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ing with the Ad-
ventures of Harry
Wharton & Co. at
Greyfriars.

—By—

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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Quite the Limit!

FROM the first, the Remove declared that they wouldn't stand it.

It wasn't to be expected.

Differences of opinion might exist—and, in fact, did exist—among the Remove fellows, upon other points. But they were all agreed upon that point. They wouldn't, couldn't, and shouldn't stand it.

Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, said so. Bob Cherry said so. Peter Todd said so. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder, said so. All the Remove said so. Even Billy Bunter was indignant. With more or less degrees of emphasis, they all said the same thing. They wouldn't stand it.

It was an insult to the Remove. It was an invasion of the liberty of the subject. It was an innovation. It had never been done before; and it wasn't going to be done now! What was the good of Britannia ruling the waves, if the Lower Fourth Form of Greyfriars—the famous Remove—couldn't do as they liked in their own quarters?

Nugent hinted his fears that the respected and reverend Head was, at last, going off his "rocker." At all events, he ought to have known that the Remove wouldn't stand it. He certainly ought to have known that.

It really looked as if he didn't trust the Remove, as Bob Cherry remarked, more in sorrow than in anger. Nugent declared that some beast of a prefect must have been talking to the Head, hinting to him that the Remove were not a nice, quiet, orderly Form. They weren't, as a matter of fact. But to have a prefect quartered in the passage that had always been sacred to the Remove—to live, move, and have their being under the watchful eyes of a Sixth Form prefect—that was the limit! It was too thick! It was impossible. It was, as Bob Cherry said in a burst of eloquence, unstandable, and, therefore, not to be stood.

There wasn't a dissentient voice in the Remove on that point. They wouldn't stand it. The real trouble was, that they had to.

For the order had gone forth—and the Head's order was law.

From that day forth the Remove passage was to be desecrated by the continual presence of a prefect. There had been, it appeared, rows in the Remove passage. Bumping had been heard—raggings were not infrequent. There would be a roar of disturbance in the quarters of the Lower Fourth; and when an exasperated master toiled upstairs, cane in hand, to see what was the matter, he would find the juniors all working away industriously in their studies, and looking as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths.

Then it was useless to make exasperated inquiries. Nobody had heard anything out of the common; everybody wore an expression of surprised or injured innocence.

At Greyfriars, each Form had its own quarters to itself. That was how it had always been; and that, in the opinion of the Removites, was how it ought always to be. It was no use quoting the example of other public schools to the Greyfriars fellows. Greyfriars fellows had a way of smiling in a superior manner when Eton and Harrow were mentioned. Eton and Harrow, certainly, were Eton and Harrow; but Greyfriars was Greyfriars.

When the order went forth some of the fellows said it was gammon—as if the reverend Head of Greyfriars could be suspected of "gammoning."

But the next day it was proved clearly enough that it was not "gammon."

Bob Cherry rushed breathlessly into No. 1 Study, where Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were sitting on the table, talking over the prospects of the coming football season. Bob was crimson with excitement and haste.

"They're at it!" he gasped.

"Who are—at what?" asked Wharton.

"They are—at it!" roared Bob. "The Head means business. He really intends to stick a prefect's study in the Remove passage—our passage."

"But what—"

"They're at it, I tell you. Come along and see."

And Bob Cherry grasped his chums, one with either hand, and dragged them off the table, and rushed them out of the study.

The passage was crowded with Removites.

Morning lessons were over, and as a rule the Remove juniors would have been on the playing-fields just then, or out in the Close. But now all the Remove were in their passage. The work of desecration, as Bulstrode put it dramatically, had begun.

At the end of the Remove passage was a disused room, where lumber had been piled. The lumber had been removed now. In the room were two British workmen, busy. There was a smell of paint and plaster. The work had evidently started that morning while the Remove were in their Form-room. The room had been swept and cleared out, and a paperhanger was at work. The walls were newly papered, and the painting had started. The room was being turned into a study for the obnoxious prefect who was to take charge of the Remove passage.

There was a buzz of voices in the passage. The two British workmen went steadily on with their work, at the easy and leisurely pace of men who are paid by the hour. The excitement outside the open doorway did not affect them at all.

"They're at it!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, as his chums came dashing up the passage.

"Papering and painting, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Turning this room into a study!" growled Bolsover major.

"I pity the prefect who puts up here—that's all!"

"We'll scalp him!"

"We'll lead him a giddy dog's life!"

"We'll screw him in!"

"We'll boot him out!"

"We'll make him think life isn't worth living!"

"It's rotten!"

"It's a shame!"

"We won't stand it!"

Thus the Remove. Indignation was at boiling-point. The Head was in earnest, then—it was not gammon. It was no

empty threat. From that day forth there was to be a Sixth Form study in the Remove passage—a prefect would live among the juniors—and raggings and bumpings and all sorts of little jollifications would have to stop. At the sound of a row in the passage, a Sixth Form "beast" would come striding out with cane in his hand—there would be whackings, whoppings—lines would fall as thick as leaves in Vallambrosa.

The Remove were an unruly Form, and they rather prided themselves upon it. But their unruliness would be a thing of the past now. There would be a Reign of Terror—a chap might as well live in Russia, with the Czar next door. In their minds' eye, the Removites saw themselves reduced to the state of meek orderliness of the "Babes" of the First Form. The Remove, like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, would be fallen from their high estate.

"Let's raid 'em now!" suggested Bolsover major. "There are only two of 'em. We can yank off the paper before it's dry—and chuck the paint out of the window."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good egg!"

"I think you had better not!" said a quiet voice, as Wingate of the Sixth came striding along the passage.

The buzz of voices died away. Wingate was head prefect, and captain of the school. The noise in the Remove passage had brought him upon the scene, and he had thoughtfully brought a cane with him.

"I say, Wingate—" began Bob Cherry.

"We're not going to have any blessed prefects here, Wingate!" said Nugent.

"We don't want any strange dogs in the kennel!" howled Bolsover major.

"Let the blessed Sixth keep in their own blessed quarters!" roared Johnny Bull. "We have enough of the Sixth, anyway!"

"Too much!" said Vernon-Smith.

"The too-muchfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

Wingate laughed.

"Head's orders," he said tersely. "If you kids had behaved yourselves you wouldn't have needed looking after. There have been too many rows in this quarter. It's a jolly good idea to put a prefect in this passage; not very nice for the prefect, certainly; but duty's duty."

"Some beast must have suggested it to the Head!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"I suggested it!" said Wingate.

"Oh!"

"I say, Wingate, that wasn't cricket, you know," said Harry Wharton reproachfully.

Wingate pointed down the passage towards the stairs.

"Clear off!" he said.

There was a roar of indignant protest.

"Yah! We can stay in our own passage if we like, can't we?"

"No, you can't! Clear off. You're bothering the workmen. Mind, if they are ragged in any way, or interfered with, the Head will take the matter up. To-morrow there will be a prefect quartered here."

"Who's the beast, Wingate?"

"Walker is going to take up his quarters here. Now clear off, and no more jaw!"

Wingate made a movement with the cane. The Removites, breathing wrath and indignation, cleared off, and the captain of Greyfriars followed them down the passage.

"Get a move on, Skinner!"

"I s'pose a chap can stop to tie up his bootlace, can't he?" demanded Skinner indignantly.

Thwack!

Skinner gave a yelp, and dashed away, leaving his bootlace till he was downstairs. The passage was cleared, and the Removites, boiling with indignation, swarmed out into the Close.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Up Against It!

"GENTLEMEN—"

"Yah!"

"Hear, hear!"

Harry Wharton had mounted upon a bench outside the tuckshop, in the corner of the Close. Harry Wharton was captain of the Remove, and the Lower Fourth naturally looked to him for guidance in this emergency of emergencies. Wharton waved his hand as he stood up to address the meeting.

"Silence!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Order!" bawled Johnny Bull.

"Gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear!"

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"It is for our children, and our children's children, that we must keep flying the flag of liberty," cried Wharton. "I read something like that the other day!" said Peter Todd suspiciously. "It was a speech about Free Trade, or——" "Order!" said Wharton hastily. "I appeal to you—can we allow this?" (See Chapter 2.)

"Gentlemen of the Lower Fourth, in this unprecedented state of affairs we must keep cool. We must not lose our heads. This is no time for gas. It is a time for action! This is where we assert our rights, or the liberties of the Greyfriars Remove are lost for ever!"

"Hear, hear!"

"It is not only for ourselves that we shall fight," went on Wharton, with a vague recollection in his mind of some speech he had read in the newspapers. "It is for our descendants—our children and our children's children!"

"My hat!"

"I—I say, that's looking rather a long way ahead! What?" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I stand by my words!" said Wharton firmly. "What I have said, I have said! Now is the time for all just men to rally to the aid of the party! If there is trouble, let there be trouble! We are standing up for a principle. Long after we have left Greyfriars—when we are old, old men with grey hair, or no hair at all, there will still be Greyfriars—there will still be a Lower Fourth Form here; and the Removites of that time will call us funks if we allow a prefect to be planted on them in their own quarters. Therefore, I said, and I say again, that it is for our children and our children's children that we must keep flying the banner of liberty!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

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NEXT
MONDAY:

"BUNTER, THE PRIZE-WINNER!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
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"I read something like that the other day," said Peter Todd suspiciously. "It was a speech about Free Trade, or Tariff Reform, or something of that kind——"

"Order!" said Wharton hastily. "Gentlemen, I appeal to you! Can we allow this? As Shakespeare says——"

"Blow Shakespeare!" said Johnny Bull. "He wasn't a Greyfriars chap!"

"Order!"

"As Shakespeare says," pursued Harry Wharton determinedly. "Can such things be, and overcome us like a summer cloud, without our special wonder? Gentlemen, I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon, than such a Roman!"

"Oh, cut Shakespeare!" roared Bolsover major. "What are we going to do about it? That is the question."

"To rag or not to rag—that is the question!" said Bob Cherry.

"Gentlemen, we are not going to stand it! Our freedom is invaded. Our liberties are infringed; our own passage is desecrated by the presence of a Sixth Form bouncer! We get too much of the Sixth, anyway!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We are fed up to the chin with them, at the best of times. Now they want to plant one of them on us at close quarters. We are not taking any! Never!"

"Never!"

"The neverfulness is terrific!"

"The order has gone forth!" resumed Wharton. "Tomorrow there will be a prefect in the new study. What are we going to do?"

"Bump him!"

"Rag him!"

"Chuck him out!"

"Gentlemen, I have formed a plan. Let the enemy come—let him plant himself in our quarters. Gentlemen, we will soon make him glad to go. Gentlemen, we shall declare war upon the new study. We shall proceed to make it so uncomfortable that the prefect will get out. We cannot chuck him out, as an honourable member has suggested, because the Head has sent him there. But we can make him sorry he came, and make him clear out of his own accord. Walker of the Sixth is coming. Well, a Walker ought to walk, and we are going to make him walk!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen, all suggestions from members of the Form will be carefully considered by the Standing Committee that will meet in No. 1 Study. We shall consider everything that is suggested, but the editor's decision will be final—I mean, the committee's decision—"

"Who's the committee?" Bulstrode wanted to know.

"I shall be chairman, and there will be four members—Nugent, Cherry, Bull, and Inky—"

"Keeping it all in the family, as usual!" bawled Bolsover major. "I'm jolly well going to sit on that committee!"

"Impossible!" said Nugent. "It will be a Standing Committee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Same here!" said Peter Todd. "You can't leave out No. 7 Study—the top study in the Remove!"

"Rats!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows, I shall be a member!" piped Billy Bunter. "You'll need me! Besides, I've got a wheeze for ragging the prefect. You know what a jolly good ventriloquist I am—"

There was a general roar:

"Shut up, Bunter!"

The meeting might disagree about other things. But they all agreed unanimously in telling Billy Bunter to shut up.

"I guess you'll want me on the committee, too," said Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior. "You will want the brainy man of the Form, I guess! Just a few!"

"The Committee of Five will meet—"

"The Committee of Six!" roared Bolsover.

"Seven!" said Peter Todd.

"Eight, I guess—"

"Nine!" yelled Billy Bunter.

"Order! Gentlemen, the committee will meet after lessons this afternoon, and take measures for diddling the Sixth and frustrating their knavish tricks."

"Hear, hear!"

"The whole Form will be expected to buck up as one man. No compulsion will be used, but any fellow who doesn't back up will be slogged, bumped, and pulverised!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Are you going to talk all day?" yelled Bolsover major. "I've got a few words to say—"

"Rats!"

"Go home!"

"So have I!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, clambering upon the little table under the elm where Mrs. Mimble was wont to set ginger-beer for juniors who took their refreshment *à fresco*. "I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Yah! I'm not going to shut up! I've got a few words to address to the Form!" Billy Bunter blinked at the excited crowd round the table through his big spectacles. "At a time like this you want a really clever chap to take the lead, and I suggest that Wharton shuts up and leaves it to me! I consider—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the dinner-bell!" said Bob Cherry. "I'm off!"

"I say, you fellows, just listen to me! I say—"

"Cheese it!"

"I insist upon addressing the meeting!" roared Bunter. "After what you have heard from Wharton, you can hear some sense from me! I say—Ow! Let that table alone, Bull, you idiot! Don't shake it, or I shall fall—yah!—fall down! You silly ass, I shall be down in a minute—"

"You'll be down in less than a minute!" chuckled Johnny Bull, as he kicked at the centre leg of the little table.

"Yaro-o-o-oh! Ow! Help!"

Bump!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Ow! Beast! Yow!" Billy Bunter sat up on the ground, and groped for his spectacles, and set them

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straight on his little fat nose. "I—Ow! Yaroooh! I say, you fellows—"

But the fellows were streaming away for dinner. Billy Bunter's valuable remarks upon the situation were lost for ever.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Catching the Committee!

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, noticed that there was some suppressed excitement in his Form that afternoon.

He guessed the cause, and smiled.

Mr. Quelch kept his Form very much in order when they were directly under his charge in the Form-room. But out of the Form-room there was no doubt that the Remove were unruly. Even prefects—great men of the Sixth, invested with no end of authority and dignity—had been ragged in the Remove passage on occasion. The plan of putting a prefect's study in the Remove passage met with the Remove-master's hearty approval. Under the eye of a prefect the juniors would have to keep better order in their passage. Pillow-fights in the passage, study raids and raggings, would have to cease from troubling, and worried masters would be at rest.

Mr. Quelch expected objections at first on the part of the Removites. They would not give up their old freedom without a sigh. But they had to give in, and that was the end of it—so Mr. Quelch considered, at all events.

The Remove didn't. They had no intention whatever of giving in. They could not resist openly, certainly. They had to let the prefect come. But they were all determined to follow the plan suggested by Harry Wharton. When the obnoxious intruder had had some experience of life in the Remove passage he would be glad to go.

Afternoon lessons were over at last, and the Remove were dismissed. Then the committee met in No. 1 Study. The Famous Five were the committee; but there were other claimants for the honour. The committee had no sooner met than there was a heavy thump at the study door, and Bolsover major presented himself.

"Hailo, hallo, hallo! What do you want?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"No admittance except on business!" explained Wharton. Bolsover snorted.

"I've come on business," he said. "I'm a member of the committee."

"Rats!"

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, stepped in after Bolsover. The Bounder had a very determined expression on his face.

"Committee meeting?" he asked.

"Yes. Get out!"

"Thanks! I'm a member."

"Look here! We can't have all the blessed Form on the committee!" said Harry Wharton.

"You can't keep it all to yourselves," retorted the Bounder. "Make it a committee of seven, and we'll back you up."

"Oh, anything for a quiet life. Committee of seven, then," said Harry Wharton, resignedly. "But that's the limit."

"Right-ho!" said Bolsover major. "I'll see that nobody else comes bothering. Seven's quite enough, in my opinion."

The door opened, and Billy Bunter presented himself. He blinked cautiously into the study through his big spectacles, and then rolled in.

"I say, you fellows, I hope I'm not late for the meeting," said Bunter.

"Get out!"

"Oh, really! I've got a dodge for playing ventriloquist tricks on Walker—"

"Travel!"

"Sha'n't!" roared Bunter. "I'm on the committee—Yaroooh! Let go, Bolsover, you beast! Oh, really, you know—Yah!"

Bolsover's strong grasp closed upon Billy Bunter, and he went whirling out into the passage. He did not return. But a few minutes later Fisher T. Fish walked in, and did not seem to observe the ferocious glares that were turned upon him. He looked round the grim committee with a pleasant smile.

"I guess I'm on time!" he remarked.

Harry Wharton pointed to the door.

"I reckon I'm ready to act as chairman," continued Fisher T. Fish, ignoring the gesture. "I guess you'll want a business man to help you out—some!"

"I guess we shall help you out if you don't go!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Now, don't go off on your ear!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"That cuts no ice with me, you know. I guess I'm a member of the committee—just a few! I guess—"

Fisher T. Fish's guess was never finished. Bolsover major charged at him, and he went rolling out into the passage, with a yell. He did not come back. But the committee were not left in peace. Peter Todd walked in cheerfully.

"All here?" he asked.

"Yes; all—and no more wanted," said Vernon-Smith.

"There's the door."

"I'm a member—"

"Outside!"

"I'm a member of this committee—"

"Travel!"

The committee rose to their feet and advanced upon Peter Todd. Todd backed away towards the door.

"If I don't sit on this committee, I shall start a rival one in Study No. 7," he declared.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Mind, I mean business! I—"

The committee charged. Peter Todd hit out, and Vernon-Smith rolled on the floor, and Frank Nugent rolled over him. Then Peter was ejected, and bumped in the passage. Harry Wharton slammed the study door.

"Now we may have a little peace," he said. "I'll lock the door."

And the committee of seven sat down to their important deliberations. Knocks came at the door, the handle was turned, and voices bellowed through the keyhole. Apparently there were more Removites who wanted a seat on the committee. But the committeemen took no notice of them. Deaf to the thumps, bangs, and yells at the door, they proceeded to business.

The uproar outside died away suddenly. Bob Cherry grinned as the sudden silence fell in the Remove passage.

"They've brought a master up with their row!" he chuckled.

There was a sharp tap at the door.

"Wharton!"

"Oh, crumbs, it's Quelch!" gasped Wharton. "Yes, sir!" he called out.

"How dare you hold a committee meeting behind locked doors!" came the sharp voice from outside. "This is rebellion against authority, Wharton. Come to my study at once—you, and all who are with you! This instant!"

There was a sound of receding footsteps. The speaker was gone. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at each other with sickly expressions.

"Down on us pretty sharp!" muttered Bolsover major. "How on earth did he know it was a committee meeting? Must have heard those silly asses chattering."

"I suppose we've got to go," said Nugent.

"I suppose so," Wharton grunted.

He unlocked the study door, and the committee went out. The passage was empty, and they went downstairs glumly. They passed Billy Bunter on the landing, and he was grinning gleefully, and Bolsover major gave him a shove that caused him to sit down very suddenly, and stopped his grinning on the spot.

Then the unfortunate committee made their way to Mr. Quelch's study. Mr. Quelch was there, sitting at his table, writing. He did not look pleased as the seven Removites filed in. He seemed surprised and annoyed.

"What do you want?" he asked. "I am busy."

"Please, we've come, sir," said Wharton.

Mr. Quelch raised his eyebrows.

"I can see that!" he said tartly. "You need not tell me that you have come, when you are under my eyes. I am not blind."

"But, sir—" stammered Wharton.

"Tell me what you want."

"You told us to come, sir!" exclaimed Harry, indignantly.

"What! I do not remember telling you so," said Mr. Quelch, puzzled. "I think I gave you lines this afternoon, Bolsover; but the others—"

"You told us just now, sir," said Bob Cherry. "We were in Study No. 1 when you knocked at the door—all of us—so we've come."

