I say, Loder—"

"Go away!" howled Loder. "Can't you clear off and mind your own business?"

"Have you gone potty?"
 "Oh, shut up!"

Walker was heard to tramp away, evidently much mystified. Loder wiped the perspiration from his brow. He turned an almost haggard look on the convict.

"Will you keep quiet? Can't you see you'll bring a crowd here, and they'll find you out? For your own sake—"

"For your sake, you mean!" sneered the man from Blackmoor. "You'd hand me over, fast enough, if you dared to let the fellows here know who I am."

"Will you go?" groaned Loder. "I've

nothing more to give you—you've smashed everything. For mercy's sake, go!"

"By the door?" sneered the convict.
 "No! No—no!" breathed Loder.
 "By the window! I'll let you out—I'll help you—I'll—I'll—"

"You'll do anything to get rid of me and keep it dark. That's the way you treat a near relation! By gum, I've a good mind to walk out of this study, and let everybody see me, and—"

"Don't!" breathed Loder. "Don't!"

"Well, perhaps I'd be safer, going by the window. You can put out the light, and look out of the window, and see if the coast's clear."

Loder fairly gasped with relief, at the idea of that dreadful visitor going, at last. All his wishes, all his desires, were concentrated in the one hope—that that awful man, his cousin from Blackmoor, would go, unseen by the school.

He turned off the light, drew back the blinds, and pushed up the lower sash of the window. The convict stepped to his side, with something in his hand.

Outside, the September evening was dark and misty. After lock-up, no Greyfriars fellow was out of the House. But it was possible that a master might be walking in the quad, or that Gosling, the porter, might be about. Gerald Loder scanned the shadowy quad anxiously.

"It's all right!" he whispered. "Cut, while you've got the chance!"

"Put your head out, and take a good look!" grunted the convict. "Is that a shadow—or what—look!"

Loder leaned out of the window and looked. As he did so, the convict suddenly grasped the sash, and slammed it down on his back.

There was a startled gasp from Loder.

The sash, jamming on his back, pinned him down, with his head and shoulders outside, the rest of him inside.

What that amazing and unexpected action, on the part of the convict, could possibly mean, Loder could not begin to guess. But he struggled to heave up the sash.

But he heaved in vain! The convict hung on the sash with one hand, his weight keeping it down. With the other hand, he wedged a fork in between the sash and the window-frame, effectually jamming it.

Loder was a helpless prisoner.

The convict stepped back in the study behind him. With all his strength, Loder heaved at the sash. But it was tightly jammed by the fork, and he could not shift it a quarter of an inch. He was a prisoner there, till the convict chose to release him.

He dared not call out. He could only wonder, dizzily, whether the man was out of his senses. It seemed like it—for what else could it mean? Whatever he might have expected No. 22 to do, he had not expected this, or anything like it. The convict had imprisoned him under the window-sash, thus cutting off his own escape by the window. What did it—what could it mean? Loder could only wriggle and wonder, in dizzy, dumbfounded amazement.

And while he wriggled, the "convict" drew the blinds behind him, turned on the light, and calmly divested himself of the garb and make-up of the "man from Blackmoor," washed off grease-paint at Loder's wash-basin, and became Wibley of the Remove again.

Wibley had his own clothes on, under the convict garb, and in five minutes he had changed back from a desperate-looking convict, into a Remove fellow.

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of Greyfriars. Loder, with his head outside the window, remained in happy ignorance of the change.

Having rolled up his "props" into a small bundle, Wibley quietly unlocked the study door, and peered out.

He had a glimpse of Wingate, leaving his study, and going along to Gwynne's. Then the passage was empty, and Wibley slipped out, closed the door after him, and walked cheerfully away.

Walker's study door was open, and Walker glanced carelessly at the junior as he passed, without any particular interest. William Wibley sauntered away to the Rag—and Loder, jammed in the study window, was left to wriggle!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Quite a Mystery!

"I SAY, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter.

Bunter rolled into the Rag, his fat face full of excitement, his little round eyes almost bulging through his big round spectacles.

"I say, you fellows!" he shrieked.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Anything up, Bunter?"

