

Great "ARMAMENTS" RACE . . . Third Lap! MORE PRIZES to be WON!

The Magnet^{2D}

Billy Bunter's
Own Paper



THE GREAT ARMAMENTS RACE

5 More Bikes to be Won

2,000 Other Tip-Top Prizes

FREE FOR COLLECTING ARMAMENTS STAMPS / FREE!

GO ALL OUT TO WIN A GRAND PRIZE!

PRIZE NEWS! This week we start the third lap in our Giant Stamp-Collecting race!

We still have Five More "Hercules" Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other grand prizes to give away in the July contest—all for collecting the free Armaments Stamps being printed in The MAGNET every week. There are now five different kinds to be collected—BATTLESHIPS, TANKS, DESTROYERS, and so on. Cut them out and try to get as many others as you can—all those you have collected so far (except Bombers, Submarines and Searchlights which have been called in) should be kept for this month's contest.

There are sixteen more stamps on this page! Add them to your collection right away, and don't forget that you will find more of these stamps to swell your total in other papers like "Modern Boy" and "Gem." Why not get your pals interested, too? You can then swap stamps with them.

At the end of July, we shall again ask you how many of one or more kinds of stamps you have collected. And then the remaining Five Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other prizes will be awarded to those readers with the biggest collections of stamps called for. All second-prize winners will be asked to choose their own gifts.

Don't send any stamps yet! We will tell you how and where when the time comes.

OVERSEAS READERS! You are in this great scheme also and special awards will be given for the best collections from overseas readers for whom there will be a special closing date.

(N.B.—You can also collect or swap Armaments stamps with readers of—"Gem," "Modern Boy," "Boy's Cinema," "Triumph," "Champion," "Sports Budget," "Detective Weekly," and "Thriller"—stamps can be cut from all these papers, but no reader may win more than one first prize or share, of course.)

RULES.—Five First Prizes of £4 7s. 6d. "Hercules" Cycles and at least 2,000 other prizes will be awarded in order of merit (as in previous months of the contest), i.e., to the readers declaring and sending the largest collections of the stamps called for. Cash value of any of the first prizes may be divided in case of a tie or ties for such prizes. Ties for any other prizes will be decided by the Editor.

All claims for prizes to be sent on the proper coupon (to be given later); no allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated, or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence. No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.



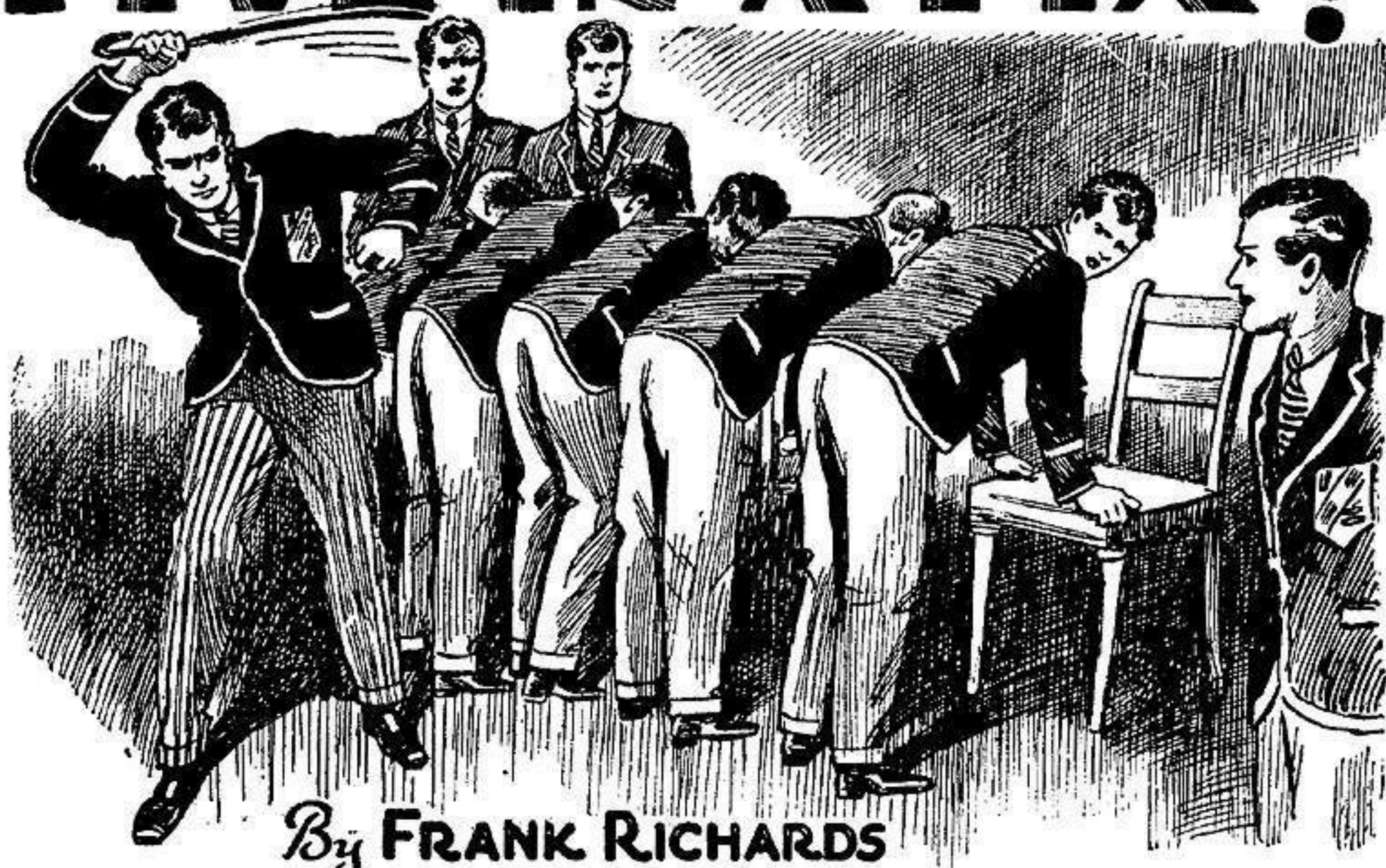
MORE STAMPS TO SAVE!

Cut Them Out NOW!



Gerald Loder, the most unpopular prefect at Greyfriars, has been waiting a long time to land the Famous Five into trouble. Opportunity comes his way this week—and he seizes it with both hands!

FIVE IN A FIX!



By FRANK RICHARDS

The Famous Five bent over to take the prefects' beating. Some of the whops were very light—merely flicks. But when Gerald Loder wielded the cane his whops were far from light!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Invisible Five!

"WHERE are you?" roared Billy Bunter.

Echo answered "you."

But there was no other answer.

Billy Bunter, the fat ornament of the Greyfriars Remove, blinked round him, through his big spectacles, with an intensely exasperated blink.

He knew—he jolly well knew—that Harry Wharton & Co. were not far away! But they had become suddenly invisible! Even with the aid of his big spectacles, Bunter failed to spot them.

He blinked to the right—he blinked to the left—he blinked all round. His fat face was pink with wrath.

"I say, you fellows, where are you?" roared Bunter. "I jolly well know you can hear me, you beasts! Where are you?"

Silence!

Billy Bunter snorted with wrath.

It was enough to make any fellow wrathful.

Ever since dinner that afternoon, he had had his eyes, and his spectacles, on the Famous Five of the Remove. He knew what they were going to do that afternoon. Bunter was never likely to be at a loss for information, so long as keyholes were made to doors!

So Bunter knew that there was going to be a picnic, somewhere along the banks of the Sark; he knew that the Co. were going to meet the Cliff House girls for that festive purpose; he knew that good things, both to eat and to drink, were packed in the basket carried by Bob Cherry; and when the five

juniors walked out at the gates, Billy Bunter rolled after them.

He did not join them. Bunter's idea was to arrive, accidentally, as it were, while the picnic was on. All he had to do, was to keep the party in sight—and they would be his unconscious guides.

From the school, he stalked them as far as Courtfield Common. Then he shadowed them by a track across the common towards the river. And then—then, like five Boojums, they "suddenly, silently vanished away!"

Blinking up and down, and round about, the grassy track that ran between high hawthorns, Bunter might really have supposed that the Famous Five had melted into thin air!

But he knew that they hadn't! He

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## A Sensational Story of School-boy Adventure, featuring HARRY WHARTON & CO., of GREYFRIARS.

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knew that they had spotted a fat figure astern, and dodged out of sight. He was quite sure that they were, at that very moment, within sound of his dulcet tones. But where?

"I say, you fellows, I know you're there!" howled Bunter. "If you think I was coming after you, you're jolly well mistaken! I never knew you were going on a picnic. I jolly well know you can hear me!"

Which was quite correct. Five juniors

were parked within ten feet of Billy Bunter. But there was a thick bank of hawthorns between, and they were quite invisible to the fat Owl of the Remove. They grinned cheerfully, and suppressed a desire to chuckle. Not a sound was uttered to guide the fat Owl! They had plenty of time on hand, and were quite willing to take a rest, while the exasperated Owl hunted for them.

"Beasts!" roared Bunter. He fanned himself with his straw hat. It was hot, that June afternoon. "Think I want any of your measly picnic? Yah! I jolly well know why you don't want me! You jolly well know that Marjorie won't take any notice of you while I'm about! Just putrid jealousy! Yah!"

Deep silence, save for the summer breeze stirring the hawthorns.

Billy Bunter made a few steps—and stopped again. It was useless to think of hunting the beasts among the hawthorns. There was cover for dozens of fellows. And all the time they might be stepping quietly away, leaving Bunter in the lurch! It was fearfully exasperating! Somehow, he had to make those beasts show up!

"I can see you!" howled Bunter suddenly. "You needn't hide any longer—I've spotted you! You may as well come out of it."

But that dodge failed! The Famous Five did not "come out of it." They remained where they were, grinning, much more amused by this peculiar game than Billy Bunter was!

"Wharton, you cad!" hooted Bunter. "I say, Wharton! You're a cad—a stuck-up prig! Hear that?"

Harry Wharton heard it; but, like the

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ancient gladiator, he heard, but he heeded not!

That, Bunter thought, was enough to make the captain of the Greyfriars Remove show up, if only to kick him for his cheek! But he did not show up!

"Bob Cherry!" howled Bunter. "I know you can hear me, Cherry! Do you think Marjorie wants to see a fat-headed hippopotamus like you? I expect you'll tread on her feet! You sat on her hat once, like a clumsy ass, and I jolly well know she was waxy, though she never let on. Yah!"

That ought to have drawn Bob Cherry! But it didn't! There was no sound or sign from Bob; Bunter was still wasting his sweetness on the desert air!

"Nugent!" yelled Bunter. "I say, Frank Nugent, you milksop!"

Bunter seemed bent on giving all the members of the famous Co. a turn! But Frank Nugent was not drawn, even by the word milksop!

"Bull! I say, Johnny Bull! You can hear me all right, you hooligan. Think Marjorie wants to see a fathead with a face like a Yorkshire ham? Yah! I heard you swanking about your rotten county in break this morning! You can't play cricket in Yorkshire! Lancashire can beat you any day!"

One of the hidden five made a movement—and the other four grabbed him, to keep him quiet! The one who moved was Johnny Bull! That reference to Johnny's county had very nearly been successful! But not quite—once more the exasperated Owl drew blank!

"Inky!" came Bunter's howl. "Show you, you nigger! Do you hear me, Inky? Nigger! Yah! Nigger!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, did not like being called a "nigger." But on this occasion Bunter called him a nigger unregarded! There was no sign from Inky!

"Beasts!" roared Bunter. Having, in vain, addressed the Famous Five individually, he now addressed them collectively. "Rotten lot of swabs! Keep your measly picnic! Yah! I'm going back!"

This was a new stratagem. Bunter tramped noisily a few paces—and stopped! If the Famous Five supposed that he was gone, no doubt they would come out into the path, and resume their way.

Only—they did not suppose that he was gone! They did not come out into the path—they stayed where they were, exchanging hilarious grins.

Bunter waited—breathing hard and deep!

Then there was a footstep on the path behind him. He spun round like a fat humming-top, nothing doubting that his ruse had been successful.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

Then he gave a snort of angry disgust! It was not the Famous Five that his eyes and his spectacles fell upon. It was not one of them. It was a lad with a rather shiny, good-tempered face and a well-developed nose, whom Bunter knew by sight—Solly Lazarus, of Courtfield School. Solly had a camera under his arm; he was, apparently, on a photographic walk that Saturday afternoon.

He gave Bunter a nod, as he saw him—and then a glance of inquiry, perhaps surprised by the exasperation in the fat face.

Bunter gave him a disappointed glare. Then it occurred to his fat mind that young Lazarus might have seen something of the elusive five.

"I say, Lazarus, have you seen Wharton and his gang?" asked Bunter.

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"Yeth!" answered Solly.

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Bunter, in great relief. "Where are they?"

"Can't say!" answered Solly.

"Eh? You said you'd seen them!"

"Tho I have," agreed Solly. "I thaw them when we played the Remove at cricket! I haven't then them thince, though."

Billy Bunter looked at the cheery Solly, as if he could have bitten him. He did not want to know if Solly had seen the Famous Five a week ago! He wanted fresher news than that!

"You silly idiot!" he gasped. "Trying to pull my leg?"

"Yeth!" assented Solly, with a cheery grin. "Just that!"

"You howling ass!" roared Bunter. "You silly, fatheaded Jew!"

Solly, who had been smiling, ceased to smile! He did not reply to Bunter in words! He lifted his right hand.

Bang!

"Yarooop!" roared Bunter, as his straw hat was flattened on his fat head. "Why, you beast—yoo-hoop—you cheeky rotter—wow!"

Solly Lazarus chuckled, and passed on his way, disappearing by the path through the hawthorns—leaving Billy Bunter spluttering with wrath, and five hidden juniors struggling hard to restrain a roar of laughter.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Painful For Pon & Co.!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. waited, suppressing their merriment.

They were in no hurry. Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevlyn were not due yet at the spot by the river where the Famous Five were to join them for the picnic. And Billy Bunter, at the moment, was entertaining.

He stood in the path, fanning his fat, warm face with a rather dented straw hat, breathing wrath.

Bunter was a sticker! He was not giving in, if he could help it! Somehow or other he was going to find the lost track.

All round that path, winding across the green common, towards the river, there were clumps and fringes of hawthorn and other bushes. One of these clumps, the fat Owl had no doubt, hid those beasts, the Famous Five of the Remove. They were sticking there, out of sight, and waiting for him to clear off. Bunter wasn't going to clear off. Not if there were a chance of getting on the track of the picnic!

Those beasts—cads—rotters—swabs, made out that the Cliff House girls did not care for Bunter's company! That, Bunter knew, was simply due to the jealousy of his good looks. Bunter knew—at least, he fancied he knew—the effect of those good looks upon the gentler sex. No other fellow had a chance when Bunter was around!

Bunter was not going to miss a picnic on account of this rotten jealousy! Not if he could help it!

But where were those beasts? Quite near at hand, he was sure; laughing in their sleeves, he had no doubt! Bunter cast devastating blinks round at the circling bushes.

Through the interstices of the hawthorns, ten feet away, the Famous Five had a view of him, though he had no view of them. His infuriated blinks very nearly drew a chuckle from them.

"I say, you fellows!" It was a sudden squeak from the fat Owl. "I say, which of you dropped this half-crown?"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Does he really think that we shall rise to that?"

Apparently Bunter did! It was another stratagem to draw the chums of the Remove from cover.

"Did you drop this half-crown, Wharton?"

No answer.

"I mean this ten-shilling note. Did you drop this ten-shilling note?" squeaked Bunter.

The Famous Five gurgled. Having failed to draw them with a half-crown that was not there, Bunter had made it a ten-shilling note! Really, they were not likely to believe in that ten-shilling note!

"I say, you fellows, that half-crown—I mean that ten-shilling note—will blow away if you don't come and pick it up!" howled Bunter.

Silence!

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter.

He fanned his fat face again with the dented straw hat. Strategy seemed quite a failure. Bunter was trying to think out another dodge, when again there were footsteps, and he blinked round.

Three fellows came along the path among the hawthorns—three well-dressed fellows, in Highcliffe caps.

Bunter gave them a far from welcoming blink.

He was by no means pleased to meet Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson, of the Highcliffe Fourth.

Pon & Co., on the other hand, seemed quite pleased to discover Bunter there. Pon & Co. were full of beans, on a half-holiday. Their customary way of amusing themselves was by making things unpleasant for somebody; and they had been, as a matter of fact, walking after Solly Lazarus, with the playful intention of ramming his camera down the back of his neck, when they came on Bunter. Now they bestowed their playful attentions on Bunter.

"Gad! What's that?" ejaculated Ponsonby.

"Fat Jack of the Bonehouse!" remarked Gadsby.

"Bunter's been slimming!" said Monson. "He's not more than six yards round. Is it six, or seven, Bunter?"

Without replying, Billy Bunter backed off the path to give the Highcliffe trio plenty of room to pass.

But Pon & Co. did not pass; they halted. They were not losing a chance of ragging a fat and helpless fellow, caught all alone on the wide common. Nobody else was in sight, and, naturally, it did not occur to Pon & Co. that five Greyfriars fellows were there out of sight!

"Damaged your hat, Bunter?" asked Pon politely.

"A—a beastly Jew banged it!" said Bunter, placing the straw on his head and backing away a little farther.

"Let's all do the same, shall we, you men?" asked Pon, with a cheery grin at his companions.

"Good egg!" agreed Gadsby.

"Let's!" grinned Monson.

And they did!

Gathering round Bunter, the three of them banged on the hat in turn, each bang eliciting a loud yell from the hapless Owl.

"Keep off! Stop it! Beasts!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, rescue! Rescue, Greyfriars!"

Pon & Co. chuckled. As there were no Greyfriars men in sight, they supposed that Bunter uttered that yell to give them a false impression. They were not to be taken in so easily as all that!

"Bag him!" said Pon cheerily.

"Let's sit him down in the hawthorns and hear him squeak!"

"I shouldn't wonder if he burst if he was punctured!" said Gadsby. "Let's see if he does!"

"Pick out a nice, thorny spot!" chortled Monson.

"Leggo!" roared Bunter, struggling wildly in the grasp of the three playful Highcliffians. "Beasts! Highcliffe cads! Help! I say, you fellows, rescue! I say, they're going to stick me on the thorns! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Roll him over!"

"Get ready to burst, Bunter!"

"Here's a good place—stocked with thorns——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leggo! Help! Rescue!" shrieked Bunter.

There was a sudden rush from the bushes.

Harry Wharton & Co. had hitherto been deaf to the voice of the charmer. But they could not turn a deaf ear to that appeal.

Bunter was a Greyfriars man, and Pon & Co. were malicious in their ideas of a rag—it was not a joke, really, to sit a fellow down on sharp thorns. It was bullying, and Pon & Co. would not have attempted it with a fellow who could use his hands. Bunter couldn't—and Bunter would have been booked for a most uncomfortable bump among the thorns, had not the Famous Five been there.

But they were there—and they showed up promptly as the fat Owl wriggled and howled in the grasp of the Highcliffians.

Five pairs of hands grasped the three before Pon & Co. knew that they were coming, and they were wrenched away from Bunter and tipped over on the grassy path.

"Oh gad!" gasped Ponsonby. "Who—what— Oh, you cads!"

"Ow! You rotters!" gasped Monson.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" chirruped Bob Cherry. "Fancy meeting you! Don't get up, Ponsonby!"

Cecil Ponsonby gave him a glare.

"Why shouldn't I get up, you silly fool?" he snapped.

"Because I'm going to knock you down again if you do!" answered Bob agreeably.

"The knockdownfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed and rotten Ponsonby!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Pon & Co. exchanged glances, and remained where they were. Bunter was an easy prey, but tackling the hefty Co. was quite another matter. Pon & Co. would have been glad for the matter to end where it was.

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "I jolly well knew you were here! I say, those cads were going to sit me down on the thorns! You fellows hold them while I kick them all round, will you?"

"Like the idea, Pon?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Oh, chuck it!" said Ponsonby. "We were only joking with the fat fool. We weren't really goin' to stick him on the thorns——"

"Don't you tell lies, Pon!" said Bunter. "You low rotter, I've a jolly good mind to kick you all the way to Highcliffe. You're too jolly funky to tackle a Greyfriars man, you cad!"

Pon's eyes gleamed with rage at Bunter.

Bunter turned up a fat little nose at him. Bunter was not afraid of Pon now—not in the company of the Famous Five.

"I say, you fellows, chuck them into

the thorns, same as they were going to do to me!" said Bunter.

"Good egg!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Sit Pon down on the thorns, you fellows, and let's see whether he bursts when he's punctured."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby leaped to his feet in alarm. Sitting Bunter down on the thorns was quite an amusing idea to Pon; but sitting on thorns himself did not amuse him in the very least. He made a jump to escape, and Bob Cherry's grasp closed on his collar and grabbed him back.

"Let go!" yelled Pon, struggling.

"You didn't let go Bunter!" grinned Bob. "One good turn deserves another, you know. Here goes!"

There was a wild howl from Ponsonby as he went, with a crash and a bump, into the "nice thorny spot" selected for Bunter. There were plenty of thorns about and they were sharp!

Pon rolled among them, and roared.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Now chuck the other cads after him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Look here——" gasped Gadsby.

"I say——" panted Monson.

But objections were unheeded. Gadsby and Monson were grasped, and they went bumping after their leader. Their wild howls were added to Pon's, as they discovered the thorns. If Pon & Co. had fancied that there was anything funny in bumping on thorns, they found out their mistake now. It was not funny at all!

Leaving them yelling, the Famous Five walked on by the path. And after them rolled Billy Bunter!

Owing to the Highcliffe fellows ragging, the fat Owl was on the trail once more; and he was not going to lose it again! He was not losing sight of the Famous Five till the picnic was due—and so long as there was a crumb left in the picnic-basket, Billy Bunter was going to cling closer than a brother!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Follow Your Leader!

GERALD LODER, of the Sixth Form at Greyfriars School, gave a little start. He frowned, and glanced up.

Voices unexpectedly came to his ears. Loder of the Sixth did not want to be observed at that moment. He was smoking a cigarette; which no Sixth Form man at Greyfriars, especially a prefect, was ever supposed to do. But Loder of the Sixth did quite a lot of things that Sixth Form prefects were not supposed to do.

Loder was seated, at that moment, under the shadow of a bush, at the foot of a high, steep, chalky bank on Court-field Common.

He had stopped there for a rest and a smoke—chiefly a smoke; quite out of sight of any casual eye. Behind the bush, the chalky bank sloped steeply to a height of fifteen feet or more. It was from the top of the bank that he heard voices—familiar voices of Greyfriars juniors. He was glad that the owners of those voices could not see him—with the cigarette in his mouth.

"I say, you fellows, what have you left the path for?"

Loder recognised the fat voice of Billy Bunter, of the Remove.