"If this is a joke, Cherry, I do not understand it, and do not appreciate it," said Mr. Quelch acidly. "I did not tell you to come; but since you have come without being told, you may take fifty lines each. You can come again and bring them to me when they are written. Now kindly go—not a word—go! I am busy, and have no time to waste."

The committee left the study without another word. Their feelings were too deep for words. They realised too late that it was not Mr. Quelch who had called through the door of Study No. 1—that they had been taken in once more by the Remove ventriloquist. Billy Bunter had played that little trick on them in retaliation for being excluded from the committee, and the committee were the richer by fifty lines each.

"Bunter, of course!" growled Johnny Bull at last. "We ought to have guessed it. Let's look for Bunter."

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They looked for Bunter, but the Owl of the Remove was not to be found just then. Billy Bunter was wise in his generation—he had disappeared. The committee of seven returned to their quarters, but not to deliberate on plans of warfare. The committee meeting had to be put off, and the committee sat down to write lines.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Shoulder to Shoulder.

AFTER the workmen were gone, the Removites looked into the new study at the end of their passage, to see how it was getting on. The alterations were nearly finished, and the study looked very bright and clean, and a strong odour of new paper and paste and paint hung about it. Walker of the Sixth was there, looking round his new quarters, and apparently satisfied with what he saw.

He grinned as Harry Wharton & Co. looked in. Walker knew how the Removites regarded the innovation, and he rather enjoyed it. Walker was a good deal of a bully, though not quite so bad as Loder or Carne in that respect. He had a very high-handed way of dealing with juniors, and he felt that he would have every opportunity now for exercising the high hand.

"Whose study is next to this?" he asked.

"Mine!" growled Johnny Bull. "No. 14."

"I guess it's mine, too," said Fisher T. Fish. "I shall expect you to be quiet, Walker, and not disturb me at my work."

Walker frowned.

"None of your cheek!" he exclaimed. "I was going to tell you that you will have to mind your P's and Q's there. The partition isn't very thick, and I don't like noise. If there is any disturbance I shall come in with a cane."

"You may go out with a thick ear!" said Johnny Bull.

Walker made a movement towards the speaker, and Johnny Bull prudently vanished into the passage.

The juniors left Walker of the Sixth there, planning the arrangement of his furniture. The study was at present only furnished with paint-cans, brushes, and paste-pot and brush, and remnants and trimmings of wall-paper. They were to be removed when the workmen came to finish in the morning.

Harry Wharton's eyes were glimmering as he walked away down the passage. It was evident that an idea had come into his mind.

"Walker's taking up his quarters there to-morrow!" he remarked.

"Yes," said Nugent. "The study's finished. What are you thinking of? It's no good trying to stop that, is it?"

"I think so. The study's finished to-day, but it may be unfinished to-morrow," said Wharton, with a chuckle. "Suppose somebody—anybody—came down in the night—"

"Yes?" said his chums all together.

"And repainted the study?" said Harry.

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gee-whiz! I guess there would be an awful row!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Well, there are going to be rows, anyway," said Wharton coolly. "If we're afraid of rows we may as well chuck up the sponge at once."

"Hear, hear!"

"The whole Form's in it!" said Harry. "If we're called over the coals—"

"If!" grinned Nugent.

"Well, when we're called over the coals," amended Wharton, "we shall all take blame for it—all equally. They can't flog a whole Form, and if we stand together we shall come off lightly. Every chap in the Remove will have a hand in it."

"Good egg!"

In the dormitory that night the plan was discussed in full. The Removites jumped at the idea. Peter Todd was pleased to signify his approval—though he had formed a rival committee in No. 7 Study. The juniors were in the thick of the discussion when Gerald Loder of the Sixth came in to see lights out. Loder noticed how the buzz of voices died away on his entrance, and he stared suspiciously at the juniors.

"What are you young rotters up to?" asked the bully of the Sixth, in his usual amiable way.

"Snuff!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Plotting some mischief—eh?" said Loder.

"Loder, old man, you're a regular wizard," said Nugent solemnly. "How do you guess these things? It shows what education will do even for a silly chap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The prefect scowled.

"You'll have an eye kept on you in future," he said. "No more of your rags and rows in the Remove passage."

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"Some fellows want watching in the Sixth-Form passage," suggested Johnny Bull. "I've heard that some of the Sixth smoke and play nap in their studies."

The Remove chuckled at that, and Loder made no reply. He turned out the light, and quitted the dormitory with a frowning brow.

The buzz of voices broke out again as soon as the prefect was gone. The Remove were full of the new scheme. Almost all the Form had received it with enthusiasm. But there were exceptions. That trouble would follow was certain; and all members of the Lower Fourth Form of Greyfriars were not of the stuff of which heroes are made. Billy Bunter was not keen, and Snoop was still less keen, and there were other waverers. But as Harry Wharton remarked, any fellow who tried to keep out would be scalped, slaughtered, boiled in oil, and otherwise maltreated, so that laggards had more to fear from their Form-fellows than from their Form-masters.

"We start at twelve o'clock," said Harry. "Everybody will be in bed then, and there won't be any danger of prefects nosing about."

"Hear, hear!" said the Remove.

"I don't want to lose my night's sleep!" growled Snoop.

"It isn't a question of what you want, my son," said Vernon-Smith. For once the Bounder of Greyfriars was hand-in-glove with Harry Wharton & Co. "It's a question of what's got to be done. Savvy?"

"Quelchy will cut up frightfully rusty!" said Snoop.

"Let him cut up!"

"The Form will cut up rusty if anybody tries to sneak out of his share," said Bob Cherry. "Don't be a funk, Snoop."

"Oh, rats!" said Snoop.

"I say, you fellows," came Billy Bunter's voice. "I think I shall very likely be too sound asleep to wake up at twelve o'clock—"

"That's all right," said Bob Cherry. "You can rely on me to wake you up. You'll be woke up all right if a jug of water will do it!"

"Look here, Cherry—"

"Don't trouble to thank me, Bunter, I shall be pleased."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter grunted and went to sleep. He was in hopes that all the Remove would go to sleep, too, and fail to wake up at the appointed time. But when midnight tolled out from the clock-tower of Greyfriars, it found Harry Wharton awake. He had dozed off several times, but he woke up in time, and heard the last stroke of twelve.

The captain of the Remove jumped out of bed.

"Time!" he called out.

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

"Wake up!"

"Grooh! I'm awake—all right!"

"Help me wake the other chaps!" said Harry.

Wharton shook Bulstrode by the shoulder. Bulstrode opened his eyes and blinked at him in the darkness.

"Wharrer marrer?" he murmured. "Shurrup!"

"Time! Buck up!"

Bulstrode yawned portentously.

"I—I say, Wharton, I've been thinking. It would be a jolly good idea to leave it till to-morrow night—don't you think so? You see—Yah—oh! Yaw!"

Bulstrode yelled as he was bumped out of bed on the floor. Then he put on his trousers without further objections. The other fellows did not raise any objections, either, after that example—if they had been thinking that it would be a good idea to put off the expedition until the following night, they did not say so.

In a few minutes only Sidney Snoop and Billy Bunter remained in bed. Snoop was awake, but Billy Bunter was snoring. He was snoring with so much energy that it sounded, as Bob Cherry remarked, too good to be true.

"Time, Snoop!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Look here, I'm not coming!" said Snoop.

"Yank him out!"

"Bump him!"

"Hands off, you beasts—yarrooh!—I say I am not coming—leggo my leg—yah!"

Bump!

Sidney James Snoop descended upon the floor with a terrific concussion. The juniors gathered round him with pillows and bolsters, and smote him as he rolled over.

Smite, smite, smite!

"Coming now?" asked Wharton pleasantly.

"Ow! Grooh! Yow! Yes."

"Get into your bags, then, and sharp!"

And Snoop sulkily got into his bags. Then the juniors devoted their attention to Billy Bunter. The Owl of the Remove was still snoring as if by steam-power.

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"Fast asleep!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "Bunter, old man, are you asleep?"

Snore!

"Can't you wake up, Bunter?"

Snore!

Bob Cherry bent over the fat junior and roared in his ear:

"Bunter!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. Then, remembering himself, he snored again, more loudly than before.

The juniors chuckled. Bob Cherry dipped a sponge into a jug of water, and approached the fat junior's bed again and suddenly squeezed the sponge over his fat face. There was a gasping yelp from Bunter, and he started up so suddenly that his head came into violent contact with Bob Cherry's nose.

Crack!

"Ow!" yelled Bob. "Ow, ow! By dose! Ow, crumbs! Murder—yow!"

"Grooh!" gasped Bunter. "You beasts! I'm wet!"

"Ow! My dose—my dose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—ow!—I've knocked my head against something—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you fat villain! It was my nose!" said Bob Cherry sulphurously. "Ow, it's bleeding! I believe it's flattened! Ow!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" growled Bunter. "I'm wet! Look here, you fellows, I'm not getting up!"

"Your mistake—you are!" said Johnny Bull. And he rolled the Owl of the Remove off the bed with a mighty shove. Bunter and bedclothes rolled on the floor together. Bob Cherry bathed his nose, which was streaming red, and Bunter scrambled wildly among the tangled bedclothes and roared.

"Ow, ow! I'm not going—yah! I tell you—ow—"

"Shut up!" said Harry Wharton. "You'll have the prefects here."

"I don't care! Yah! I—yarrooh! What beast is that kicking me! Yow!"

"Shut up!"

Bunter disentangled himself and scrambled up. From the direction of the door, in the darkness, came a sharp voice:

"Boys! What are you doing out of bed at this hour! Get back to bed at once!"

"Oh, my hat! Quelchy!"

For a moment the Remove were stricken with dismay. But the next moment Harry Wharton caught the Owl of the Remove by the neck, and shook him energetically.

"You fat bounder! You can't catch us twice with that rotten trick! It's all right, you chaps—it's only some more of Bunter's beastly ventriloquism!"

"I'll ventriloquise him!" growled Bolsover major.

"Lemme get at him!"

"Ow! Leggo! I—it was only a lark!" gasped Bunter.

"I'm coming, you know. I—I meant to come all along. I—I want to come!"

"Shut up and come then, you fat beast!"

Vernon-Smith linked arms with Bunter, and Peter Todd with Snoop, as the Removites left the dormitory. There was no chance for the laggards to retreat. The juniors crept softly out into the passage. All was dark and silent—with the exception of the Remove, all Greyfriars was sound in slumber.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Art for Art's Sake!

"HERE we are again!" grinned Bob Cherry.

The Co. were the first to enter the new study. Harry Wharton lighted the gas, and the other fellows crowded in. There was not room for all of them, and most of the crowd had to remain in the passage. Johnny Bull was set on guard to watch in case of an alarm, and also to see that the laggards did not get away. It was necessary for every member of the Remove to have a hand in the proceedings, and Wharton ordained that they should take it in turns.

Wharton started the proceedings.

He picked a brush out of a can of paint and started on the window. The glass was soon covered with a thick coating of green. Bob Cherry painted the newly-papered walls, and Nugent and Inky and Todd and Vernon-Smith joined in. Meanwhile, Bolsover major and Tom Brown were busy with the paste and the remains of the wall-paper, and the trimmings. They pasted them on the walls, on the door, and on the painted window. The steps the workmen had used in the whitewashing were still there, and the juniors mounted upon them to paint the ceiling.

The grate was painted in a variety of colours, and looked really striking when the amateur artists had finished.

Under Wharton's direction, relays of the Removites came in to take part in the painting, and the activity of the juniors was only limited by the amount of paste and paint at their disposal.

With many a chuckle, they continued their work, till the last atom of paint had been squeezed out of the brushes, and the last fragment of paper had been stuck up.

By that time the study presented a most remarkable appearance.

"Walker will be pleased!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"So will Quelchy—I don't think!" grinned Nugent.

"Yaas, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer, who had wired in

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into the largest of the paint-pots. "How do you like that?"

"Groogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you going to have a hand in it now, or do you prefer to keep your head in it?" asked Bolsover pleasantly.

"Groogh! Lemme go! I—I—Ow!"

Snoop's face was startling when he raised it from the paint-pot. He scraped the paint off his face, amid suppressed chuckles from the other fellows. He was red with fury, but he did not make any further objections. He took the brush that Harry Wharton put into his hand and painted away savagely.

Billy Bunter took warning by Snoop's punishment, and joined in, without being persuaded by Bolsover's gentle methods.

"There, I think that's about done!" said Harry Wharton, looking round the study with great satisfaction when the last atom of paint was exhausted.

"Ha, ha! Yes, I think so!"

"Begad, yaas!"

"Me tinkee lookee nicee-nicee," said Wun-Lung, the little Chinese.

"To-morrow Walkee will be latty!"

"He can be as ratty as he likes—he won't be able to dig in this study!" grinned Wharton.

And the raiders, satisfied with their handiwork, cleared out of the study at last. Harry Wharton turned out the gas, and went last. Softly and silently they made their way back to their dormitory.

"I say, we've brought a giddy niff of paint back with us," said Peter Todd. "I fancy we shall show signs of this in the morning — especially Snoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, we should be found out, anyway," said Hazeldene. "I don't think it will take Quelchy long to tumble."

"Ha, ha! No."

One was chiming out as the juniors went to bed again. They were soon fast asleep, and they did not wake again until the rising-bell was clanging out in the fresh summer morning:

Clang! Clang! Clang!
The juniors yawned and rubbed their eyes as they sat up in bed, at the familiar clang of the rising-bell. "Begad, I feel sleepy!" mumbled Lord Mauleverer.

"Same here!" grinned Bob Cherry. "But we did a good night's work. My hat! I didn't know I'd brought away so much paint!" he added, as he surveyed his hands. "Even Bunter will have to wash himself this morning."

A great deal of washing was required before the juniors got the paint off; and even then enough of it remained to betray them. Snoop scrubbed at his face desperately, but his complexion was still a pale-green when he went downstairs.

Mr. Quelch glanced sharply at Snoop at the breakfast-table, but made no remark about his peculiar complexion. The raid on the new study had not been discovered yet; it would probably not be found out until the workmen arrived to finish.

By that time the Removites were in their Form-room. The juniors were in a state of anxiety, which Hurree Jamset Ram Singh described in his weird English as "tender-hooks."

They expected the discovery every moment now; and when it came it would be followed by trouble. There was no doubt whatever upon that point. It came at last! In the middle of first lesson there was a knock at the door of the Remove-room, and Trotter, the



The two juniors were lowered with ease, and their feet rested on the window-sill of No. 7 study. The window was a foot open at the top, and through the opening they could hear the deep breathing of Walker. (See Chapter 8.)

manfully, putting nearly as much paint upon himself as upon the study walls. "I really think it looks rather artistic, don't you know. Somethin' like one of those Post-Impressionist pictures, begad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Has Snoop done his whack?" asked Wharton.

"Not yet," grinned Skinner. "Come on, Snoopey! Don't be backward in coming forward, you know. This isn't a time for bashfulness."

And Snoop was pushed into the study by the grinning juniors.

"Look here, I won't have a hand in it!" howled Snoop. "There will be a fearful row over this, and I'm not looking for lickings. I tell you I won't have a hand in it!"

"You'll have a head in it, then!" growled Bolsover, grasping the sneak of the Remove, and forcing his face down

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page, came in. Trotter was suppressing a grin, which would not be quite suppressed. He brought a message to Mr. Quelch. The juniors did not hear what it was, but they saw their Form-master give a start, and he hurried out of the Form-room, followed by Trotter.

"Now the band begins to play!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is where we get it in the neck, my infants! Buck up, and look chippy!"

But now that the hour had come, the Remove did not succeed in looking very chippy. However, they "bucked up" as well as they could. Ten minutes passed in suspense, and then Mr. Quelch returned. He came into the Form-room with a brow like a thundercloud. There was a hush. In the Remove Form-room—not as a rule the quietest Form-room at Greyfriars—a pin might have been heard to drop.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. A Very Downy Bird!

"BOYS!"

Mr. Quelch's voice was not loud, but it was deep; it sounded to the ears of the Removites like the rumble of distant thunder.

The Remove sat silent. It was coming now, and they were prepared for the storm.

"Boys, wanton and wicked damage has been done in the new study in the Remove passage—the study destined for Walker of the Sixth! I have very little doubt that the damage has been done by members of this Form!"

Still silence.

"I call upon the authors of this outrage to stand forward and own up!" said Mr. Quelch. "They will be discovered, in any case. Every boy concerned in damaging the new study will step out immediately before the class!"

The Removites exchanged glances. Harry Wharton gave the signal by rising to his feet and walking out into the middle of the room. The rest of the Form followed him. Only two remained in their places—Billy Bunter and Sidney Snoop. In spite of ferocious looks from the other fellows, they remained sitting where they were.

Mr. Quelch started as his order was obeyed to such an unexpected extent. He had hardly expected the culprits to own up at all, and he had certainly not expected the whole Lower Fourth to turn out promptly at the word of command.

The Remove stood before their astounded Form-master, who was at a loss for words for the moment.

"What does this mean?" he gasped at last. "Were you all concerned in this outrage?"

"Yes, sir."

The Remove replied with one voice.

"The whole Form?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

"This is—is outrageous!" exclaimed the Remove-master, very much taken aback. "However, I see that two of the Form were innocent in the matter. Had you anything to do with the outrage in the new study, Snoop?"

"I refused, sir," said Snoop.

Mr. Quelch looked at him more closely.

"Indeed! Then what is the cause of the stains of paint on your face, Snoop, if you were not there with the others?"

"I—I—"

"Were you there with the rest?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Ye-es, sir. But—"

"Did you take part in the painting?"

"Yes, sir; but I—"

"Then stand out here with the others!"

"But, sir, I—"

"Do as I tell you, Snoop, and hold your tongue!" said Mr. Quelch crossly; and Sidney James Snoop reluctantly joined the array of culprits. "Bunter!"

"Eh? Did you speak, sir?" asked Billy Bunter.

"I did! Were you concerned in this matter, in which the whole of the Remove seems to have been engaged?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly not, sir!" said Bunter promptly.

"Did you go with them?"

"Oh no, sir!"

"Did you remain in the dormitory while it was done—for I am aware that it must have been done after lights out last night?"

"No, sir—I mean, yes, sir. I—I didn't even know they were going to do anything of the sort, sir," said Bunter. "If I had known, I should certainly have remonstrated—like Eric, sir. I have always regarded Eric as my model, sir. I should have remonstrated with my misguided school-fellows, sir, if I had known what they were going to do. In fact, I told them plainly I wouldn't have a hand in it."

"What! You told them you would not have a hand in what they did, and yet you did not know what they were going to do?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir; you've got it exactly!" said Bunter.

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
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Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

Mr. Quelch stared hard at the fat junior, and some of the Removites chuckled. Billy Bunter was an Ananias of the first water—so far as "whoppers" went, he could beat the original Ananias hollow; but he was a very clumsy performer. He would roll out any number of fibs, but they never agreed with one another.

"How could you refuse to have a hand in what was intended, if you did not know what was intended, Bunter?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"I refused because I'm such an orderly and obedient chap, sir," said Bunter. "I said no—I said you would be cross, sir, if we ragged the new study, and mucked it up with paint and things. That's how it was, sir."

"Then you knew what was intended?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"You utterly stupid boy!" the exasperated Form-master exclaimed. "Cannot you see that you have admitted as much?"

"Oh, really, sir! I hadn't the faintest idea! In fact, I was fast asleep when they left the dormitory, sir. I said to Wharton—"

"What! You have said that you were fast asleep?"

"So I was, sir, and dreaming about home, and the field where I used to play when I was a dear little boy!" said Bunter sentimentally. But if he expected his sentiment to touch the hard heart of his Form-master, he was greatly mistaken.

"Yet you spoke to Wharton?"

"Of course I did, sir, and remonstrated with him—"

"How could you speak to Wharton if you were asleep?"