"I say—Loder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter. The juniors in the Rag were expecting to hear news of Loder—since Wibley had turned up there.

William Wibley, with a cheery grin on his face, was standing in the midst of a laughing crowd of Removites. His description of Loder's supper with the convict, and of Loder left wriggling in his study window, made them howl. There was no doubt that Wib had put paid to the bully of the Sixth! It was likely to be a long time before Gerald Loder forgot that visit from the man from Blackmoor!

"I say, you fellows—Loder!" stammered Bunter. "I say, something's happened to Loder in his study—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I hear that Walker went in, and found him!" gasped Bunter. "I say, he's jammed in his window—"

"Not really?" exclaimed Wibley.

"Yes, really, old chap—jammed in his window, with his head out in the quad, and his legs whisking about like anything in his study—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, nearly all the Sixth are there, and they're trying to get him out!" gasped Bunter. "I say, the window's jammed somehow, and they can't get him loose! I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's go and have a squint!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!" There was a rush from the Rag. A crowd of juniors arrived in the Sixth Form passage. In that quarter, as a rule, juniors trod quietly, and with care. But the majestic repose of the Sixth Form studies was quite banished now. There was already a crowd on the spot, and the Famous Five had to push for front places.

But they got there and looked in. The study was nearly full of amazed Sixth Form men. Wingate, Gwynne, Walker, Carne, and others were trying to extricate Loder. But it was no easy task. With a fork jammed down between the sash and the window-frame, that sash was immovable; combined efforts of the sturdy men of the Sixth failed to shift it.

Of Gerald Loder, only the legs and coat-tails could be seen; the legs thrashed and wriggled.

"Who did it?"

"It's a rag!"

"Who's been here?"

"What the thump—"

"Poor old Loder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crack! Smash!

One of the panes went, as an elbow banged on it; a shower of broken glass fell out into the quad.

"This dashed window is fixed somehow!" gasped Wingate. "Something must be jammed in it somewhere!"

"Look here, perhaps we can pull him out," said Walker. "We can't shift that blinking sash! Take hold of his legs and pull!"

Walker grasped one leg, Carne the other; they pulled. There was a fiendish yell from Loder.

"Ow! Yaroooo! Leggo! You're breaking my back! You're pulling my legs off! Yooo-hooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder jerked one of his legs free and kicked frantically; there was a fearful howl from Walker as he caught Loder's boot with his nose.

"Whoooooooop!"

When you have finished this great Greyfriars yarn you will no doubt like to read another. Then get the GEM, on sale now, in which appears a grand yarn of the early schooldays of the chums of the Remove. It's called:

"BUNTER THE ATHLETE!"

By Frank Richards.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the mob round the doorway.

"Ow! Wow!" Walker clasped his nose with both hands in anguish. "Ow! The silly ass! Wow! He can get out of that by himself! Ow! I'm not helping him any more! Oooooooh!"

"There's a fork stuck in here!" exclaimed Gwynne.

"Pull it out!"

"Can't; it's jammed too tight! That sash won't move!"

"Looks as if Loder's fixed for the night," remarked Wibley. "I say, Loder, who fixed you up like that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Looks as if somebody's been ragging here!" exclaimed Coker. "Look! There's smashed crocks all over the study! Look at that pie in the fender!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder, twisting his head round over the window-sill, glared into the crowded study. He was only too conscious of the absurdity of his position, but the thought of his Cousin James, from

Blackmoor, was uppermost in his mind. The "convict" certainly had not escaped by the window. He could hardly have walked through the House unseen. Yet it was clear that he was not in the study, or every voice would have announced the fact. Loder could not imagine what had become of him, unless he was hiding under the bed.

"Will you get me out of this?" howled Loder. "Get that sash loose, blow you! Can't you get a crowbar?"

It was clear that nothing but a crowbar would shift that sash. There was considerable delay while a crowbar was fetched.

But the crowbar arrived at last. It was thrust out, the end resting on the sill, and two or three Sixth Form men grasped the inner end and wrenched it upward. Then that obstinate sash at last gave; it heaved up, and the pressure was taken off Loder's back.