"Nice day for a walk round, Bunter!" answered Bob Cherry.

"You'll be late for the picnic, you fathead!"

"Oh, lots of time yet!" said Frank

"Well, I don't think you ought to keep girls waiting, Nugent! It's frightfully bad manners to keep ladies waiting! Girls don't like waiting!"

"Circumstances alter cases, old fat man!" said Harry Wharton. "If you were coming, I'm sure they'd be glad to wait—and the longer they waited, the better they would like it!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"The waitfulness would be a boonful blessing, in comparison with the execrable company of the idiotic Bunter!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Yah! Look here, we shall have to go back to the path!" yapped Bunter. "You can't get any farther in this direction."

"Why not?" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"You can't go down that bank!" hooted Bunter. "It's too jolly steep for walking down, and if you think I'm going to clamber about like a monkey, you're jolly well mistaken."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" snorted Bunter. "I tell you, I can't go down that bank, and I jolly well shan't, so there!"

"That's why!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Eh? Wharrer you mean?"

"I mean that that's why we've come this way, old fat bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Co.

"Why, you—you—you beasts!" gasped Billy Bunter. He blinked down the steep, rugged bank, and blinked at the Famous Five.

Since the encounter with Pon & Co. he had clung to the Famous Five, sticking to them like glue. Now it looked as if he were going to come unstuck!

Active fellows could run down that steep bank, at the risk of stumbling and rolling headlong to the lower level. Bunter was not an active fellow; and he did not feel in the least attracted by the possibility of stumbling and rolling down!

"I say, you fellows——" he howled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say—— Beasts!" roared Bunter.

"Come on," chortled Bob. "Follow your leader!"

He started, at a run, down the bank. His friends followed him fast.

Once started, it was impossible to stop. The slope was too steep for that. Only by a series of active bounds could a fellow keep his feet at all. Actively as a kangaroo, Bob bounded down, and his chums bounded after him.

But Billy Bunter did not bound! He was a good deal of a boulder, in some respects; but this sort of bounding did not appeal to him.

He stayed where he was; snorting with fury! He had lost the trail, found it again, and now lost it once more; and this time for good! A dozen picnic-would not have tempted him to risk a headlong tumble down that steep bank. He watched the Famous Five, his only consolation a charitable hope that they might take a tumbler, and come down a wallop!

And, as it happened, that was what came to pass—owing to something quite unexpected! Had the coast been clear—as clear as it looked—all would have been well! But it wasn't!

Nobody from above had seen Loder, screened by the bush behind him. Loder, realising that the juniors were coming down, hastily put away the cigarette. They would see him when they reached the lower level.

Unfortunately, Bob Cherry was heading for that very bush in the shade of which Loder sat! Not having the

faintest idea that anybody was there, there was no reason why he shouldn't! It was a low bush, easy to leap—and Bob was going to clear it with his last jump, and land on the level ground beyond. That programme would have been carried out without a hitch had not Loder of the Sixth been sitting there. But Loder was!

Bob hurtled down the steep bank, his chums hurtling after him, and cleared the bush, his feet just brushing the top, and came down on the farther side—not on grassy earth, as he expected to do, but on a Sixth Form prefect!

Crash!

Bob did not even know what it was he landed on. He knew that it was something, and that it moved, and yelled. That was all.

Loder yelled, with all his lungs! Naturally, he had not expected a fellow to jump on his head, over a bush; and he was taken quite by surprise.

He rolled over, yelling, mixed up with Bob, who yelled, too!

Before either of them could scramble up, the next man came hurtling over—following his leader. It was Harry Wharton, and he crashed on the senior and the junior mixed up in the grass. "Oh!" he gasped, as he crashed.

He had no time for more than one gasp. Johnny Bull hurtled down the next second. Johnny, as he came, had a glimpse of the mixture below, but it booted not—he was going too fast to stop. A split second after he spotted the mixture, he was added to it.

It seemed like earthquakes to Gerald Loder. He was flattened out, spluttering, gurgling, gasping, with Bob Cherry sprawling over his head, Wharton over his legs, and Johnny Bull over the three.

Johnny might have scrambled off, if Frank Nugent had not landed as he started wildly to scramble. Nugent flattened him down again.

"Oooogh!" gurgled Nugent. "What—oooooh!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh interrupted him by bumping down on the back of his neck.

"Oh, my esteemed hat!" gasped the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Yoo-hoop!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Owl! Wow!"

"Urrrrrrrrgh!" came an agonised gasp from Loder of the Sixth, squashed under the five of them. "Wurrrrrgh!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Gerroff!"

"Oh dear!"

"Ooooooogh!"

"He, he, he!" came floating down from above.

Really it was fortunate, for Loder and the Famous Five, that Billy Bunter was not making that perilous descent. Had Bunter's weight been added to the heap, matters, already bad enough, would have been a good deal worse.

Bunter, blinking down from the top of the bank, chortled.

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, he, he, he!" Bunter was amused.

Five spluttering and gasping juniors scrambled up, somehow. They hardly knew what had happened, for some moments. They were dizzy and breathless.

"What the thump!" gasped Harry Wharton. "You ass, Bob—why didn't you get clear?"

"Owl! I fell over somebody!"

"Who?"

"Great pip! Loder!"

"Oh, holy smoke!"

The gasping five gazed at Gerald Loder. He sat up, painfully, and with an effort.

He gurgled horribly for wind.

"Loder!" stuttered Nugent.

"The absurd Loder!"

Loder struggled for breath, giving the juniors a look that the fabled Gorgon might have envied. He strove to speak.

"You—you—grooogh! You—oogh—you—urrrgh—warrgh!"

"We didn't see you, Loder!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Sorry!" panted Wharton.

"The sorrowfulness is terrific!"

"Urrgh!" gurgled Loder. "Wurrrgh! You—you—woooogh! Wait till I get my bib-bub-breath, and I'll—Yooooogh!"

The Famous Five exchanged a quick glance. What Gerald Loder was going to do when he got his breath was easy to guess. As Loder was a prefect of the Sixth Form, he could not be collared and faithfully dealt with if he cut up rusty—as clearly he was going to do as soon as he had wind enough. The chums of the Remove sagely decided not to wait!

"You—grooogh—och—woogh—I'll—I'll—ooogh!" spluttered Loder, as the juniors, still gasping, cut off and disappeared among the bushes on the common. "Stop—grooogh—I tell you—oggh—I say—woooogh—ooh!"

The Famous Five were gone.

"He, he, he!" floated down the bank.

Then Billy Bunter was gone, too—in another direction. He had lost the Famous Five, and he was anxious to lose Loder; Loder looked as if he might smack the nearest head, and Billy Bunter stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once!

Loder was left struggling for wind, and in the worst temper ever.

By the time he had recovered sufficient breath to deal with the heroes of the Remove, they were far out of sight, and Loder of the Sixth had to bottle-up his wrath till calling-over at Greyfriars. And Loder's wrath was likely, like wine, to improve with keeping. His expression was like unto that of a demon in a pantomime, as he took his gasping way across the common towards the school.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Pon Asks For More!

"O H, thissors!" ejaculated Solly Lazarus.

Solly looked alarmed.

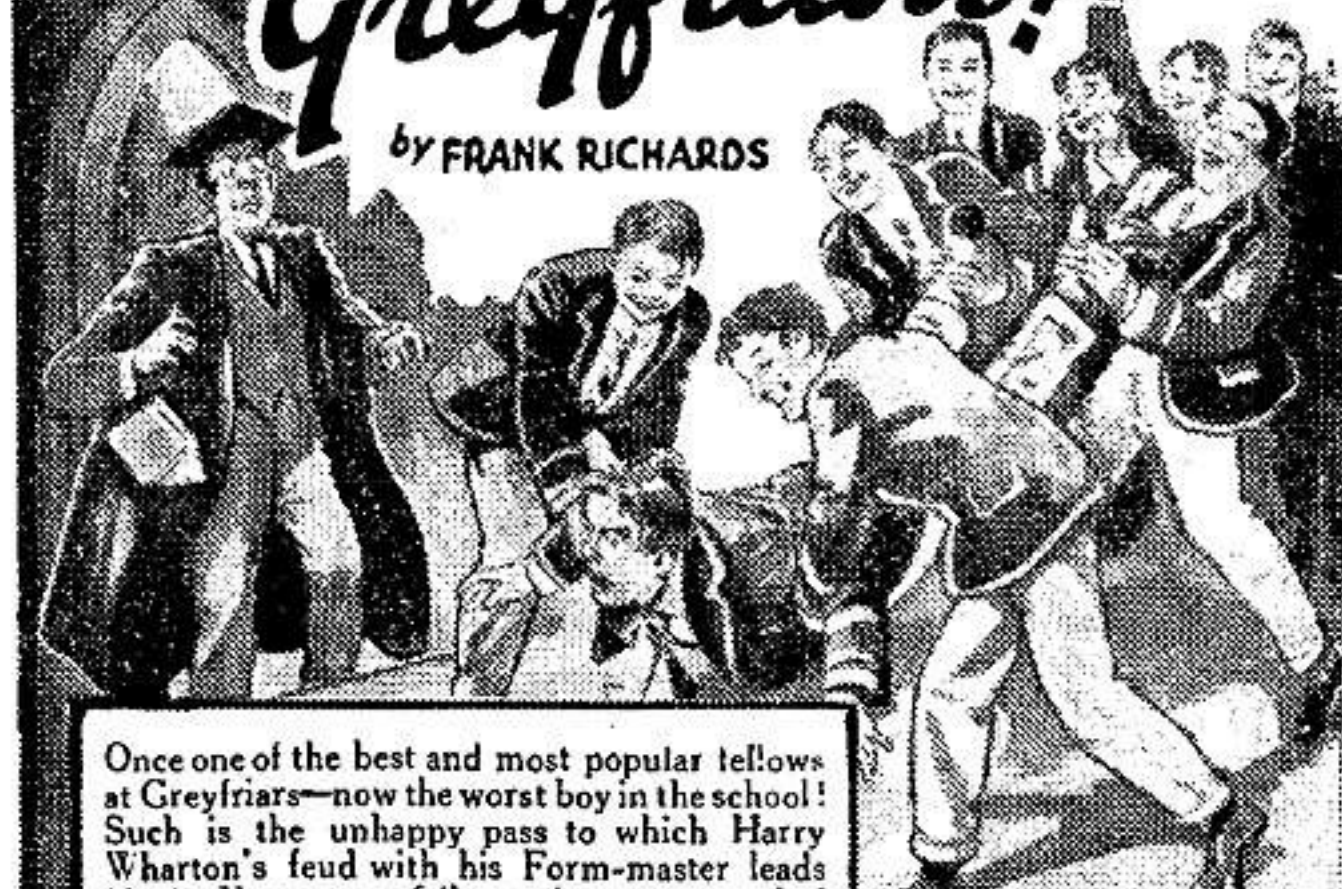
He had been enjoying his stroll with his camera over Courtfield Common, that bright June afternoon. It was quite a nice little camera, being, in fact, an "unredeemed pledge" from the pawnbroking department of old Mr. Lazarus, in Courtfield, and a much better one than Solly could have afforded to buy. He had eight films in it, and was using them one after another with care and skill. Solly never wasted a film.

At the present moment, he was carefully focusing the camera to take a shot at the river, with Courtfield Bridge in the distance, his good-natured, shiny face very intent. But he ceased to gaze through the view-finder as three Highcliffe fellows appeared in sight, cutting across the grass towards him at a run.

Had Solly fallen in with the Famous Five of Greyfriars, he would have been pleased to meet them. But he was not pleased by any means to see Pon & Co., of Highcliffe. When Pon & Co. were idle, they were mischievous, and their mischief was generally malicious. A

The Worst Boy at Greyfriars!

by FRANK RICHARDS



Once one of the best and most popular fellows at Greyfriars—now the worst boy in the school! Such is the unhappy pass to which Harry Wharton's feud with his Form-master leads him! You cannot fail to enjoy every word of this powerful book-length yarn. Don't miss it.

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"rag" always seemed to Pon an agreeable way of passing the time, and his ragging was far from gentle or good-natured.

At the sight of the three cutting towards him, Solly shut his camera, jammed it back into the case, and gave up taking photographs for the present. He walked away very quickly.

Glancing over his shoulder, he noted that Pon & Co. had broken into a rapid run, and Solly promptly did the same.

Had his pals, Dick Trumper and Willy Wickers, been with him, he would have waited quite cheerfully for the Highcliffe fellows to come up—though, in that case, Pon & Co. would have taken another direction, scrapping on equal terms not being in their line at all. As it was, Solly executed a retreat—and he executed it promptly.

"After the cad!" murmured Ponsonby.

And the three dashed in pursuit. It seemed to the playful Pon quite an entertaining idea, to jam Solly's camera down the back of his neck, and his cap after it—not that Solly had given any offence, but that was Pon's happy way of occupying idle moments.

Solly pelted away across the grassy common, with the three grinning young rascals in hot pursuit.

It was quite a relief to Solly to sight somebody in the distance—a Greyfriars Sixth Former, walking across the common towards the road. Solly headed for him in the hope that the Highcliffians, seeing somebody else about, would give up the chase.

Ponsonby did pause for a moment. He could see that the fellow in the distance was a senior schoolboy, and had it been a Highcliffe prefect, Pon would have chuckled it at once. But the next moment he recognised Loder, of the Greyfriars Sixth—and a Greyfriars prefect had no terrors for the dandy of Highcliffe. Pon sped on, with Gadsby and Monson at his heels.

Loder glanced round at the sound of running feet, perhaps hoping to see some of the Remove fellows who had tumbled on him down the bank. He stared for a moment at the panting Solly, and then walked on.

Solly, breathless, overtook him, and slackened speed at his side.

He had seen Loder at Greyfriars, where the Courtfield fellows played the Remove at cricket, and knew that he was a prefect of his school.

"Mind if I walk with you as far as the road, Mither Loder?" asked Solly, very politely and respectfully. "Thum fellows are after me."

Loder glanced at him. Had he been a good-natured fellow, like Wingate or Gwynne of the Sixth, he would willingly have convoyed the Courtfield boy out of danger. But Loder was not good-natured, and he was, also, in a fearfully bad temper at the moment.

"Oh, get out!" he snapped. "Nothing to do with me!"

"They won't dare to touch me if I'm with you!" urged Solly.

"I said get out!" yapped Loder.

He stalked on.

Solly did not get out. He walked on with Loder, hoping that the pursuers would call it off when they saw him in company with a big Sixth Form man—who could, if he had liked, have knocked the three of them into a cocked hat.

Loder scowled at his unwelcome companion and stalked on.

Solly cast a backward glance over his shoulder. Pon & Co. had not called it off—they were coming on fast, and, now that Solly was at a walk, rapidly overtaking him.

"Thuppose you tell them to clear off, Mithter Loder!" suggested Solly, hopefully.

"Rubbish!" grunted Loder. "Think I want to get mixed-up in your rows? Get out of it!"

"Got him!" grinned Ponsonby, and he made a rush at Solly.

Solly Lazarus dodged round Loder.

Loder nearly walked into him, and he came to an angry halt.

"Clear off, the lot of you!" he exclaimed angrily, his wrath directed equally at Solly and the three Highcliffians.

Unheeding him, Pon & Co. rushed at Solly.

Solly dodged round Loder again, much to Loder's annoyance. And as Pon reached him and clutched, he landed out with a prompt fist, catching Pon on the nose and sending him staggering—right into Loder.

Smack!

Loder's temper was already at boiling-point. He smacked hard at Pon's head as the Highcliffe junior jolted into him.

Pon gave a roar and spun over, measuring his length in the grass. He roared again as he stretched there. Solly's punch had hurt his nose a little—but that terrific smack had hurt his head a lot.

"Ow!" roared Pon. "You cheeky cad! Wow!"

"Greyfriars cad!" yelled Monson.

"Keep your paws to yourself, you rotten outsider!" shouted Gadsby.

Loder had not intended in the least to give Solly Lazarus any assistance against the raggers; but he was not likely to take talk like that from Highcliffe juniors, especially in his present temper.

He made a jump at Gadsby and Monson. They leaped away too late—he grabbed them by their collars.

Two heads came together with a fearful concussion.

Bang!

Two anguished yells were blended into one.

"Yoooooop!"

Loder, with a swing of his arms, sent Gadsby and Monson staggering across Ponsonby, and they sprawled over their leader in the grass.

Solly Lazarus burst into a chuckle. This was quite a pleasant sight for him! But his chuckle changed into a yell as Loder strode at him and smacked. A heavy hand landed on Solly's ear, and he staggered over.

Having thus relieved his feelings, Loder stalked on.

"Oh, thissors!" gasped Solly, scrambling to his feet. His head was singing from that hefty smack.

But he did not linger. He cut off as fast as his legs could go towards the road, giving Loder a wide berth. He had had enough of Loder.

Pon & Co. struggled up, Gaddy and Monson rubbing their heads, and Pon uttering a string of expressions that would have earned him a severe whopping if they could have been heard at Highcliffe.

"Ow! My napper!" groaned Gadsby.

"Oh gad!" moaned Monson. "My napper!"

"The cheeky rotter!" hissed Ponsonby. "Rotten Greyfriars cad! Smackin' my head, by gad! I'll show him!"

Ponsonby was in a savage and vicious temper, and in such a mood he was not particular about his methods. He glared round him, kicked loose a stone from the earth, and grabbed it up.

"Hold on, you fathead!" gasped Gadsby, in alarm.

Pon did not hold on. He took aim and hurled the stone, catching Loder of the Sixth on the back of the head.

"You potty ass!" gasped Monson. "You could be sacked for that, you dummy!"

Loder gave a fearful yell. He turned and glared round, and then he came back at a run.

Solly Lazarus disappeared over the horizon, neither party giving him any heed. Pon & Co. broke into frantic flight, and Loder, spluttering rage, fairly hurtled after them.

In a couple of minutes his grip was on Ponsonby.

Gaddy and Monson fled on; but there was no further flight for their leader. Pon kicked and struggled and howled and yelled, in the angry grasp of the Greyfriars Sixth Former. But it bootied not. Loder, with an ache in the back of his head where the stone had smitten, did not spare him. He smacked and smacked and smacked at Pon's head. He twisted his ears, till it seemed to the wretched Pon that they were coming off. Finally, he pitched him, in a yelling, howling heap, into the grass and stalked off.

Gaddy and Monson watched from a safe distance, and did not come back till Loder was out of sight. They found Ponsonby sitting in the grass, howling and groaning, rubbing his head, and rubbing his ears in a sadly rumpled and dismantled and dishevelled state.

"You rotten funks, why didn't you lend me a hand?" yelled Pon.

"Oh, rats!" grunted Monson. "Think we can handle a Sixth Form man? What did you chuck that stone at him for?"

"You funky cads, the three of us could have handled him!" groaned Pon.

"You'd have cut off if you'd had a chance!" snapped Gadsby.

"I'll make him sit up for this!" moaned Pon. "Oh gad, my head! Oh crumbs, my ears! Ow! Wow! I'll pay him out! Wow! Yow!"

"Well, you asked for it!" remarked Monson.

"Oh, shut up!" snarled Pon.

It was a disgruntled and quarrelsome trio that took a dismal way home to Highcliffe. Pon & Co. had not had a happy afternoon!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Trouble To Come!

"I SAY, you fellows, you're for it!" grinned Billy Bunter.

Bunter derived consolation from that circumstance.

Harry Wharton & Co. derived none!

It had been quite a pleasant picnic—under shady trees, by the bank of the shining Sark. But all the time the chums of the Remove had been wondering what might be awaiting them at Greyfriars when they came in.

To Marjorie and Clara they had said nothing on the subject. Loder of the Sixth was dismissed from discussion, and, so far as possible, from mind, while the picnic was on. But when they had walked back to Cliff House with the two girls and left them there, the Famous Five returned to Greyfriars in a mood not of happy anticipation.

It had been quite an accident, tumbling down the bank on Loder of the Sixth. Also, Loder had had time to get over it. So they hoped that they were going to hear no more about it. But the hope was faint.

Loder was not a good-tempered or tolerant fellow. Also, he had had

plenty of trouble with the cheery chums of the Remove, and there was no love lost between them. And there was no doubt that Loder had been rather damaged.

It was close on calling-over when the Famous Five came in, and they found a good many of the Removites interested in them. Evidently that little misadventure was known in the school.

"What on earth have you fellows been up to?" asked Vernon-Smith. "Loder's like a jolly old tiger."

"Is the tigerfulness terrific?" asked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You're for it!" grinned Bunter. "Don't you wish you hadn't played that rotten trick on a fellow? He, he, he!"

"My dear chap it was worth anything to lose sight of you for a couple of hours," answered Bob Cherry.

"Yah!"

"But what did you do it for?" asked Skinner. "Didn't you know that Loder would be awfully wild?"

"It was an accident, fathead!" said Harry Wharton. "We didn't see Loder—"

Skinner chuckled.

"Are you going to tell Loder that?" he asked.

"Yes, if he asks us."

"Let's hope he will believe it!" said Skinner, laughing.

"He knows already!" grunted Johnny Bull. "The silly ass was sitting out of sight at the bottom of the bank. How were we to know he was there?"

"You didn't jump on his head on purpose?" asked Skinner.

"No, you ass!"

"I fancy he thinks you did!"

"Oh, rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific."

"Really an accident?" asked the Bounder, grinning. "You didn't spot Loder there, and play follow-your-leader just to land on him?"

"No, fathead! Loder's too jolly dangerous to play games like that on!" said Frank Nugent.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "I saw you jumping on him! He, he, he!"

"You know we never saw him there, you fat ass!" snapped Johnny Bull.

"Eh? How should I know?" asked Bunter. "I never saw him till you landed on him. But I'm short-sighted; you're not."

"You fellows had better go to the House-dame, and tell her you want specs, like Bunter," suggested Hazeldene. "You've all got short-sighted all of a sudden!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Queer how a fellow doesn't see what he doesn't want to see!" remarked Skinner. "Loder's big enough to be seen, as a rule."

"He was sitting under a bush, and we couldn't see him from the top of the bank," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Bunter knows it quite well."

"I jolly well don't!" contradicted Bunter. "Don't you get calling me as a witness when you're up before the prefects. I'm bound to tell the truth!"

"Help!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Loder can't think that we did it on purpose!" said Frank, in dismay.

So far, the Famous Five had only wondered whether they were to be called to account for an unfortunate accident. But if Gerald Loder supposed that they had jumped on him, one after another, intentionally, the matter was ever so much more serious.

Johnny Bull snorted.

"Isn't it just what Loder would do?"

think?" he growled. "Isn't that the sort of suspicious swab he is?"

"Then it was an accident?" asked Tom Brown.

"Of course it was, ass!"

"Accidents will happen, especially when a prefect's unpopular!" grinned Bolsover major. "Was it an accident when your knuckles knocked against Walker's nose the other day, Browney?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, chuck it, you men!" said Lord Mauleverer. "If the fellows say it was an accident, it was an accident! Loder's bound to take a fellow's word."