Mr. Quelch rapped out the question, and for a moment even Billy Bunter was staggered. He had caught himself, as usual, by telling too many falsehoods at once.

"I—I—I sometimes talk in my sleep, sir," he stammered at last. "That's how it was, sir. I was talking in my sleep."

"Ha, ha, ha!" The juniors could not resist that yell of laughter, and even Mr. Quelch smiled for a moment at the utter absurdity of Bunter's statement.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You will stand out here."

"But I—I didn't have anything to do with it, sir!" said Billy Bunter, in dismay. "I—I've already assured you of that, sir, on the word of a Bunter—"

"Come out here at once!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "If you tell me any more falsehoods, I shall punish you more severely than the others!"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Billy Bunter. And he joined the rest of the Remove with a lugubrious face.

Mr. Quelch surveyed the Form sternly.

"I suppose you understand," he exclaimed, "that this act was practically a defiance of authority—the authority of your headmaster?"

"We didn't mean it that way, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Whether you meant it or not, that was what it was," said Mr. Quelch tartly. "Now kindly give me your reason for acting in this reprehensible manner?"

"We didn't want any rotten prefects—ahem—any prefects in our quarters, sir!" said the captain of the Remove.

"That is not a matter for you to decide, Wharton. The Head has already decided it. Now, to-morrow is a half-holiday. The Remove will be detained the whole afternoon, and will occupy the time in writing out Latin declensions."

"Oh!"

"And this trick will not succeed in its object," went on the Form-master sternly. "The object, I presume, was to render the new study unfit for habitation, and so put off the time of Walker's taking up his quarters there? In that you have succeeded—but the result will not, I think, please you. Walker will take up his residence in the Remove passage to-day—and Study No. 1 will be assigned to him."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton involuntarily.

"Study No. 1 belongs now to two boys—Wharton and Nugent. Wharton will be put into No. 2 for the present, and Nugent into No. 7. Study No. 1 must be cleared out ready for Walker to take possession of it immediately after lessons this morning. Walker will retain possession of that study until the new one is ready for him. Now return to your places."

With dismayed faces the Remove went back to their seats. They exchanged dismayed looks. Mr. Quelch had been one too many for them after all; as Nugent groaned, he was a downy bird, and was not to be caught. The Removites had lost their night's rest for nothing.

There were glum faces in the Remove-room during the remainder of morning lessons. There were loud growls when the juniors came out of the Form-room at last.

"The downy old bouncer!" growled Bulstrode. "We're

three in No. 2 now—Hazel and Browney and me. Four will be a crowd!"

"We're three in No. 7, without Bunter," grunted Peter Todd. "Nugent will be one too many."

"Fairly caught!" said Harry Wharton, breaking into a laugh. "It can't be helped—Quelchy has been one too many for us this time. He is a very downy bird."

"Come and help us clear our things out of No. 1, some of you," said Frank Nugent. "We've got it in the neck this time, and no mistake. But are we down-hearted?"

"NO!" roared the Remove.

As Harry Wharton said, Quelchy had won the first round. But there were more rounds to come—and the Lower Fourth were not down-hearted.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Makes Terms.

WALKER of the Sixth took up his quarters in Study No. 1 that day.

Walker, who had a special "down" on Harry Wharton & Co., seemed to be very pleased about it. Study No. 1 was not so large as Walker's room among the Sixth, but if he was a little less comfortable, he was going to make the Removites much less comfortable, and there was consolation in that.

Wharton and Nugent, with the other fellows' help, carried their belongings out of Study No. 1, and Walker installed himself there.

Walker had several friends to tea after school—Carnic, and Valence, and Loder of the Sixth—and, as Johnny Bull growled to his chums, it seemed as if it was raining Sixth-Formers in the Remove passage.

Then the tyranny began.

Tom Brown, in Study No. 2, started practising a harmless and necessary mouth-organ. In a minute or less there was a ferocious rapping on the wall from the next study. The New Zealand junior blew away heartily, taking no notice of the rapping. But he had to take notice when the door of No. 2 was flung violently open, and four Sixth-Formers rushed in.

Walker & Co. did not waste time talking. They had brought cricket-stumps with them, and they preferred actions to words.

Tom Brown and Bulstrode and Hazeldene, to whom the study belonged, were all there, and so was Harry Wharton, the new inmate. The Sixth-Formers fell upon the four of them, and smote them hip and thigh. Even if the assailants had not been prefects, and armed with authority, four Lower Fourth juniors would not have had much chance against a quartette of big fellows in the Sixth. They were whacked heartily, in spite of their resistance, and chased out of the study, and fled down the passage in dismay. Walker & Co. returned in triumph to Study No. 1—and there was no more mouth-organing in No. 2.

The Remove were in a state of fury.

The way Walker had started showed that he intended to carry matters with a high hand, and be monarch of all he surveyed in the quarters hitherto sacred to the Lower Fourth.

Some of the wilder spirits proposed a raid on the study, and hurling the obnoxious Sixth-Formers out by sheer force of numbers.

But, as Harry Wharton pointed out, that would be no use. Walker, if he were ejected, would simply be like the evil spirit of old, who was turned out, and returned with seven devils worse than himself.

There could not, of course, be any more committee meetings in No. 1, now that Walker was there, and the committee met in the common-room.

Peter Todd was also holding a committee meeting in No. 7, when Nugent came in there to do his preparation. Peter Todd, and his Cousin Alonzo, and Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, shared No. 7. Billy Bunter had also belonged to the study, but he had changed out of his own accord—and now Peter refused to allow him to come back. Billy Bunter presented himself daily at the study, especially at tea-time, and Peter Todd was always ready with a boot or a cricket-stump to convince Bunter that it wasn't his study any longer. He told Bunter that as he had made his bed, he must lie upon it—and added that that wouldn't come hard on Bunter, as he was so accustomed to lying.

Peter was talking—Peter did most of the talking in Study No. 7—when Nugent came in. He gave Nugent a nod of welcome, and went on.

"The enemy are within the gates now," said Peter dramatically. "One of the Remove studies is held by the enemy. It's up to us, as top study in the Remove, to change all that."

"Rats!" said Nugent.

"You shurrup, when you're in my study!" said Peter Todd. "I'm letting you come in here to do your prep., but

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not to talk rot. You dry up. Now, what do you think, Alonzo?"

"I think Walker has proved himself a very unpleasant person, Peter—very!" said the gentle Alonzo. "But I am not sure whether Uncle Benjamin would approve of taking any violent measures for getting rid of the obnoxious individual."

"Oh, give Uncle Ben a rest!" said Peter. "What's your idea, Dutton?"

"Eh?" said Dutton.

"Got any idea for dealing with Walker?"

"No; I've got to do my prep.!" said Dutton. "I'll go for a walk with you afterwards, if you like, in the Close."

"Walker!" shouted Peter Todd. "What about Walker of the Sixth?"

"Well, a walk will do you good, if you feel sick," said Dutton, with a nod. "What have you been eating?"

Peter Todd groaned.

"You'll bring down my grey top-knot in sorrow to the grave yet, Tommy!" he sighed. "Look here, we're going to shift Walker out somehow—see?"

"Impossible!"

"Why is it impossible?" bawled Peter indignantly.

"Why, the sea is a good distance from here, and it's dark already. What's the good of breaking bounds just for a walk by the sea?" argued Dutton.

Nugent burst into a chuckle.

"Better give it up!" he suggested. "Buy a megaphone, or go into training."

Peter Todd grunted, and gave up his appeal to Dutton. Dutton went on with his preparation, very much surprised that Peter should have suggested a walk by the sea at that time of day.

"It's up to us!" said Peter musingly. "No. 1 Study is no good—"

"What's that?" demanded Nugent, looking up wrathfully from his work.

"Fact!" said Peter. "Now, as No. 1 Study is no good—"

"You silly ass! I—"

"Shush!" said Peter, waving his finger chidingly at the exasperated Nugent. "Don't you interrupt your uncle when he's thinking a think. No. 1 Study being played out, it's up to this study to shift that boulder out of our quarters. Now—"

"You frabjous chump—"

"Shush!"

"You blithering duffer—"

The study door opened, and the fattest junior at Greyfriars presented himself. Peter Todd's hand wandered to a ruler. Bunter blinked at him cautiously through his big spectacles, ready to dodge.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Don't you come into this study!" said Peter warningly.

"It's my study—"

"Not since you changed out," chuckled Peter Todd.

"I'm willing to come back—"

"It takes two to make a bargain. You can go and eat coke. Shut the door after you."

Bunter came into the study, and closed the door behind him. Peter Todd rose to his feet, and took a business-like grasp upon the ruler.

"I—I say, Todd," stammered Bunter, "I—I want to come back into the study. I don't get on with Snoop, you know. He's a beast! It was all rot about his coming into money, you know—he's as poor as those scholarship bounders Fenfold and Linley, you know. I never get enough to eat—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. Look here, Toddy, I want to come back into this study. I'm sure you miss me—you're bound to miss me—"

Peter Todd raised the ruler.

"Bet you two to one I don't miss you!" he said.

Bunter jumped behind Nugent.

"Ow! I didn't mean that!" he roared. "You know that jolly well."

"Keep your head still, Nugent," said Todd, taking aim with the ruler. "Don't move it, and I shall just miss your left ear, and catch Bunter under the chin—"

Bunter dodged away again, and took refuge behind Alonzo.

"I say, Toddy, old man, don't be a beast!" he pleaded. "I'm coming back into this study, you know. Alonzo wants me back, don't you, 'Lonzy?"

"I fear that I cannot say truthfully that I do, Bunter," said Alonzo. "I should be very pleased to make a more courteous response, but my Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me the necessity of strict truthfulness."

"You—you rotter!" said Bunter. "I say, Dutton, you

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want me to come back into this study, don't you, old man?"

"Eh?" said Dutton.

"You want me back, don't you?"

"Rats!" said Dutton. "Catch me scratching your back. What do you want me to scratch your silly back for? Scratch your back yourself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, I've got an idea," said Bunter, appealing to Peter Todd again. "I've got a scheme for getting Walker out."

"Oh, rot!" said Peter.

"I'll tell you what," said Bunter, "if I get Walker out of No. 1 Study, will you let me come back—what?"

"You can't do it," growled Peter. "Why, I can't myself, so far."

"Is it a go, if I do?"

Peter nodded.

"Right-ho!" he said.

"Good!" said Bunter. "Of course, you fellows will have to back me up."

"That's all right," said Peter, "No. 7 Study always sticks together. Now, what's your wheeze? I expect it's silly rot."

"I've been thinking it out," said Bunter. "Walker is a superstitious chap. You know the Sixth chip him for believing in Spiritualism, and that sort of foolishness."

"I know he's a silly ass," said Peter. "What has Walker's Spiritualism got to do with it?"

"That's where I get him!" grinned Bunter, evidently very pleased with his idea. "Walker went to a Spiritualistic seance in Courtfield the other day. When he came back he told Loder that he had the gift of being a medium, with training. The Spiritualists there had taken him in wholesale, and he had planked down money, he told Loder—and Loder said he was a silly idiot."

"Well, I don't often agree with Loder," said Peter Todd thoughtfully; "but I must say he was right on the wicket that time."

"How do you know what Walker said to Loder, Bunter?" asked Alonzo Todd, in some surprise.

"I happened to be passing their study window, and it was open—"

"And you happened to listen, like the eavesdropping worm you are," said Frank Nugent, with a curl of the lip.

"You mind your own business," said Bunter. "You don't belong to this study, Nugent. I'm not going to have any of your cheek in my study, I can tell you."

"It isn't your study yet," said Peter Todd grimly.

"Well, to come back to Walker," said Bunter. "He's a superstitious idiot, and he doesn't know anything about my being a ventriloquist. He's afraid of ghosts and things. He told Loder he'd seen tables moved, and heard raps and things, at the seance in Courtfield, and he swallowed it all without salt. If he hears voices in No. 1 Study, he's bound to get awfully scared. He's not a giddy hero, you know—he's afraid of the dark, and I heard Loder tell Carne that Walker kept the gas burning in his study all night after that seance at Courtfield."

Peter Todd sniffed.

"The silly funk!" he said.

"When he hears mysterious voices in No. 1 Study, he's bound to be scared into fits," said Bunter. "He'll clear out—you bet your hat!"

Peter Todd grinned. The scheme appealed to him, if only as a lesson to Walker not to put faith in nonsense. As he remarked, it was really for Walker's good, and they would be entitled to his gratitude—though whether they would receive it was another matter.

"It's a go!" said Peter Todd. "In the stilly hour of midnight we'll wake Walker up with weird voices—and see how the cat jumps! Done!"

And Billy Bunter remained in No. 7 Study—and distinguished his return to his old quarters by a raid upon the study cupboard—leaving it, when he had finished, in the same state as the cupboard of the celebrated Mother Hubbard.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

In the Dead of Night!

HARRY WHARTON & CO., went to bed that night leaving the enemy in possession of No. 1 Study. The Sixth Form of Greyfriars did not sleep in dormitories like the juniors; they had beds in their own rooms; each Sixth Form-room was a study by day and a bed-room by night. Walker's bed had been put into No. 1 Study when he was installed there. It was at a considerable distance from his old quarters, and as the other studies in the passage

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were, of course, unoccupied at night, Walker was very much "on his own" there.

It did not occur to Walker that he would be lonely, however, till after his friends were gone. Valence, and Loder, and Carne had had supper with him, and they stayed up till nearly eleven o'clock—the Sixth not being tied down to a regular bed-time like the juniors.

When they had returned to their own rooms in the Sixth-Form passage, Walker was left alone.

He locked the door—having a suspicion that there might be a raid of the juniors in the night—and went to bed.

Most of the Remove had been asleep for a long time before that. But some were awake in the Remove dormitory. Peter Todd had determined to carry out Bunter's scheme, and he kept awake till twelve o'clock tolled out from the old tower. Then he jumped out of bed, and shook Bunter. Billy Bunter was sleeping soundly, and it required a very hard shake to wake him up. He opened his little round eyes at last, and blinked at Peter Todd in the darkness.

"Lemme alone!" he murmured. "Yaw! Lemme alone, you idiot!"

"Time for the little game," said Peter Todd pleasantly, yanking Bunter out of bed. "Now, don't say you've changed your mind, because I haven't changed mine. Get into your things and look sharp."

"I—I say, Todd—"

"No need to say anything," said Todd briskly. "Get dressed—quick!"

Bunter groaned and dressed himself. He knew that it was no use arguing with Peter Todd. Now that it was midnight, and he was sleepy, Bunter repented him of having thought of that ripping scheme. But repentance came too late, as it often does. The leader of No. 7 Study was not to be denied.

Alonzo Todd and Dutton were awakened, and they dressed quickly. Not that Alonzo was likely to be much use, but Peter's law was that No. 7 Study always worked together, and he had no mercy upon his followers. Alonzo was a little doubtful whether his Uncle Benjamin would have approved of the proceedings, but Peter displayed a really hardened indifference to the possible opinion of Uncle Benjamin.

"Don't put anything on your feet but your socks," said Peter. "We shall have to pass Quelchy's room to go down, and we don't want to wake him."

"I—I say, Peter, my feet will get cold!" said Bunter.

"Can't be helped! Come on!"

"Oh, really, Todd—"

"Are you ready, Bunter, or do you want a thick ear?"

Bunter was ready. The four juniors left the dormitory together. Several other fellows were awake now, much interested in the proceedings of the Funny Four—as Peter Todd & Co. were called in the Lower Fourth.

The Funny Four crept cautiously down the passage and the stairs, and reached the Remove passage. They paused to listen in the darkness outside No. 1 Study. There was a sound from within—deep and steady breathing, with an occasional snore. Walker, of the Sixth, was evidently safe in the arms of Morpheus.

"Sleeping like a giddy top!" said Peter Todd, and he gently turned the handle of the door. The door did not open.

"Oh, my aunt!" said Peter.

"Open the door, fathead," said Bunter.

"It's locked on the inside."

"Oh, rotten!"

The quartette stood in dismay. Billy Bunter, perhaps, was less dismayed than the others. His enthusiasm for ragging Walker had cooled.

"Well, I'm afraid it's up, all up," he said. "We'd better get back to bed, Peter."

"Really!" said Peter sarcastically. "Do you suppose that I've got up and come down for the pleasure of a little promenade in the middle of the night?"

"Well, I'm sleepy, you know, and—"

"Let's get back to the dorm.," said Peter.

They returned to the Remove dormitory. There was a chorus of whispered inquiries as they came in. Bunter made at once for his bed.

"Well, what's happened?" asked Harry Wharton.

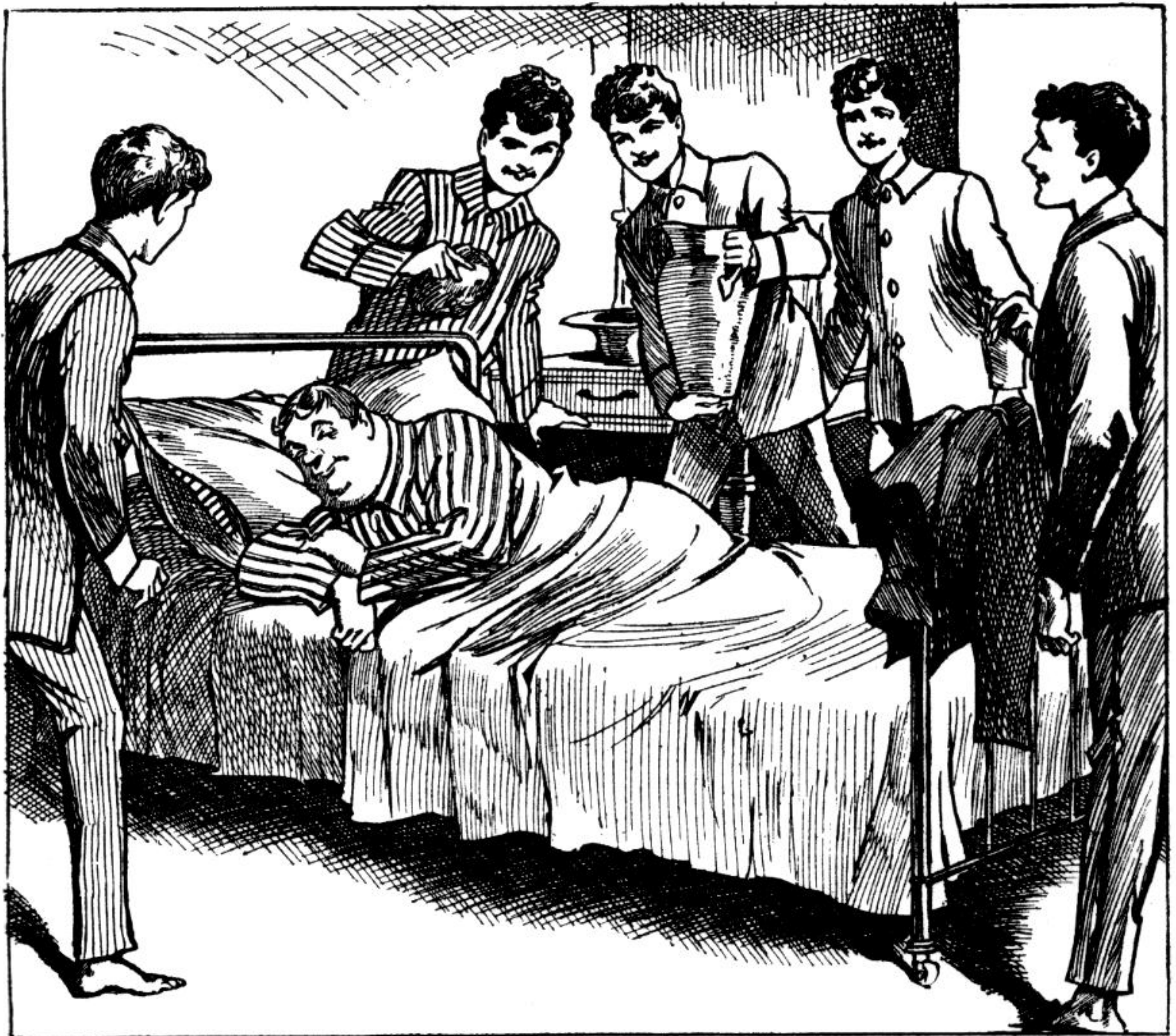
"Walker's got the door locked."