He wriggled into the study.

Crimson and furious, he glared round, panting, at a sea of faces. Nothing was to be seen of the convict. Evidently nobody had the faintest suspicion that the man from Blackmoor had been there. That, at least, was a relief.

"Now, who did this, Loder?" asked Wingate. "I can see that there's been a rag! Who's been here?"

Loder was not likely to tell him that. He was only anxious to get rid of the crowd. Unless the convict had melted into thin air Loder could only suppose that he was hiding under the bed.

"Oh, never mind that!" snarled Loder. "Look here, clear out of my study, the lot of you!"

"But—" exclaimed the Greyfriars captain. "But—"

"I'm a prefect," growled Loder; "I'll handle this matter myself. What the thump is this mob doing here? Clear off!"

"Well, look here—"

"Oh, shut up!" howled Loder.

That was enough for Wingate. He shrugged his shoulders and walked out of the study. The crowd, in a buzz of excitement and hilarity, broke up. Loder was able to slam his door at last.

He looked under the bed in the alcove. It was the only place where the convict could have hidden. He stared blankly as he saw that the space was empty.

Where was James? Where was the man from Blackmoor? Loder felt as if his brain was turning round. The man was not in the study! He could not have gone unseen! Yet he had not been seen—and he was not there! Where, in the name of wonder, was the convict who had given Loder such a high old time in his study?

That "convict," as a matter of fact, was in the Remove dormitory—turning in with the rest of the Remove. Loder of the Sixth was not likely to guess that—and it was undoubtedly very fortunate for William Wibley that Loder was not likely to guess it!

THE END.

(Don't miss the next yarn in this grand series: "THE CONVICT WHO CAME BACK!" It's full of amusing and amazing situations, and shows Frank Richards in tip-top form.)

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UNDER SNARLER'S THUMB!

First Instalment of an "Enthralling"
New St. Sam's Romance by
DICKY NUGENT

"Eggscuse a bloke, miss er—"

Molly Birchmall gave a dainty start. She was returning from a shopping expedition to Muggleton by a somewhat lonely footpath across the fields, and the unexpected sound of the coarse, unculchered voice on her delicate ears was quite a shock to her for the moment.

The Head's pretty dawter drew herself up hawtily as she saw the owner of the voice. He was a grate, hulking villidge lout—not at all the kind of person Molly Birchmall encouraged to speak to her.

"Kindly allow me to pass," she tinkled, with a toss of her pretty head.

The ruffian grinned. "Eggscuse a bloke, miss, but ain't you on your way to the yung jents' collidge up the road? 'Cos, if you are—"

"How dare you talk to me!" eggscolded Molly Birchmall, indignantly. "Stand aside!"

"—you can 'and over this 'ere letter from my guv'nor to Master Snarler!" finished the lout, with a leer. "Ere you are!"

Doctor Birchmall's dawter recoiled, as the leering ruffian tried to hand her a grimy envelope.

"Go away, you loathsome creetcher!" she trilled, tremulously. "Oh, I wish I had friends at hand to get rid of you—"

As if in answer to her wish, there came a pattering of footsteps and a shout of: "Hurry up, you fellows!"

A moment later, Frank Fearless, of the Fourth, burst into view, with Jack Jolly and Merry and Bright close at his heels.

"Fearless!" breathed Miss Molly. "Thank goodness you've come!"

The heroes of the Fourth took in the situation at a glance. Without wasting words, they piled in. Fearless gave the ruffian a smashing blow between the eyes, Jolly gave him one on the chin, and Merry and Bright punched his right and left ears respectively.

"Bang! Wallop! Thud! Crash!"

nerve to speak to me! He wanted me to hand a letter to Snarler, if you ever heard of such a thing!"

"And it looks as if he left the letter behind in his hurry!" remarked Fearless, as he picked up the envelope which the ruffian had dropped. "I wonder what connection there can be between such a low-down lout and Snarler of the Fourth?"

"Little need to wonder, old chap!" laughed Merry. "I think I reckenised him as the billiards-marker from the Jolly Sailor. If you ask me, it's ten to one in dozen that it's an invitation to Snarler to go there for a game this afternoon!"