"I can see him doing it, when he's bumped and bruised all over!" chuckled Skinner. "Bunter didn't mention that it was an accident when he told us about it."

"He knows it was!" snapped Wharton.

"The knowfulness is terrific."

"I jolly well don't!" declared Bunter. "All I know is that you ran down that bank and jumped on Loder. I wouldn't join you, playing a trick like that, as you know. I stayed where I was."

"You stayed where you were because you were too funky to run down the bank!" bawled Johnny Bull.

"Yah!" retorted Bunter. "I wasn't going to jump on a prefect's head like you fellows did. You'll get six all round for it."

"Oh, boot him!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"After all, it was a jolly lark," said Skinner. "I don't see how Loder is going to prove that you did it on purpose, if you all stick to it that it was an accident. Mind you tell the same story, though."

"The samefulness will be terrific, as it is the absurd truth, Skinner," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, of course!" said Skinner, winking at Snoop. "If you get by with it I'll look out for a chance of jumping on Wingate's head. He gave me six yesterday."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bell for calling-over interrupted the discussion which was far from agreeable to the Famous Five. Evidently a good many of the Remove believed that they had played a rough and reckless trick on a Sixth Form prefect, and if that belief were held in the Remove, it was easy to guess the view that Gerald Loder would be taking.

The captain of Greyfriars spoke to the Famous Five as they went into Hall with the Remove.

"Prefects' Room, in half an hour!" said Wingate.

"Anything up, Wingate?" asked Bob Cherry innocently.

The Greyfriars captain gave him a look, and did not answer the question. He turned away frowning.

Wingate did not, personally, pull very well with Loder; but, as head prefect, he had to take a serious view of the ragging of a member of the august prefectorial body. Clearly he was taking a serious view of the happening on Courtfield Common. Which meant that Gerald Loder did not regard that happening as an accident.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, called the roll. When it was over, the Famous Five went along to the Rag, not in the best of spirits, to wait till it was time to repair to the Prefects' Room, as bidden by Wingate.

"I say, you fellows, you'd better pack!" grinned Billy Bunter. "Looks to me as if it's going to be a prefects' beating! Better pack! He, he, he!"

"Oh, shut up, you cackling fat octopus!" growled Johnny Bull.

The Famous Five disdained to "pack." Some fellows, in such circumstances, would shove in a folded newspaper, or even a Latin grammar, to take the swipes.

"That cad Loder!" muttered Bob. "He must have told Wingate we did it on purpose—called it an attack on a prefect, very likely—"

"Like him!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The likefulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But if we bag a ridiculous prefects' beating, we will make the execrable Loder sit upfully."

"What-ho!" said Bob. "We'll get back on the brute somehow, if he lands us with a prefects' beating."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"But I say, it might help if I came as a witness!" suggested Bunter. "I don't know whether you saw Loder or not, before you jumped on him—"

"Then what use would you be, fat-head?" grunted Bob.

"I mean to say, I'd stretch a point, for a pal," explained Bunter. "I can say that, nobody could possibly have seen Loder where he was, you know. That ought to help, what? I'd do more than that for fellows I really like!"

"You fat, fibbing, footling frump—"

"Oh, really, Bull! It may get you off the whopping," said Bunter warmly. "You can stand a study supper afterwards. See? No supper unless I get you off the whopping—that's fair! I'll swear to anything you like—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the fellows in the Rag.

"Just tell me what you'd like me to say, and I'll make a note of it," said Bunter generously. "I'm not the fellow to let a pal down, I hope. I'll come with you to the Prefects' Room, and say—Yaroooh, you beast! Wharrer you kicking me for? Yooo-hooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter did not accompany the five to the Prefects' Room. His last remark to them, when they went, expressed the hope that they would get a jolly good whopping!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Prefects' Beating!

THE Prefects' Room presented quite a solemn aspect when the Famous Five arrived there.

The whole body of prefects were present, sitting with grave and serious expressions on their faces. On the table lay a cane—ready for use! The delinquents were going to be judged, before they were punished; but it looked as if the cane was expected to be wanted.

Gerald Loder's eyes gleamed at the chums of the Remove, as they walked sedately in. His pals, Walker and Carne, gave them grim looks. They, like Loder, had had their little troubles with the heroes of the Remove. Other prefects who were quite indifferent to them personally, looked very serious—even good-natured old Wingate wore a frown. All the more, perhaps, because he did not like Loder personally, the Greyfriars captain was going to see strict justice done.

The fact that all the prefects were present, sitting round like solemn owls,



There was a wild howl from Ponsonby as he landed in the hawthorns selected for Billy Bunter. "One good turn deserves another, you know!" cried Bob Cherry, as the cad of Highellie rolled and roared.

as Bob Cherry described it later, showed that it was going to be what was called a "Prefects' Beating!"

This was a rather more drastic affair than "six on the bags."

When a prefects' beating was administered, every prefect in turn took a swipe, laying it on as hard or as soft as his fancy dictated. As there were a dozen prefects, it was "some" whopping!

The solemnity and the severity, added together, were expected to produce a lasting effect on the guilty!

"Oh, here you are!" rapped Wingate. "If you've got anything to say, before you're whopped, you can say it! Sharp!"

"If it's not troubling you too much," said Harry Wharton politely, and with gentle sarcasm, "we'd like to know why we're going to be whopped!"

"Just as a matter of curiosity, you know!" said Bob. "I'm sure you wouldn't mind letting us know, Wingate."

Gwynne of the Sixth grinned. Being an Irishman, Gwynne was bothered with a sense of humour, and was liable to grin at the most solemn moments. But the other prefects frowned.

"Don't you be cheeky!" said Sykes warningly.

"Is it cheeky to inquire why we're to be whopped?" asked Harry, with the same polite sarcasm. "Quech always lets us know."

Wingate knitted his brows. He gave Gwynne a warning look, then he fixed stern eyes on the culprits.

"You ragged a Sixth Form prefect this afternoon, on Courtfield Common!" he rapped. "You could be taken before the Head for it, as you know very well. Loder has left it in the hands of the prefects! You're not going to deny what you did, I suppose?"

"Not at all," said Harry. "But we didn't rag Loder, Wingate. We never knew he was there when we ran down the bank and fell over him."

"That's false!" snapped Loder.

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"If that cad's to be allowed to call me a liar, Wingate, I'd better shut up," he said.

"What?" roared Loder, jumping to his feet.

"Sit down, Loder!" snapped Wingate.

"You heard what he called me!" roared Loder. "Why, I'll take the skin off him!"

"You'll sit down!" hooted Wingate. "You've placed this matter in the hands of a prefects' meeting, and it's too late for you to handle it yourself. Sit down!"

Loder, with an absolutely ferocious glare at the captain of the Remove, sat down.

Wingate gave Wharton a grim look. "You'd better be careful what you say here!" he rapped.

"I'm quite careful, Wingate," answered Harry coolly. "If any fellow here, prefect or not, calls me a liar, I shall tell him what I think of him. I shall be careful to say exactly what I think."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Silence! You say that it was an accident, then, Wharton?" asked the Greyfriars captain.

"Of course it was an accident," answered Harry. "We ran down the bank to get rid of Bunter, who was sticking to us like glue, and hadn't the faintest idea that anybody was sitting under the bush there."

"Not the foggiest, Wingate!" said Bob.

"There's a track runs along the bottom of that bank on the common,

said Wingate. "Anybody going that way might sit down to rest. You might sit down to rest. You might have landed on anybody. If it were an accident, you acted thoughtlessly and recklessly."

The juniors did not answer that. They had to admit that it was true. In bounding down that steep bank, they certainly had overlooked the wisdom of the ancient proverb: "Look before you leap."

"It was no accident," snarled Loder. "They knew perfectly well that I was there, and that was why they did it."

"You feel certain of that?" asked Wingate.

"Absolutely certain!"

No doubt Gerald Loder did feel certain. He was helped to certainty by the fact that he disliked the Famous Five; and the other fact that he had an ache where Pon's stone had struck him—which was not at all reasonable, but just like Loder.

George Wingate looked rather worried. He was prepared to deal very severely with juniors who ragged a prefect, and from Loder's account he had had no doubt that this had been a particularly rough and disrespectful rag. He was prepared to make an example of the raggers.

But the juniors' claim that it was an accident, even a thoughtless one, that ought never to have happened, worried him. Loder had no doubt that the young sweeps were trying to lie themselves out of a scrape, having realised what a very serious matter it was. But Wingate doubted it very much.

"Look here, Wingate, we give you our word that we never saw Loder," said Harry Wharton. "I admit that"

we ought to have been more careful; but we never knew that anybody was there."

"Loder couldn't possibly be seen from the top of the bank," said Bob. "He was sitting under a bush that quite hid him. I hardly knew what was happening when I jumped over that bush, and landed on him."

"And then we were all going too fast to stop!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, cut all that out!" snarled Loder. "It's no use to tell untruths about it. I know what happened."

"Nobody here's telling untruths, Loder, unless you are!" retorted Harry Wharton.

"Silence!" roared Wingate. "Now listen to me! You did it—you're not denying that, at any rate."

"Oh, no! We did it!" agreed Harry.

"Well, if it were an accident, it shouldn't have happened! Loder thinks it was done intentionally. You get a beating for it! If it were an accident, that will be a warning to you not to let such accidents happen where Sixth Form prefects are concerned! Now shut up, and bend over!"

There was nothing more to be said. All the prefects nodded assent to Wingate's judgment. If it had been an accident, it was one that ought not to have happened—if it had been a rag, still more it ought not to have happened, and in either case, a beating was due—in the opinion of the prefects, if not of the juniors.

All that remained was to bend over and take the beating with as much philosophy as was available!

Five fellows bent over. Wingate took up the cane and delivered a whop each. Probably Wingate believed the juniors' explanation, for his whops were very light—merely flicks. But Loder came next—and his whops were far from light!

The Famous Five were fairly tough, and they had been whopped many a time and oft. But as Loder laid on the cane, they almost repented them that they had not taken Billy Bunter's advice, and "packed." Loder made that cane fairly ring!

Luckily, according to the rules of a prefects' beating, he was able to give them only one each! But he passed the cane to his pal Carne, who emulated Loder—laying it on as if he were beating carpet.

Frank Nugent gave a gasp—immediately suppressed. The other four uttered no sound.

Carne passed the cane to Walker! James Walker swiped, though not quite so severely as Loder or Carne. But the whopping was having a cumulative effect by this time. Two of the sufferers emitted gasps under Walker's whops.

Sykes came next, with mere flicks. Then Bancroft, hardly touching them, and then Tom North, with airy lightness. But two or three who followed seemed to feel it their duty to make the swipes felt, on a serious occasion like this—and they did! It was getting quite painful. By the time it was over, the Famous Five were feeling that "six" from Mr. Quelch would have been quite pleasant in comparison. But it was over at last.

"Now cut!" said Wingate.

And the juniors cut.

Loder grinned, as they wriggled out of the Prefects' Room.

They had determined to take that whopping in their stride, as it were, and shut their teeth on it, and give no sign. But they could not help wriggling. A prefects' beating, in fact, was a severe ordeal, and the toughest man at Grey-

friars must have wriggled, after going through it.

They wriggled away.

They did not return to the Rag. Until they felt a little better, they did not want to meet the public eye. Wriggling was a rather undignified process, and they preferred to do it in private. They retired to Study No. 1 in the Remove, where they wriggled and gasped, and told one another what they would like to do to Loder of the Sixth.

Other fellows, tactfully, left them to themselves, with one exception. Billy Bunter tracked them to the study, and looked in, with a fat, grinning face.

"I say, you fellows, did it hurt?" he inquired.

"Get out, ass!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

A Latin dictionary flew across the study. It landed on a fat little nose!

Bunter yelled and departed.

After which, the sad sufferers were left to wriggle in peace!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Wonderful Wheeze!

"IT'S a shame!" said Billy Bunter.

"What?"

"Absolutely rotten! I feel pretty strongly about it, I can tell you. Loder ought to have a lesson! I'll help!"

Billy Bunter emitted these unexpected remarks after class on Monday.

The Famous Five were in the Rag, in a little group by the window, and were, as a matter of fact, discussing Loder of the Sixth and the possible chances of making that unpopular prefect sit up for his sins.

Loder had just passed in their view from the window, going down to the gates, which reminded them of his disagreeable existence.

By that time, of course, the effects of the prefects' beating had worn off. But the chums of the Remove still felt sore about it, mentally if not bodily. They would have been glad to get back on the bully of the Sixth.

But that Billy Bunter should take a deep and personal interest in the matter was quite surprising. Bunter, hitherto, had seemed rather amused by that prefects' beating! His considered view seemed to be that it served them jolly well right, for having left him out of that picnic.

Now there was quite a change! He joined the group at the window, blinking at them very seriously through his big spectacles.

"I mean to say it was unjust and all that!" went on Bunter. "Loder made out that you fellows were telling whoppers. You were, of course—"

"What?" roared Bob.

"I say, don't yell at a chap," said Bunter peevishly. "You make a fellow jump, yelling at him like that! I mean to say, a prefect ought to take a fellow's word. Loder's an awful cad! He's doubted my word, more than once. Absolute outsider, you know. Well, what about giving him jip?"

"The jipfulness will be terrific, if we can manage it, my esteemed idiotic Bunter," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "But the howfulness is a boot on the other leg."

"Well, I know a way!" explained Bunter. "I've been thinking it over, you know, because I feel so indignant about you fellows getting all that injustice. I'm not on the make, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle

at! I'm thinking entirely of you fellows in this!" said Bunter warmly. "I can tell you a jolly good way of making that cad Loder squirm."

"How, fathead?" asked Harry Wharton.

"He's gone out now," said Bunter, "and all the Sixth are at games-practice. I've just squinted into the Prefects' Room! There isn't a man about."

"Well?"

"Well, a fellow could cut in, and use the telephone!" said Bunter, with a fat wink.

"What the thump—" said Frank Nugent, staring at the fat, grinning Owl. "Nobody here wants to borrow a telephone."

"You don't catch on yet, old chap! Member when Loder's uncle came down at the half-term? He fed him in his study—I dare say he got a good tip out of him, too—anyhow, he fed him up to the chin. He had strawberries and cream sent from the bunshop in Courtfield. You know, they make a special line of strawberries and cream there—delivered on a bike, if you phone. Loder phoned, and I saw the stuff when it came—it was prime! I'd have taken it to Loder's study for him, only the boy from Courtfield had instructions to deliver it himself, so I never had a chance—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle! I'm trying to tell you how to get even with Loder, and you keep on interrupting me!" yapped Bunter. "Suppose Loder phoned for another lot to-day, they'd deliver it same as before—see?"

"Not in the least," said Harry Wharton blankly. "I suppose you mean something, Bunter—but if you do, what is it?"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Loder's gone down to Courtfield—I heard him tell Walker he was going there, so he's safe off the scene. He wouldn't know anything about it till afterwards. One of you fellows nips into the Prefects' Room to phone to the bunshop—"

"Eh?"

"Using Loder's name, you know—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"They send the stuff, and it's landed in Loder's study, same as before," went on Bunter. "Well, Loder will be out! You bag it out of Loder's study—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"We have a jolly good spread of strawberries and cream!" said Bunter, his eyes glistening behind his spectacles. "And Loder don't know anything about it till he gets the bill in."

"Oh scissors!"

"May as well give a good order while we're about it," said Bunter. "Might have a couple of pounds' worth. They trust a Sixth Form prefect, you know; and how are they to know that it isn't Loder phoning, as he's done before? Loder being out, we can get the stuff out of his study easily enough, see? Loder won't know what's happened till they ask for their money—and then just think how wild he will be! He, he, he! What do you fellows think of that for a wheeze?"

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the fat Owl of the Remove. They did not tell him what they thought of that for a wheeze. They just gazed. Bunter seemed to have taken their breath away.

"Pretty deep—what?" grinned Bunter. "You fellows would hardly have thought of a wheeze like that, I fancy. It's brains that does it, you know!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry. "What did your people send you to Greyfriars for, Bunter? Wasn't there a vacancy at Borstal?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—" "You fat villain!" said Harry Wharton. "If you start swindling Loder of the Sixth you'll get sacked, and serve you jolly well right!"

"Well, I like that!" said Bunter indignantly. "Here I take all the trouble to think of a way of paying Loder out for getting you a prefect's beating—and that's all the thanks I get! I say, you fellows, you needn't be funky—it's as safe as houses. One of you can do the phoning, while the others keep watch. Ain't that safe enough? And after the stuff is delivered one of you can sneak it away from Loder's study—before he comes in, you know—"

"Boot him!" said Johnny Bull.

Bunter backed away.

"I say, you fellows, what are you afraid of when I tell you that it's perfectly safe?" he demanded. "Think of Loder's face when he gets a bill for a couple of pounds! He, he, he! He will go down to the bunshop and make out that he never had the stuff—and they'll say he had—and there may be a fearful row about it, and it will come before the Head, and—he, he, he!—and all the time we shall have had the strawberries and cream—see?"

Billy Bunter blinked eagerly at the Famous Five. This seemed, to Bunter, an absolutely ripping idea for making the bully of the Sixth sit up—though it was probable that he was thinking less of Loder sitting up than of Billy Bunter sitting down to strawberries and cream!

But, excellent as that scheme appeared to the fat and fatuous Owl, it did not appeal to the Famous Five. They were ready and keen to make Gerald Loder "sit up" if they could; but there was a limit.

"You blithering bloater!" said Bob. "Can't you really see that it's a swindle, the sort of thing people are sent to chokey for?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Honesty is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well, my esteemed Bunter!" said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "Keep your hands from the pickfulness and the stealfulness."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"I suppose," said Harry Wharton slowly, "that Bunter hasn't brains enough to know that a fellow can't do these things. It's no good talking to him—but even Bunter can understand a boot! Boot him!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"All together!" said Bob.

"Why, you ungrateful beasts!" yelled Bunter. "I can jolly well—Yarooop! I say, you fellows— Oh crikey! Wow!"

Bunter fled for the door. For some reason or other, unknown to Bunter's powerful intellect, the Famous Five were not going to adopt that wonderful wheeze for getting back on Loder. They were only going to impress on Bunter's mind that he couldn't do such things—and boot-leather was the way! Bunter had to be booted for his own good!

Thud, thud, thud, thud, thud!

There were five loud thuds before Bunter reached the doorway of the Rag, and Johnny Bull got in one extra as he bolted out. After which the Famous Five resumed their discussion, unassisted by Billy Bunter.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Strawberries And Cream!

BILLY BUNTER looked this way and he looked that way, like Moses of old, and, like Moses, he saw no man.

The coast was quite clear.

Loder had gone out; Walker was sprawling over a novel in his study; Carne was smoking cigarettes in a secluded spot; and the rest of the Sixth were at cricket! The Prefects' Room was quite deserted.

Bunter rolled in and shut the door.

There was a telephone in that apartment, sacred to the use of the Sixth. Sometimes it was used by other fellows—when none of the Sixth was about. Thus it was on this occasion.

The fat Owl rolled across to the telephone, grabbed the receiver, and rang up the bunshop in Courtfield.

The Famous Five having ungratefully refused to rise to the bait, Bunter was taking the matter in hand himself. Strawberries and cream, on a warm summer's afternoon, had a strong appeal for Billy Bunter. And, so far as Bunter could see, it was absolutely safe! "Safety first" was Bunter's motto; coming even before strawberries and cream!

But what could be safer? Loder was on his way now to Courtfield, as Bunter knew; he could hardly have arrived there yet. What his business was in the town Bunter did not know, but it stood to reason that it would occupy some time; Loder could not be getting back yet. Long before he got back to the school the strawberries and cream would have been delivered and disposed of! There would be no evidence against Bunter—not to be discovered, at all events, without the help of X-rays! Bunter could not help feeling that this was really a masterly scheme, worthy of the powerful brain that had evolved it. He lost no time.

The manager's voice came through from the bunshop. Bunter assumed a deep tone in answer.

"Mr. Loder speaking, from Greyfriars School," he said into the transmitter.

"Yes, Mr. Loder. Good-afternoon, sir! What can we do for you, sir?" asked the voice from the other end very politely.

Loder of the Sixth was well known at the Courtfield bunshop, where he often dropped in when he was in the town and expended cash freely.

"Er—I want you to send me some strawberries and cream, the same as last time," said Bunter.

"Certainly, sir."

"I mean, twice as much as last time! I—I'm having some fellows to tea in my study. I—I want them as early as possible—"

"Half an hour, sir; I will dispatch the goods immediately—"

"Right-ho—I mean, very good!" said Bunter. "I shall most likely be at—the cricket, so tell the boy to leave them in my—my study; the page will show him the room."

"Very good, sir!"

Really, it was as easy as falling off a form. The man at the other end had not the slightest suspicion. If he did not recognise Loder's voice—as certainly he couldn't have—he put that down to the telephone.

Billy Bunter rang off, with a cheery grin of satisfaction on his fat face.

He put up the receiver and rolled out of the Prefects' Room.

The coast was still clear; not an eye fell on Bunter.

All he had to do now was to wait—with an eye open for the lad from Courtfield! That was all—but it was a painful process to Billy Bunter, whose extensive mouth fairly watered at the prospect of a large consignment of strawberries and cream! The minutes were long, to Bunter.

On the last occasion when Loder had phoned to the bunshop Bunter had seen

the goods when they were delivered—a large basket of strawberries and a large pot of cream. Having thoughtfully ordered twice as much this time there was a feast of the gods ahead of Bunter. It was quite dazzling to think of.

But it seemed an age, if not several ages, to Bunter as he loafed by the window at the end of the Sixth Form passage before Trotter, the page, came up that passage, guiding a boy in a peaked cap who carried a basket and a parcel.

Bunter gave them a blink from the distance, and then stood looking from the window. He heard a door open; then he heard it shut; then he heard retreating footsteps.

He blinked round again.

The passage was empty. Trotter and the boy from Courtfield were gone—Trotter back to his own regions, the boy from Courtfield to his bike and his homeward way.

Bunter stepped cautiously along to Loder's study.

He whipped into that study and shut the door after him. On the study table stood the basket and the parcel—one containing almost infinite strawberries, the other a huge pot of cream!

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

He shoved a fat paw into the basket, to begin with. A dozen strawberries vanished on the spot. They were delicious. They were, in fact, scrumptious! They melted in Bunter's mouth!

"Gorgeous!" breathed Bunter.

Gobble, gobble, gobble!

Had the Famous Five fallen for Bunter's wonderful wheeze, Bunter's idea was to leave it to one of the Co. to annex that consignment from Loder's study. But he did not want, personally, to risk being seen carting off a basket and a parcel from the Sixth Form passage.

Neither was it necessary to take the risk. Loder's study window gave Bunter a view of the gates, and it was easy to keep an eye open for Loder.