"Then it's all ended in smoke," grinned Vernon-Smith.

"This is where No. 7 Study sings small, I suppose?"

"Off-side!" said Peter coolly. "We haven't started yet. There are more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream, Smithy! Where are you, Bunter?"

ANSWERS



Bob Cherry leant over the sleeping Bunter, and roared in his ear: "BUNTER!" "Ow!" gasped Bunter. Then he suddenly remembered himself, and commenced to snore again. Bob Cherry dipped a sponge in water, and squeezed it over Bunter's face. (See Chapter 4.)

Snore!

"He's in bed!" chuckled Nugent.

"I'll soon have him out of that!"

"Oh, really, Todd! I—I say, there's nothing to be done, you know—yaroooh!—you horrid beast, leggo my neck! Ow—all right, I'm getting up—yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quite so," said Peter Todd. "I'm getting you up. Now, we can't get at Walker through the door, as it's locked; but there's a window, and the window's open at the top."

"I'm not a rotten bird, or a blessed airman!" growled Bunter. "I suppose you don't think I can get in at the top of his blessed window, do you?"

"You can get on the window-sill," said Peter.

"And break my neck!" howled Bunter.

"It wouldn't be much loss if you did," said Peter calmly.

"There are plenty of Bunters in the world. But there's no need to break your neck if you're careful. We can make a rope of sheets, and lower you down over the window of No. 1 Study. You can hold on to the ivy all right, and I shall go with you."

Bunter simply glared.

"I won't do it!" he roared. "It's dangerous!"

"No. 7 Study never shrinks from danger," said Peter.

"Besides, I'm going with you, and I promise you that if you fall I'll fall with you."

"That's a fair offer," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

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"I won't go—I won't—yaroooh!—leggo my ear—ow!"

"Going?" asked Peter pleasantly, compressing Bunter's fat ear between his finger and thumb. "You've made us get up for this little expedition, you know, and you can't back out now. No. 7 Study never backs out. Say when!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Leggo! I'll go! I—I want to go, you know!" howled Bunter. "I was only j-j-joking!"

"Then don't do any more j-j-joking at this time of night," said Peter Todd severely. "You're making me lose my beauty-sleep, wasting time like this. Some of you fellows turn out and help us make the ropes, please."

Most of the Removites were awake now, and they lent a hand willingly. Sheets were twisted up and tied together, nearly all the beds being denuded of sheets for the purpose. Ropes of great length were soon made, and they were strong enough to bear the weight of half a dozen fellows. Peter Todd tied one of them round Bunter, under his arms, and then the other round himself.

"It's really only for safety," he explained. "We can climb down the ivy quite easily. And there's quite a broad sill to the window of No. 7, and a stone ledge a foot below it, for our feet to rest on. Some of you fellows can lower us down, and tie the ropes to the window here for safety. Buck up, Bunter; there isn't any danger, and I'm going to tie you to me, so you can't fall."

Billy Bunter was somewhat comforted; and as the danger

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receded, he was more inclined to be heroic. He tested the strength of the ropes, and was satisfied, and allowed Peter Todd to drag him out of the dormitory window. Harry Wharton & Co. took charge of the ropes at the window. The ends of them were secured inside the dormitory, so that even if they had slipped the juniors could not have fallen far. Peter Todd would never have troubled about all those precautions for himself, but Billy Bunter was not of the stuff of which heroes are made.

"Lower away!" said Peter cheerfully. "Buck up, Bunter!"

Bunter grunted.

The two juniors were lowered down with ease, and their feet rested upon the window-sill of No. 7 Study. The window was a foot open at the top, and through the opening they could hear the deep breathing and the snoring of Walker. Walker was still sleeping soundly. Peter Todd, standing on the window-sill, put his head in at the opening of the window. The interior of the study was intensely dark, and he could barely make out the white glimmer of the bed in the corner.

"Feel all right, Bunter?"

"Of course I do!" snapped Bunter. Now that he realised that there was no danger, Billy Bunter was full of courage. "Mind you don't lose your nerve, Todd. I don't want to have to bother looking after you while I'm doing the ventriloquism, you know."

Peter Todd breathed hard through his nose. If they had been anywhere else, Bunter would certainly have received a "thick ear" for his impudence. But as it was, Peter Todd magnanimously passed it over.

"Are you ready?" he said.

"Yes; don't bother."

Billy Bunter was master of the situation now. He was the ventriloquist, not Peter Todd, and he meant to make that fully understood. Peter Todd said something under his breath.

"Now, keep quiet, and don't bother me, and don't get frightened," said Bunter. "I'm just going to begin."

He blinked into the study over the lowered sash of the window. There were curtains to the window, which quite concealed the juniors outside, even if it had been light. Between the curtains, Bunter put in his head, and blinked round him.

"Don't let him see you if he wakes up, fathead!" said Peter, in a whisper.

"Shut up!" said Bunter independently.

"Look here——"

"If you're going to jaw, Todd, and keep on interrupting me, we may as well chuck up the whole idea," said Bunter loftily.

"You—you——"

"Dry up!"

Peter Todd dried up, with feelings too deep for words. Billy Bunter had taken the bit between his teeth with a vengeance, now. Having reduced the leader of No. 7 Study to silence, Bunter prepared for business. He blinked into the room again, and then the silence was broken by a deep, deep groan!

"My hat," murmured Peter Todd, "if I didn't know what that was, it would make my giddy flesh creep. Pile in, Bunter!"

"Cheese it! He's waking up!"

The two young rascals were silent. From the dark room within came a sound of someone moving in bed, and then a startled voice.

"Wh-wh-what's that?"

Walker, of the Sixth, had evidently woke up!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Ghost Walks, and Walker Runs!

WALKER sat up in bed, and looked around him in the darkness. That fearful groan had awakened him, and, indeed, it would almost have awakened the dead. Walker hardly knew what it was that had awakened him, and he blinked round in surprise. He thought of the Removites at once, but he knew that the door was locked.

Groan!

Walker fairly jumped.

"Great Scott, what's that?"

Walker stared round in the gloom with a shiver. The remembrance of that spiritualistic seance in Courtfield came back to his mind. There he had heard spirit-rapping, but he had been in company with others; now he was alone, and it wasn't half so entertaining to hear from the spirit-world alone in the middle of the night.

"Walker!"

It was his own name, pronounced in a hollow voice from the direction of the door. The Sixth-Former gasped.

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"Who's there?"

"Arise, James Walker!"

James Walker gritted his teeth. He felt certain that the voice came from the door, and he concluded at once that the juniors had found some means of forcing the lock, and were ragging him, or that they were at the keyhole. He stepped quietly out of bed, and caught hold of a cane which he had thoughtfully placed in readiness in case it should be wanted, and groped towards the door in the dark.

"James Walker, beware!"

The voice was still in the same place. Walker made a vicious slash with the cane in the dark, and if a speaker had been there that speaker would have caught the cane somewhere upon his person.

But there was no one there! The cane swept downward through empty space, and, meeting with no resistance, naturally it lashed against Walker's own legs.

The prefect gave a terrific yell, and jumped clear of the floor, dropping the cane and clasping at his legs in anguish.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

There was a low chuckle from the window, which was fortunately drowned by Walker's roar of pain.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Walker. "Oh, my hat! Ow! I—I'm hurt! Yow—ow——"

"Silence, James Walker!" came the hollow voice.

Walker ceased his howling suddenly. It flashed into his mind that as his cane had struck nothing, nothing could have been there, and that it must have been a bodiless voice that was speaking to him.

"Who—who—who is it?" panted Walker, almost forgetting the pain in his lower limbs in his terror.

"It is I, James Walker."

Walker set his teeth, and groped to the door. It was still locked, and the key was on the inside of the lock. The prefect backed away, shivering. The voice was inside the study, and the door had not been opened. It was close to him, and yet when he threw his hands out he felt nothing. No wonder James Walker's hair rose on his head, and a cold perspiration trickled down his back.

"Oh, good heavens!" he murmured. He fumbled at his clothes to find a box of matches to light the gas, but his hands trembled so much that he could hardly find the pocket where the matchbox reposed. The hollow voice sounded again, still from the direction of the door, where Walker knew there was empty space and nothing else. Indeed, now that his eyes were getting used to the gloom, he could see that there was nothing there.

"James Walker!"

"Yes," gasped Walker—"what's the row? What do you want? Who are you?"

"Do you forget, James Walker, that you called my restless spirit from the realms of repose at the seance at Courtfield?" demanded the hollow voice.

Walker shuddered. He had still had a faint hope that it might be a trick of some sort. But no one at Greyfriars knew anything about that secret visit to a spiritualistic seance at Courtfield, excepting Loder of the Sixth—so far as Walker knew, at all events. He had told no one else. The Head would have rated him soundly for wasting his time upon such nonsense, if he had known, and Walker had told only his chum. Evidently it could not be a jape of the juniors.

"Dost thou remember, James Walker?"

"I—I remember!" gasped Walker.

"Thou didst call my restless spirit from the vasty deep with the aid of a medium."

"I—I did!" groaned Walker, sincerely wishing that the medium had been at the bottom of the vasty deep before he had called up that wretched spirit.

"I gave you a message in raps upon the table, James Walker."

"Yes. Oh, crikey!"

"Didst thou understand that message?"

"Nunno! I—I didn't know what the raps meant!" stammered Walker. "I'm awfully sorry!"

He stood shivering in his pyjamas, staring blankly at the corner of the room where the door was. The space before him was utterly empty; yet thence the voice came. No wonder the superstitious fellow was convinced that he was receiving a message from the spirit-world, a little clearer than the table-rapping message.

"Thou didst not comprehend?"

"No; I'm fearfully sorry. I'll try hard next time——"

"I have come to make it clearer to thee, James Walker. Since thou understoodest not the table-rapping, I speak to thee with words!"

"You're awfully good!" groaned Walker.

"Art thou prepared to meet thy doom?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Hast thou made thy peace with the world?"

"Nunno!"

"Yet thy doom is upon thee. Unless thou repentest of thy sins thou diest!" went on the hollow, awe-inspiring voice.

"But I—I haven't any sins!" stammered Walker. "I'm a really good chap, you know—quite up to the mark."

"Thou art a bully!"

"Well, I keep the fags in order!" stammered Walker. "That's my duty. I—I don't think you need have come about that!"

"Scoff not, thou insolent mortal!" said the deep, hollow tones.

Walker trembled.

"I wasn't scoffing!" he groaned. "I don't feel much like scoffing. I—I say, I——"

"Wilt thou swear a solemn oath to change thy ways?"

"Yes, yes—honour bright!"

"It is well. Each night, while thou dwellest here, I shall visit thee!"

"I—I wish you wouldn't trouble," said Walker. "I shall remember every word you've said, Mr. Ghost, I shall really. You needn't bother about coming again."

"Return to thy bed!" said the voice harshly. "All the night I shall be beside thee."

"Oh!"

"If thou feelest an icy touch upon thy face——"

"Yow!"

"It will be my touch. Go back to thy bed, and tremble!"

Walker did not go back to his bed, though he trembled. He made a sudden dash for the door, unlocked it, and fled down the passage.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Haunted!

THERE was a chuckle at the study window as James Walker fled from the room, the door banging behind him. The hollow voice the Greyfriars ventriloquist had assumed had almost made Peter Todd's flesh creep in the darkness, and it was not surprising that it had terrified the amateur spiritualist.

"Oh, my Uncle Theophilus!" gasped Peter Todd. "Bunter, old man, you're worth your weight in scrap-iron. Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"He's cleared off!" said Peter Todd, peering into the study. "He's not going to come back, either—no fear! I'm going to lock the door; he can put it down to the ghost."

"He, he, he!"

Peter Todd released himself from the rope, and nipped into the study through the window and turned the key in the lock of the door. Then he rejoined Billy Bunter, and gave the signal to the juniors above to pull them up.

A couple of minutes later they were in the Remove dormitory, surrounded by eager inquirers.

"Well?" demanded Harry Wharton. "How did it go?"

Todd breathlessly explained, and the juniors chuckled joyfully.

"Better get to bed," added Peter. "It may dawn on Walker that the ghost might belong to the Remove, and he might come up here on suspicion."

The sheets were hastily untied, and the juniors turned in again. If Walker came up to the dormitory to investigate he would find nothing suspicious there.

But James Walker was not thinking of that just then. He had dashed out of No. 1 Study in a state of the wildest funk. He rushed away at top speed to the Sixth-Form passage, thinking only of getting human company to help him bear the horrors of that supernatural visit. He rushed into Loder's room at top speed, with a howl that startled Loder out of his slumbers.

Loder started up in bed in amazement.

"Who's that? What's the row?"

"Loder!"

"Eh—who is it?"

"Loder! I say, Loder! Oh, dear! Oh, oh, oh!"

"Is that you, Walker?"

"Yes. Oh, oh, oh!"

"You thundering ass!" said Loder, in measured tones.

"What do you mean by waking me up in the middle of the night and stuttering out 'Oh, oh, oh!' Are you dotty?"

"The ghost!" stuttered Walker.

"What!"

"The g-g-ghost! The horrible, awful g-g-ghost!"

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Loder crossly. Loder did not believe in ghosts.

"I'm not being funny!" yelled Walker furiously. "I tell you the ghost is there. It's the same spirit that was rapping on the table in Courtfield, that I told you about!"

"You silly idiot!" said Loder.

"I—I want to share your room for the night!" panted Walker. "I'm not going back there. I can't go back there!"

"You can sleep on the floor if you like," said Loder.

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"There's no room for you in my bed. You've been dreaming, you silly chump!"

"I haven't!" groaned Walker. "It was horribly real. A deep, hollow voice—the kind of voice a ghost would use, you know——"

"Well, I've never heard a ghost doing vocal exercises, so I can't say!" snorted Loder. "It is some jape of the Remove kids to get you out of the study."

"I—I thought it was at first, but the door was locked on the inside. The voice was close to me, yet there was nothing there. I lashed out with a cane, and only walloped my own legs. It hurts, too," added Walker, rubbing his limbs.

"You didn't see anything?" asked Loder.

"Well, there was a—a sort of pale light," said Walker, drawing on his imagination a little, for the purpose of convincing Loder. "A kind of floating, bodiless sort of form, you know!"

"I don't know!" growled Loder.

"Lemme have half your bed——"

"Rats! You can have the sofa!"

"But I can't sleep without bedclothes——"

"Go back to your room, then!"

"I—I can't!"

"Why can't you?"

"I daren't!" gasped Walker.

Loder snorted.

"Oh, don't be such an awful funk! It's only a jape of the Remove kids, and they'll be yelling at you about it tomorrow."

"It wasn't! I—I dare not try to sleep there again! I should feel an icy touch upon my face!" groaned Walker.

"What did you have for supper?" asked the unsympathetic Loder.

"I tell you I wasn't dreaming!" howled Walker.

"Anyway, you're keeping me awake," said his friend.

"Do clear out, and don't be an idiot! I don't want to stay awake all night listening to your rot! I should advise you to go back with a cane, and find out who's been japing you."

"I—I can't!"

"Well, sleep on the sofa, then. You can fetch your bedclothes from the study."

"I—I—— Will you come with me, Loder?"

Loder growled. But there was evidently no other way of getting rid of Walker, and he consented. He turned out of bed, and dragged on his trousers and slippers. Then he awoke all night listening to your rot! I should advise you and he was convinced that if anyone were found in Study No. 1 that person would be quite substantial, and amenable to applications of the cane.

"Come on, you blessed funk!" grunted Loder.

He led the way, and Walker followed him in fear and trembling. They reached the door of Study No. 1 in the Remove passage, and Loder turned the handle. The door did not open.

"Did you lock this after you?" he demanded.

"No fear! I didn't stop!"

"It's locked now."

"Locked!" gasped Walker.

"Try it."

Walker tried the door. He turned a deeply-scared face upon Gerald Loder in the gloom of the passage.

"It's the ghost!" he muttered.

"Don't be an idiot!" said Loder politely. "If there are such things as ghosts, they can't turn keys in locks. Some kid's been in the study."

"But the door was locked when I was there!"

"May have got in at the window."

"But the voice—it wasn't a kid's voice; it was a deep, hollow voice, and—and he mentioned the seance at Courtfield—and the juniors don't know I was there."

"One of them may have seen you. Let's give the Remove a look in."

Loder led the way upstairs. He opened the door of the Remove dormitory, and turned on the electric light. He glanced along the row of beds, to ascertain whether any of the Lower Fourth were absent. But each bed was occupied, and all the Removites seemed to be sound asleep. Loder strode into the dormitory and examined the window, but it was open only at the top, as usual, and there was no sign of a rope. Vernon-Smith opened his eyes, and called out to the prefect.

"Hallo, Loder! What's the matter? Burglars?"

"Somebody's been japing Walker!" growled Loder.

"Have any of the kids been out of this dormitory, Smith?"

"I know I haven't," said Vernon-Smith.

"Are you awake, Wharton?"

No reply.

"You awake, Bob Cherry?"

Silence.

Loder, with baffled expression, turned out the light and left the dormitory with Walker. They went downstairs, and tried the door of Study No. 1 as they passed, but it did not open.

"I—I can't get the bedclothes," stammered Walker. "You'll have to let me share your bed, Loder."

"You can have the sofa," said Loder, uncompromisingly. "I'll lend you a coat if you like, and you can have the rug over you."

And with that Walker had to be content. He passed a very uneasy night on the sofa in Loder's study, but anything was preferable to going back to the haunted room in the Remove passage. Indeed, for some hours before he fell asleep at last, Walker was haunted by fears of hearing the weird voice again, in Loder's study. Fortunately, that did not happen.

After the two prefects had left the Remove dormitory,

GOOD TURNS.—No. 8.



A Magnetite helping a tired kiddie across a shallow stream, so as to give her the advantage of a short cut to her home in the village.

there was a ripple of laughter from bed to bed. Peter Todd slipped out of bed.

"Where are you off to now?" demanded Wharton.

"I'm going to unlock that study door. They can find it open in the morning. It's all right. I can get down without a rope. I'm not a porpoise like Bunter."

"Oh, really, Todd—"

Peter Todd clambered up to the window and swung himself out. It was easy enough for the active junior to climb down the ivy to the window of Study No. 1 and to climb in. He unlocked the study door, and climbed back, and in ten minutes was in bed again in the Remove dormitory.

"I don't think Loder quite believed in the ghost," grinned Peter Todd. "But Walker did. He will be more mystified than ever when he finds the door open in the morning, and I

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fancy he won't want to dig in the Remove passage any more."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Removites went to sleep very well satisfied.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Loder Discovers the Ghost!

"BLESS my soul! Walker, what is the meaning of this?"

The Head had reason to be surprised.

Walker of the Sixth was coming along the passage from one direction as the Head of Greyfriars came from another, and they met face to face.

It was morning. Walker had slept very badly in Loder's study on Loder's sofa, and he had woke up in the morning in a very bad temper. His clothes were still in Study No. 1,

and he had to borrow a dressing-gown from Loder and some slippers. With his pink pyjamas flapping below the end of the dressing-gown, Walker was making his way to the Remove passage, with the hope of getting into Study No. 1, somehow, and obtaining his clothes. His luck was out. He had hoped to meet no one on the way, and he met Dr. Locke.