"Few!"

"Surely a St. Sam's boy could never go to such a shady hawnt—and for such a purpuss!" eggscolded Molly Birchmall, agast.

"Oh, you don't know Snarler, Miss Molly!" grinned Bright, who hadn't got a lot of tact. "He's one of the dingiest blaggards in the Fourth—and yarrooooo!"

Jack Jolly was the cause of Bright's yell. Realising that it was rather unwise to discuss Snarler's little ways with the Head's dawter, he had stepped on Bright's foot to warn him to dry up.

But the damndidge was done. Already Miss Molly had taken the letter from Fearless' hand.

As if in answer to her wish, there came a pattering of footsteps and a shout of: "Hurry up, you fellows!"

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"Bang! Wallop! Thud! Crash!"



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September 26th, 1936.

The GREY FRIARS HERALD



TOO MODEST TO TALK ABOUT HIMSELF!

Sporting Senior Prefers Other Topics

"No!" said George Blundell, decisively, when our Interviewer asked him to discuss his achievements in the realm of sport and athletics. "But, my dear old chap—" protested our Interviewer.

"I'm sorry; but it can't be done," said Blundell firmly. "I'm willing to discuss anything under the sun, with one exception—myself!"

"But what's the idea?"

Blundell shrugged. "It's just that I'm too modest—that's all. Oh, I know that most sportsmen are ready to talk about themselves," he added, as our Interviewer registered protest. "Wingate and North and practically anybody in the Sixth, will talk about themselves till the cows come home. But I'm different."

"I realise, of course, that I'm the kind of chap the public are interested in. I quite appreciate that I'm one of the finest all-round athletes in the school. I know how disappointed your readers will be when you tell them I don't discuss myself, and I'm sorry about it. But the fact remains that I can't do it. My modesty forbids it."

"Any other topic I'll discuss with pleasure. Art, science, politics, philosophy—anything you like, in fact. You'll find me up to snuff, whatever it is. There's not much I don't know, I assure you."

"Thanks awfully, Blundell!" gasped our Interviewer. "Then as you simply won't talk about yourself, what exactly would you like to talk about?"

Blundell rubbed his chin in perplexity. "It's difficult to make a choice. You see, I'm such a dab at everything. Artists have been amazed by my knowledge of art. Scientists have been stunned by what I know of science. Politicians have been paralysed by my understanding of politics. Philosophers have been floored by the depth of my philosophy."

"In fact, I'm such an all-rounder that I really don't know where to begin. You'd better give me a subject yourself, and then I'll talk about it—taking care, of course, not to bring myself into it. I simply insist on excluding myself, hard as it may be on my admirers amongst your readers. So just name your subject, kid, and I'll go ahead!"

"Thanks, Blundell," said our Interviewer, reluctantly; "but I'm afraid we shall have to call it off. As you positively refuse to talk about yourself the interview would be useless."

"Sorry!" smiled Blundell. "I ought to give way, I know. I quite understand how deservedly popular I am. I realise that it would be only gracious on my part to tell my fans something about myself. But I can't do it. I'm too modest!"

"So there you are, chaps. We've done our best, but there's nothing doing. Blundell absolutely refuses to say a word about himself!"

SPECIAL ADVERTISEMENT

PAGE-BOY wanted to turn over the pages whilst I am languidly reading my "Holidy Annual." Apply, LORD MAULEVERER, Study No. 12, Remove Form.

JAZZ WILL SOON AID SWOTS IN CLASS!

Forecasts BOB CHERRY

It has recently been found that the provision of music in factories results in doubling the output of work.

This great discovery is being eagerly taken up at Greyfriars.

For some time past, a committee of masters has been investigating the possibilities of doubling our work output with the help of music. When the committee's report is issued, sensational developments are likely to follow.

Radio-gramophones and an array of musical instruments are likely to be installed in all Form-rooms. Classes may be conducted to the clash of a dozen competing concertos! And that will probably be only the beginning!

I'm told on jolly good authority, anyway, that the beaks are all convinced that music will make us work harder!