If, by chance, he appeared in the offing there was plenty of time for retreat from the study before he arrived at the House. But he was not likely to be back soon. Bunter had lots of time.

Still gobbling strawberries, he turned the key in the door in case any chance comer might look in. Any such person, finding the door locked, would only suppose that Loder had locked it when he went out.

But Bunter's luck was in. Nobody came. He was left in peace and plenty!

With a cautious blink every now and then from the window, Billy Bunter got busy, and kept busy. He borrowed a spoon and a bag of castor sugar from Loder's study cupboard—Bunter liked plenty of sugar with his cream. He sat at Loder's table on one of Loder's chairs, and hardly paused for a moment.

Gobble, gobble, gobble!

There were almost endless strawberries; there was almost unlimited cream. Strawberries and cream, cream and strawberries, went on the downward path, and Billy Bunter's fat face grew shinier and stickier, and he breathed happy contentment.

But even Bunter slowed down before he got to the end of that immense supply of strawberries and cream.

The tuck was too delicious to leave; he was not going to leave one strawberry or half a spoonful of cream. But he had to slacken speed. He was feeling full—perhaps a little too full; he was dis-regarding the Plimsoll line even more

recklessly than usual. He began to feel a little difficulty in breathing.

But Bunter was a stickler! He was going to finish the lot, and he did finish the lot. But he merely toyed with the last two or three dozen strawberries. However, they were all gone at last.

He rose from the chair.

It had been a gorgeous feed. It was something to think about and dream about. There was no sign of Loder yet. All was safe. But Bunter moved very slowly when he got up from the chair at last. He had done well—remarkably well—and perhaps he had a slight misgiving that he had done a little too well. There were pounds of strawberries and plenty of cream parked inside Bunter, and he had a sudden queer feeling that he had better breathe carefully, in case something happened!

He rolled to the door and unlocked it, and blinked out into the passage.

The Sixth Form men were still at cricket; nobody was about. Bunter rolled out of the study.

Not an eye fell on him as he went. Really, his luck was phenomenally good. He passed Hobson of the Shell on the stairs; but Hobby did not even glance at him. On the Remove landing he found Skinner and Snoop lounging, and they did glance at him, perhaps noticing that his fat face looked shiny and a little pasty. He rolled on to his study—No. 7 in the Remove.

In that study he sat down in the armchair for a rest. He felt that he needed a rest. But, strange to relate, he was no longer thinking of that gorgeous feed with happy satisfaction.

He was feeling rather queer. In Loder's study a doubt had crossed his fat mind that perhaps he had overdone it. Now there was no longer any doubt. He knew that he had.

With the perspiration gathering on his fat brow, Bunter sat very still in the armchair—very still indeed—fearful of what might happen if he stirred!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Cornered!

"O H, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"Look!"

"That fat ass!"

It was not more than ten minutes after Billy Bunter had left Loder's study that two other Remove fellows stepped quietly in. Had they arrived ten minutes earlier, they would have found the door locked and Bunter inside. Now the study was empty again. Loder of the Sixth had not yet come in; the coast was still clear.

They had two reasons for coming to that study. One was that they had heard Carne of the Sixth ask Walker where Loder was, and had heard Walker reply that Loder had told him that he was going to tea at the bunshop in Courtfield. If Loder was tea-ing in Courtfield, it meant that he was safe till near calling-over. The other reason was that Bob had remembered that Smithy had a bottle of liquid glue in his study. Liquid glue was a very useful thing. Though not intended for the purpose, it could be used to pour into the seat of an armchair—with surprising results to the fellow who sat in the chair afterwards!

For these two good reasons, the juniors had arrived in Loder's study. With plenty of time on hand, and a bottle of liquid glue, they felt that this was a chance to make Loder sit up—in

glue! Having already decided that the bully of the Sixth had to suffer for his sins, they were not going to let their chances, like the sunbeams, pass them by!

So here they were—inside Loder's study, the door shut, ready to set to work for Gerald Loder's behoof. And then their eyes fell on the wreck of that gorgeous feed on Loder's table.

They had forgotten all about Billy Bunter's wonderful wheeze—indeed, they had forgotten Bunter's fat existence. Now they were reminded of both.

On the table was a strawberry basket; beside it a large cream jar. Both had been emptied. A spoon was standing in the jar, where it had been left, creamy with cream. Fragments of strawberries littered the table. Sugar had been spilt. Obviously, somebody—not a very tidy or cleanly person—had had a feast there—of strawberries and cream.

The two juniors stared blankly at the relics.

"That blithering Owl!" gasped Bob.

"Then—then—then he did it!" stuttered the captain of the Remove. "He must have done it!"

"Must have phoned—" breathed Bob.

"And the stuff came—"

"And he scoffed it—"

"Here, in Loder's study—"

"Scoffed the whole lot—"

"Must have been tons! Look at the size of that jar—"

"And that basket—"

"Great pip! There'll be a fearful row about this!" murmured Harry Wharton. "Loder will have a tidy bill to pay for that lot! Why, here's the bill! It came with the stuff! Thirty-two-and-six! Oh crikey!"

"Thirty-two-and-six! Oh crumbs!"

The two Removes gazed at one another across Loder's table. They almost forgot why they had come to the study.

There was a bill for Loder—for thirty-two shillings and sixpence—for strawberries and cream! What Loder would say and do when he saw that bill was hardly imaginable. Bunter, evidently, had parked strawberries and cream to the tune of thirty-two shillings and sixpence! Where he had parked it all was rather a mystery—even for Bunter.

"Loder won't pay!" gasped Bob.

"Well, they will say he phoned; they must have supposed that he did, or they wouldn't have sent the stuff."

"Oh, that ass!" said Bob. "This will come before the Head! He may be sacked for it!"

"If they spot him—"

"Let's hope they won't. But there's going to be an awful row! Did you ever hear of such a blithering owl?"

"Hardly ever!"

"Diddling Loder out of thirty-two-and-six! Somebody will have to pay for the stuff—"

"Bunter, if they get him!"

"I—I say, we'd better get out, I think," said Bob. "There will be row enough over this, without glue in Loder's armchair."

"I jolly well think so! Let's!"

Bob Cherry slipped Smithy's bottle of liquid glue into his pocket.

Bunter did not seem to understand that he had done anything of a serious nature; he had been thinking wholly and solely of strawberries and cream at Loder's expense. But it was certain that the beaks would take a fearfully serious view of what had happened. There was going to be a royal row—a tremendous row—and the chums of the Remove sagely decided to postpone that

rag in Loder's study till a more suitable occasion.

They stepped back to the door. They had, as they supposed, ample time to get clear, as Loder was tea-ing in Courtfield. But that, as it proved, was a little mistake.

Bob was opening the door when suddenly he shut it again—at the sound of a voice in the passage. It was Loder's voice.

"By gum! I'll take it to the Head, and—"

Loder's voice, loud and angry, was shut off by the closing of the door.

"Copped!" breathed Bob.

"What rotten luck! What the thump's he come back for?"

"Goodness knows!"

Footsteps came along to the study. Bob made his chum a sign, and backed behind the door. Wharton caught on at once, and backed with him.

The door would hide them when it opened. If Loder did not close it, they would remain hidden. It was a remote chance, but it was all they had.

A moment later the door was flung angrily open. It banged wide, and Bob promptly caught it by the handle, and kept it so. If only Loder did not grab it to shut it again—

He did not. He tramped in with heavy footsteps. From his footsteps alone, it was clear that he was in a very bad temper.

"But what—what the thump, Gerald, has—"

It was Walker's voice. Walker was standing in the doorway.

"One of those young sweeps who were whopped on Saturday, I expect!" hooted Loder. "Look! Look on the table!"

Loder's first glance had fallen on the sticky relics of Bunter's feast.

"But what—" demanded Walker.

"Look at that sticky muck on the table!" howled Loder. "Squashed strawberries and cream and spilt sugar—my hat! Look at it! I tell you, I'll take it before the Head!"

"You'll take that muck off the table before the Head!" gasped Walker.

"No, you ass! No, you dummy! I'll take the matter before the Head—the rotten trick that's been played on me!" hooted Loder. "I shouldn't have known, only I went into the bun-shop for tea, and the manager told me. He was surprised to see me, soon after sending the stuff off, and he mentioned that it had been sent—see? That was the first I'd heard of it—"

"But what—"

"Somebody telephoned from the school, using my name, and ordering stacks of strawberries and cream!" howled Loder. "I can tell you, I jumped when the manager told me it had been sent! I came back at once, without my tea! I told the man I never ordered it, and he said it was ordered in my name, and the fellow, whoever he was, mentioned the last lot, and said, send twice as much—he thought that it was I, of course. It came to sixteen and six last time, so goodness knows how much it comes to this time—hallo, here's the bill!"

Loder clutched the bill from the bunshop.

"Thirty-two-and-six, by gad! Well, I shan't pay it! Look! Whoever ordered that stuff has been here scoffing it—he actually had the neck to sit here in my study and scoff it." Loder gurgled with rage.

Walker whistled.

"Well, by gum!" he said. "Talk about nerve! I suppose the young sweep knew you were out, of course—but what

a nerve! Who the dickens can have done it, Loder?"

"I'll bet it was one of that gang who got the beating on Saturday!" snarled Loder. "I'll jolly well find out. I've got to, to make him pay that bill! By gum, they may get sacked for this! It's a swindle! It's diddling! Dishonest young scoundrels! Thirty-two-and-six! And they've scoffed the lot—must have been more than one of them in the game—one fellow couldn't park all that! Have you seen anybody about the studies while I've been out?"

"No—I was reading in my study till I saw you coming in. But I say, I hardly think young Wharton would play a trick like that! He's got too much sense—"

"Who else?" snarled Loder. "They're up against me—always have been, the cheeky young scoundrels! They'd think this a lark! I'll lark them! They can't have been long gone—I got back as fast as I could, when I heard that the stuff had been sent—I thought I might catch them with it. But they've had the nerve to scoff it here, in my study, instead of carting it off—sitting down in my study to feed, by gad! Why, I might have walked in and caught them at it—as I came back before the young scoundrels expected—of course, they never knew I should hear about it in Courtfield! I might—"

Loder broke off.

The possibility that he might have caught them scoffing the strawberries and cream in his study, put another idea into his head. The young rascals might have been still in his study when he arrived, and might have dodged out of sight. He cast a searching glare round the room.

"By gum! They might be still here!" he exclaimed.

Two juniors, behind the door, exchanged a dismal look. They had wondered whether Loder might think of that. He had!

"Look round, Jimmy!" exclaimed Loder. "Shut that door! They—why—what—great pip! There they are!" roared Loder, as Walker pulled the door shut, thereby revealing Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Trouble For Two!

"WHARTON!" roared Loder. "Cherry!"

The two Sixth Form men stared at the two Removites. There they were—undoubtedly!

"So I've caught you, fairly in the act!" said Loder grimly. "You'll go to your Form-master for this, and then to the Head! You can make up your minds to get a Head's flogging, if you're not sacked. I suppose you know that you may be sacked for bringing off a sneaking swindle like that?"

"Like what?" asked Bob.

"Are you going to tell lies, as you did in the Prefects' Room the other day?" sneered Loder. "Well, it won't help you any more now than it did then. Which of you telephoned to Courtfield, using my name?"

"Neither of us!" answered Harry Wharton quietly. "We had nothing whatever to do with that, Loder!"

Loder laughed—grimly.

"You haven't been here scoffing strawberries and cream that you got by a swindle?" he sneered.

"Nothing of the kind!"

"Draw it mild, kid!" said Walker. "You may as well own up, now you're caught! What's the good of gammon?"



Bob Cherry hurtled down the steep bank, cleared the bush, and landed—not on grassy earth as he expected to do, but on Gerald Loder! Crash! "Urrrrrgh!" came an agonised gasp from the Greymfriars prefect.

Neither of the Sixth Form men had any doubt. Really it looked like a clear case! The remnants of a recent feed were on the table—the two juniors were caught hiding in the study! Loder's suspicion had already turned to them—now his suspicion was a certainty! He had not the slightest doubt that the two young rascals had been caught at their surreptitious feed in his study, and had just finished the tuck when he barged in. It certainly looked like it.

"Will you let us explain?" asked Harry Wharton. "We haven't been here more than a few minutes, and we found all that stuff on the table when we came here, exactly as it is now—"

"What are you doing here at all?" sneered Loder. "I don't remember asking Remove fags to my study."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"We came here for something else!" he said. "I may as well own up that it was a jape— But we had nothing to

do with what you've just been talking about to Walker—"

"You can tell Quelch that!" said Loder. "You'll come with me to your Form-master's study at once."

"Better tell the truth, you young asses!" said Walker, as the two juniors followed Loder from the study. "Not much good trying to gammon now."

The juniors made no reply to that. They followed Loder of the Sixth, in a dismal frame of mind. The evidence against them was, in point of fact, overwhelming; and they could hardly expect their Form-master to believe them, in the face of overwhelming evidence. They had been caught in Loder's study, where, of course, juniors had no business; with the remnants of the feed on the table—obviously a quite recent feed! What could be clearer?

Indeed, had Loder got back a quarter of an hour earlier, he would have found

(Continued on page 16.)

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FIVE IN A FIX!



By FRANK RICHARDS

(Continued from page 13.)

the real culprit in his study! Who was going to believe that they had arrived there just after the real culprit had gone? Not Loder, at all events!

Loder tapped at Mr. Quelch's door, and entered, followed by the two dismayed Removites.

Mr. Quelch was sitting by his window, with a volume of Sophocles open on his knees. He glanced round inquiringly—and then frowned, laid down Sophocles, and rose to his feet.

"What is it, Loder?" he asked.

"A very serious matter, I am very sorry to say, sir!" answered Loder. "These two juniors have used my name to obtain goods from a shop in Courtfield."

Mr. Quelch fairly jumped.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed.

"We have done nothing of the kind, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

"I feel sure of it, Wharton—there must surely be some mistake!" said Mr. Quelch. "However, let Loder speak! Please be careful what you say, Loder—such an accusation is extremely serious!"

"I am aware of it, sir!" said Loder. "But there is, unfortunately, no doubt. I was in Courtfield after class, and went into the bun-shop there to tea. The manager told me that a large quantity of strawberries and cream had been delivered here, on a telephoned order supposed to have been received from me. As I had sent no such order, I hurried back at once to inquire into the matter."

"Quite so!" said Mr. Quelch.

"The goods had been delivered—I think the messenger must have passed me on the Courtfield Road, in fact," said Loder. "Anyhow, they had been delivered, and placed in my study. One of these juniors did the telephoning—I cannot say which—but both were concerned in it."

"For what reason do you suppose so, Loder?" asked Mr. Quelch sharply.

"Because, sir, when I came in I found them hidden in my study—they had dodged behind the door when they heard me coming in! They had eaten the whole of the strawberries and cream, actually in my study!"

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Here is the bill, sir—thirty-two shillings and sixpence!" said Loder, laying it on the Remove-master's table. "These juniors are, of course, responsible for it. The dishonesty of their conduct—"

"Let me hear what the juniors have to say!" said Mr. Quelch. "Do you admit this?"

"No, sir!" said the two juniors together.

Loder's lip curled.

"If they deny that I caught them in my study, sir, Walker was present when I found them there!" he said contemptuously.

"You do not deny that, Wharton?"

"Certainly not, sir!" said Harry.

"We were in the study. But we had not

touched the stuff on the table—we found it there, just as Loder found it—somebody else had been there before us."

"You were in Loder's study?"

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's face set grimly.

"What business had you in Loder's study, Wharton, unless you had gone there for the goods delivered from the shop in Courtfield?" he demanded. "You are perfectly well aware that juniors are not allowed to enter Sixth Form studies without leave."

"I know, sir. But—"

"Well?" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"It—it was a—a jape, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, a—a joke! Loder got us a prefects' beating on Saturday for nothing, and we—we were going to stick some glue in his armchair."

"I've got the bottle in my pocket, sir," said Bob Cherry. "That's what we went there for, sir—nothing else."

"That is a very extraordinary statement!" said Mr. Quelch. "You admit that you entered the study to play a lawless and disrespectful prank on a Sixth Form prefect."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Did either of you telephone the shop in Courtfield?"

"No, sir."

"Did you consume the—the comestibles, which were placed in Loder's study?"

"We never touched them, sir."

Loder gave a contemptuous grunt. This sounded, to him, like a string of the most palpable falsehoods.

Unfortunately, it sounded a good deal like it to Mr. Quelch. The only difference was that he, unlike Loder, had a good opinion of those two juniors, and was reluctant to believe that they could, or would, look him in the face and tell untruths.

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips thoughtfully.

"I do not think, sir," said Loder, "that anything could be clearer than this. I came back as quickly as I could to catch the young rascal who had used my name, and these two juniors were there. I see no reason whatever to suppose that anyone else had been in the study."

"Except Wharton's statement, Loder."

"A fellow who would obtain goods under false pretences would tell lies about it afterwards!" said Loder contemptuously. "Any fellow caught as they were caught could say the same!"

"That is certainly true," said Mr. Quelch. "The evidence appears to be quite conclusive, Loder; but in so very serious a matter it is impossible to be too careful. This matter must go before the headmaster, but before that it will be judicious to make some inquiries and ascertain whether any other person may have visited your study during your absence."

Loder breathed hard.

This seemed to him mere quibbling. Still, he had no doubt that such inquiries would only demonstrate the fact that nobody else had been to the study. Anyhow, he had to give Mr. Quelch his head, as it were.

"Very well, sir!" he said. "It is in your hands, of course, as these boys are in your Form."

"Quite so!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Kindly make some inquiries on the subject, Loder, and I will do the same. Wharton! Cherry! I shall give you every chance of clearing yourselves of this charge. Strict inquiry will be made, and if it cannot be found that any other boy entered Loder's study during his absence I shall take the

matter as proved, and you will go before your headmaster. For the present you may go."

And the juniors, dismally, went!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Doesn't Feel Well!

"THAT fat ass!"

"That burbling bloater!"

"The frabjous foozler!"

"That terrific toad!"

"That—that benighted sticky slug!"

The Famous Five were alluding to Billy Bunter!

Two members of the famous Co. were "for it"—there was little doubt about that. The other three were deeply concerned.

Other fellows, gathered on the Remove landing, were keenly interested, and some of them seemed amused.

It was tea-time, and most of the Remove had come up to the studies to tea. But they forgot all about tea when they heard the news.

There was a "row" on—a royal row—a record row! Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were booked for an interview with their headmaster, and the result was a foregone conclusion. Indeed, most of the Removites, when they heard what had happened, wondered that Quelch had not taken them directly to Dr. Locke. What more evidence could he want than what he had?

"Well, if it weren't you fellows, you seem to have taken a lot of trouble to make it look as if it were!" said Bolsover major.

"It was Bunter, you silly ass!" howled Johnny Bull.

"I don't see putting it on Bunter," remarked Skinner. "Did Bunter make you go to Loder's study and get copped there?"

"Don't be a fool—and a cad!" snapped Harry Wharton. "We went there to jape Loder, as we've done before, more than once, and as you've done."

"Well, look here, how do you know it was Bunter?" demanded Peter Todd. "If grub's been scoffed, it sounds like Bunter, but that ain't proof. I know Bunter's in the study now, and he's been there some time. He looks seedy. How do you know he ever went near Loder's study?"

"Because it was his fatheaded wheeze!" snorted Bob. "He came and told us in the Rag, and we jolly well booted him."

"And then you acted on the idea?" asked Skinner.

Harold Skinner did not wait for a reply to that impertinent question. Bob Cherry lifted his boot—and Skinner retired up the Remove passage.

"Bunter suggested the stunt?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, like the silly owl he is. He thought it a good idea!" growled the captain of the Remove. "We booted him, and forgot all about it, till we went up to Loder's study, Bob and I, about an hour later, and then we saw the litter all over the table, where he had been scoffing strawberries and cream."

"You think he did the phoning, then?"

"Somebody did, ass! Who could it have been, but Bunter?" exclaimed Nugent angrily.

The Bounder laughed.

"That's not evidence," he said. "Somebody phoned and used Loder's name, and it's pretty well known that you fellows are up against Loder. Two of you were copped in his study, where

the stuff had been scoffed! If the Head wants more evidence than that he must be greedy!"

"If you mean that you don't take our word, Smithy—" began Harry Wharton, with gleaming eyes.

"Hoity-toity!" grinned the Bounder. "My dear chap, keep your wool on! I take your word all right; but if the Head does, you'll be jolly lucky."

"We can't give Bunter away to the Head!" growled Bob Cherry. "He would tell a pack of lies, if we did—but we can't, anyhow."

"Wouldn't be any good if you did!" remarked Hazel. "Even if the Beak believed that Bunter had suggested it he would only believe that you acted on the suggestion, as you were copped on the scene of the jolly old crime."

"Bunter ought to own up, now the wrong fellows have got landed with it," said Tom Brown.

"I can see him doing it!" grinned Squiff.

"Bunter mayn't have done it!" said Peter Todd. "If he suggested it to these chaps, he may have suggested it to other chaps, and any fellow might have done it."

"Nobody but Bunter is fool enough!" growled Johnny Bull. "Anybody else would know that it would lead to a fearful row."

"Bunter ought to own up, if he did it!" repeated the New Zealand junior. "Any fellow would, when they get the wrong man. Look here, you fellows, put it to Bunter."

"We're going to!" said Harry Wharton. "Not that it's any use. Catch Bunter asking for a flogging!"

The Famous Five went up the Remove passage to Study No. 7. They, at least, had no doubt that Billy Bunter was the genuine culprit, though other fellows did not feel so sure. The whole crowd followed them and packed the doorway of Study No. 7 as Harry Wharton & Co. went in.

Billy Bunter was there. He was seated in the armchair, sitting perfectly still, and seeming to breathe with some difficulty.

Angry and excited as they were, the chums of the Remove felt their wrath melt away at the sight of the fat Owl. Peter had said that he looked seedy—and most undoubtedly he did.

His fat face, usually ruddier than the cherry, was nearly as white as chalk. Perspiration bedewed his fat brow. He did not look merely seedy—he looked ill. He gave the juniors a lack-lustre blink through his big spectacles, but did not stir or speak.

Looking at him, the Co. felt, for the first time, a doubt. If Bunter had been in this seedy state long, he could not have visited Loder's study, or any other study. He really looked all in!

"What's the matter, Bunter?" asked Bob, in quite a kindly tone—not at all the way he had intended to address Bunter, when he arrived in the study.

"Oh, nothing!" mumbled Bunter, faintly.

"You look ill!" said Harry.

"I—I—I'm not—not feeling fearfully well," moaned Bunter. "I—I think it—it's a touch of the heat! Or—or something I—I had at dinner! Might have been something out of a tin, or something! Oh dear!"

"You were all right when we saw you in the Rag!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ooogh!"

"Well, look here, old fat man," said Bob. "I'm sorry you're seedy, and you do look awfully queer; but it must have been you who phoned to the bun shop for that stuff for Loder. Wasn't it?"