"I was not aware, Walker," said the Head severely, "that it was a custom of the Sixth to go about the house in the morning in dressing-gown and slippers. I cannot possibly allow such slovenliness, Walker!"

Walker coloured.

"I—I—I'm going for my clothes, sir," he explained.

"Your clothes! Are not your clothes in your room?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why did you not dress before you came down?"

"I haven't come down, sir—I mean, I've been sleeping in Loder's room. I was locked out of my room last night."

The Head knitted his brows.

"Do you mean that the Remove—"

"It wasn't the Remove, sir."

"But someone locked you out of your room?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then who was it?"

"A ghost, sir."

The Head started, and then looked very sternly at Walker. Walker was looking serious enough, certainly, but from his reply Dr. Locke could only conclude that the prefect was attempting to pull his reverend leg.

"Walker! How dare you say such an absurd thing to me!" exclaimed the Head angrily.

"It's true, sir," said Walker. "The room's haunted. There was a ghost in the room, sir, and I ran out. Loder went back with me to get my bedclothes, and we found the door locked on the inside, sir. Nobody was there. The door was locked, and we couldn't get in. But nobody was there. I heard a voice when I was in the room, sir—the voice of a ghost. I know there was no one in the room beside myself."

"You have been the victim of an absurd joke, I suppose," said the Head crossly. "You are as well aware as I

am, Walker, that there are no such things as ghosts. If you left the room empty when you came out, the door could not be locked after you."

"But it was, sir."

"Nonsense!"

"Will you go and look at it yourself, sir?" said Walker, very much nettled. "You will see that it is locked if you try the handle, sir."

"I shall certainly ascertain, Walker."

The Head turned and walked away majestically to the stairs. Walker followed him, and a number of fellows, attracted by the prefect's peculiar attire, followed Walker. Quite a crowd arrived outside Study No. 1 in the Remove passage.

"You say this door was locked after you left, Walker?"



From the passage came Harry Wharton's voice, quickly and sharply: "Now then, the camera—quick!" "Right-ho!" There was a sudden blinding flash, which lit up the whole room, and then—click! A sound of chuckles and receding footsteps, and the raiders were gone. (See Chapter 15.)

"Yes, sir."

"And there was no one there?"

"No one, sir. Only the ghost," said Walker firmly.

"Nonsense!"

The Head tried the door, and it opened to his touch. Walker simply gaped. He had been quite certain that the door was still locked. But it evidently wasn't. The Head turned a frowning glance upon the startled prefect.

"Well, what do you say now?" he asked acidly.

"It—it—it's open!" gasped Walker.

"Certainly. And I do not believe it was locked at all. You have been the victim of some foolish joke, and you were frightened. It is utterly absurd!"

"It was a ghost, sir," said Walker. Nothing would move him from that. He was as sure that a ghost had visited Study No. 1 the previous night as he was that the spirits rapped the tables at the spiritualistic seance in Courtfield.

"Don't be absurd, Walker!"

"If you please, sir, I'd rather not be in that study again, sir," said Walker. "I'd rather go back to my old quarters, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 291.

sir, if you'll allow me. I couldn't sleep there again. I should not get a wink all night."

The Head made an impatient gesture.

"You may do as you like, Walker. I will ask another prefect to take the room—someone with a better regulated nervous system than you appear to have, and less given to taking absurd and groundless frights."

And the Head stalked away frowning.

Walker did not care for the Head's frown, however, so long as he got away from that dreadful study. Broad daylight as it was, he did not stop there to dress himself, but gathered his clothes under his arms, and carried them away, and dressed in Loder's study.

There was much chuckling among the Remove when they learned that James Walker had abandoned his new quarters. Billy Bunter's ventriloquial wheeze had worked to perfection, and there was no doubt that the Remove had won the second round.

After morning lessons that day, Walker's things were removed from Study No. 1, and, the new study being ready now, Wharton and Nugent were allowed to take possession

of their old room. Gladly enough, the chums of the Remove carried back their belongings to Study No. 1. Billy Bunter grinned gleefully in at the door as they were arranging their study furniture to their satisfaction.

"I've done you chaps a good turn!" he remarked.

"Will you do us another?" asked Frank.

"Oh, certainly! What is it?"

"Clear out, and shut the door after you."

"Oh, really, Nugent!" said Bunter, showing no sign of intending to do the chums of the Remove that good turn.

"I say, you know, but for me you wouldn't have got your study back, you know. I scared Walker out."

"Well, Walker would have changed into the new study as soon as it was finished, and it's finished to-day," said Wharton. "We were only turned out temporarily."

Billy Bunter sniffed.

"I don't expect any gratitude from you fellows," he said.

"But I think you might say thanks, when I risked my neck last night. It was jolly dangerous sticking on that window-sill, I can tell you, and Peter Todd was scared almost to death. I had to keep on encouraging him all the time."

"Did you?" said a voice behind Bunter, as Peter Todd appeared in the doorway, and took Bunter's fat ear between his finger and thumb.

"Ow! I—I didn't see you, Toddy, old fellow. Leggo my ear, you beast! I—I say, you know, I really meant to say that you kept on encouraging me all the time," stammered Bunter. "It's much the same thing, you know. Ow!"

Peter Todd grinned and passed on, leaving Bunter rubbing his ear, and glowering at the chums of Study No. 1, who were grinning.

"I say, you fellows, after what I've done for you, you might ask a chap whether he'd like a snack before dinner," he urged.

"Would you like a snack before dinner, old chap?" asked Nugent solemnly.

"Yes, rather!" said Bunter promptly.

"Good!" said Nugent genially. "Then I hope you'll get one. Good-bye!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! Look here, I'm expecting a postal-order to-day, and if you chaps feel any gratitude for what I've done for you, you can advance me—"

"But we don't!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Look here, who was it scared Walker out of this study, I'd like to know?" howled Billy Bunter. "Who was it ventriloquised on the window-sill, and made the thundering ass think it was a ghost? Who was it—"

There was a step in the passage, but Bunter was too excited to hear it.

"Shut up, Bunter!" gasped Nugent, as he caught sight of Gerald Loder's face at the doorway. Loder was coming up to take possession of the new study, and he had heard every word Billy Bunter had uttered.

"I sha'n't shut up!" roared Bunter. "I did it, and you know I did. You fellows couldn't have done it—you haven't the gift! You'd have funk'd sticking on the window-sill, too. You know you would! You needn't make faces at me, Wharton; I'm not going to shut up! I'm going to tell you what I think of you. Walker would still be in this study if I hadn't scared him out, and—"

"Ring off!" gasped Nugent. "Can't you see—"

"I can see that you're a pair of ungrateful rotters," growled Bunter. "After all I've done for you, I think— Oh!"

Billy Bunter swung round with Loder's grasp on his shoulder. He almost fell down at the sight of the prefect. His little round eyes seemed to be about to start from his head behind his spectacles.

"Oh, really, Loder! I—I—I—"

"So you played ventriloquist and scared Walker out of the study, did you?" said Loder grimly.

"I! Certainly not! I'm not a ventriloquist," said Bunter promptly. "Whatever put that idea into your head, Loder, old fellow?"

"Why, you just said so!" roared Loder.

"No, I didn't! I—I—I was just talking about—about a ventriloquist I saw at a show once," stammered Bunter. "What I really meant to say was— Ow, ow, ow! Don't shake me like that, you beast. If you make my glasses fall off, and they get broken—ow, ow!—you'll have to pay for them—yow!"

"I knew there was some trick in it," said Loder, with a grin. "I never guessed what it was—but I'm glad to know. It was jolly clever of you, Bunter!"

"Yes, I'm rather a clever chap," said Bunter fatuously. "I—I mean, I don't know anything about it, and I didn't do anything of the sort. I— Oh, help!—yah!"

Bunter's voice died away as Loder rushed him down the passage. But it was heard again, in loud tones of anguish, from Loder's study, accompanied by the swishing of a cane.

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THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Great Preparations!

L ODER took possession of his new study very cheerfully.

He was not at all sorry to be "planted" there. The new study, at the extreme end of the Remove passage, was a very considerable distance from his old quarters. But Loder was not displeased by that. In the first place, he would have liked the Lower Fourth at his mercy, and would be able to rag and bully them as much as he liked. In the second place, he could carry on certain little celebrations in his study of an evening without fear of discovery by a master or the head prefect, Wingate.

When Loder had a little party to play nap or bridge in his study among the Sixth, he was never quite without fear of detection. But in his new quarters he would be far from all danger.

Gerald Loder was therefore pleased, and he was quite willing to take Walker's place. He laid his plans for giving a little house-warming that evening in the new study, to which he asked his special friends.

Carne and Vallance and Walker, and Ionides the Greek were coming. They were the black sheep of the Sixth Form at Greyfriars. Supper in the new study was to be followed by a little game, after all the other fellows were in bed. There would be no danger of Wingate coming in that direction, or of a master dropping in. The black sheep of Greyfriars were prepared to keep the ball rolling till midnight and past.

Loder's pals cordially accepted Loder's invitation—especially Ionides the Greek. Ionides was a keen gambler, but not a lucky one, and Loder and Carne made quite a little income by "skinning" him. Ionides' father was a Greek merchant, and he made his son an ample allowance, which Ionides never failed to expend. Loder and Carne helped him. Loder's funds just now were somewhat low, and he was looking forward to the little game that evening to replenish the exchequer at Ionides' expense. As it was Loder's study, it was up to him to stand the supper, and Loder was a little puzzled how to do it; for he was almost "on the rocks."

Loder thought it out in his new study. The room looked very cheerful, with its new paper and paint, and new carpet. But the table was bare, and the cupboard was empty; and Loder had four fellows coming to supper. And, as it was to be a house-warming, they would expect something a bit better than bread-and-cheese, too.

Loder frowned as he thought of it. At one time he would have called upon a fag in the Remove to provide supper—leaving him to discover where the cash was to come from. But it had been established that the Remove did not fag any longer, and Loder could not do that now. Had he been able to fag Lord Mauleverer or Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the supper would have been provided quickly enough. But an attempt to fag any member of the Remove was followed by a "row" with the whole Form. Loder could have fagged any of the Third or the Second, but, unfortunately, fags in the Third or Second were not blessed with large allowances. There was no cash to be raised in that quarter.

Loder was still thinking it over, when there was a tap at the door, and Billy Bunter of the Remove blinked in.

"What do you want?" growled Loder.

"I hear you're standing a house-warming this evening, Loder, old man," said Bunter agreeably. "I'm willing to fag for you, if you like. You know what a dab hand I am at cooking, don't you? I don't approve of the fellows sticking out against fagging—I think it's an honour to fag for you, Loder."

"You mean you're after the grub, you fat rotter!" growled Loder.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Look here, Bunter; you can fag for me if you like, and have some of the feed," said Loder, after a pause.

"I'm on!" said Bunter promptly.

"But I shall want you to lend me a quid—"

"Eh!"

"I'm hard up till to-morrow," Loder explained.

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles, and chuckled.

"Expecting a postal-order?" he inquired.

"Well, something of the sort," said Loder.

"Or is it nap for sixpenny points, and the loser pays?" grinned Bunter.

"Shut up, you cheeky young hound!" exclaimed Loder, starting to his feet.

Billy Bunter backed towards the door. He had come to Loder's new study seeking what he might devour, so to speak; not looking for opportunities of lending money. There was nothing to be got from Loder, evidently, and

Bunter had neither time nor money to waste upon him in consequence.

"Oh, I know about the sixpenny nap, Loder," he said. "I happened to hear you speaking to Carne, you know. As for the feed, you can keep your old feed. I'm going to have a jolly good feed to-night, anyway, and you can go and eat coke!"

Loder made a movement towards him, and Billy Bunter rolled out of the study.

Loder was half-inclined to follow him and give him a licking, as a relief to his feelings, but he paused. Bunter's last remark had struck him.

"A feed to-night!" murmured Loder. "So those young rotters are having one of their giddy spreads somewhere. Perhaps in the dormitory. It is like that fat young idiot to give it away. If there is any feeding after lights-out in the dormitory, the stuff must be confiscated, and—and—"

Loder smiled.

He left the study, and went down the passage to Snoop's room. Sidney James Snoop was alone in his study, writing lines, with a scowling face. Loder had given him those lines earlier in the day. Snoop's scowl grew darker at the sight of the prefect as he came in. The Sneak of the Remove was not in a good temper.

"Finished your lines, Snoop?" asked Loder genially.

"Not quite," said Snoop.

"It's time they were handed in."

"Can't help it."

"I'm afraid I shall have to double them, Snoop," said Loder.

Snoop scowled more blackly.

"By the way," said Loder casually, "I hear that there are preparations going on for a big spread in the Remove—eh?"

Snoop looked at him hard.

"I don't know," he said.

"You needn't do those lines at all, Snoop," said Loder pleasantly. "But what about that feed? Is it a fact?"

Snoop's face cleared, and he rose from the table. He understood quite well. He was to be let off the imposition if he sneaked. As the coming feed was to be stood by Harry Wharton & Co., and as Snoop was very much up against Harry Wharton & Co., he had no objection to getting off the impot. at that price.

"Yes, it's a fact," he said.

"Big feed in the studies—eh?" said Loder.

Snoop grinned.

"They're afraid you might come down on the grub, with some excuse or other, if they have the feed in the study," he said.

"Oh, I see! In the dormitory, then?"

Snoop nodded.

"After lights-out?"

Another nod.

"Good enough!" said Loder. And he turned to the door.

"I—I say," stammered Snoop, "don't let on that—that—"

"Not a word," said Loder. "You're quite safe, my boy. And it will be worth your while to keep in with me, now I'm prefect of the passage, Snoop."

Loder left the study. He did not go back to his own, but descended to Carne's study, and found Carne and Walker there. The three Sixth-Formers were soon talking together, and laughing gleefully. Their plans had soon been laid.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. were proceeding with their preparations in perfect unconsciousness of danger.

Harry Wharton had had a remittance from his uncle that afternoon, and the thoughts of the Co. had naturally turned to a celebration in the form of a "spread." But with Gerald Loder in the vicinity, they were doubtful about standing it in their own study. The slightest noise would be an excuse for Loder to come down on them, and he would jump at the chance of confiscating the feed. That was one of the inconveniences of having the prefect stationed in the passage.

The chums of the Remove had agreed that the feed should take place in the dormitory after lights-out—especially as it was a very large one, and they meant to ask all the Form. There would have been no room for all the guests in No. 1 Study, anyway.

The remittance was nobly expended to the last shilling, and several other fellows piled in with contributions, so that quite a large number of packages and parcels were surreptitiously conveyed into the School House, and hidden in the dormitory.

Before bedtime the parcels had been stacked out of sight in boxes or under the beds, and all was ready, but there was nothing to be seen to excite suspicion.

Loder came up to see lights out for the Remove, and Loder's manner was quite genial and entirely unsuspecting.

Harry Wharton glanced at the prefect, to ascertain

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whether he had any inkling; but if Loder had, his face did not show it. It was quite unconscious.

"Good-night!" said Loder, with unusual good-humour, as he turned out the light.

"Good-night, Loder!"

The door closed after the prefect.

Billy Bunter rolled out of bed at once. When it was a question of a feed, the Owl of the Remove did not believe in wasting time.

"I say, you fellows, I'm ready!"

"Shurrup!" growled Bob Cherry. "Give Loder time to get clear. It would be just like the rotter to sneak back quietly."

"But, I say, I'm hungry——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter grunted. The juniors waited ten minutes before they turned out of bed, in spite of the expostulations of the fat Remove. But there was no sign of Gerald Loder returning, and it seemed that the coast was clear.

"It's all right," said Frank Nugent. "Loder's having a house-warming in his new study, and he won't bother his head about us. They'll be playing some rotten game for money, and Loder will forget there's such a giddy Form as the Remove."

"Turn out!" said Harry Wharton.

And the Remove turned out with great alacrity.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Loder Looks In!

CANDLE-ENDS were lighted up and down the dormitory, and they shed a glimmering light through the long, lofty room. The juniors did not venture to turn on the electric light. The illumination from the windows would have betrayed them, if a master or a prefect had been in the Close. Besides, the candle-ends gave light enough for the purpose.

Packets and parcels were dragged out of their hiding-places, and unfastened, and the contents spread out.

Billy Bunter's little round eyes seemed to grow larger and rounder as he blinked at the treasures spread before him. The feed was a magnificent one. Not only Harry Wharton's remittance had been expended—Lord Mauleverer had chimed in with an equal amount, and little Wun-Lung had added a couple of pounds, and several other fellows had made contributions. The result was that the intended feed had developed into something like a gorgeous banquet.

"Well, this is what I call something like," said Bob Cherry. "Don't often get cold chickens in a dormitory spread."

"The something-likefulness is terrific, my worthy chum!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur, with a beaming smile upon his dusky face.

"Begad! where are the knives and forks?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"There's a carving-knife somewhere," said Nugent.

"But we can't all eat with one carving-knife!" grinned Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the matter with pocket-knives?" said Fisher T. Fish, who was already at work with one. "And I guess that fingers were made before forks."

Whether fingers preceded forks or not in the date of manufacture, there was no doubt that they had to be used on this occasion instead of forks. As Wharton remarked, a fellow couldn't think of everything, and the cutlery had been forgotten. It was better to have the grub without the cutlery, than the cutlery without the grub, Johnny Bull observed, and the Remove agreed.

Lord Mauleverer, however, was in a state of great dismay. He had a pocket-knife in his hand, and the wing of a chicken before him, but he hesitated to touch it with his noble fingers.

Kindly advisers recommended him to try his tooth-brush as a fork, and Bolsover major suggested that he should take it in his teeth and worry it—a suggestion that made the elegant junior shudder. Billy Bunter, having got through three helpings, settled the matter by reaching over and taking the wing away, and he did not hesitate about taking it in his teeth and worrying it.

Sitting on the floor, on boxes, or on the beds, all the Removeites piled in. They had specially missed their supper in order to have first-class appetites for a first-class feed. And they enjoyed themselves.

"Not too much row," said Peter Todd, as a buzz of voices arose. "You never know whether Loder's prowling around."

"Oh, he's busy!" said Vernon-Smith.

"All the same, better be careful."

But in spite of the carefulness, there had to be a certain amount of noise—popping of ginger-beer corks, clinking of pocket-knives and plates, and buzzing of voices.

The feed was fairly under way when the dormitory door opened, so silently that the juniors did not observe it for a moment.

Loder, Carne, and Walker appeared in the doorway, with canes in their hands.

The three seniors grinned at the sight spread out before their eyes. Loder had been scouting in the passage, and he had heard the sounds within the dormitory, and was warned that the feed was in progress. He had called up Walker and Carne, and they had taken the juniors entirely by surprise.

"Ahem!" said Loder.

There was a turning of heads at once, and a general exclamation of dismay.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Loder!"

"Rotten!"

Some of the juniors made a wild dive for the beds, but most of them stood where they were. They were caught in the act, and it was not of much use diving into bed under the eyes of the prefects.

"Oh, a very pretty sight!" said Loder severely.

"Young rascals!" said Walker. "Simply shocking!"

"Disgusting!" said Carne.

"Don't you know that you are ruining your digestions by scoffing those things at this time of night?" said Loder, with quite a fatherly air.

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry.

"You will take a hundred lines each—the whole Form!" said Loder. "All this stuff will be thrown away!"

"Look here——" began Harry Wharton.

"Silence!" said Loder, frowning.

"That's our grub!" exclaimed Nugent.

"It will be confiscated, and thrown away into the dust-bins!" said Loder. "Collect it up in a heap immediately, and I will take it downstairs."

"Look here, you're not going to scoff our tommy, Loder!" said Harry Wharton wrathfully.

"Silence!"

Walker and Carne and Loder began to collect the feed. The Removites had already disposed of a considerable quantity of it, but there was a great deal left. The pile was a large one when the seniors had finished.