The chap who told me about it (Skinner, as a matter of fact) says that they're now

busy "departmentalising" the Music Plan. By this he means deciding which particular instruments are best suited to particular kinds of work. It seems to be quite a fascinating job, if what Skinner says is true.

Skinner says that scientific investigation has proved that students of Greek do best on a gramophone. On the other hand, chaps studying painting respond more quickly to a piano, while geography calls for a Jew's harp and maths for a mouth-organ!

So it's quite likely that before long we shall take it as a

matter of course when Quelch borrows a lyre to teach us Latin or a trumpet to teach us trigonometry!

Swots (says Skinner)



are taking up the new idea with enthusiasm. If Skinner says much more, I shall begin to have doubts about the whole business! (Ye gods! We think so, too!—Ed.)

ALL THE BEST PEOPLE PLAY CONKERS!

Says DICK RAKE

Have no qualms about playing conkers this year, chappies! All the Best People are doing it!

In fact, just at present, there's a positive craze for it in fashionable Greyfriars society!

Fellows outside the magic circle would hardly credit how remarkably human our Betters are when they're just on their own! But, believe it or not, those immaculate, superior creatures who seem so remote from our ordinary, common-or-garden lives as they stroll at their lordly leisure across the quad, can be just the same as you and I when they mix with their equals!

I've found that in the most exclusive and aristocratic studies in the school, dartboards are quite common,

while even snakes-and-ladders sets are not unknown! Sounds incredible—but it's a fact!

Anyway, the ancient game of conkers has the vote this term. I've proved it!

Nobody would have guessed it, to see the contemptuous smile that flickered across Cecil Reginald Temple's face when he passed Tubb and Bolsover minor yesterday, when they were playing a game. That lordly smile from the Upper Fourth leader of fashion would have put any conkers fan off his stroke; even Tubb nearly crumpled up under it!

But I'd heard something about conkers in the Upper Fourth already, and Temple's smile didn't put me off my stroke. I followed him up at a respectful distance, and when he got back to his sumptuous

quarters in the fashionable Fourth Form passage, I took the liberty of having a peep through the keyhole.

There, as large as life and twice as natural, was the lordly Temple, engaged in a thrilling duel at conkers with Dabney, while Fry umpired! And the excitement was at least as great as the excitement you got in the Second Form Room when a couple of fags smite each other's conkers for victory!

So you can take it from me, lads, there's no need to hesitate about playing conkers. The blue-blooded nobilities are taking it up in earnest and the seal of fashion is set to it with a vengeance now!

It won't surprise me in the least, before the season's over, to see matches played in the quad between Sixth Formers wearing toppers, spats and monocles—with umpires holding silk umbrellas on their arms!

Stranger things have happened!

like being responsibul for getting him into trouble.

If they had only known it, there wasn't the slightest need for them to worry. But it wasn't till some time after that that they found how eggstremely useful Snarler was at looking after himself!

As Jack Jolly & Co. marched through the gateway of St. Sam's, a shifty-eyed junior who had been lounging up against Fossil's lodge came over to them and they reckenised the very fellow they were thinking about—Sid Snarler, the cadd of the Fourth!

"Hullo, you fellows!" said Snarler, with a sneer. "I suppose you haven't seen a chap nocking about with a letter for me?"

"Your mistake—we have!" replied Jack Jolly, kertly. "He gave the letter to Miss Molly—and she's taking it straight to the Head!"

An ugly eggsspression came into Snarler's dial.

"She is, is she?" he muttered. "Sounds as if I'd better take a hand in this!"

Snarler, who was a frightfully bad-mannered chap, then lounged off after Miss Molly, without even a word of thanks to the fellows who had tipped him the wink.

But he didn't get far before he had to make a dive for

"Dear Master Snarler," he heard the Head read out.

"Why not come along to the Jolly Sailor this afternoon for a game of billiards? I've found someone to play you who seems properly green. I feel sure it will cure you of the blues. Hooping you are in the pink.—Yours, Sam Beery." Bless my sole!

"How dreadful, pop!" trilled Miss Molly. "I suppose you'll give Snarler a wacking for this?"

Snarler heard the Head rub his hands gloatingly.