"Oh, no!"

"You told us, in the Rag——"

"I—I didn't——"

"What?" howled Bob Cherry.

"I—I never had anything to do with it! Don't you get making out that I had!" moaned Bunter. "Loder will never find out who did it! How can he?"

"Then it was you!" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"Oh, no!"

"Look here, Bunter, Loder caught Wharton and me in his study, and thinks that we did it," said Bob. "You ought to own up that you did it. See?"

"I—I didn't! What the dickens did you want to go to his study for? There weren't any strawberries left, or any cream, either."

"You mean you had finished them?"

"Oh, no! I never went there! I—I haven't tasted strawberries this term—or—or cream! I—I don't like strawberries and cream—I—I hate 'em!" moaned Bunter. "Nasty sickly stuff! Ooogh!"

"Where have you been the last hour?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Nowhere—I mean, anywhere—that is, I—I've been here. I—I've been feeling rather ill, and—and I came up here for a rest—I've been here ever since class—hours and hours——"

"You fat owl, it's not much over an hour since we booted you out of the Rag!"

"I—I mean, that was when I came up! It was that that made me feel ill, see? I—I haven't been out of the study since."

"Not even when I saw you coming upstairs?" asked Skinner, from the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean, I—I went down to look for—for—for letters. There weren't any! So I—I came up again! I say, you fellows, you shouldn't have barged into Loder's study! If you got copped, you can't blame me! You're jolly well not going to put it on me."

"It must have been Bunter!" said Bob slowly. "Who else could it have been?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Look here, Bunter——"

"Ooogh! Grooogh! Woogh!"

"What's the matter now?"

"Goorg-gug-gug!"

Bunter gurgled.

"I—I say, you fellows, don't you come bothering a chap when he's ill!" he gasped. "Haven't you any feelings? Ooogh!"

"Cave!" called out Ogilvy, from the passage. "Here comes Quelch!"

"Ooooooogh!"

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry exchanged a look.

"We're for it!" grunted Bob. "It must have been that blithering owl—but we can't tell Quelch so."

"Must have been—but we can't!" agreed Wharton. "We're for it, old man—unless—unless the Head sees us through. After all, he's a wise old bird."

And the hapless two, making up their minds to what could not be helped, stepped to the study doorway as Mr. Quelch came rustling up the Remove passage.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Guilty Man!

MR. QUELCH gave a start. From the interior of Study No. 7, a strange, weird, woe-ful sound reached him—such a sound as might have been heard on a Channel steamer on a rough day.

"Ooooooogh! Gooooorrrgh!"

Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle!

"What—what is that?" exclaimed the Remove master.

"Only Bunter, sir!" said Peter Todd.

"He's not quite well."

"Yurrrrrgh!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

"If Bunter is not well, he should have reported to the House-dame at once." Mr. Quelch glanced into the study, the juniors respectfully making way for him. "Bunter!"

"Ooooooogh!"

"The boy looks very pale!" said Mr. Quelch, staring hard at the ghastly figure in the armchair. "Bunter! Are you ill?"

"Ooogh! No! Yes! Oh lor'! Woocoo!"

Bunter did not move. A fellow had, of course, to rise to his feet when his Form-master entered. Bunter didn't! He dared not! Only too well he knew what would happen if he moved!

For half an hour Bunter had been sitting there, getting worse and worse and worse! His statement that he hated strawberries and cream was perfectly true—for the time! The mere thought of them made him quake.

He was suffering from an over-dose of both. There were awful feelings inside Bunter! His fat interior seemed to be floating about in space.

Mr. Quelch's look at the unhappy fat Owl grew very fixed and penetrating. The juniors had been wondering what on earth was the matter with Bunter. Mr. Quelch put two and two together.

A large quantity of strawberries and cream had been devoured by somebody—and Billy Bunter was stretched in his study armchair looking like a seasick Channel passenger. Two and two, added together, made four.

Mr. Quelch, after that long, penetrating look at the Owl of the Remove, glanced round at the other juniors crowded round the door.

"I came here," said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice, "to make some inquiries. From the evidence that has been placed before me, it appears that Wharton and Cherry consumed a large quantity of comestibles in a prefects' study a short time ago. They deny having done so, and it was my intention to make further inquiries. But——" He paused, his eyes on Bunter again. "Bunter!"

"Ooogh!"

"Your appearance, Bunter, is that of a boy who has over-eaten, greedily and unthinkingly. Is that the case?"

"Woogh!"

"Answer me at once, Bunter!"

"Gurgh!"

"I require to know, Bunter, whether you have lately consumed a large quantity of strawberries and cream!" said Mr. Quelch, his voice growing deeper.

"Oh!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"An enormous quantity of strawberries and cream—to the value, to be precise, of thirty-two shillings and sixpence—was consumed in Loder's study!" said Mr. Quelch. "Any boy who ate so much at one sitting would certainly be ill afterwards, I imagine. You are ill, Bunter!"

"Ooogh! No!" moaned Bunter. "Not—not-n-n-not at all, sir! I—I—I never felt bi-b-bub-bob-better in my life! Urrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the passage.

"Silence, please!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Bunter, do you deny that you went to Loder's study and devoured strawberries and cream there in a disgustingly greedy manner?"

"Oh! No! Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"It wasn't me, sir! Ooogh! I'm not

ill, sir. I—I'm quite well, sir! I—I—I feel rather bucked, really, sir."

"You have eaten no strawberries, Bunter?"

"Oh! No, sir."

"Then what kind of fruit has made your hands so sticky, Bunter?"

"Oh crikey!"

"You have eaten no cream, Bunter?"

"N-n-never, sir."

"Then how did you come to spill cream on your waistcoat?"

"Oh lor'!"

"Bunter never washes!" murmured the Bouncer, in the passage. "This time he'll wish he did."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was not, as a matter of fact, fearfully keen on washing. And he had arrived in his study, after that gorgeous feast, thinking of anything but washing. His fat paws, and his fat face, showed traces of that extensive feed, which did not escape Quelch's gimlet-eyes. And creamy spots on his waistcoat told their own tale.

All the fellows knew now how the matter stood. Bunter was ill—and if he had scoffed thirty-two-shillings-and-sixpence-worth of strawberries and cream, at one fell swoop, it was no wonder.

Indeed, Bunter was feeling so awfully upset and seedy that he had hardly energy enough left to prevaricate on the subject. But the old habit was strong, and he did.

"There is no doubt in my mind, Bunter, that you consumed the strawberries and cream in Loder's study!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir!" moaned Bunter. "Never! Grooogh! It wasn't—ooch—me, sir!"

"Then what has made you sick, Bunter?"

"I—I ain't sick, sir! I'm feeling fuf-fuf-fine!" groaned Bunter. "Right in the pip-pip-pink, sir!"

"Upon my word! Stand up, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

Bunter did not stand up. He eyed his Form-master with haggard eyes. He couldn't stand up. He dared not stir. It was catastrophe if he did!

"There is no doubt in my mind," said Mr. Quelch. "And if it were you, Bunter, who ate the goods sent from Courtfield, there can be no doubt that it was you who telephoned for them, using Loder's name on the telephone."

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "It wasn't me, sir! I haven't been in the Prefects' Room to-day. I'd forgotten there was a telephone there, too!"

"Bunter!"

"I don't know the number at the bunshop, either, sir, and I never looked it out in the book!" groaned Bunter. "The telephone book wasn't there, sir—so I—I couldn't, could I?"

"Upon my word?"

"I expect Loder telephoned, sir, and—and forgot all about it!" said Bunter. "And—and I dare say he scoffed the strawberries and cream himself, sir!" said Bunter. "I—I know I—I didn't! I wasn't in his study at all, and I didn't lock the door while I was there, either."

"Boy!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"I—I didn't, sir! Not being there, you know, sir—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Say no more, Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "My boys, the matter is clear now! Wharton and Cherry, you will take two hundred lines each for having entered a prefect's study with the intention of playing tricks there!"

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"Oh! Yes, sir."

"But you are completely exonerated in the matter of the order telephoned to the Courtfield shop. Bunter—"

"Urrrrggh!"

"You will come with me," said Mr. Quelch. "This matter is so very serious that I am bound to take you to the headmaster."

"Grooogh!"

"Rise immediately from that chair, Bunter."

"Wooooooch!"

"Did you hear me, Bunter?"

"Yurrgggggggggh!"

Mr. Quelch, with an impatient exclamation, stooped over Bunter, grasped a fat shoulder, and hooked him out of the chair.

The next moment, perhaps, he wished that he hadn't!

The catastrophe came!

"Wurrggh! Gurrgh! Yurrggh! Oooo-er! Mmmmmmmmmmm! Oooch!" Billy Bunter leaned over the fender, like a Channel passenger leaning over the rail. "Oh! Oooch! Grooogh! Wooooooch!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

He stepped rather hastily out of the study.

Left on his own, Bunter heaved and quaked:

"Todd," gasped Mr. Quelch, "when—when Bunter is better, take him down to the House-dame! Probably the wretched boy will have to be taken to the sanatorium."

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch rustled away. The crowd of fellows in the Remove passage were left gurgling with laughter. Bunter, in his study, was gurgling—not with laughter, by any means!

The unhappy fat Owl would have given twice thirty-two shillings-and-sixpence, if he had possessed the same, for that cargo of strawberries and cream to have been still at the bunshop in Courtfield!

For a long time there were sounds of merriment in the Remove—but for a longer time sounds of woe and anguish proceeded from Bunter's study—and it was a very dismal fat Owl that tottered away at last to the House-dame—and was promptly transferred to the sanatorium!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Gated!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH, the Bouncer of Greyfriars, grinned.

Five fellows were looking very grim, in a group in the quad, after dinner on Saturday, and their expressions seemed to amuse the Bouncer.

Harry Wharton & Co. were talking as Smithy came along. He guessed, as he heard their remarks, that they were alluding to Loder of the Sixth.

"The cad!"

"The bully!"

"The swab!"

"The terrific worm!"

"The rotten worm!"

"The rotten outsider!"

"Go it, you men!" said Smithy, as he joined the disgruntled group. "You're quite eloquent. What's Loder's latest?"

"We're gated for the afternoon!" said Harry, with a deep breath.

"And for what?"

"Nothing."

Smithy chuckled.

"It's a hard life at school!" he remarked sympathetically. "We're always getting something for nothing! Queer, isn't it, how beaks and prefects

are down on nice, innocent, inoffensive chaps like us?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" growled Johnny Bull. "It's really for nothing! That cad—"

"That swab!" said Bob Cherry.

"That toad has got his back up with us!" said Harry. "He wanted us up before the Head the other day, about that stuff in his study! He doesn't care two straws about Bunter—he fancied he had us, and he was disappointed when we got off—the worm!"

The Bouncer nodded. All the Remove knew that Loder of the Sixth had not been pleased by the outcome of the affair of the strawberries and cream—indeed, he was far from convinced that his old foes in the Remove had not had a hand in that affair.

Mr. Quelch was satisfied that Bunter was the guilty man, as everybody was quite well aware—except Loder, who obstinately persisted in his own opinion.

Loder did not, perhaps, exactly want the innocent to be found guilty and punished for what they had not done. No fellow could want that! But he did want Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry taken up to the headmaster, and he was angry and disappointed. It was unreasonable, but Loder all over!

Everybody knew that Bunter had made himself ill with those strawberries and cream. He had had two days in sanny; and, after that horrid experience, he had been let off with a caning from his Form-master, instead of going up to the Head. Loder did not care about that—he was not bothering about the fat Owl.

The bill from the bunshop had been sent to Bunter's father. That, to every mind but Loder's, settled the matter beyond doubt that Bunter and Bunter alone, was the culprit.

Loder could not dispute the matter with Mr. Quelch. But he continued to suspect that Harry Wharton & Co. had had, at least, a hand in the affair, somehow. And he had been down on the cheery five, with a heavy down, all that week—and had made himself most unpleasant.

Now, on Saturday afternoon, they were "gated."

It was all the more exasperating, because they had laid plans for that half-holiday.

There was a Form match on, with the Fourth, which, as an easy game, they were leaving to the lesser lights in the Remove cricketing fraternity. Smithy was going to captain the Remove side, in Wharton's place, and other members of the Co. were standing out to make room for smaller fry. That arrangement, having been made, could hardly be altered at the last moment, when the chums of the Remove found themselves gated for the afternoon.

And a walk over to Highcliffe, to see their old friends, Courtenay and the Caterpillar, had to be washed out.

For which reason the Famous Five were telling one another what they thought of Loder of the Sixth, when the Bouncer came along.

"But what are you gated for, as well as nothing?" asked the Bouncer, with a grin. "Quelch must have fancied there was something."

"Oh, Loder's pulled his leg, of course, to make him drop on us," said Bob. "Last Saturday we came on those cads, Pon and his pals, on Courtfield Common, and there was a bit of a dust-up. They were ragging Bunter, and we jolly well ragged them. Of course, that fat ass had to cackle it all over the shop, and Loder got to hear about it."



"Someone has consumed a large quantity of comestibles in a prefects' study," said Mr. Quelch. "Any boy who ate so much at one sitting would certainly be ill afterwards. Are you ill, Bunter?" "Ooogh! No!" moaned Bunter. "Not-not-n-n-not at all, sir. I—I—I never felt bib-bub-bob-better in my life! Urrgh!"

"It was a chance for him!" snorted Johnny Bull. "Quelch is fed-up with the rows with Highcliffe. Loder knows that, of course. So he passed the news on to Quelch, blow him!"

"And Quelch jawed us," went on Bob. "Not that that matters—beaks do jaw, and it can't be helped. But—"

"But," said Nugent, taking up the tale, "that worm, that cad, that swab, must have spotted the cricket list this afternoon."

"And found out that we're not in it!" said Bob. "Fat lot he cares about Remove cricket! But he must have had his eye on it—"

"So Quelch called us in after dinner—" said Harry Wharton. "Loder must have gone straight to him—"

"The worm!"

"The swab!"

"And Quelch asked us, looking like a gargoyle, where we were going!" resumed the captain of the Remove. "And as we said, Highcliffe."

"He didn't wait for any more," said Bob. "Gated! And an extra jaw thrown in, over and above!"

"He's got it into his head that we're hunting for more trouble with those Highcliffe cads," said Nugent. "Loder put it there, of course!"

"The cad!"

"The rotter!"

Vernon-Smith grinned. It was quite possible that Loder believed that the Famous Five were going "hunting for trouble" that afternoon in the circumstances. Anyhow, he had succeeded in getting Mr. Quelch to take that view. Quelch, naturally, was "down" on the endless rows and rags with the Highcliffe fellows.

"So we can stay in gates and play cricket, if we like!" said Harry. "Only

we can't, as it's all fixed up for the match."

"Hard luck!" said the Bounder. "No good advising good little boys like you to cut gating!"

"Oh, rats!"

"I've a jolly good mind—" said Bob.

"Same here!"

"Well, why not?" grinned Smithy. "If you did, I've an item of news for you. That's what I came to tell you. Loder and Carne passed me ten minutes ago, and Loder was saying that he was going by the short cut, by the pond."

"What the dickens—"

"That was all," said Smithy, "but it means that Loder will be walking across Courtfield Common this afternoon. The short cut by the pond is that path through the patch of wood on the common."

"What about it?"

The Bounder laughed.

"Well, it occurred to me that if some fellows parked themselves in that bit of wood they'd have Loder just where they wanted him," he answered. "No bisney of mine, but if Loder was going for me, as he is for you, he wouldn't get past that nice, solitary spot without something happening to him."

"Oh!" said Harry.

The Bounder, laughing, gave the Famous Five a nod and walked away to change for cricket.

The chums of the Remove exchanged glances. Johnny Bull gave an emphatic grant.

"Rot!" he said. "Smithy's a howling ass! We're jolly well not going to ambush a prefect, and get marched to the Head for it."

"I don't know!" said Bob slowly. "I'd jolly well like to make Loder sit up! We could get him all right in

those thickets by the pond on the common. Might up-end the cad, without letting him see who we were—"

"And give him six on the bags!" said Nugent, with a chuckle. "If only he didn't spot us—"

"He would!" said Harry.

"Well, I don't know," repeated Bob. "If we up-ended him all of a sudden on his face, and sat on the back of his head—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's time Loder had a lesson!" urged Bob.

"High time!" agreed Harry Wharton. "But—"

"The butfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Well, look here—" said Bob, evidently rather taken with the idea. "I jolly well think—"

"You jolly well don't!" contradicted Johnny Bull. "Smithy's a mad ass! We're not going to do anything of the kind."

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"Too jolly risky!" he said. "I'd like to mop Loder up, as much as anybody, but we don't want to be taken up before the Big Beak and sacked. Even if Loder didn't spot us, think he wouldn't guess?"

"Guessing isn't proof!" said Bob.

"Fathead! Think we could roll out a string of whoppers when the Head tackled us about it? Smithy could. He thinks it's all right to tell lies to beaks. We don't!"

"Well, no; but—"

"Chuck it!" said Harry decidedly. "Blow Loder, anyhow! Look here, what are we going to do with the afternoon? Cricket's off, and Highcliffe's off, but I'm not going to loaf about all the afternoon, with my hands in my pockets."

pockets, to please a cad like Loder. I'm going out!"

"Um!" said Johnny Bull.

"So am I," said Bob. "Lovely afternoon for the river."

"The river is out of gates!" said Johnny.

"I didn't suppose it was flowing across the middle of the quad!" said Bob sarcastically.

"We couldn't get a boat out, as we're gated," said Harry.

"We could walk up to Courtfield Bridge, and hire one there," answered Bob. "Look here, let's! Nobody will spot us, on the other side of Popper's Island. Hardly a man goes so far up the river."

"Good egg!" said Harry, with a nod.

"The goodfulness of the egg is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Come on!" said Nugent. "Come on, Johnny!"

Johnny Bull did not stir.

"Rot!" he said. "We're gated! It's rough luck, and we don't deserve it, but there it is! Fellows have to toe the line at school, and take the rough with the smooth! Wash all that out, see? Quelch doesn't mean to be unjust; he thinks we're after a row with those Highcliffe cads—and it jolly well looks like it, too! Stay in and stick it!"

Johnny Bull was a hard-headed youth, and his words were words of wisdom. Unfortunately, his four pals had no use, at the moment, for words of wisdom. They looked at him expressively.

"You're staying in" snorted Bob.

"Yes."

"Well, I'm not."

"Same here!"

"The sameness is terrific!"

Four fellows walked away, heading for the old Cloisters. Gated fellows could not walk out of gates; but there were plenty of other ways out, if they chose to take the risk. And they did! Johnny Bull walked after them.

Having uttered his words of wisdom unavailingly, he joined up, as a matter of course. The Famous Five had to sink or swim together.

"Oh! Coming, after all?" grunted Bob.

"One fool makes many!" answered Johnny affably. "If you fellows are going to play the goat, I'm going to play the goat! I'm not going to be left out when Quelch whops you, after calling-over."

"We're not going to mention to Quelch that we've been out of gates!" said Bob, with sarcasm.

"Ten to one he will spot us!"

"Stay in, then, fathead!"

"Rats!"

And five fellows dropped, in a secluded corner, over the Cloister wall.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Pon On The Spot!

"P ON, old man——"

"Shut up, Gaddy!"

"Well, I'm fed up!"

grunted Gadsby sulkily.

"Absolutely!" murmured Vavasour.

"Bit of a bore, Pon!" said Monson.

"We've been here half an hour!" yawned Drury.

"And we'll jolly well stay here another hour, if necessary!" retorted Ponsonby. "So you can shut up!"

Four members of the Highcliffe Fourth yawned. Cecil Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders. Yawning had no effect on him. Pon was determined.

mined—and when he was determined, his knotty followers followed his lead.

Pon was on the warpath that afternoon. The Highcliffians were in strong force—five of them. Four were not very keen; but Pon was keen, and that settled it.

They were in cover, in the patch of woodland on Courtfield Common. It was the loneliest spot on the wide common, half-way between the road and the river. Round a large, shallow, muddy pond trees and thickets grew, and a footpath ran through the thickets, skirting the pond.

Pon was on the watch, from behind a tree; the wide expanse of the green common, bright in the June sunshine, spread before his eyes. Gaddy, Monson, Drury, and Vavasour were smoking cigarettes to while away the time.

At Pon's feet lay a large, rough sack. It was a cement sack, which Pon had coolly abstracted from a van on the road for his own purposes.

His eyes, as he stood in cover, were fixed on a distant figure on the grassy common.

It was the figure of a lad, with a chubby, shiny face, who had a camera in his hand—no other than Solly Lazarus.

Solly's photographic excursion the previous Saturday had been interrupted. Now he was taking his camera for a walk again—in happy ignorance of the eyes that were upon him from a distance.

"Can you see him, Pon?" yawned Gadsby. Gaddy was sitting at the foot of a tree, smoking, not on the watch.

"Yes!" snapped Pon.

"Coming this way?"

"I think so."

"Well, if he doesn't——" yawned Vavasour.

"If he doesn't we'll go after him," said Ponsonby. "But ten to one he will get away if we do. He can run! He started in this direction when I saw him on the road, and I've no doubt he's coming this way. Wait and see."

"Yaw-aw-aw!" yawned Drury.

"You can yawn your head off if you like," said Pon; "but we're after that cad. I came out to look for him specially, and I've spotted him, and I'm not losing this chance. I guessed he might be at it again this afternoon, and so he is. The greasy little beast earns money with that camera. They sell picture postcards that he makes. Beastly little tick!"

Gadsby winked at Monson.

"Horrid toad!" he said. "Frightful disgrace to earn any money! Not the sort of thing I shall ever do—if I can help it."

"Oh, don't be a goat!" snapped Pon. Ponsonby had plenty of money, and he felt a lofty contempt for persons who had to work in order to obtain that very necessary article.

"Still, there's somethin' to be said for earnin' money," said Gaddy, with another wink at his friends. "Where should we get it from if somebody didn't earn it, Pon? Money doesn't grow like blackberries."

"Oh, shut up, ass!"

"How much longer are we goin' to stick here?" asked Vavasour plaintively. "There's some beastly insect crawlin' on my back!"

"We're goin' to stick here till we nail that cheeky cad," said Ponsonby. "He punched my nose last week——"

"Well, you were goin' for him."

"What difference does that make, you fool? He punched my nose. It's been sore all the week. And he landed me into that tussle with that Greyfriars

russian, Loder." Pon gave a reminiscent wriggle. For days and days he had felt the effects of that thrashing from Gerald Loder. "By gad, I wish we could get that brute! But we can't. We can get that Lazarus, though, and we're goin' to. We're goin' to head him up in this sack, and tie it round his legs, and leave him to walk home in it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I dare say his camera will drop into the pond by accident!" added Ponsonby. "I shouldn't wonder."

"I say, that's rather thick!" said Gadsby.

"Accidents will happen, won't they?" said Ponsonby. "I dare say that no-class cad will be sorry he punched my nose by the time we're through with him."