The juniors looked on furiously.

They were quite helpless. Feeding in the dormitory after lights out was very much against the rules, and it was the duty of the prefect to put a stop to it.

By rule and custom the feed on such occasions was ruthlessly confiscated. But the Removites suspected Loder. They did not believe that he had come there from a sense of duty to put a stop to a surreptitious feed. They felt pretty certain that he had come to raid the spread under cover of his duty as a prefect. The food would be confiscated, but it would not be thrown away, or sent down to the kitchen. It would be taken to Loder's study, and there consumed by Loder and his friends.

That was the rub! Confiscation was to be expected, in case of discovery; but to have their "grub" raided by Loder & Co. was an injury it was hard to bear.

But there was no help for it.

"Get back to bed, you kids!" said Loder commandingly.

"It would serve you right if I caned you all round, but I'll let you off with the lines. Tumble in, sharp! Pack the stuff in that cricket-bag, Walker—it will be easier to carry."

"Right-ho!" said Walker.

"Look here, you mean to scoff that grub yourselves, you rotters!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Silence!"

"Yah! Shame!"

"Seen any ghosts lately, Walker?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Walker turned very red. Loder went round the dormitory blowing out the candles and collecting them. The seniors left the dormitory laden with plunder. Loder paused in the doorway to address a last remark to the exasperated juniors.

"Now go to sleep and behave yourselves," he said.

"You're very lucky to get off without a licking, as well as lines. But I don't want to be hard on you. I'm going to keep you in order, that's all. Good-night!"

"Yah!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Rats!"

Loder grinned and closed the door. The dormitory was in a buzz of indignant voices when he was gone. The Remove

were in a state of dangerous exasperation. The thought that Loder & Co. were about to feed upon the good things they had raided from the Remove was simply maddening, as Peter Todd said emphatically. Loder had scored this time—the most unpopular prefect at Greyfriars had made the Lower Fourth feel the weight of his hand, and it was heavy.

"Foiled, diddled, dished, and done!" said Bob Cherry dramatically. "Gentlemen, this is where we get it in the neck!"

"I guess we come out at the little end of the horn this journey!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "Jevver get left like this—eh? That jay has vamoosed with the goods."

"Let's raid him and have 'em back!" said Bolsover major recklessly.

"And have Quelchy on our track!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Not good enough, thanks. Loder's got law and order on his side; he's doing his beastly duty."

"Just a few, I guess!"

"He's going to scoff the grub himself!" howled Billy Bunter. "If it was sent down to the kitchen we might see some of it again, but that beast means to scoff it."

"To the victor the spoils!" said Nugent, with grim humour.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who's that still scoffing?" asked Bob Cherry, as he heard a sound of clamping jaws in the darkness. "Somebody's got something left—what?"

"It's Snoop!" said Skinner.

"What have you got there, Snoopey?" asked a dozen voices.

There was a chuckle from Sidney James Snoop.

"I shoved a few things into my bed in case of a surprise," he explained airily. "Only a pie and a bag of jam-tarts!"

"I say, you fellows, make him whack 'em out!" roared Bunter.

"Nearly all gone now!" chuckled Snoop.

"Yah! Beast!"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton. "The question is, what's going to be done. We can't get the grub back—that's gone for good. But are we going to take this lying down?"

"No fear!"

"If old Wingate had found us out and confiscated the grub it would be all in the game," went on Harry. "Wingate plays the game. Loder doesn't. He's used his authority as a prefect to collar our stuff, and he's going to have a feed in his study with it. That's Loder!"

"Rotten!"

"I know he's giving a house-warming, and he must have got on to our feed somehow, and he's taken our supplies for his blessed house-warming!"

"Shame!"

"It's up to us to come down on him heavy. We can't get the grub back—that's a goner. But we're not beaten. The Greyfriars Remove never say die!"

"Never!" chorused the Remove.

"They're going to have supper—with our grub. You know what they're going to do after supper—play cards for money. They always do in Loder's study when he has a party. I wonder what the Head would say if we gave Loder away to him? We can't do that—sneaking is barred, even against a worm like Loder. But I've got an idea!"

"Bravo!"

"They caught us in the act—and dropped on us. We're going to catch them in the act, and drop on 'em."

"Oh!"

"And when we've dropped on them," resumed Wharton coolly, "we shall have Loder in the hollow of our hand, as they say in newspaper serials—we shall bring him to his giddy bended knees. What price a flashlight photograph of Loder & Co. playing nap—with cards and money on the table?"

"Phew!"

"Ogilvy's got a camera——"

"But I can't take a flashlight photograph without making proper arrangements first," said Ogilvy, the Scottish Removite. "You have to arrange——"

"You can do it near enough to scare Loder to death," said Harry Wharton. "There will be a knock at Loder's door—out goes his light at once in case he should be spotted. Then the door opens—flash of light—click——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Whether the giddy photo is a success or not, I fancy Loder won't let us take it to the Head, or pin it up on the wall in the Form-room passage!" grinned Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wait till they've finished supper——"

"Finished our grub!" groaned Billy Bunter.

"Well, they won't be able to finish that lot in one sitting,



Cutts just had time to take up a "Football Annual" when a knock sounded at the door. "Come in!" said Cutts calmly, and Mr. Railton entered. "Has your visitor gone yet, Cutts?" he asked sternly. (For this incident, you should obtain a copy of this week's issue of our grand companion paper "THE GEM" LIBRARY, and read the long complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. entitled: "THE BLACK SHEEP," by Martin Clifford. Out on Wednesday. Price One Penny.

and we may be able to ransom the remainder—with a negative!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites chuckled loud and long over the scheme. If it came off, there was no doubt that the bully of the Sixth would be promptly brought to terms. It would be a case of tit for tat with a vengeance.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Well Caught!

"JOLLY good supper!" said Walker.

"Ripping!" said Carne.

"And cheap!" said Loder genially.

And the four seniors laughed heartily.

As Ionides the Greek remarked, it gave the supper an added zest to know that it had been taken by force from the young rascals of the Lower Fourth.

"And now we play!" said Ionides, who was impatient to get to the cards. Loder had promised him his "revenge," and was only too willing to give it to him—Ionides' revenge being pretty certain to take the form of his losing more money to Loder.

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NEXT
MONDAY:

"BUNTER, THE PRIZE-WINNER!"

There was still a large quantity of the feed packed in the cricket-bag. Loder was well provided with provisions for a day or two. The table was cleared, the supper being finished. Half-past eleven had sounded from the clock-tower, and at that hour all Greyfriars was in bed. Even the masters seldom stayed up so late. The Sixth Form went to bed at what time they pleased, but they were not supposed to keep late hours.

Loder carefully arranged the blind over the window to conceal the light from other windows, and the study door was locked, and a rug laid along it to keep the light from escaping into the passage. When the party broke up, the seniors would return to their rooms in their socks, carrying their boots in their hands. It made the black sheep of Greyfriars feel extremely "doggish" to go back to their quarters in that manner.

Loder threw a couple of packs of cards on the table. Ionides the Greek, who was fond of displaying his wealth, laid a little pile of silver and sovereigns on the table before him. Carne and Walker followed his example, but with much smaller piles, and with very little gold in them. Loder jingled a bunch of keys in his pocket with an airy smile, but did not put his "pile" on the table. He was playing on

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credit—if he won he would be in funds—if he lost he would have to give an I O U. But he did not mean to confess that he was "stony" unless circumstances compelled him to.

The cards were dealt, and immediately the play began, the fixed, eager look of the Greek showed how the gambling fever was in his veins.

Loder was quite cool, however; he was engaged in business, not in pleasure. It was his business to transfer some of the Greek's superfluous cash to his pockets, and Ionides was welcome to whatever pleasure he could obtain from the transaction.

"Nap!" said the Greek boastfully. The Greek liked the limelight exceedingly, and he was given to going "nap" on a hand that was by no means a nap hand.

They played, and Ionides lost, and paid up cheerfully enough—half-a-crown to each of the others. When Loder & Co. played among themselves, they were content with penny points. But when Ionides was in the party, they made it sixpence a time. The Greek's ample allowance was a joint at which they could all have a cut, as Loder remarked.

The game went on, and although Ionides won sometimes, the luck was very much against him, and ere long he was four or five pounds out. By that time Loder had a little "pile" on the table, and it was no longer necessary for him to rattle a bunch of keys in his pocket—he had money there.

"Ah! Bah!" said Ionides. "Let us make it shilling points, and the game will be worth playing."

"I'm agreeable," said Loder cordially. "What do you fellows say?"

"Bobs, by all means!" said Walker.

"Oh, I don't mind!" said Carne. "I must say you are a sportsman, Ionides."

"The real stuff!" said Loder flatteringly.

The Greek liked flattery—in chunks, as Loder put it—privately, of course. He threw up his head with an arrogant look.

"Bah! It is nothing to me!" he said.

"Of course it isn't, with a pater rolling in filthy lucre like yours," said Walker. "I'd swap my pater for him any day. Your deal, Carne."

Tap!

It was a sharp knock at the door, and the gamblers started in alarm. Loder remembered a time when he had almost

been caught by the Head, and turned quite pale. But it was impossible that the Head could have come there.

"It's a Remove kid, ragging," muttered Walker.

"Open this door!"

Harry Wharton's voice came through the keyhole.

Loder started to his feet savagely. He picked up a cricket-stump from the corner of the study.

"You young hound!" he shouted. "How dare you come here?"

"I'm looking after you, Loder. I'm afraid you're getting into bad ways," said the voice through the keyhole calmly.

"I'm not satisfied with you."

"The—the—the cheeky young villain!" spluttered Loder.

"He guesses about this," said Walker, with a gesture to the cards and money on the table. "It's a trick to get the door open so that he can have proof. Better shut him up, Loder; we don't want to let the masters know we're up after twelve."

"It might mean trouble," said Carne.

"Put the light out!" said Loder, in a low voice. "Then I'll open the door suddenly, and collar him and wallop him. I'll make him sorry he came."

The gas was extinguished. The study was plunged into darkness, and the table, the cards, the money, the ash-trays, with stumps of cigarettes and matches, were invisible. Loder stepped softly to the door, and turned back the key in the lock with equal softness. Then he suddenly threw the door open and dashed out.

He had heard only Wharton's voice, and supposed that the captain of the Remove was alone.

But as he rushed out, half a dozen pairs of hands grasped him, his arms were seized, the cricket-stump was wrenched away, and he was hurled back into the study. Harry Wharton was evidently not alone.

Loder staggered into the study breathlessly, and bumped against Walker, who had half-risen from his chair.

From the passage came Harry Wharton's voice, quickly and sharply.

"Now then—the camera—quick!"

"Right-ho!"

There was a sudden blinding flash that lit up the room for a second with a glare.

Then—click!

Darkness and silence again, and a slight smell!

Then a sound of chuckles and retreating footsteps.

The raiders were gone.

Loder & Co. were almost petrified. It was some moments before they could speak. The Greek was the first to recover himself.

"Do you know what they have done?" he cried, leaping to his feet. "That was a flashlight photograph. They have photographed us, and the cards—and the table. We shall be ruined if it is seen!"

"My hat!" stammered Walker.

"The—the young villains!" gasped Loder. "After them. We must get that back, and smash it up, or— Come on!"

The seniors rushed out of the study. Loder paused a moment to lock the door after him. Cards and money were still on the table, and he dared not risk letting them be seen. Then the four seniors rushed away in the direction of the Remove dormitory. They reached the door, and shoved at it; but it was locked on the inside. Loder let go the handle with an oath.

"They've locked us out!" he said between his teeth.

"We must have that photograph!" muttered Carne.

"Or we are ruined," said Ionides. "If the Head should see it—think! We should all be expelled from Greyfriars on the spot."

Loder knew that. He was in a state of desperation from sheer terror. He knocked on the door of the dormitory, and called through the keyhole.

"Wharton! Harry Wharton!"

"Hallo!" came calmly from within the dormitory. "Go away, Loder!"

"I want to speak to you, Wharton!"

"Sorry; you're spoiling my beauty sleep. Go away, like a good boy."

Loder ground his teeth.

"You have taken a photograph, Wharton. You must give it to me."

"Thanks. I'm not a professional photographer, and the picture isn't for sale," said Harry calmly. "But when we have a dozen or so printed from the negative, we'll let you have one, enlarged, to hang up in the study. We want some to hang up in our studies, you know, and one for the common-room; and we were thinking of a really first-class enlargement for the Head. Do you think he would like one?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a yell of laughter from the Remove dormitory, following Wharton's question. Loder knocked on the door as loudly as he dared.



3

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

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"Wharton, let me in at once."
"Can't be did! You're not good enough to associate with a Form like the Remove. We bar gamblers and card-sharpers."

"The bar-fulness is terrific, my esteemed and contemptible Loder."

"Go home!" sang out the Remove.

The Sixth-Formers consulted together. It was clear that the Removites did not intend to let them in; and at that hour of the night they dared not attempt to force the door.

"You'll have to make terms with them!" muttered Walker.

Loder applied to the keyhole again.

"Wharton, give me that camera, and I'll hand you a sovereign."

"It's not for sale, thanks."

"Offer the cad five pounds!" snarled Ionides. "I will pay half. This is not a time to be niggardly when we may all be ruined."

"A five-pound note!" Loder whispered through the keyhole.

"Made it yourself, Loder?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you give me that negative?"

"Not at any price!"

"The negative is in the dorm., and the reply is in the negative!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder & Co. retired, furious. There was nothing else for them to do. They returned gloomily to the new study, and sullenly put away the traces of their orgy. Their only hope was to make terms somehow with the Removites on the morrow. The thought of humiliating himself before his old enemies made Loder grind his teeth with helpless rage; but anything was better than the risk of that negative getting before the Head. Loder did not believe that the juniors really meant to betray him; but they would certainly have copies of the photograph printed off, and the whole school would see them, sooner or later, and it would be only a matter of time before the natural consequences followed.

"You'll have to get that negative away from them before they've a chance of printing anything from it, or even developing it, Loder," said Walker.

"I'll try," said the prefect.

"We shall be expelled before the week's out, if you don't."

"Hang it, I know that!"

And the little party that had started so cheerfully broke up in the most glum humour. The gay dogs of the Sixth were making the old discovery that the way of the transgressor is hard.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Loder Lies Down!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. found Loder, of the Sixth, looking for them when they came down the following morning. Loder's face wore a dark scowl, but the heroes of the Remove were cheerful and smiling. Ogilvy had examined his negative that morning early, and found that it was a hopeless failure—a blur, and nothing more. That little fact the juniors intended to keep to themselves. It was useless taking Gerald Loder into their confidence on that point, as Wharton smilingly remarked.

"I've been waiting for you," said Loder, setting his teeth.

"Awfully good of you," said Nugent. "Anything we can do for you, Loder, old man? Can I go nap, or anything of that sort?"

And the Removites chuckled gleefully.

Loder restrained his temper with an effort. He would have liked to charge at the grinning juniors, and hit out right and left; but he dared not quarrel with Harry Wharton & Co. now. The juniors whom he had bullied and ragged held the upper hand; and he knew it, and they knew that he knew it. He had to temporise very carefully with the heroes of the Remove so long as they had that negative in their possession.

"You took a photo last night," said Loder.

"Quite so!"

"The quitefulness is terrific, my worthy and ludicrous Loder."

"I want it handed over to me before it's developed," said Loder.

"Ha, ha! It's been developed already."

"Have you printed any copies yet?" asked Loder savagely.

"If you knew anything about photography, my infant, you'd know that we have to wait for the sun to do that!" said Nugent. "It's not bright enough yet."

"Will you hand it over to me?"

"No fear!"

"What are you going to do with it?"

"That depends!" said Wharton coolly. "We're willing to make terms. We're not going to hand it to you at all. But we're willing to destroy it on certain conditions."

"I wouldn't trust you."

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MONDAY:

"BUNTER, THE PRIZE-WINNER!"

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ONE
PENNY.

Wharton's lip curled.

"Yes, you would—and you know it," he said. "You could take my word, though I couldn't take yours, and you know it, Loder."

The prefect bit his lip. It was true enough; he did know it. But the statement of the plain fact enraged him almost to boiling-point.

"But if you don't want to come to terms, don't," said Harry Wharton independently. "Come on, you chaps, and get a trot before brekker."

"Hold on," said Loder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "You do want to come to terms—what?"

"Yes," said Loder, with an effort.

"Good egg!" said Wharton. "We're willing."

"I'll pay you—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Harry disdainfully. "You know we wouldn't touch your money—or you ought to know it."

"What do you want, then?"

"Several things. In the first place, take back the lines you gave us last night."

"Done!" said Loder.

"In the second place, give us back all that's left of the grub that you raided from us. We know it's not confiscated, and that you're keeping it in your study."

"You can take it."

"Good! In the third and last place, get out of your quarters in the Remove passage. Ask the Head to let you go back where you belong. He'll do it; anyway, you must manage it somehow. We don't want any prefects in the Remove passage."

"I can't do that—"

"You must!" said Wharton coolly. "That's the giddy sine qua non! The lines and the grub are only secondary. But you've got to get out of our passage, and give your word of honour not to come back on any excuse, and it's a bargain."

"If I clear out another prefect will take my place," said Loder. "What good will that do you, you young ass?"

"We'll deal with the next when he comes. We've cleared out Walker, and now we're clearing you out. Next man in will be bowled out somehow."

"Look here, I can't—I won't—"

"Then it's all off. Come on, you chaps—the brekker-bell will be going soon."

The Removites walked away. Loder, of the Sixth, was left scowling furiously. But he hurried after the juniors in a few minutes.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What do you want, Loder?" said Bob genially. "In a hurry for your copy of the photograph?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I agree to your conditions," said Loder. "I can manage it with the Head. I'll do as you ask—and you'll destroy that negative without showing it—honour bright?"

"Honour bright!" said Harry Wharton. "I've got it locked up now. When you've carried out your part of the bargain, I'll burn it—on my word."

"That's good enough!" said Loder.

And he went into the house to acquaint his friends with the result of the negotiation, looking very much relieved. It was a weight off his mind. The chums of the Remove exchanged joyful grins.

"Diddled, dished, and done!" said Bob Cherry. "Gentlemen, we have downed Loder. That's two of the prefects have got it in the neck. If another one comes on, we'll down him, too. In the long run the Sixth will get fed up with the Remove."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder kept his word—he had to! He cleared out of the new study, and returned to his old quarters. He explained to the Head that he did not feel equal to keeping order there, and the Head admitted the plea. The juniors were in high hopes that the whole plan would be dropped.

But that was not to be. Later in the day the Remove learned that another prefect of the Sixth had taken Loder's quarters in the new study—and this time it was the head prefect, and captain of the school—George Wingate!

"Wingate!" Nugent exclaimed, in dismay, when the news was brought into the junior common-room. "Old Wingate! That's simply rotten."

It was indeed "rotten." For Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, was the idol of the juniors—and, as Bob Cherry said feelingly, he would sooner have ragged his own grandfather than have ragged old Wingate. But Harry Wharton pointed out gently, but firmly, that duty was duty.

"I'm sorry it's Wingate," he said. "But Wingate has got

to go. We can't have the Sixth in our passage. Wingate or no Wingate, we're up against it!"

"Wingate will be a hard nut to crack," said Vernon-Smith. "He'll not a silly chump to be scared, like Walker—and not a rascal to be bowled out like Loder."

"Jolly dangerous customer—and a jolly hard hitter!" said Peter Todd, rubbing his palms together reminiscently.

"I know! But, all the same, he's got to go!"

And all the Remove agreed upon that. They felt considerable doubt about their ability to bring it to pass, but Wingate had got to go. As Bob Cherry declared, in the words of the song—of that there could not be the slightest doubt, no possible probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER. On the Warpath!

WINGATE of the Sixth was not quite pleased with his new duties.