"Doubtless, I shall, my dear—in dew corse! But, before doing so, I shall complete the evidence against this yung blaggard. I shall re-address the letter and see what he does. If he goes to the Jolly Sailor this afternoon, I shall follow him and catch him red-handed. And then I shall give him what-for!" finished the Head, with a blud-curdling lurf.

From his hiding-place, Snarler uttered a low, sinister chuckle. "Ha, ha! So that's the idea, is it?" he mormered. "Well, it gives me just the chance I'm looking for! I've been waiting to get the Head in my power for a long, long time, and now it looks as if he's going to fall right into my trap! Ha, ha, ha!"

And Snarler tiptoed away, grinning unplezzantly.

What he had got to grin about was a mystery that mite well have puzzled an observer. But Snarler knew what he was doing. A deep plot was forming in the brains of the cadd of the Fourth—a plot to get Doctor Birchmall right under his thumb, so that he could put his finger to his nose at the Head's authority! Nobody else at St. Sam's would have thought of such an unscrew-pulous wheeze. But Snarler thought of it!

Two minnits later, a fagg brought Snarler the letter, re-addressed by the Head in a disguised hand.

Two hours after that, Snarler went out of gates. Two minnits after that, the Head set out after him at a brisk canter.

Two hours after that, the Head was completely under Snarler's thumb!

What had happened in the meantime?

All Doctor Birchmall knew was that he had gone to the Jolly Sailor and searched

every nook and cranny of it for Snarler's about success.

And then, as he stood in the doorway for a moment before returning to St. Sam's, a camera had clicked and he had seen Snarler calmly snapping him—right underneath the pointed sign over the door!

The Head had uttered a yell of dismay.

"Snarler! What are you doing? If the Guvvners see a foto of me standing here, I shall be ruined!"

"That's exactly why I've taken it, sir!" retorted Snarler, with a mocking lurf, as he put away the camera. "I'm going back to St. Sam's to develop it—and when that's done, you'll be completely in my clutches! I shan't I, lurf then! Ha, ha, ha!"

Then Snarler had turned and run like the dickens in the direction of St. Sam's!

When the Head arrived back at his study, footsore and weary, this was the message that he found on his desk in Snarler's handwriting: "Sorry I haven't got time to do the 100 lines you gave me yesterday—S. Snarler."

"P.S.—Foto O.K. Now mind your P's and Q's or it'll be all U.F."

A hollow grin burst from the Head's face as he sank into his chair.

"Trapped!" he cried horsely. "I am under Snarler's thumb! He holds me in the hollow of his hand—and there's nothing left for me now but to buckle under!"

And the Head groaned aloud as he thought of the terrible prospect that was opening up before him!

(Don't miss next week's instalment, boys! There's a "lurf" in every paragraph!)

Answers to Correspondents

G. TUBB (Third).—"Bolsover minor" willing to pay for fifteen doughnuts, providing I can do the lot at a sitting. What do you think of the offer?"

Sounds a "swell" idea to us!

SMITH JUNIOR (Remove).

"Bunter says that if I lend him my new bike, he'll return it to me as good as over. What's your opinion?"

We feel sure that by the time Bunter has finished with it, it will be "rattling fine"!



"Now you've told me that, Bright!" she trilled. "I shall consider it my duty to give this letter to pop!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"If Snarler is in the habit of playing billiards at a place like the Jolly Sailor, it's high time pop knew about it!" added Miss Molly. "I think it's positively disgusting!"

With these words, she tripped off towards the skool.

Jack Jolly & Co. followed, looking rather rowful over the turn of events. None of them had much time for Snarler, who was a rank outsider; but they didn't

the cover of one of the bushes. On her way to the Head's house, Miss Molly had bumped into her respected father, Doctor Birchmall himself.

"Why, Molly, my dear!" Snarler heard the Head eggscold in his deep, refined voice. "What are you a-lurfing for like this here?"

"To give you this, pop!" was Molly Birchmall's tinkling answer. "A ruff man told me to give it to Snarler of the Fourth. But I thought you'd better see it first."

Snarler gritted his teeth as he heard the Head tear open the envelope.