"Well, look here, don't pile it on too thick!" grunted Gadsby. "A rag's a rag, but we don't want his people comin' up and makin' a row at the school."

"Think Dr. Voysey would take any notice of a dashed shopkeeper from the town?" asked Pon contemptuously. "Don't be an ass!"

"He might have to, if you went too far," said Gadsby sulkily. "What state is that kid goin' to be in after bein' headed up in a dirty old cement sack?"

"Well, if it spoils his clothes it won't be much loss!" sneered Ponsonby. "Old Lazarus can stand him another suit out of his second-hand department."

"Pon, old man, you're a bit of a snob!" said Gadsby. "You get on my nerves with it sometimes, old bean."

"Oh, shut up!"

"I say, that beastly insect is ticklin' my back!" wailed Vavasour. He wriggled uncomfortably.

"What about gettin' along to the Three Fishers, Pon?" asked Drury.

"Oh, dry up!"

"We're wastin' a lot of time!" grunted Monson.

Ponsonby did not answer.

His eyes, which had been fixed on the distant figure of Solly Lazarus, were now fixed intently on another figure that had come into sight on the common.

"By gad!" breathed Ponsonby. His eyes flashed. "Oh gad!"

"What's up now?" yawned Drury, without taking the trouble to look.

"Loder!" breathed Ponsonby. "That Greyfriars cad who handled me the other day. By gad, he's comin' straight this way!"

The four Highcliffians rose to their feet at that, and looked out from the thicket.

Gerald Loder, of the Greyfriars Sixth, was still distant; but he was easily recognisable as he came, walking along the track on the common, directly towards the patch of woodland by the pond.

Solly Lazarus had seen him, and, no doubt remembering a smacked head of a week ago, he moved off to keep clear of the Greyfriars prefect.

But Ponsonby was not heeding Solly now.

His eyes burned at Loder.

Solly had deeply incensed the lofty and supercilious Pon by punching his aristocratic nose. But Solly's offences were as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine, compared with Loder's. Loder had thrashed the dandy of Highcliffe for throwing the stone, and it had been a tremendous thrashing—as much as Pon deserved, and perhaps a little over. Ponsonby was changing his plans as he watched now.

Solly Lazarus could wait. He did not matter much, anyhow. This was an unexpected, an unlooked-for chance of repaying that tremendous thrashing.

"By gad," breathed Pon, "he's comin' nere! Watch him! He's takin' the short cut by the pond. He will be here in five minutes."

Gadsby caught his arm in alarm. He could read Pon's thoughts in his spiteful, malicious face.

"For goodness' sake, Pon, don't be a mad ass!" muttered Gadsby. "That man's a Sixth Form prefect of Greyfriars school. His headmaster would come over to see old Voysey about it if we laid a finger on him. We might be sacked for it—flogged, at least! Don't be a mad fool!"

Pon paused a moment.

Ragging Solly Lazarus, the son of a second-hand dealer in Courtfield, was one thing; ragging a Sixth Form prefect of Greyfriars was quite another. Dr. Voysey, the headmaster of Highcliffe, might, or might not, disregard a complaint from old Mr. Lazarus, but he certainly could not disregard one from Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars. He would not be allowed to disregard it.

Pon's comrades were deeply alarmed, and Pon, for a moment, hesitated.

But he set his teeth.

"We're gettin' him!" he muttered.

"You fool!" breathed Monson. "Headin' up a Greyfriars prefect in a sack! Old Locke would come raggin' over to Highcliffe—"

"Floggin' all round, if not worse!" said Drury. "Don't be mad, Pon!"

"You know what he did to me!" snarled Pon.

"I know what you did to him!" snapped Gadsby. "Think anybody would blame him for thrashin' you, when you got him with a stone on the back of the head—as dirty a trick as a fellow ever played—"

"Shut up, you fool! I tell you—"

"And I tell you, I'm havin' no hand in it—"

"Will you listen to me?" hissed Ponsonby. "He will be comin' through these bushes, and he doesn't know we're here; he's not seen us. Well, he's not goin' to see us. We can let him pass, get him from behind, and mop the sack over his head before he knows what's comin' to him. He won't see a thing except the inside of the sack."

"Oh!" said Monson.

"Safe as houses!" breathed Pon. "I don't want a row with old Voysey any more than you do. That cad won't know who got him. Most likely he'll put it down to the hooligans who come up the river sometimes. Anyhow, he won't know it was us if he doesn't see us."

"Yes, but—" muttered Gadsby.

"He's a hefty brute!" said Drury uneasily.

"There's five of us, and we take him by surprise. Are you afraid to tackle a fellow, five to one?" sneered Ponsonby.

"Well, if he doesn't see who we are—" muttered Monson.

"He won't!"

Ponsonby picked up the sack and opened it. He drew a length of cord from his pocket.

"You lend me a hand with the sack, Gaddy. You take the cord, Monson, and be ready to tie it round him when we get the sack on. Keep quiet!"

Four of the Highcliffians were dubious. But Pon had his way, as he always did with the knutty crowd at Highcliffe.

In deep cover, watchful and wary, they waited while Gerald Loder, never dreaming of danger, drew nearer and nearer to the ambush that was waiting for him.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

"Sacked!"

GERALD LODER hardly knew what was happening.

He swung into the track through the trees and bushes from the sunny open common, and walked on, and something, he did not know what, suddenly dropped over his head from behind.

It was done swiftly, neatly, without a second's warning. Ponsonby was perfectly cool, with all his wits about him. He was out of sight behind a tree that Loder passed. One swift step and he was behind Loder, and the open end of the sack dropped over head and shoulders.

Loder gave a sort of convulsive bound. The sack dropped round him, covering his head and face and shoulders; but his arms swung up instinctively, and the edges of the sack caught in his elbows.

Given a few seconds, he would have heaved it up and flung it off, startled and amazed, and almost dazed as he was by the strange and sudden happening.

But he was not given a few seconds—he was not given one second. Even as his arms jerked up, they were grasped by a fellow jumping on either side of him, and dragged down again.

That caused the inverted sack to slip lower down round him at once, and its open end was round his waist.

From the interior came a bellow of enraged surprise—and as Loder bellowed and dragged at his grasped arms, Ponsonby gave him a violent shove in the back and Monson hooked his leg.

Loder went over—with a heavy crash.

He landed on his face, enveloped in the sack, and the next moment Pon's knee was in the middle of his back, pinning him down. His legs kicked up, till Vavasour stood on them.

"Ooooooooo!" came a wild splutter from inside the sack. Half-choked by the dust inside, Loder spluttered frantically.

His struggles were desperate. But Gadsby had one arm, Drury had the other, grasping with both hands and all their strength. Loder could not get his arms loose. He struggled helplessly, face down in the grass; and his wild heaving did not shift Pon, kneeling on his back.

Loder, on his feet, with the use of his hands, would have been a tough proposition, even for the five of them—but Loder rolled in a sack, pinned down and held, was not hard to handle.

Pon & Co. handled him quite efficiently.

They grinned breathlessly as they handled him—but did not speak a word. It was unlikely that Loder would have known their voices, through the sack—or indeed that he would have known them at all. Still, they were not taking risks. This rag was a wild and reckless one—and if Pon was not worried about the thought of the possible consequences, his friends were. They were not taking the risk of being called to account.

Pon signed to Gadsby and Drury, and they dragged Loder's arms together behind him. Pon, with swift fingers, knotted a length of cord round the wrists. That made Loder quite helpless.

"Oooogh!" came from inside the sack. "You young rascals—you rotten young rascals—let me go at once!"

Pon shrugged his shoulders. But Pon's friends immediately looked uneasy. Loder was calling them "young rascals." That looked as if he knew that he was in the hands of fellows younger than himself.

If he had, after all, had a glimpse—

It was an alarming thought—even Pon felt a twinge of uneasiness.

"Let me go!" came the bellow from the sack, as Loder struggled and squirmed. "You young hooligans, let me go! You'll be sacked for this! Do you hear? You'll be sacked! Do you think I don't know who you are?"

"Oh crumbs!" breathed Vavasour, turning quite pale; and he let go the Greyfriars prefect.

"I—I say—" muttered Drury; and he let go, too.

Pon, still with a knee grinding into Loder's back, gave them a fierce glare.

"You rotten funks!" he whispered. "He can't know—keep him—till I get the sack tied—you know he can't know—"

"I know who you are, you young villain!" came the savage bellow from the sack. Loder had caught the whisper. "I shall go straight to the Head about this, you young hooligans!"

Pon & Co. almost jumped.

"Oh gad!" breathed Pon.

They caught on, at once!

Loder fancied that he knew who they were; but he was not thinking of Highcliffe fellows at all. He was thinking of Greyfriars fellows—he fancied that he had been collared by juniors of his own school!

Ponsonby grinned, a wide grin; and his friends grinned, too! So long as Loder fancied he was in the hands of some party of Greyfriars fellows, it was all right for the Highcliffians!

Pon took the cord to tie the end of the sack round Loder.

The Greyfriars senior was not likely to get it off now that his wrists were tied together behind him and the sack pulled down over them. But he was not going to be left the ghost of a chance. The young rascals rolled him over, wound the cord round him, and knotted it, fastening him up in the sack.

Then Loder was jerked to his feet. He stood unsteadily—a strange-looking figure, with the sack down to his knees. Of all Loder of the Sixth, only the boots and a section of trousering were visible.

The Highcliffians chuckled.

Now that it was clear that they were quite safe from detection, absolutely safe, owing to Loder's belief that they were Greyfriars fellows, they were all full of beans.

Loder, staggering in the sack, bellowed. He wrenched, and struggled, and tottered, and bawled frantically.

"Will you get this off? I'm suffocating! Oooogh! Let me go at once! By gad, I'll smash you when I get loose! Grooogh! You young rascals, I know you—I'll go straight to the Head and report this—you'll get barked out of Greyfriars this very day! Wharton, you young scoundrel—Cherry, you young villain—Do you think I don't know you?"

Pon winked at his friends.

They gurgled with merriment.

The names mentioned by Loder told where his suspicion, or rather belief, was fixed! He believed that he was in the hands of the Famous Five of the Remove.

No doubt he had had some trouble with those fellows—Pon could guess as much, from the fact that he suspected them of this rag! Probably, too, he had noted that five pairs of hands had been laid on him. It was certain that he believed that the chuckling fellows round him, in the thicket, were Harry Wharton & Co.

"Do you hear me?" bawled Loder desperately. "Wharton—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"You won't cackle when you come before the Head for this!" shrieked Loder. "Nugent—Bull—you young scoundrels!"

It was then that Ponsonby had a bright—indeed, a brilliant—idea!

Loder believed that the Famous Five had bagged him. But his belief was not proof! It occurred to the artful Pon to give him some proof!

That, Pon considered, would be tit for tat, for the thorns he had sat on a week ago! To make the affair safer for himself, and at the same time to land his old enemies, the Famous Five, in trouble for it, seemed to Cecil Ponsonby the very brightest of ideas!

"Bring him along to the pond, Bob!" said Ponsonby.

Gadsby and Monson, Vavasour and Drury, stared at Pon blankly for a moment. None of them was named "Bob."

Then they caught on, and Monson, grinning, played up.

"What-ho! Shove him in the water, Harry!"

Drury chuckled.

"I say, he'll get wet, Wharton!" he said.

"Let him, Johnny. Bring him along!"

"Urrrrgh!" came from the interior of the sack as Loder was jerked along the track through the thickets. "You young scoundrels—you—"

"Ow!" yelled Pon suddenly, as Loder kicked.

The cord round Loder's knees impaired the force of the kick. Still, it was rather painful.

Ponsonby, with a howl of pain and rage, gave the prisoner in the sack a savage shove, and Loder toppled over.

"I—I say—" gasped Gadsby. "I say, draw it mild—"

Pon, with a snarl, tied another length of cord round Loder's ankles. He was not taking the risk of another kick.

"Now yank him along!" he snapped.

And Loder, spluttering wildly and breathlessly inside the dusty sack, unable to use hand or foot, was dragged bodily along in the direction of the pond.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Rough Luck For Loder!

SOLLY LAZARUS jumped.

"My only Aunt Thelina!" he ejaculated.

He was quite startled.

Solly was standing at an opening in the thickets that surrounded the pond on the common. Since his attention had been turned to Loder, Pon had forgotten all about Solly; he had not given him another thought.

Neither was Solly thinking of Pon; being quite unaware that the Highcliffe fellows were on the common at all. Solly was thinking of photographs, for a set of local picture postcards that he was going to make.

At sight of Loder he had sheered off, and approached the pond from another direction. Now he was focusing his camera—slowly, and with great care, for Solly never wasted a film.

The old pond, circled by shady trees, made quite a pleasant rural picture; and that was the picture Solly was going to make. He was "squinting" carefully through the view-finder, and just about to take a snap when a bunch of moving figures appeared in the line of vision.

Solly snapped, getting an unintended and unexpected picture.

Then, lowering his camera, he stared.

There was an open, grassy space

round the pond, circled by trees and bushes. The figures he had so unexpectedly spotted in his view-finder had emerged from the thickets—five fellows, dragging something that looked like a big sack towards the pond.

In amazement, Solly stared.

They had spoiled his picture by suddenly barging into the line of vision. But he was not thinking of that. He was wondering what on earth the Highcliffe fellows were up to.

He recognised them at the distance; he knew the Highcliffe crowd at a glance. But he did not know, and could not guess, what they were at.

So far as he could see, they were dragging a heavy sack along the ground; but what was in the sack he had not the faintest idea.

Certainly it never occurred to him that it was a Sixth Form man of Greyfriars School.

It was not uncommon for local people to throw rubbish into that old pond to get rid of it, but it was hard to imagine the knotty crowd of Highcliffe dragging a sack of rubbish there for that purpose.

But it was clear that there was something, whatever it was, in the sack, for they handled it as if it were heavy.

Solly was so astonished that he stood staring, and Ponsonby, glancing in his direction, saw him.

Pon gave him a savage look.

He did not want any witnesses to his proceedings that afternoon, though he knew that Solly at the distance could not possibly have discerned what was hidden inside that old cement sack.

Pon released the sack at once.

"This way!" he muttered.

"What—" began Gadsby.

"Come on. I tell you!" snapped Pon; and he started at a run, round the pond, towards Solly Lazarus.

His comrades followed at his heels.

Loder was left, wriggling and gurgling, in the sack.

"Oh thissors!" murmured Solly, as Pon & Co. started towards him; and he quite forgot his surprised interest in the proceedings of the Highcliffians, and took to his heels at once.

Solly did not want a Highcliffe ragging—especially in that spot, where it was likely to take the form of a ducking in a muddy pond.

He flew.

"I say, Pon, look here—" panted Gadsby.

"Oh, come on, you slacker!" snapped Pon. "That Greyfriars brute will be all right! Think he can get out of the sack?"

"No; but—"

"Come on, you fool! We've got to clear that pawnbroker's son off!" grunted Pon. "Do you want him watching us?"

"He's seen us," said Monson.

"He doesn't know what's in the sack. But he will if he hangs around! Get after him!"

Solly Lazarus was going strong, fairly streaking across the common. For a hundred yards or so the Highcliffe fellows dashed in pursuit.

Then Ponsonby came to a panting halt.

"Chuck it!" he said. "He won't come back now."

Solly was not likely to come back. As the Highcliffians stared after him, panting for breath, he disappeared in the far distance across the common.

"That's all right!" said Pon. "We're done with him! Now get back to that cad Loder!"

The Highcliffe knuts walked back to the pond.

Loder was still lying in the sack where they had left him, wriggling and

struggling, panting and gasping, but able to do nothing more. Until he had a helping hand, Loder was a powerless prisoner inside the sack.

"Roll him over, Bob!" said Ponsonby.

"Over he goes, Harry!"

"Look here, chuck it!" muttered Gadsby. "Don't be a cad!"

"Shut up, you fool!" hissed Pon.

"It's too thick!" muttered Gadsby.

Pon's bright idea of landing this on the Famous Five of Greyfriars did not meet with unanimous approval among his friends.

Monson, who was as hardened a young rascal as Pon himself, had joined in that peculiar trick, and so had Drury; but Gadsby and Vavasour were feeling very uneasy about it. It was, as Gadsby said, "too thick."

"Fellow might be sacked—" muttered Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" murmured Vavasour.

"Lend a hand, Bob!" said Ponsonby loudly.

"Oh, you young scoundrels!" came a suffocating voice from the sack. "I'll make you smart for this! I know you—"

"Duck him!" said Ponsonby.

"I'll report this to Dr. Locke! You and your friends, Wharton, will—Wooh!"

Splash!

Loder, with a wild howl, sat in the muddy shallows at the edge of the pond. The water flowed round his waist as he sat there.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Feel damp?"

"Oooogh! Oh, you young rotters! Oooogh!" gasped Loder.

The grinning young rascals hooked him out again. His boots and trousers and the lower end of the sack dripped mud.

"Time we were goin', I think!" murmured Pon. "Bring him out on the common! We'll take him a safe distance from the pond; we don't want him to be found drowned! Keep your eyes open!"

The next five minutes were rather like a nightmare to Loder of the Sixth. He was rolled and pulled and pushed along till he was a good distance from the pond, in the direction of the road over the common, between Courtfield and Greyfriars.

Pon had intended to loosen his bound feet, so that he could totter on his way; but the sudden sight of a silk hat shining in the distance was a warning of danger.

"Hook it!" whispered Pon.

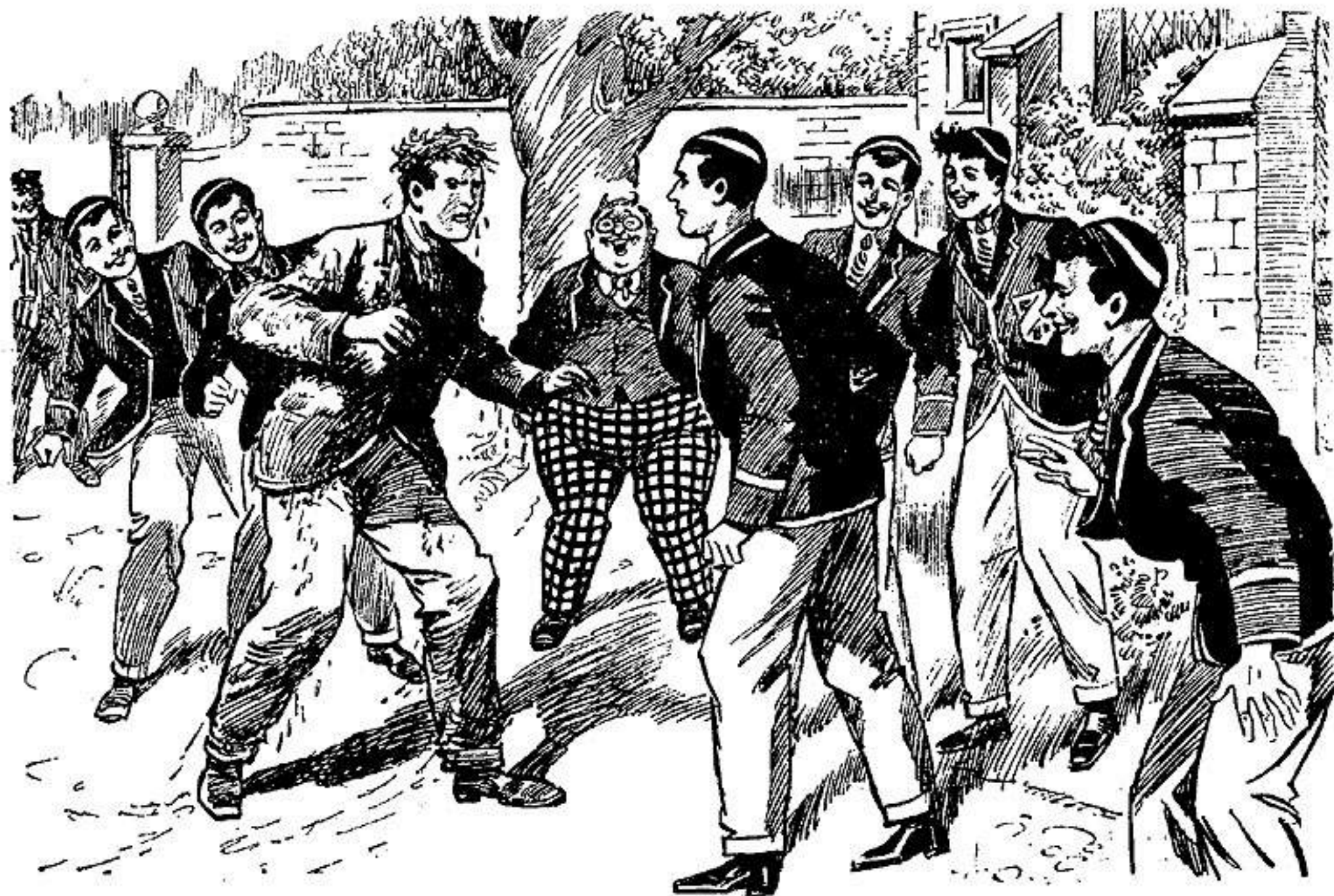
The silk hat was approaching.

Leaving the wretched Loder wriggling in the sack in the grass, Pon & Co. cut off promptly.

And Mr. Prout, the Fifth Form master of Greyfriars, who was taking a walk that afternoon on Courtfield Common, glimpsed five fleeing figures vanishing in the distance as he rolled on his portly way. They were too far off for anything like recognition, however, and Mr. Prout gave them no particular attention. Moreover, his attention, a few minutes later, was riveted by a strange series of sounds—gurgles, gasps, howls, and splutters—which caused him to stare round him in great astonishment.

And when those wild, weird sounds guided him to the spot where Loder sprawled in the sack, Mr. Prout's eyes almost popped out of his plump face.

He stood petrified, staring at the sack in which something wriggled, and from the end of which a pair of muddy legs protruded.



"You're in a shocking state, Loder!" said Wingate. "Had an accident, or what?" "Yes," hissed Loder. "Wharton and his gang tied me up in a sack and ducked me in the pond!" "Great Scott!" exclaimed the captain of Greyfriars.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Accused!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Billy Bunter. "Great pip!" ejaculated Skinner.

"It's Loder!" gasped Hobson of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker of the Fifth. "I say, that's Loder! Potter, old man! Greene, old chap! Look! Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker of the Fifth thought it funny. Everybody thought it remarkable. There were startled stares on all sides.

The Form match was still going on on Little Side. Most of the Remove and the Fourth were there. But there were plenty of fellows in the quad, and every fellow turned his eyes, in amazement and amusement, on Gerald Loder as he came in.

Loder's aspect was startling.

He was smothered, from head to foot, in a whitish dust from a sack that had been used for cement. His boots were caked with mud; his trousers, up to the knees, were thick with mud.

Never had a prefect of the Sixth been seen in such a state before. Something, it was clear, had happened to Gerald Loder.