He had fully approved of the idea of a prefect being quartered in the Remove passage, but he did not "hanker" after the position himself. It was out of the way of all that was going on in the Sixth Form—seniors who had to consult the captain of the school did not like tackling an extra flight of stairs and a long passage before they could get to his study. Wingate was cricket captain, and head of the games—the source and fount of all athletic activity in the top Forms. It was quite inconvenient for everybody to have Wingate tucked away in the Remove passage, and especially for George Wingate himself.

But the Head had asked him, and he could not very well excuse himself. For the Head had consulted him about the idea in the first place, and he had given it his approval.

Wingate could not very well decline what he had considered all right for others. And so he took up his quarters in the new study.

He guessed pretty accurately that the Remove had somehow brought pressure to bear upon Walker and Loder to get rid of them. He gave the juniors a very plain warning of what they might expect if they tried any tricks with him.

For a few days nothing happened. The Remove had not given in by any means. They were turning the matter over in their minds, plotting plots and scheming schemes.

Little polite attentions were bestowed upon the seniors who came along the Remove passage to visit Wingate in his new quarters. Courtney of the Sixth was Wingate's special chum, and when he came along, as he often did, a cushion would come flying out of a Remove study just when Courtney was passing—by accident, of course, and Courtney would be clean bowled. Or a fellow would save up an ancient fish till it was almost shrieking, and would throw it away just when Courtney was coming by—or another would be trying a new squirt in his study doorway, with ink instead of water.

The unfortunate Courtney, being the most frequent visitor, received most of these attentions—and he confided to Wingate that he was getting fed up with cushions, ancient haddock, and inky squirts. The juniors to blame always apologised most respectfully for the accidents, and if they were licked, they took their lickings with great fortitude—and then the same things would happen over again.

When the cricket committee came to meet in Wingate's study, in the evening, they found the lights out in the passage. Courtney struck a match, with an angry exclamation.

"Another trick of those blessed juniors!" he exclaimed.

"Yell to 'em to come out and light the gas!" growled Valence.

Valence kicked open the door of No. 1 Study. Wharton and Nugent were there, looking very innocent as they worked at their preparation.

"The light's out in the passage," growled Valence.

"Is it?" asked Nugent, in surprise.

"Didn't you know it was?"

"Well, yes—I knew."

"You put it out on purpose, I suppose?" exclaimed Walker.

"I've tried to light it," said Nugent, with an injured air. "I knew you fellows would be coming up for the committee meeting, and I tried to light the gas."

"Won't it light?" asked Courtney.

"No; somebody's stopped up the gas-jet with sealing-wax."

"Frightfully inconvenient," said Harry Wharton solemnly. "Lucky we're not like the chap in the song, who couldn't go home in the dark."

The seniors glared at them, and left the study. They groped their way along the passage, and there was a sudden bump, and a yell from Courtney, who was in advance.

"Ow! Oh!"

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR"
Every Friday.

"What's the matter?" growled Walker. "I— Oh! Yah!"

Bump!

"There's a cord across the floor!" yelled Courtney. "Look out! Greeooh! Who's that falling on me? Ow!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Valence.

"Grooh! Gerroff!"

"Ow! Oh! Oh!"

The cricket committee were mixed up on the floor. They struggled to their feet with exclamations of rage. The noise brought Wingate out of his study.

"Hallo, in the dark!" he exclaimed. "What's the matter there? If you don't stop that row, you noisy young sweeps, I'll—"

"It's us!" roared Walker.

"My hat! What are you doing?" exclaimed Wingate, in surprise.

"Breaking our blessed legs over a blessed string!" yelled Walker. "Ow! Ow!"

Wingate struck a match, and tried to light the gas. But the jet was plugged up with sealing-wax, as Nugent had declared.

The cricket committee sorted themselves out, and stamped into Wingate's study in decidedly bad tempers. They rubbed their legs and arms, and growled with wrath.

"I'm fed-up with this!" grunted Valence. "I'm jolly well not coming up here any more. Only yesterday I got a squirt of ink in the neck, and now I've jolly well barked my beastly shins, and I've knocked my elbow on something and started the funny-bone."

"Ow! It was my eye you bunged it in!" groaned Walker.

Wingate grinned. He could not help it.

"It's those young rascals again!" he said. "They don't like a prefect being stuck in their passage."

"You'll be stuck here without visits from me, after this," growled Valence. "I'm off."

"But I say—the cricket—"

"Blow the cricket!"

And Valence departed angrily. In his anger he forgot the string across the passage, and he caught his foot in it and came another cropper. The seniors in the end study heard the bump and the yell that followed.

George Wingate looked worried.

"I don't know whether it was a good idea to have a prefect's study up here, after all," he confessed. "Those young villains seem to be full of resources, and there's no sign of their taking it quietly."

"Lick the little beasts!" growled Walker.

"They've been pretty well licked already," said Wingate, with a shrug of the shoulders. "It only seems to make 'em worse."

"Hallo! What's that frightful row?" exclaimed Courtney.

There was a terrific uproar in the passage, and they rushed out to ascertain the cause. Valence had rushed into No. 1 Study to avenge his injuries upon Wharton and Nugent. But the leaders of the Lower Fourth did not take it "lying down." Valence was not a prefect, and they weren't afraid of Valence. When he piled in on them, they piled in on him, and the two sturdy juniors were more than a match for the angry senior. Valence was hurled headlong out of the study, and other Removites came to lend a hand, and he was rolled down the passage to the stairs, and would have been rolled down the stairs, too, had he not escaped from the hands of the raggers and fled.

By the time Wingate had arrived on the scene, Wharton and Nugent were at work on their preparation again, quite cool and cheerful.

"What have you been doing?" roared Wingate.

"Prep," said Harry.

"Take a hundred lines each."

"Thanks!"

Wingate stalked away. He cut the cord in the passage, but he could not light the gas. It was a very bad-tempered cricket committee that deliberated in Wingate's new study. When they broke up, the passage was still in darkness. They felt their way along very carefully as they came, afraid of more traps to fall over—and as they came slowly and cautiously past the open doorway of Vernon-Smith's study, there was a sudden whiz and a swish in the darkness.

"Ow!" roared all the seniors together, as a large squirt full of ink splashed over them. "You young villain! Ow!"

"Anybody there?" called out the Bounder, in tones of great surprise, from the dark study. "Sorry—I was just trying my new squirt—"

"Collar him!" roared Walker.

The infuriated seniors rushed into the study, and roared again as they stumbled over chairs, stools, and boxes that had been carefully ranged for them to run into. Before they

sorted themselves out, Vernon-Smith had whipped out of the study and fled.

"I've had enough of this," snorted Walker, when he was safe in the Sixth Form passage again. "This is the last time I'm going into that blessed hornets' nest."

And the others said the same.

But Wingate held out! The Remove expected every day to hear the Greyfriars captain had decided to go back to his old quarters. But he didn't decide to—and it was Morgan, the Welsh junior, who hit upon the next scheme. Morgan was in the chemistry class — "Stinks," as the juniors elegantly termed it. Morgan came back from class one afternoon in a state of great excitement, and bore down upon Harry Wharton & Co., in the Close.

"I've got it, look you!" Morgan gasped.

"Got what?" asked Wharton, in surprise.

"I guess it's the jim-jams, to judge by your chivvy," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Or the collywobbles?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Smell that!" said Morgan, holding up a little packet.

Bob Cherry sniffed at it, and staggered back with a yell. "Ow! Grooh! Yah! You—you poisonous villain!"

Morgan chuckled.

"That's the wheeze!" he said.

"What is it?" asked Harry Wharton, backing away from the smelly packet, and declining Morgan's invitation to take a sniff.

"Asafoetida!" said Morgan proudly.

"You—you ass! What are you carrying that awful muck about in the Close for?"

"It's the wheeze, look you! Suppose Wingate found his new study smelling of this stuff!" said Morgan excitedly.

"Suppose we took up a loose board, some time when he isn't there, and put a whole lot of it under the floor—and put the board and the carpet back again same as before—"

The Removites burst into a yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They fell upon Morgan and hugged him, in spite of the deadly packet. The youthful chemist beamed with joy.

"I think that will fix 'em, look you!" he chuckled.

"Ha, ha! I think it will!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Wingate's playing in the Sixth Form match to-morrow afternoon!" said Nugent. "And when he gets back to the study—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the next day, when all the Sixth were as busy as bees on the cricket-ground, several grinning juniors might have been seen—as the novelists say—making their way to the study in the Remove passage. There was no danger of interruption—they removed the carpet, they prised up a board—and a quantity of asafoetida that Morgan had raided from the laboratory was duly deposited under the floor. Then the board was nailed down again, and the carpet was replaced. And then the juniors fled—not because they feared discovery, but because the smell in the study drove them forth.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Victory!

"MY sainted aunt!"

Wingate uttered that exclamation as he came into his study after the Sixth Form match. Wingate was ruddy and cheerful when he came in, but as soon as he was in his study he became much less ruddy, and anything but cheerful.

He sniffed, and stared round him, and sniffed again, and fled.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, meeting the captain of Greyfriars in the passage. "Don't shove a fellow over, Wingate! Where are you running to?"

Wingate halted, and gasped.

"Have you noticed anything smelly in this passage, Cherry?" he asked.

Bob looked thoughtful.

"Now I come to think of it, there's a bit of a niff from your study, Wingate," he replied. "You don't keep it too clean, do you?"

"It's clean enough," growled Wingate; "but it certainly seems to smell to-day. I never noticed it before to-day."

"Used to it, perhaps," suggested Bob cheerfully. "Fellows who get into slovenly habits get used to dirtiness and bad

smells and things—" And then Bob Cherry fled, just in time, as Wingate rushed at him.

The Greyfriars captain strode downstairs. Voices from the Remove passage followed him.

"I say, Wingate, your study smells awfully."

"It's quite wiffy, Wingate."

"The wiff-fulness is terrific."

"Why don't you keep your study clean, Wingate?"

"It's dangerous for us, Wingate, to have a smelly study in the passage. We might be ill, you know."

"Why don't you use more soap, Wingate?"

"I say, you fellows, shall we have a whip-round and buy Wingate a bar of soap?"

Wingate affected deafness, and went downstairs. He was very puzzled and very annoyed. He looked in at Courtney's study, and found Courtney and Valence there.

"Will you fellows come up to my study?" he asked.

"Anything wrong?"

"There is a very queer smell about it. I fancy there must be something wrong with the drains. I'd like you to see it before I mention the matter to the Head."

Courtney and Valence ascended to the Remove passage with the Greyfriars captain. The Removites made remarks to them from their studies as they passed.

"Courtney, can you lend Wingate some soap?"

"Valence, you might get Wingate to wash a bit oftener."

"Just smell his study! It's fearful!"

"Shut up!" roared Wingate.

"Well, it's dangerous to have such smelly places," said Johnny Bull. "I think a prefect ought to keep his room wholesome."

Wingate glared at Johnny Bull.

"Come here, Bull!" he shouted.

"No fear!" said Johnny Bull, dodging away.

Wingate strode on furiously. Courtney and Valence were grinning as they followed him to his study. But they ceased to grin as they entered that apartment.

There was no doubt about the smell. It was there, and it was terrific. Valence backed out hastily into the passage.

"What on earth have you been doing, Wingate?" he gasped.

"Doing?" roared Wingate. "Nothing, you silly ass!"

"Then it must be the drains."

"Must be," said Courtney, beating a retreat. "Grooh! It's fearful! It's not safe to be here, Wingate. Might catch something. Perhaps there's a dead cat under the floor, or something of that sort."

"Ass! How could a dead cat get under the floor?" shouted the exasperated Wingate.

"Well, I know I can't stand it," said Courtney. "I'm off!"

The seniors hurried away. Wingate glared round the room, with some suspicion that it might be a new trick of the Removites. But there was nothing to show that it was, and Wingate followed his friends.

When they were gone there was a chorus of chuckles in the Remove passage. The Removites were rejoicing.

"I think they're done this time!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah!"

"Cave! Here comes the Head!"

Dr. Locke was coming upstairs with Wingate. The Head of Greyfriars was looking very grave. Something wrong with the drains was a decidedly serious matter, and it might mean great trouble. The good old doctor was more concerned about the health of the boys, however, than about any other aspect of the case. The laughter died away at once, and the Removites looked almost preternaturally solemn as the Head passed down the passage with the captain of Greyfriars.

"I notice nothing amiss in the passage," said the Head, sniffing. "Wharton, do you notice any—any odour in your study?"

"No, sir," said Wharton.

"Or you, Bull? I think your study is next to Wingate's?"

"None at all, sir," said Johnny Bull. "I keep my study clean and wholesome, sir."

(Continued on page 27, col. 2.)

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MYSTERIA



By **SIDNEY DREW**, Prince of Adventure Story-tellers.

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends Ching-Lung, Barry O'Rooney, Gan-Waga, the Eskimo, and Prout & Co.—the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction there is a rumour afloat that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narwhal's tusk which he has picked up in an East-End curio-dealer's shop. The tusk proved to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins, and a small wad of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island inhabited by strange monsters, which Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Thurston immediately christens the phantom island "Mysteria" in advance. All hands board the Lord of the Deep, which slips out of its secret cave on its mysterious new quest. Ferrers Lord makes for an uncharted island, which he intends to use as his headquarters, and, arrived there, he lands with a party to make the acquaintance of the inhabitants, leaving Prout in charge of the launch. Prout captures a wonderful talking cockatoo, which has evidently escaped from some vessel, but which is now enrolled as one of the crew of the Lord of the Deep as James Jimson, A.B. Back on the submarine, the adventurers at last catch sight of "Mysteria." The mysterious island—bare and ghostly-looking—appears to be floating in the sky. It is a mirage, but, as Ferrers Lord points out, there can never be a mirage without a substance. The millionaire determines to start in pursuit of the floating island at once, but a terrific volcanic eruption occurs, in the course of which a blazing fire-ball falls on the Lord of the Deep, passing clean through her from deck to keel. The millionaire runs the submarine aground in the bay of the nearest island, and sends Ching-Lung and Thurston with a party of men in the launch to cut some logs. On landing the party are confronted by a curious figure in a red tam-o'-shanter, who warns them that the island belongs to Germany. Red Cap is not alone, but Ching-Lung captures him by a trick, and ties him up. A dense mist arises, and the landing-party make preparations for returning to the submarine.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Tables Turned.

Faber snarled out a string of curses. The mist lifted slightly. Bending over the prisoner, Ching-Lung untied his legs. Then tying a slip-noose he flung it over the red tam-o'-shanter and drew it up until the rope was gently pressing the man's throat.

"Get— Ah, would you?" The prince dodged a vicious kick. "None of those charming little tricks, Red-cap, if you please, or I may start to kick. Get up!"

"How can I get up, you fiend?"

"I'll show you how. People can do many difficult things when they try. Allow me to persuade you."

He gave the rope a pull. Faber at once struggled to his feet. Ching-Lung levelled his revolver.

"Quick march!" he cried. "I'm only a dirty Chinaman, Red-cap, but you're not the first stubborn mule I've taken in hand, and broken in. Get along!"

"You—you're strangling me!" gasped Faber, his face purple. "I—I can't breathe!"

"Serves you right for pulling so hard on the bit. Get along!"

The beaten German stepped out briskly. He staggered over one of the felled palms, and went down with a thud.

"You clumsy idiot!" said Ching-Lung, losing patience. "Up with you!"

Julius Faber was limping when he rose, but Ching-Lung suspected a ruse. Once more the sky was brightening over the hill-top.

"Quicker!" shouted Ching-Lung. "Don't mistake me, Red-cap, I shan't leave you alive if I can't take you with me. Quicker!"

"How can I? Curse you, you yellow hound! I've dislocated my ankle," groaned Faber.

"All the more reason for hurrying. The sooner we get

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there, the sooner can we attend to your fatal wounds. Ah! In there, dog—in there!"

The launch loomed out of the thinning mist in the very nick of time. It lay with its keel towards the rocks well over on its port side. A tug at the rope brought Faber to his knees, and Ching-Lung bundled the half-strangled man into shelter and crouched down beside him. The next instant all was clear.

"A close thing that, Red-cap," said the prince. "It was kind of you to shove the keel that way, but it was thoughtless. Oh, sorry again," he added, slackening the noose. "I don't want to hang you just yet. Whew! Is the luck dead out?"

There was every appearance of a change in the weather. The clouds were floating higher, and were less angry-looking. Ching-Lung began to think that it would have shown greater wisdom on his part to have taken Thurston's advice. Still, he longed to bring his prisoner safely on board the submarine and confront him with Ferrers Lord, and when Ching-Lung had set his mind on carrying out a project he seldom allowed himself to be beaten. He had trusted to a continuance of the fog. If that failed him his position would be anything but an enviable one.

"Red-cap," he said. "I'm going to give you a little swim if all goes well. Your island has a beastly and treacherous climate. It's not often you find a sailor-man like myself whistling for a fog, but I'd give a thousand pounds for a good one just now. Be very quiet, Redcap, unless you want to get hurt."

He had one consolation—his comrades had evidently got clear away. The launch had been hauled up about a dozen yards above high-water mark, but the tide had receded so rapidly that there was a strip of yellow sand at least as wide between the bank and the river. They could not have crossed that unseen or swum down the river unseen.

"It strikes me I've messed this up somewhat," thought

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

his Highness of Kwai-hal. "This comes of trusting to the beautiful weather. If we can hang on for an hour without being spotted, Lord and his merry men will soon put 'paid' to somebody's account. But—"

He peered out cautiously. A man, with a dirty knotted handkerchief round his neck, was leaning against a rock watching the hill. He was only about seventy yards away, and he had a rifle. Ching-Lung jerked back his head like a startled tortoise. He was not in love with the prospect.

"Red-cap," he remarked, rubbing his nose thoughtfully. "It strikes me I shall have to kill a few of you. I make it a rule not to kill people on Wednesdays, but I fear I shall have to break through it on this occasion, much to my regret, and—don't go wild with joy—I must start on you first."

Again he looked out. The man was trying to light his pipe. A streak of sunshine brightened the hill-top. Just then Ching-Lung loathed sunshine. Pulling up a clod of grass he screened his face with it. The men among the rocks seemed to be still in blissful ignorance of the flight of the foe. They also evinced a wholesome respect for that foe. But how long would it last? he wondered.

An answer swiftly came to Ching-Lung's unspoken question as five human figures appeared on the sky-line.

"Is the game up?" muttered Ching-Lung.

Julius Faber had seen the men, too. He forced himself back by imperceptible degrees and bent his head, getting the rope between his teeth. Then next moment a leg was waving in the air above the tiller of the launch. The sunlight flashed on the lens of a telescope.

"Spotted, by Jupiter!" gasped Ching-Lung. "That pig with the glass is looking straight at us!"

Had he seen them? Ching-Lung took the rifle from his back, and prepared for the worst. In doing so he released the rope, which slid away out of his reach. Once more Faber signalled frantically with his leg. Then, digging his head into the sand, he worked off the red tam-o'-shanter. Screwing himself round, he hooked the knitted cap round with his toe.

Then the red tam-o'-shanter swung to and fro.

"Red-cap," said Ching-Lung, "the bull is about to— Why—"

With an exultant yell Julius Faber rolled himself clear. His signal had been answered. A powerful heave from behind flung the launch over, imprisoning Ching-Lung. A big hand, grasping a revolver, shot through a gaping hole in the boat, and a ring of cold steel touched the prince's temple.

"I play the ace," bellowed Faber triumphantly, "and win."

Relates, amongst Other Matters, How Ching-Lung Played at Being a Parrot, and Escaped from One Cage only to Find Himself in Another and Worse One.

It did not take Ching-Lung very long to make up his mind to surrender gracefully. The cold touch of the weapon was too persuasive. Altogether, the last portion of the game had utterly gone against him.