Under the grime on his face he was crimson with fury. His boots, full of water and mud, squeaked as he tramped. Exclamations were heard on all sides, and a ripple of laughter.

"I say, you fellows, just look at him!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "He, he, he! I say, Loder wants washing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" bawled Coker.

"What the thump—" Walker of the Sixth rushed up to his pal, his eyes popping. "What—Gerald, old man, what—what—"

"Is that Loder?" Wingate hurried up. "Had an accident, or what?"

You're in a shocking state, Loder!"

Loder panted.

"It was a rag! I was shoved in a sack—tied up like a turkey—a gang of the Remove—" he gurgled.

"Wha-at?" Wingate stared at him blankly. "You—you mean to say that Remove kids did—that?"

"Yes!" hissed Loder. "Headed me up in the sack—ducked me in the pond on the common—left me lying there, tied hand and foot—"

"Then how—" gasped Walker.

"Prout found me there, and got me loose!" gurgled Loder. "I've had to walk back to the school like this—like this!" Loder choked.

His walk back from Courisfield Common to Greyfriars had not been pleasant. He had excited altogether too much interest on the part of the general public in that state.

"But who—" gasped Wingate.

"Wharton and his gang—"

"Great Scott! The mad young asses—"

"They'll be sacked for this!" said Walker, with a whistle.

"I should think so!" hissed Loder. "I'm going to the Head. Look at me! I've had to walk miles like this—and everybody I passed—" He choked again. "What are you grinning at, Walker, you fool?"

"Oh, nothing!" gasped Walker.

Loder tramped savagely on.

Walker was not the only fellow who grinned. Loder passed a sea of grinning faces on his way to the house. Even old Gosling, at his lodge, was grinning from ear to ear.

But there was one, at least, who did not grin. Dr. Locke, looking from his study window frowned. He frowned portentously.

"Loder!" he called from the open window.

Loder looked round.

"I say, you fellows, the Head's spotted him!" chortled Billy Bunter. "Oh crikey! He, he, he!"

Loder stepped towards the Head's window.

He was intensely enraged to be seen in such a state; but he was not, perhaps, sorry that the Head had seen him. Dr. Locke was able to see with his own eyes the state in which a Sixth Form man had been left by Remove ragers; he was able to witness the whole awful extent of their iniquity. This made assurance doubly sure that they would not escape the most condign punishment.

"Loder, what does this mean?" exclaimed the Head, staring from his study window. "You are in a shocking state—a dreadful state! Is it possible, Loder, that you, a prefect of the Sixth Form, have appeared in public in such a state at that?"

"It was a rag, sir—I was collared by a gang of juniors—they—"

"Bless my soul! Extraordinary! You will come to my study. Loder, as—as soon as you have made yourself presentable. Now go in!"

Loder went in.

He left the quad rippling with merriment.

He was glad to get out of sight, to get cleaned and changed. He had one consolation for this awful experience—it was the "sack," short and sharp, for the perpetrators. Five Removees were booked for the "long jump"—there could not be the slightest doubt about that. As soon as the reckless young rascals came in, they would be called before the headmaster and "bunked."

A quarter of an hour later Loder of the Sixth was in the Head's study—newly swept and garnished, making his report.

Five minutes after that Mr. Quelch

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received a message requesting him to step into the Head's study.

He arrived, glancing at Loder rather curiously as he entered. He had seen the dusty, muddy prefect from his study window, with strong disapproval.

But he did not yet know that members of his own Form were concerned in the matter. He was to learn that now.

"Mr. Quelch," said the Head, in a very grave tone, "I have sent for you, as I have to deal with boys of your Form. A most extraordinary and unexampled outrage has taken place—Loder was seized on Courtfield Common, by five boys of your Form—"

Mr. Quelch started.

"Impossible, sir, surely!" he exclaimed.

"I am afraid there is no doubt about it, sir!" said the Head. "Loder states explicitly that the boys who seized him and treated him in that unheard-of manner were Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Bull and Hurree Singh, of your Form."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"I fail to understand this, sir!" he said acidly. "Let us, if you please, ascertain that there is no error in the matter. Loder's statement appears to me absolutely impossible, for the simple reason that the five boys named were gated this afternoon, and cannot, therefore, have been on Courtfield Common to-day at all. Loder himself will remember—"

"Yes, but—" began Loder.

"Let me speak, please!" said the Remove master. "You reported to me, Loder, that you had reason to believe that those five boys had some plan for seeking trouble with the Highcliffe boys this afternoon. On questioning them, it appeared to me that you were right, and I, therefore, ordered them to remain within gates for the afternoon, and I have no doubt that they have done so. There is some mistake in this matter."

"Kindly tell Mr. Quelch the facts, Loder!" said the Head.

Loder did so.

Mr. Quelch's eyes gleamed.

"Precisely as I said!" he rapped.

"You did not see the boys who seized you, Loder—you state yourself that a sack was thrown over your head, before you could see by whom you were assailed—"

"I heard them talking—there were five of them—"

"Dr. Locke, I repeat that the five boys named were gated this afternoon," said Mr. Quelch. "I am convinced, sir, that by whomsoever this attack has been made, it was not by those five boys of my Form, and the proof is easy."

Dr. Locke nodded slowly.

"From what Loder has told me, Mr. Quelch, it would appear that there is no doubt," he said. "But if the boys in question were actually gated, and did not go out—"

"My orders to my Form, sir, are not often disregarded!" said Mr. Quelch. "I have no doubt whatever that the five boys named are now playing cricket."

The Head looked puzzled, as well he might.

"If the boys are within gates, Mr. Quelch—"

"They are within gates, sir."

"If they have not been out—"

"They have certainly not been out."

"Then Loder must be under some very extraordinary misapprehension," said the Head. "First of all, we must ascertain, beyond doubt, that the boys named are within gates, and have not been out. Please bring them to my study, Mr. Quelch, without loss of time."

"Certainly, sir."

Mr. Quelch left the Head's study—nothing doubting that in a few minutes he would shepherd in those five members of his Form—and thus prove, even to Loder himself, that whoever was guilty, they were innocent. There was a shock in store for the Remove master!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Out Of Gates!

"I SAY, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter.

Bunter arrived on the cricket ground in a state of high excitement.

Vernon-Smith and his men were taking their second knock, Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth were in the field. The Bounder was out for forty, and he was at the pavilion watching Hazeldene and Redwing at the wickets, when Bunter arrived.

Probably he would not have heeded Bunter; but, following, came a figure that had to be heeded—the tall, angular figure of Mr. Quelch.

The cricketers were already aware that something was "on," though they had not given it any attention so far. But a whole crowd of fellows looked at the approaching figure of Quelch, wondering what he wanted there.

"I say, you fellows," howled Bunter. "I say, is Wharton here?"

The short-sighted Owl blinked round him.

"Wharton? No, ass!" answered Vernon-Smith. "Wharton's not playing this afternoon."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "Ain't his pals here, either?"

"No, fathead!"

"Oh crumbs! Then it was them!"

"What was them, idiot?" asked the Bounder.

"Loder said it was them, but I heard they were gated!" gasped Bunter. "Quelch is asking for them all over the shop—he's coming here—"

"What have they been up to?" asked Peter Todd.

"Ragging Loder!" gasped Bunter. "I say, he came in in an awful state—smothered all over—dust and mud—He, he, he!" Bunter gurgled. "They got him on Courtfield Common and ragged him! He, he, he!"

Vernon-Smith started. He remembered the hint that he had given to the Famous Five. This looked as if they had acted on the hint.

"Here's Quelch," murmured Monty Newland.

Mr. Quelch came up, with a grave and somewhat troubled face.

He had had no doubt, not the slightest doubt, of the accuracy of what he had stated to the Head. He could not suppose that his head boy, after being gated, had gone out, regardless of authority, with his friends. Still, such things did happen—boys would be boys; and Mr. Quelch had now a most alarming misgiving.

He glanced over the waiting batsmen, and then over the field.

Redwing had just hit away the ball, and was running with Hazel; but the fellows at the pavilion were not regarding them now. Their attention was fixed uneasily on their Form-master.

"Is not Wharton here?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch—a rather superfluous question, as the captain of the Remove was not to be seen.

"Not at the moment, sir!" said Vernon-Smith. He did not intend to mention if he could help it, that Wharton had not been there at all. But there was no help for it.

"Has Wharton played in this match?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir." The Bounder had to answer.

"His friends—Cherry, Bull, Nugent, and Hurree Singh—have they not been playing cricket this afternoon?"

"They stood out, sir—"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"Can any boy here present tell me where Wharton and his friends are at this moment?" he asked.

There was an uncomfortable silence. Nobody there had seen the Famous Five since the game had started, and few doubted that they had disregarded the gating, and gone out.

The Bounder was sure of it—and sure.

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too, how they had been occupied out of gates, after what Bunter had said. But he was not likely to mention that to a beak.

"Has any boy here seen them since dinner?" asked Mr. Quelch, his voice deepening, as his anger grew.

"I saw them in the quad, sir," said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh!" Mr. Quelch's darkening brow cleared a little. "When was that, Vernon-Smith? If you saw them recently—"

"Just before we started cricket, sir," Mr. Quelch's brow darkened again.

"That must have been some time ago, Vernon-Smith. At what time, exactly, did this match begin?"

"Two o'clock, sir!" said the Bounder reluctantly.

Mr. Quelch uttered a sound resembling a snort.

"Then it is quite immaterial, Vernon-Smith, whether you saw them in the quadrangle or not," he snapped. "Has any boy here seen them since?"

No reply.

"Then they have not been on the cricket ground at all, either to play, or to watch the game!" said Mr. Quelch.

"We might not have noticed them about, sir!" said Peter Todd. "There's a lot of fellows about—"

"That will do, Todd! Can any boy state definitely that he has seen them here during the afternoon?"

Silence!

Mr. Quelch's lips shut in a hard line.

He had already questioned Remove fellows in the House and the quad, and none of them had seen the Famous Five during the afternoon. Now it transpired that nobody had seen them on the playing-fields. It was growing clear that they had gone out of gates in spite of gating.

The Remove master walked back to the House.

This was a blow to him, and he was intensely angry. His authority had been flouted—his orders disregarded. But that was not all—that was not the worst! The Famous Five had obviously, been out of gates at the time of the attack on Gerald Loder. What was he to think now?

Slowly, he made his way back to the Head's study.

Dr. Locke glanced at him, and Loder smiled a grim smile, as they saw that he came back alone. After what Loder had told him, the Head hardly expected Quelch to bring in the five juniors, and Loder had been certain that he would not. Evidently, they were right.

"Well, Mr. Quelch?" said the Head quietly.

Mr. Quelch breathed hard. He had intended to be absent only a few minutes and to return with the five accused juniors. He had been absent more than twenty minutes, and he had returned without them.

"I—I have failed to find the boys, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. "I had no doubt—no doubt whatever—that they were within gates, as I ordered them. But—but it would appear that they went and without leave. I cannot discover anyone who has seen them since two o'clock, and they are certainly not in the school at the present moment."

"They've hardly had time to get back, sir!" said Loder. "They ran off in the direction of Courtfield when Mr. Prout came up, and they were out of sight when he released me from the sack. I lost no time in getting back here."

"It is established that they have been out of gates during the afternoon, and at the material time," said the Head.

"I—I fear so, sir."

"Then there cannot be any doubt about the identity of the perpetrators of this outrageous attack!" said Dr. Locke. "It was, in fact, scarcely possible that Loder could be mistaken—"

"He did not actually see his assailants, sir!" said Mr. Quelch—rather like a man clinging to a straw.

"I heard them, sir!" said Loder grimly.

"Could you be certain of voices, Loder, through the thickness of a sack?" asked Mr. Quelch. "Voices, in such circumstances, would not be easy to recognise."

"I should not like to say so, sir. But I can be certain of what I heard them say—of the names they used to one another."

"The names?" repeated Mr. Quelch. He had not, so far, heard this part of Loder's story.

"Four names, sir, were uttered!" said Loder. "Three of them were Christian names—Bob, Harry, and Johnny. One was a surname—Wharton!"

Mr. Quelch stood silent.

Had the boys been within gates, as they should have been, this evidence, conclusive as it seemed, would have gone for nothing.

Had Harry Wharton & Co. been playing cricket that afternoon, had they been in the Rag, or the gym, or the studies—had they been, in fact, anywhere within the school, even Loder would have had to believe that he had been collared by unknown fellows, the names of some of whom happened, by an astonishing coincidence, to be the same.

It was, of course, impossible to believe anything so fantastic, in view of the fact that the owners of those names had been out of gates.

It was a long minute before Mr. Quelch spoke. His face was set hard.

"I have nothing more to say, sir," he said at last, "except that I regret that boys of my Form should have been guilty of this utterly reckless act. I was assured that they had obeyed my commands, and remained within gates. It is now clear that they have not done so. The matter, sir, is in your hands—and I can say nothing in favour of these boys of my Form!"

And Mr. Quelch left the Head's study again—convinced now, like Loder and the Head, that Harry Wharton & Co. were the five fellows who had collared Loder and "sacked" him—grimly prepared to see them take their gruel for that act!

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Not All Right!

"ALL serene!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"The serenity is terrific!" remarked Harroo Jamset Ram Singh.

"Let's hope so, anyhow!" said Johnny Bull.

"Croaker!" said Bob.

"If we've been missed—"

"We haven't!"

"Well, if we have—"

"Chuck it, Johnny, old man!" said Harry Wharton. "It's all right."

So far as the Famous Five could see, at present, it was all right. They were at the Cloister wall, in a solitary spot, where ivy clustered. From the little shady lane outside, they had clambered, quite easily; and, resting their elbows on top of the wall, they looked over, and saw that the coast was clear. To slip in, unobserved, was simple.

If they had not been missed, it was

all serene. And why should they have been missed?

They could see the clock in the tower—it indicated half-past five. At a quarter to six, there was a calling-over, as was usual on a half-holiday, before tea. In summer weather, the roll was called in the open air, one of the masters standing on the library steps to call the names. All they had to do, after getting in unseen over the wall, was to stroll along, mingling with other fellows, and who was going to know that they had not been somewhere about the quad all the time?

Johnny Bull seemed to have his doubts—but then, Johnny had been against the excursion in the first place.

He had enjoyed it as much as his friends—they had hired a boat at Courtfield Bridge, pulled up the upper reaches of the Sark, and spent a very pleasant afternoon, unseen by a single eye that belonged to Greyfriars School. Other eyes did not matter. They had got back in good time for calling-over—they were going to join the throng, all the more easily because the afternoon roll-call was held in the open air—and that was that! Still, Johnny Bull seemed afflicted by dubiety.

The fact was, that the Yorkshire junior's solid common sense had been against a thoughtless act of disobedience, and, though he did not, certainly, want to be caught, he could not help thinking that they deserved to be caught.

From the old Cloisters the juniors glanced across the quadrangle, and they could see the portly Prout standing on the library steps—Prout, it seemed, being the master who was going to take the roll.

Fellows were moving in ones and twos and threes, towards the library, ready to answer to their names when called.

"All serene—just as I said!" remarked Bob. "Nobody knows we've been out—I don't suppose even any Remove chaps noticed it, as they were playing cricket."

"Loder may have had an eye open!" said Johnny. "He has a pretty sharp eye on this crowd."

"According to Smithy, Loder was going out," answered Bob. "Loder's pretty sharp, but he couldn't watch Greyfriars from Courtfield."

"Hardly!" said Nugent, laughing.

"Yes, that's so!" agreed Johnny.

"But—"

"Is the butfulness terrific, my esteemed Johnny?" asked Harroo Jamset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin.

"Well, if we get through, all right!" said Johnny. "But I think it's rot to play the goat. I've said so before."

"Several times!" remarked Harry Wharton, with a touch of sarcasm. "What about giving it a rest?"

"Jolly good idea!" said Bob heartily.

Nugent and the nabob grinned, and Johnny Bull grunted.

The five juniors sauntered onward, in a careless sort of way, heading for the nearest Remove fellows in sight, so as to be seen in company.

Hazeldene and Bolsover major happened to be near at hand, and they stared at the sight of the five.

"Oh, you!" exclaimed Hazel.

"You've got back at last!"

"Might as well have come in before," remarked Bolsover major.

The Famous Five looked at them, and at one another. Johnny Bull shrugged his shoulders. Those remarks, from Hazel and Bolsover, showed that the truants had been missed, which was a blow, after their cheery confidence that it was "all right." They could see that

their absence had been a subject of discussion.

"So we've been missed!" said Harry. "Eh? You knew that, I suppose?" said Hazel, staring.

"Not in the least! Do you mean that Quelch has missed us?" asked Harry. "I don't see why he should."

"You—you don't see why he should!" stammered Hazel.

"No," said Wharton testily. "Fellows can do as they like on a half-holiday, so long as they show up for the roll-calls. We're in time for that. What the dickens did Quelch remember our existence for?"

"I don't suppose he did—till Loder reminded him!" grinned Hazel.

"Oh, that cad!" snapped Wharton. "Has he been watching and spying, as usual? I thought the brute had gone out for the afternoon."

"Nobody knew that better than you, I fancy!" chuckled Hazel. "I say, you must have been mad to do it—"

"Oh, don't be an ass! Fellows have cut a gating before, and no bones broken," said Wharton. "I suppose Quelch will be shirty! Well, it can't be helped. Come on, you men! Prouty's just going to begin."

Hazel and Bolsover stared after them as they walked on.

Vernon-Smith came cutting across to meet them. He was still in flannels.

"Be on your guard, you fellows!" he said, in a low voice. "It's all out! I say, I'm sorry I gave you that hint, as it's turned out. I never dreamed—"

"What do you mean?" demanded Harry Wharton. "We've been out, and cut gating—that seems to be all over the shop, from what Hazel said. I suppose you don't think we're going to tell any lies about it if we're asked?"

"It wouldn't be much use if you did!" answered Smithy. "I've said that it's all out. Loder came in more than an hour ago. When I gave you that tip, I never dreamed that you'd be such mad fools as this—"

"As what?" howled Bob Cherry. "What the dickens do you mean? We never took any notice of your silly tip, if you mean about Loder."

"You didn't?" gasped the Bounder.

"No, you ass! I thought of it, but the others were down on it. Anyhow, it would have been too risky."

Vernon-Smith was silent, looking long and hard at the five. Then he shook his head.

"That won't wash," he said. "Loder knows, you see."

"He knows we cut gates, do you mean?" asked Harry.

It was dawning on all the Co. now that something serious was up, though they had not the faintest idea what it was.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Smithy. "Gannon the Head, if you can, but you can talk plainly to me, I suppose. Didn't you know that Loder knew?"

"Knew what?" hooted Bob. "What was there to know?"

"Oh, gad!" said the Bounder. "You fancied he never knew—and so he mightn't have, from what I hear, if you'd had the sense to keep your mouths shut. Didn't you guess he would hear you through the sack?"

"The sack?" said Harry Wharton blankly. "What sack?"

"The sack you bunged over his head, you ass! What are you pretending not to understand me for?" snapped Vernon-Smith irritably.

"The sack we bunged over his head?" repeated Harry, like a fellow

in a dream. "Is that a joke, or what? Nobody here has bunged a sack over anybody's head. Has somebody been ragging Loder?"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "Somebody has, certainly," he sneered dryly. "Somebody got him at the short cut by the pond, where I told you he was going, and headed him up in a sack—"

"Oh crumbs! Well, we never did!" gasped Bob Cherry. "We've been nowhere near the place, thank goodness. What silly idiots can have done that?"

"Loder fancies you did!" said the Bounder. He could not hide a sneer. "Tell the tale to the Head, if you like, but what's the good of telling it to me? The whole school knows you did it, since Loder's told—"

Harry Wharton's eyes flashed.

"Chuck that, Smithy! We did not do it, and if you can't take our word about that, let it drop, before you get your cheeky head punched!"

"Well, that beats it!" gasped the Bounder. "I tell you, I'm warning you to be on your guard if you didn't know that Loder spotted you. He knows—"

"He can't know what never happened, Smithy!" said Frank Nugent quietly. "We've been up the river, and nowhere near the pond, or the common. We haven't seen Loder all the afternoon."

"Tell the Head that!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Don't you believe it?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Of course I don't, when I know it isn't true."

"Oh, bump him!"

"Look here—yaroooh!" yelled the Bounder as the exasperated juniors collared him and bumped him down in the quadrangle. "Oh, gad! You silly fools! Ow!"

"Come on!" said Harry.

And, leaving the Bounder spluttering, the Famous Five walked on, to join the crowd gathering at the library steps.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

For It!

"I SAY, you fellows! Here they are!"

"They've come in!"

"Look!"

"Here they come!"

The bell had ceased to ring. Mr. Prout, with his list in his plump hand, was about to begin calling the roll. But he paused, to fix a long, grim look on five juniors, who had joined the ranks of the Remove.

Those five had extremely red faces—naturally enough, as they found themselves the cynosure of all eyes.

The whole school was gathered there, from the Sixth to the Second—and the whole school looked at them! It was more than enough to make a fellow redder.

Even great men of the Sixth Form, even Wingate, captain of the school, turned heads to gaze at them. Coker of the Fifth pointed at them with a large hand, all the Fifth stared. The Shell, the Fourth, and their own Form, the Remove, stared: so did the Third and the Second.

Among the fags there was an outbreak of excited whispering. Fellows who had ragged a Sixth Form prefect were rather heroes, in the estimation of the small fry!

Loder was there with the seniors, and he gave the five a grim and bitter look. They had come in, walking along to call-over as if nothing had happened! They were going to get something shortly to change all that!

Looking at them, Loder wondered whether they fancied that they had not been found out. They might not have realised that he had heard their voices through that thick cement sack.

If so, they did not know that what they had done was known and proved beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Loder, of course, had no doubt that he had heard their voices. He could not have undertaken to say that he recognised the voices; he had no intention and no desire to state what was not true. But he knew that he had heard them address one another by name.

At all events, he had not the slightest doubt that he knew it. He did not even remember the existence of Pon & Co., and had he remembered them he would never have dreamed of guessing the dastardly, treacherous trick that Pon had played.

Loder knew. Everybody knew. The Famous Five, in fact, were the only fellows who did not know!

Under that sea of eyes their faces were crimson with discomfort. It was disconcerting to be stared out of countenance by hundreds of fellows.

Mr. Prout began calling the roll.

"Adsum!" came back from fellow after fellow, and when their names were called Harry Wharton & Co. answered "Adsum!" like the rest. But they already surmised that they were not to be dismissed like the rest when the names had been called.

During roll Mr. Quelch came out of the House and waited by his Form while Prout went on with the names.

He did not speak to the Famous Five, but they felt his eyes on them, and never had Quelch's eyes seemed to them so much like gimlets.

"I say, you fellows, Quelch is waiting for you," whispered Billy Bunter. "I say, what are you going to say to the Head?"

"Fathead!" grunted Bob Cherry. "Ass!"

"Eh! You can't say that to the Head!" ejaculated Bunter, blinking at him. "I say, you'd better not start calling the Head names like that, you know."

"Idiot!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Blithering chump!"

"Beast!"

"You chaps must have been batty," whispered Skinner. "Loder was bound to guess that it was you, even if—"

"Loder's a fool, and you're another," growled Johnny Bull. "We've done nothing except cut gates—"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Skinner. "Mean to say you're going to tell the Head that you never ragged Loder?"

"Yes, ass! Yes, fathead! Yes, chump!"

"Oh crikey! Some fellows have got a nerve!" said Skinner. "Still, I suppose you can't say it was an accident this time—"

"Oh, shut up, you ass!"

Roll was over at last; and then Mr. Quelch called quietly to those five members of his Form.

Under a sea of eyes they approached their Form-master—very red and very uncomfortable.

The fact that they were, for some reason, suspected of having ragged

(Continued on page 28.)

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE

THE DAILY ROUND.

(1)

When we've finished preparation,
When we've put our books away,
With a sad resolve to chance it if we're
put on to construe,
We have time for recreation
At the finish of the day,
And the Rag is full of fellows who have
nothing else to do.

IN THE RAG.

(2)

So we gather there to chatter,
And I hardly need to say
That our talk is full of cricket, for
we're keen upon the game.
And it really doesn't matter
If you never learnt to play,
For you generally air your own
opinions just the same.

(3)

When opinions chance to differ,
As opinions often may,
We've a method of persuasion that is
swift and very good;
For a biff upon the "sniffer"
In a spirited affray.
Is an argument so forcible, it's always
understood.



A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET.

DICK RUSSELL,

The Boxer of the Remove

R is for Russell—our Dick,
At boxing he's clever and slick;
No bully, however immense,
Can get through his solid defence.
For Dick is a boxer of skill,
His left would make anyone ill:



His victims have plenty of scars,
And see many millions of * * *
At cricket he isn't so great,
Though he can knock "sixes" first rate,
His batting resembles the sail
Of a windmill when turned by a gale.
And if he connects with the ball,
It's gone beyond any recall!
A pretty good chap, as a rule,
He's generally liked by the school.

ANSWER to PUZZLE

The difference between 6 and 9 is 3. The difference between SIX and IX is 3. Therefore, 8 equals 3. 3 from 7 leaves 4. 8 from SEVEN leaves even. Therefore, 4 is EVEN. Easy, eh?

HAPPY HALF-HOLIDAY

To-day, being a half-holiday, I went round asking the fellows what they proposed to do. There was no cricket, senior or junior; but the Fifth had a Form match. At first there was a rumour that Coker was playing for the Fifth, whereupon the whole Remove decided to be on Big Side. Later it was ascertained that Blundell is still in his right mind, and Coker was right out.

So here are the answers:

THE FAMOUS FIVE.—Picnic to Hawkhurst with Cliff House girls.

VERNON-SMITH.—Car trip to Brighton with Skinner & Co.

PUZZLE PAR

You know 4 is an even number—but can you prove it by figures and algebra?

Answer at foot of column 2.

MAULY.—A deckchair under the elms, and, if awake in time, bus to Courtfield, and tea at Chunkley's.

BILLY BUNTER.—A picnic to Hawkhurst, a car trip to Brighton, or tea at Chunkley's, according to the way he manages to fit in all his numerous engagements. Temple of the Fourth asked him on bended knees, with tears streaming down his knees, to join his party at the Pagoda, at Lantham; but, dash it all, a fellow's own pals must come first, and if I had a bob I didn't want, he was expecting a— (At this point I smote him, and left.)

PETER HAZELDENE.—A ramble on Courtfield Common with a butterfly-net (which will be exchanged for a billiards cue at the Three Fishers.)

MORGAN, DESMOND.—Fishing in the Sark with Micky's rod. The old boots will be sold to Fisher T. Fish.

STOP PRESS.—Heavy rain this afternoon. All off.

AFTER SCHOOL HOURS In the Rag (Second Helping)

Since the space is microscopic
For my verses on the Rag,
It is really not surprising if they can-
not be confined:
For I'll talk about this topic
If I fill up half the Mag,
And it's "After School Hours," any-
way, so nobody will mind.

Well, then, now we come to chessmen,
And this game is played a lot
By such masters as Mark Linley, or
myself, in point of fact;
While old Smithy and his "yes-men,"
(That is, Skinner, Snoop, and
Stott),
Talk in confidential tones about the
losers they have backed.

Lord Mayleverer's reposing
In an easy-chair near by,
And his snore is like the wind among
the elm-trees in the Close,
Till he's jerked out of his dozing
With a wild and startled cry
As a handsome leather volume drops
upon his noble nose.

In his usual daily fashion
Billy Bunter's on the prowl,
Snatching chocolates and toffees, or per-
haps a bag of fruit.
And the famous Bull of Bashan
Cannot beat his fearful howl
As Don Ogilvy detects him, and re-
wards him with a boot.

Wibley (made up as Othello)
Talks about the Thespian art,
While poor Fishy prods the "innards"
of a clock that's plainly dead,
And as every single fellow
Finds his best enjoyment start,
It is safe to bet that Wingate will
appear, and call out: "Bed!"

Loder of the Sixth did not worry them very much so far; they naturally did not suppose that they could be proved to have done what they had not done! But they had disregarded Quelch's authority in cutting gates, and that made them feel very uncomfortable in facing him—especially Wharton, who, as head boy of the Remove, certainly ought to have known better. They had acted thoughtlessly, on impulse; but from the bottom of their hearts they wished now that they hadn't!

Mr. Quelch's glance was icy.

"You have been out of gates," he said. "It appears that my order to you to remain within gates this afternoon was totally disregarded."

"We—we're sorry," stammered Harry.

"We—we—"

Mr. Quelch raised his hand.

"You need say nothing on that subject!" he said. "Your motive in disregarding your Form-master's authority is, unfortunately, only too clear. In the present circumstances I shall take no notice of it. You have to answer to your headmaster for your conduct while out of gates this afternoon. You will now follow me to Dr. Locke."

Harry Wharton set his lips.

"May we speak, sir?" he said. "It's true that we cut gates, but we've done nothing else that we know of."

"Wharton!"

"Some of the fellows have been saying that a prefect has been ragged on Courtfield Common," said Harry. "We have not been on Courtfield Common this afternoon, sir! If Loder thinks that we had a hand in it he's making a mistake, and—"

"We've been up the river, sir," said Bob.

"We haven't seen Loder since dinner," added Nugent. "I mean, not till we came in to calling-over."

Mr. Quelch looked at them. His look expressed a contempt which made them, if possible, redder than before. The crowd of fellows round them stared, and some grinned.

Mr. Quelch spoke at last, and his voice cut like a knife.

"I will not listen to this!" he said. "Neither, I think, will your headmaster. You have acted recklessly, foolishly, brutally—but I did not expect you to add falsehood to your offences."

"We—" began Harry hotly.

"Not another word, Wharton! Be silent and follow me to your headmaster!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

He rustled away to the House. In silence, with deep feelings, the five juniors followed him.

There was a breathless buzz in the quad as they disappeared into the House.

"They can't bunk the lot," said Vernon-Smith.

That was the only question now—whether the whole Co., or only some of them, would be bunked. But that there would be bunkings nobody doubted.

THE END.

(Don't miss: "UP FOR THE SACK!" next week's great Greyfriars yarn.)

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 Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

FROM the tone of the letters I have received lately, I gather that you have one and all enjoyed our thrilling Wild West series. Well, here's hoping you will be just as pleased with the new series of Greyfriars yarns commencing in this issue.

Gerald Loder, as you will learn, believes his old enemies—the Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove—guilty of an action meriting expulsion. And nothing would please Loder more than to see them kicked out of the school. His evidence is so convincing, in fact, that Harry Wharton & Co. find themselves faced with the dreaded penalty of the "sack"! Exciting situations you'll find in plenty when you read:

"UP FOR THE SACK!"

By Frank Richards,

next week's extra-special Greyfriars yarn. You're guaranteed a load of laughs, too, in the "Greyfriars Herald," while the Greyfriars Guide will be on parade, as usual.

Busy collecting "Armaments" stamps? Good! There will be more to add to your collection in next Saturday's tip-top issue of the MAGNET. Take my advice and order your copy to-day!

Miss Elsie Morton (Caterham) has sent me a list of various schools, and wants to know where they are situated. Here you are, my girl chum: Bedford (Bedford, Bedfordshire); Downside (near Bath, Somerset); Felstead or Felsted (Felsted, near Dunmow, Essex); Magdalen College (Oxford University); Oundle (Oundle, Northants); Radley (Radley, Berks); Repton (Repton, Derbyshire); Sherborne (Sherborne, Dorsetshire); Stonyhurst (Stonyhurst, Lancashire); Uppingham (Uppingham, Rutland); Wellington (near Wokingham, Berks)

The following is in reply to John Dyers (Yarmouth). The first banjo was made by a native of Banjoemas, Java. It consisted of a cheese-box wrapped in a goatskin. A handle

was attached, together with "strings." It was christened "Banjo" after the first two syllables of the island's name.

By way of a change, here's a few witticisms that may interest you: "Worry is the interest we pay on trouble before it is due"; "The rest of your days depends upon the 'rest' of your nights"; "If you want to get a lot of good exercise, just follow a rumour around town"; and "To-day is the yesterday we think about tomorrow." Not bad, are they?

Now for some

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to readers' queries.

E. LAMB (Stoke Newington).—Who was Honore Gabriel Mirabeau? A French statesman, who in his younger days distinguished himself as a reckless rebel against all social and moral conventions.

G. CRESWELL (Birmingham).—What is a Pariah? A term popularly applied to natives of India who have no caste. The Paraiyans—drum-beaters, from whom they take their name—are a low, labouring caste, with many sub-castes, and although classed as "untouchables," they actually rank higher than several true castes. A pariah-dog is a yellow vagabond dog of low breed.

G. CLARKE (Fulham).—What is a ptarmigan? A bird of the grouse family. Its plumage is black or grey in summer, and white in winter.

D. P. ATKINSON (Kingston-on-Thames).—When did Greyfriars first become a school? In 1716, Greyfriars, as it now stands, was started on the career it has achieved to-day. Harry Wharton appeared in the first Greyfriars yarn. He has always been in the Remove.

R. COOPER (South Shields).—Who is the tallest junior in the Remove Form? Peter Todd—he stands 5 ft. 6½ ins. Wun Lung, 4 ft. 5½ ins. is the shortest junior.

S. SHARP (Margate).—Is Hilda Richards related to Frank Richards? No.

KENNETH DOBBS (Gloucester).—Space precludes me from making use of your idea. Many thanks for submitting it, all the same.

R. MACCARTHY (S. Africa).—Stories dealing with the early adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. are now appearing in our companion paper—the "Gem."

That's all for now, chums, so will say au revoir until next week.

YOUR EDITOR.

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BLACKLEGS IN COMMAND!

Another Rib-Tickling Instalment
of "MUTINY AMONG THE
MASTERS!"

By DICKY NUGENT

"Doctor Birchmall in, yung shaver?" Jack Jolly started, as these words fell on his ears. The kaptin of the Fourth was standing on the School House steps, holding forth to the Fourth on the subject of the grate masters' strike which was paralling St. Sam's. His pals, who had a grate respect for Jolly's opinions, were listening with wrapt attention. So engrossed were they in the Fourth Form skipper's words, that nobody noticed a procession of half a dozen

tuff-looking gentlemen approaching from the direction of the gates. The first they knew of it was when the leader of the new arrivals butted in with his inquiry about Doctor Birchmall. "Doctor Birchmall in, yung shaver?" Jack Jolly wheeled round to see who was talking to him. He found himself gazing at a big, brootal-looking lout who wore a crafty, cunning look on his grimy face. "Ye-es, the Head's in," replied Jack Jolly, eyeing this nasty piece of work rather dewbiously.

MIXED FEEDS ON POPPER ISLAND

Comedy of Three Picnics

If you had been in the neighbourhood of Popper Island last Wednesday afternoon, you might have seen the unusual sight of a Remove man swimming across to the mainland with his clothes balanced precariously on his head. The man in question was Tom Brown—and he was not, as you might have thought, training for one of the events in next week's swimming gala. He was swimming because there was no other way of getting back from the island! Brown, Bulstrode, Russell, and Ogilvy having rowed to the island for a picnic had carelessly gone off exploring without leaving a guard on duty. Returning, they had had a shock. Picnic and boat had both gone! The mystery was soon solved when they spotted Ponsonby & Co., of Highcliffe, rowing away with another boat in tow. Any doubts about the identity of the towed boat were put at rest by the big picnic hamper, which could still be seen in the stern where they had left it—not to mention the cheery laughter and handwavings they received from Pon and his pals when they saw them. Brown & Co. shook fists and yelled. Pon & Co. laughed some more and kept on rowing till

they finally disappeared round a bend in the river. And that, you might imagine, ended the Remove fellows' afternoon out! Guess again, old pals! In actual fact, it was only the beginning. When Remove men are up against it, that's just the time when they rise to the occasion! After a hurried council of war, they tossed up to see who should go over for help. The honour fell to Brown, and he lost no time in getting undressed. Reaching the mainland without mishap and with his clobber pretty dry, he dried himself on his pullover, dressed, and then went back to the boathouse at the double. Ten minutes later he was pulling up river to the island again. Arriving there, he was just in time to share in a very pleasant discovery. Tucked away amongst the trees, Bulstrode had found a picnic hamper—a really tip-top picnic hamper, much better than the one Pon & Co. had filched! It was like manna from heaven to our furnished

pals and they treated it accordingly. If somebody turned up and claimed it, they agreed that they would be willing to go and buy another to replace it. Meanwhile, they scoffed it, and very nice it was, too! Of course, there was not quite the same urgency about Pon & Co. then. All the same, after a laze to get over the feed, the picnicers thought it would finish off the afternoon if they



missing, Loder and Carne and Walker saw red—and said things that nearly turned the air blue. Loder had a brain-wave. He remembered passing Pon & Co., and thought it odd that they had two hampers—one in their own boat and another in the boat they were towing. He told Carne and Walker. They thought it odd, too. The hamper had been delivered to the boathouse for them by Chunkley's of Courtfield and they had no clear recollection of it except that Pon's second hamper looked suspiciously like it in size and shape. The upshot of it was that five minutes later Loder & Co. swooped on Pon & Co., who were picnicking on the river bank not far away. They collared Brown's hamper, cuffed Pon and his pals, and returned to the island, fondly imagining that they had got their own hamper back. Pon & Co. naturally thought they were doing it for the Remove men and made no effort to stop them. When Brown's crowd arrived a little later and rolled them in the dust, and helped themselves to the remainder of Pon's feed, the Highcliffe chaps thought it their unlucky day and that was that! So Loder & Co. had Brown's picnic and Brown & Co. had Loder's in addition to a share of Pon's—and everybody was satisfied with the exception of Pon & Co. Which, as Brown remarked afterwards, was just as it should have been!



The GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 299.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON

July 2nd, 1938.



YOUR EDITOR CALLING

The Fates that dish out good luck to cricketers must be smiling on the Remove team just at present. Certainly everything went in our favour when we visited St. Jude's last Wednesday. We were warned in advance to expect a first-class licking. St. Jude's have recently been reinforced by a new fast bowler and a hurricane batsman who have made a tremendous difference to the team; and up to Wednesday last they had not been beaten. Notwithstanding this, we managed to gain a handsome victory. There was a shower of rain after we had knocked up 219 runs; and the wicket, which had been perfect for the Greyfriars innings, became as tricky as they make 'em. The result was that St. Jude's had to follow on after making a bare 99; and scoring only 87 runs in their second innings, lost to us by an innings and 33 runs. This is one of the most impressive victories scored by the Remove team in the last two seasons, and while due allowance must be made for the handicaps under which our opponents suffered, I think we can pat ourselves on the back for putting up a rattling good show. The swimming gala has been definitely fixed for next Wednesday, weather permitting. If weather does permit, I think there is little doubt that we shall have a very enjoyable afternoon. Practice has been going on daily at the swimming-pool on the Sark and several fellows have developed quite a nice turn of speed. We may see some records broken when the great day arrives—and it will not be surprising if the Remove distinguish themselves by doing some of the record breaking. Here's to our meeting in next week's 'Herald,' when I will tell you how we fared. HARRY WHARTON.

PRECISELY!

Agitators are complaining to the house-keeper that the Remove beds ought to be provided with softer pillows. They hold the opinion that it's "up" to her to provide "down" for us!

Uncensored Letters No. 2. From HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH

Honoured and Respected Tutor in Jhanipur, — I pen these few lines written to tell you of my continued joyfulness in this venerated and preposterous school. The esteemed and ridiculous masters still assist helpfully in instilling knowledge into my august noodle. My esteemed pals are still as staunch and steadfast as in the yoreful days when I first arrived reachfully at Greyfriars. I gladly relate that because of these absurd and joyful facts my gleefulness is simply terrific. Recently I made a journey to America in company with my esteemed chums. I enjoyed myself no end in the honours and ludicrous Wild West and experienced many thrilling happenings and saw much gunplay-fulness. The esteemed and idiotic Bunter, of whom I have talkfully spoken previously, came with us joyfully and got into many scrapful corners with alarming and fatuous results. The appetite of the esteemed and ridiculous Bunter does not diminish lessfully and the way in which he eats tuckfully is enough to make any honoured and disgusting porker greenfully envious. Now that I am back at Greyfriars, I look forward longfully to much cricket. It is my trustful hope that I shall hit numerous boundaries spitefully and take many wickets spreadfully with my esteemed and preposterous bowling. Hoping that you continue in strengthful good health, and with esteemed and idiotic regards, I remain stayfully. Your honoured and ridiculous pupil. HURREE SINGH.



means pleased at the interruption. He was still less pleased a few seconds later, for no sooner had Binding told Messrs. Caddish & Co. who he was than there was a rush! The next thing Mr. Lickham knew was that he was being lifted out of his chair by his arms and legs and rushed downstairs at express speed! Reaching the doorway of the School House, the strike-breakers threw out their captive neck and crop—and Mr. Lickham flew out of the doorway like a boilit from a gun and landed in the quad with a bump! "Yaroo!" shrieked Mr. Lickham. "Ow-ow-ow!" There was an excited buzz from the crowd near the School House entrance. But more excitement was on the way. Before Mr. Lickham had time to pick himself up, the strike-breakers reappeared with a fresh buiden—and Mr. Justiss

SPORT in BRIEF

The First Eleven entertained Rookwood in a one-day match on Wednesday and an evengame ended in a draw, Greyfriars scoring 258 for 7, and Rookwood 223 for 8. The fact that neither side completed an innings in a whole day's play has led to inquiries as to the possibility of three-day matches for the seniors. Why not for the juniors, too, while they are about it?

LAST WEEK AT GREYFRIARS—

Mrs. Nimble sold over a thousand fresh strawberry tarts. North, fast bowling against the St. Jim's seniors, was no-balled five times in one over. Greyfriars won the game by the narrow margin of 9 runs. George Tubb and a crowd of Third Formers went scouting on Friar-dale Common and finished up by having six goes each on a round-about at the fair. They certainly made sure of doing their good turns for the day! Vernon-Smith showed that Texas has not affected his cricket by scoring 65 not out in a practice game on Tuesday.

you are all of good carriage-licker—" "Oh, yes, we've all got good carriage-lickers, guv!" leered Mr. Caddish. "If we hadn't, the perlice would never have let us out on ticket-of-leave!" Doctor Birchmall started. "Er—ticket—of—leave? You—you don't mean to say you're all gaol-birds?" Mr. Caddish culled slily. "Yes, but only for minor offences, guv—robbery with violence and the like." The Head drew a deep breath of relief. "Oh, well, that's all right, then! Gentlemen," he continued, eyeing the new masters quite affectionately. "I really and truly believe you are just the men I need for this job. I have much pleasure in engaging you at the advertised rates of pay. Now for bizziness! The first thing you have to do is to eject the strikers. I will ring for the page and he will show you round the School House, pointing them out one by one. Please understand that you are to throw them out neck and crop. Is that quite clear?" "Wot!" "My name's Caddish—Samuel Caddish!" leered the leader of the gang. "This 'un's Bill Bullyard, and here's Slim Slaughterboys—and Mike Ainsworth—and Madham Howell—and Hoyle Lamming-ham!" "Mr. I ask if you have had any previous experience in the skollastic profession, gentlemen?" "Not exactly, guv'nor!" leered Mr. Caddish. "But I was last employed by a firm of furniture dealers as a carpet-buster." Doctor Birchmall laughed grimly. "They have had an admirable training for the work you are about to do here! And you call!" "I can answer for the lot, guv'nor," grinned Mr. Caddish. "They've never actually been schooled before, but they're all quite willing to learn. Aren't you, mates?" "Ho yes!" corussed the new masters eagerly. "Well, well, I can't be too particular in my present position," said the Head. "So long as

be a master at St. Sam's, it was just as well to treat him with respect—little as he had done to earn it! "This way!" said the kaptin of the Fourth kerty. He led the motley crew into the House, leaving the fellows on the steps fairly seething with indignation. Outside Doctor Birchmall's study, Jack Jolly stopped and nocked on the door. "Trot in, fathead!" bawled out the Head's refined voice from within, and Jolly poked his head round the door. "Half a duzen gentlemen to see you, sir!" he announced. "They say they're the new masters!" Doctor Birchmall flung aside the comic paper he had been reading and sat up quickly, his eyes gleaming with interest. "Ah! I have been expecting them. Show them in at once, Jolly, and then buzz!" The strike-breakers tramped into the Head's study and the kaptin of the Fourth, frowning deeply, returned to his pals. When the door had closed behind him, Doctor Birchmall rose and ran his shifty eye over the new recruits. He was evidently quite pleased with them, for he rubbed his bony hands together with grate cheerfulness as he sat down again. "Gentlemen," he cried, "the task I am going to give you is a stern one, requiring plenty of carriage and possibly a certain amount of brootality. I take it you all feel that you meet the requirements of the situation?" "Not half, guv'nor!" came a gruff chorus from the strike-breakers. "As you are already aware, the gentlemen who have hitherto acted as masters at St. Sam's are engaged in a stay-in strike," said the Head, with a skowl. "It will be necessary for you in the first place to throw these mutinous miscreants out on their necks. You are all. I

on the steps. The strike-breakers glared. "None of your lip, you welps, or you'll cop it!" leered the leader. "Show me to Doctor Birchmall, yung shaver—and be quick about it, unless you want a clip round the ear!" A hot reply rose to Jack Jolly's lips; but, with a mitey effort, he managed to keep cool. If this grate lout was to

"Er—is he expecting you?" "Not half! I leered the leader of the new-comers. "In case you want to know, yung shaver, we're the new masters of this here college!" "Wha-a-at?" "We're the new masters as have come to St. Sam's to bust the strike! See?" "Shame!" went up a cry from the fellows