"Push that gun out!" shouted Faber.

Ching-Lung's obedience was lamb-like. He heard a muttered order. The launch was lifted, and his Imperial Highness of Kwai-hal, to his intense chagrin and disgust, found himself sitting on the sand surrounded by an evil-looking band of sailors, the veritable scum of half a score of different nationalities.

Julius Faber appeared highly pleased with himself. He took a long pull at a square black bottle, and then passed it on to a big scoundrel, whose eyes were almost hidden in rolls of fat. The fellow wore a greasy frock-coat, and cracked patent leather boots of enormous size. An amazingly dirty silk handkerchief was tied round his thick neck, and a battered, rain-sodden silk hat was perched jauntily on the back of his head. Ching-Lung gazed in wonder at this ridiculous and repulsive figure, this quivering mountain of fat. The man lowered the bottle, and in a voice so subdued and husky as to be almost inaudible, asked what had become of the other dogs.

"They've slipped us and run for it, worse luck," growled Faber. "Took to the water, blister them! I'll see that this chow don't slip us. Serve him as he served me. Drop that nose round his throat, and pull his windpipe flat if he as much as wriggles."

Ching-Lung bowed to the inevitable. The big man seized the end of the rope, and informed the prince by means of a vicious kick that he wished him to get up. Ching-Lung rose with alacrity, making a mental note of the kick.

"Now cut along, yaller-skin," said the husky-voiced man. "Don't worry me, or I might fall on you. Cut straight ahead through those rocks. Luff, you 'ound, grab him! He hasn't been searched."

His Highness was lying on his back almost before he knew how it happened. Dirty hands relieved him of his revolver,

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knife, cigarette-case, and valuables. It was a disappointment, for Ching-Lung had hoped they would forget to overhaul him, and with a knife and revolver in his possession, even the grim walls of a convict prison would not have held him many hours.

"Watch him well, Larkie," said Faber. "He's one of the slippery sort."

The big man grinned, revealing seven distinct and separate chins. He twisted Ching-Lung's pigtail round his podgy hand and dragged the prince to his feet. Ching-Lung made a second mental note. The man had the strength of a dray-horse. He wrapped the pigtail round his wrist until his great, fleshy thumb and fingers clasped the prisoner's neck. Then he hammered his filthy hat over the young Chinaman's eyes and pushed him forward.

At every step Larkie grunted like a pig. Utterly blinded and half-suffocated, Ching-Lung was hurried along in what direction he could not imagine. He was philosophic enough not to repine. He was in a corner, and the past was the past. He had one consoling thought, and that was that Julius Faber and his myrmidons had made the most fatal blunder they could possibly have made. Ching-Lung was confident that he would quickly be rescued. But he did not wish to be rescued. He had made the trouble for himself, and his one desire was to get out of it absolutely unaided.

As well as he could he kept count of every step for a time, but he was twisted and turned about so frequently that he abandoned the task as hopeless and useless. He could catch glimpses of the ground under the hateful hat, but that was all. Suddenly he was in comparatively darkness.

"Stand still," puffed his captor. "Are you there, Stumpy?"

"Ay, ay! What d'ye want, Larkie?" demanded a squeaky voice.

"Them irons of Jimson's, burn you!" gasped the big man. "We've cotched a yaller canary."

There was a queer, stumping sound, and the hat was lifted from Ching-Lung's eyes. He saw that he was in a cave. The bright light from the entrance flung shadows across the sandy floor. In an iron basket a fire of wood burned, and a large black saucepan simmered over it. A dozen yards beyond the fire a pall of darkness obscured everything.

The stumping sound came nearer, accompanied by a faint clanking of steel. Then a man waddled out of the gloom on two wooden legs, with a set of arm and leg irons hanging round his neck like a ghastly necklace, and a heavy iron ball in his hands.

"Is it a yaller canary?" he grinned, peering at Ching-Lung with red-rimmed eyes. "Can it sing? Where did ye snare it, big 'un?"

"Down near the creek. Hold your jaw, and put the bracelets on it. Any news? Seen any more o' the niggers, Stumpy?"

"No, they've scuttled like rats," grinned the wooden-legged man. "They smelled the earthquake comin', and if that big wave ain't sent 'em all to Davy Jones, may I grow corns on my timber feet! Lift your leg up, my pretty darlin', and I'll put somethin' nice round your ankle. When are they bringin' t'others?"

Larkie spat viciously into the fire.

"We missed 'em in the fog, but we're laying up for 'em. They'll come back after this lout, and get a feed of lead they won't digest easy. I'll take that key, Stumpy. Let's have a look at you."

He made a rough inspection of the irons and pocketed the key. Stumpy leered at the captive gloatingly.

"He don't look strong enough to do a lot of work, mate," he said; "but some o' the little 'uns lasts longest. Ha, ha, ha! I've been clean through, and there's no damage done, except to them two niggers. And they're—so—"

Stumpy dropped his head limply on his shoulder and opened his ugly mouth, imitating the ghastly attitude of a corpse.

"Did much fall on them?" grinned the fat man.

"About four ton. It ain't much loss, for both of 'em was about done for. Are ye goin'?"

"Yes, I'd best be getting back. I'd sooner be here, for it takes a thundering big rock to cover me; but Faber isn't safe alone. He's getting a swelled head."

"So did Jimson, mate," tittered Stumpy. "Was he a fool? Will Faber be a fool? Will some others be fools? Oh, go along, mate! Was we born yesterday? Did Jimson think so? He, he, he!"

The giant leaned forward and shook him.

"Not so much about it," he hissed. "There's some of them smelling a rat now, through you, and the mad chatter you taught that infernal parrot. Keep your talking-box

NEXT
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"BUNTER, THE PRIZE-WINNER!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
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nailed up. Faber's not a kid or a girl. Do you hear me? Keep your mouth tight, and if that yellow dirt tries to get away, plug it."

The wooden-legged rascal rubbed his shoulder, and watched the retreating mountain of flesh with anything but affection. Then he lifted the cover from the saucepan, and thrust his head into the cloud of steam that poured out.

"Jimson was a fool," he grunted, stabbing a piece of goat's flesh with a knife, "and Faber's a fool. Larkin don't think himself a fool, but he's the biggest of the lot. They're all fools but Stumpy. He, he, he, he! People needn't have any feet to 'ave brains. Say," he yelled, glaring through the steam, "you come 'ere."

Lifting the weight, Ching-Lung went clumsily forward.

"What's your ship?" snarled the man, holding the knife close to one of the prince's manacled hands. "Spit it out, or I'll carve a finger off you!"

"The Lord of the Deep."

"What sort o' craft? What's she want?"

"She's a private vessel owned by an English gentleman, who knows his own business better than I do," answered Ching Lung. "I know he had no intention of making unpleasantness with anybody. We were forbidden to land here, but as we thought we had every right to land, we did so."

"Don't you wish you'd took good advice? Don't you wish you 'ad, eh? He, he, he! Don't you"—he paused to cram a piece of the half-raw meat into his mouth. "More fools! The world swarms wi' 'em. He, he, he! You won't be able to use your teeth like I can when you've been with us a month, chow. Its rough on teeth down yonder, and rough on bones. Ever 'eard of cinnabar? Oh, it's beautiful stuff to work. Guano is honey to it."

"So you've struck cinnabar?" said Ching-Lung.

"Tons of it. Mountains of it, Yaller jaundice," croaked the man. "You'll have your share. He, he, he! We ain't mean a bit. You can breathe it, eat it, saturate yourself wi' it till the teeth drop out of your 'ead, and we sha'n't grumble at the waste. Thunder! There ain't more generous boys this side o' the Equator. That's why we're so poor, Chow. Wait a week, Chow. You'll be as full o' mercury as one o' them old-fashioned barometers."

So the murder was out. Faber and his friends had discovered a mine of that red deposit, known as cinnabar, from which quicksilver is extracted.

Ching-Lung was not surprised that they were more than eager to keep the secret. Mercury is a very valuable metal. It is also a deadly substance to work, its poisonous fumes eating away the teeth and softening the bones of the miserable wretches employed in mining it. So ghastly are its effects on human beings, that in many districts only criminals doomed to death or to penal servitude for life are employed to work the profitable lodes.

Stumpy put the lid on the saucepan again, and rubbed his bony hands. Then he sat down, crossed his wooden legs, and lighted his pipe. It was a black, evil-smelling pipe, and it squeaked and bubbled at each puff.

Ching-Lung smiled imperceptibly. Outside, the sunshine was quite brilliant. The storm of rain had passed away and the wet earth steamed. To comfort himself further, the legless man took a long drink out of a flask, and remarked, quite genially, that it would be a thundering fine afternoon while it lasted. His Highness smiled again.

"What was that about Jimson?" he asked.

The man bunched himself together as if ready to fly at the prisoner's throat. His little eyes protruded, and the liquor poured out of the bottle clasped in his hand. Then his jaw dropped. Out of the darkness of the cavern a sepulchral voice croaked:

"Jimson's dead, ain't he, mate? Poor old Jimson! Where's Jimson? He's dead, mate, ain't he?"

Ching-Lung had not forgotten James Jimson, able seaman, or, otherwise, the intelligent cockatoo, captured by Prout.

The effect was quite magical. Stumpy scrambled up as agile as a monkey. The look of abject terror vanished from Stumpy's face.

"Darn!" he yelled. "It's the old parrot come back."

The prince saw his mistake. Luckily it had done no harm. He immediately changed his tactics.

"Hallo, Jimson! Poor old Jimson! He's dead, ain't he? Pull up your socks."

This time the unmistakable croak of a parrot sounded from

outside the cave. Not a muscle moved. Stumpy glared at Ching-Lung.

"What d'ye mean by Jimson? Why did ye say Jimson?" he hissed. "Why did ye say Jimson?"

"Because," replied Ching-Lung, without any hesitation, "I heard you talking about the gentleman, and we've got a cockatoo on board that talks of nothing else. At least, we had one on board, but that sounds like him."

"Pull up your socks! Hooray! Where's poor old Jimson? He's dead, ain't he? He's a stiff 'un. Hurroo!"

The bird with the pigtail uttered a chattering laugh.

"Hi, Jim! 'Ere, you saucy rascal!" called the cripple, stumping towards the mouth of the cave. "Come along to your old boss!"

He stood blinking about him in the unaccustomed sunshine like some night-prowling bird of prey.

"Kwa-a-ak! Poor old Jimson! Jimson's a stiff 'un, ain't he, mate?"

The croak was fainter. Stumpy moved further away, calling endearingly to the cockatoo, and swearing also in the same coaxing tone what he would do to it when it was captured.

"Now, old Jim! Come, good boy! I'll rip every feather out of ye—burn ye! Where are you, Jim? Sugar for Polly. Pretty Poll, nice old Polly! I'll tear the beak out of ye. Hi, Jimmy, come to the boss. Thunder! I'll wring your neck, brute!"

A set of manacles that could hold Ching-Lung very long had yet to be forged. These were of the ordinary regulation pattern. He licked his wrists and gripped the irons between his knees. Then he swayed to and fro. The veins of his forehead and temples stood out like knotted cords, and perspiration trickled down his face.

"Jimson's a stiff 'un, mate. Poor old Jimson! Jimson's dead, ain't he?" whimpered the uncanny bird.

Free! Ching-Lung took off the lid of the enormous saucepan, and dropped his fetters into it. Which way? Stumpy was armed, he knew, with both revolver and knife. Again the tantalising cockatoo uttered a shrill laugh of derision. Ching-Lung ran over the soft carpet of sand and looked out.

Stumpy was not in sight, but he could hear the fellow's wheedling voice. Overhead only a slice of shining sky was visible, for the rocks bent over to meet each other. Their sides were so smooth that nothing without wings or suckered feet could possibly have scaled them. Some twenty yards farther down the narrow ravine took a sharp angle.

"This," thought Ching-Lung, "is my lucky day. I shall have to chance neck or nothing."

One glance round the angle was more than sufficient for his Imperial Highness. Stumpy, having abandoned the hopeless chase of the phantom bird, was coming back. Two other men, rifles on shoulder, were also advancing down the ravine. Picking his way under the rocks where the ground was hard, so as to leave no trail, Ching-Lung dashed back into the cave. There was only one way to go—forward. The light faded away behind him, and, thrusting out his hands, he slowed down to a cautious walk, then paused to listen.

"Where's the Chow?" howled somebody.

The voice rolled and rumbled through the hollowness.

"He ain't far wi' that jewellery on," snarled Stumpy's voice. "He could only ha' gone one way! Out o' the road."

Ching-Lung saw a blaze of red flame. The crash of a revolver followed. He edged farther into the darkness.

Bang!

The bullet clipped the rock in dangerous proximity to the fugitive's head.

"You've settled him, Stumpy," said another voice, as the pent-up echoes grumbled themselves into silence. "Let him stop there. What 'ave you got to eat? We're all starving."

Ching-Lung, knowing what to expect now, hurried on. A wolfish yell rang in his ears. Stumpy had lifted the lid of the pot, revealing the extraordinary meal of iron the escaped prisoner had left for them.

"Shoot, shoot! He's got rid of his bracelets; burn him!" shrieked the cripple.

At that moment Ching-Lung tripped, but uttered no cry. There was a sullen splash, drowned by the maddened howls behind him. The prince, gasping, choked, nauseated, struggled to the surface. He had plunged headlong into some black pit of poisonous water.

(A splendid instalment of this grand adventure Serial again next Thursday.)

"THE PENNY POPULAR" this week contains Three Splendid Complete Stories, and Poplets, the Great Cash Prize Competition. Order To-day. Price One Penny.

UP AGAINST IT!

(Continued from page 23.)

Wingate bestowed a glare upon Johnny Bull. The Head coughed.

He moved on to the end of the passage, and put his head into the new study. He withdrew it again, looking quite pale.

"Oh! Ah! Ahem! Ah! Bless my soul!" ejaculated the Head. "There is a most—most decided smell in the study! Ahem! I—I think it is unnecessary to investigate further, Wingate. You are undoubtedly right. There is certainly something wrong with the drains. You cannot possibly enter that study again till it is seen to, Wingate. You had better remove your belongings to your old quarters, and lock up the study, and I will telephone for someone to come and make an examination to-morrow."

"Yes, sir," said Wingate. And the Head hastily retired.

As a rule, the Remove were not prompt for fagging duties. But they fagged merrily for Wingate, helping to carry his property out of the study, and to take it back to his old quarters in the Sixth Form passage, with cheerful alacrity.

The study was locked up, and Wingate took the key away.

The Remove celebrated their victory with a war-dance in the passage, and there was a terrific din. But there was no prefect at close quarters with them now.

"The builder's man is coming to investigate to-morrow," grinned Wharton. "But a chap about my size can get into the study window to-night and clear the stuff away—what? They won't find anything but a lingering whiff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In the dead of night Wharton climbed into the window of the new study, and opened the board up and removed the asafœtida. It was concealed in a locked box in the furthest box-room. The next day the builder from Courtfield arrived, and made an exhaustive investigation. The scent still lingered strongly in the study, but there was nothing to indicate the cause, and the drains were reported in perfect condition.

It was a very peculiar mystery, but one thing seemed quite clear—the new study was not a pleasant place of habitation, and the most energetic and dutiful prefect in the Sixth showed no desire whatever to inhabit it.

That afternoon Wingate looked into Study No. 1, where the Famous Five were at tea. They greeted Wingate with cheery smiles. The captain of Greyfriars looked at them grimly.

"The new study's going to be shut up," he said.

"Oh!" said the Co.

"It's been decided," went on Wingate, "that, upon the whole, it isn't really necessary to have a prefect quartered in this passage. The smell in the study seems to be clearing off now, but it's still horribly unpleasant. It seems that there's nothing wrong with the drains—nothing at all to account for it."

"Queer, ain't it?" said Bob Cherry reflectively.

"Very queer," said Wingate, with emphasis. "So very queer, that it really looks as if it might be a trick of some kind."

The juniors looked astonished.

"A trick!" said Wharton.

"A trick!" said Nugent.

"A trick!" said Johnny Bull. "Oh, Wingate!"

Wingate tried to frown, but he laughed instead. He could not help it.

"Well, whether it was a trick or not, you've got rid of the prefect," he said. "I've looked in to tell you so, and to warn you that if there are any rows in this passage I shall make it a point to come up every time, and bring a cane with me. That's all!"

And with that warning Wingate retired.

The Remove chums grinned at one another cheerfully.

"Remove wins!" said Bob Cherry. "Down with the Sixth! Down with tyranny! Down with everybody! This is where we smile!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Removites smiled so loudly that they could be heard at the end of the passage.

THE END.

(Next Monday's splendid, long, complete tale of the Chums of Greyfriars is entitled: "BUNTER, THE PRIZE-WINNER," by Frank Richards. Order your copy of THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY in advance. Price 1d.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 291.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"BUNTER, THE PRIZE-WINNER!"

SPECIAL NEW FEATURE!

Greyfriars Lyrics

BY

"The Magnet" Library's Own Rhymester.

No. 6.—PETER TODD.

Proud Peter Todd has now produced
A startling new sensation,
By setting forth to "rule the roost"
With keen determination.
He means to make his study lead,
While others have to follow;
Yet how his object will succeed
Beats Greyfriars simply hollow!

This customer, so cool and cute,
Has cheek enough for twenty;
His daring no one can dispute,
Of pluck the boy has plenty.
'Tis well that Todd can face the foe
When warfare once commences;
For if he failed he'd undergo
Some painful consequences!

The boys he has to call to arms
Form very raw material;
Alonzo Todd prefers the charms
Of some enchanting serial.
It takes a megaphone to fire
The deaf, impassive Dutton,
While Billy Bunter's great desire
Exists in joints of mutton.

Yet Todd will stand no shrinking back—
He makes them rally round him;
And those who've faced each fierce attack
A fearless foe have found him.
Alonzo Todd must now forget
His "Horace" and his "Plato,"
And lay aside, with deep regret,
"The Tale of a Potato."

On one occasion Peter played
A very witty antic;
Within a suit of mail he stayed
While Loder grew quite frantic.
On Todd the cad would fain bestow
His cane without abatement;
"So near, and yet so far, you know,"
Came Peter's muffled statement.

The Head supplied Todd's well-earned need,
And grieved a cane to handle;
But those who were not flogged agreed
The game was worth the candle,
While Todd himself remained unmoved
And cheerful as a pierrot;
And from that time the new boy proved
A veritable hero!

Although we hope the Famous Five
May keep the chief position;
Like giants they will have to strive
To smother Todd's ambition.
The leader of the freaks so odd
We cannot help admiring;
Then "three times three" for Peter Todd,
The schoolboy so aspiring!

The Subject of next Monday's Lyric
will be

VERNON SMITH.

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early.



WHOM TO WRITE TO :
EDITOR,
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
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 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
 EVERY WEDNESDAY
 AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
 EVERY FRIDAY.

The Editor
 is always
 pleased to
 hear from
 his Chums,
 at home or
 abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"BUNTER, THE PRIZE-WINNER!"

By Frank Richards.

Our next grand, long, complete tale of the famous chums of Greyfriars, entitled as above, relates how Billy Bunter of the Remove Form enters for a competition run by an enterprising paper. The fat junior makes all sorts of plans for disposing of the huge cash prize, which he has no doubt whatever about winning, his mind running chiefly, of course, upon unlimited feeds. He even manages to raise one or two little loans from his schoolfellows on the strength of his expectations. The excitement, therefore, may be imagined when it is announced that Bunter's name figures in the list of prize-winners, and that a share of the great cash prize of £1,000 will be his portion. His share, when it comes, however, provides a great surprise for

"BUNTER, THE PRIZE-WINNER!"

A WELCOME SURPRISE!

I should much like to publish on this page a letter that I have just received from one of my thousands of "Penny Popular" readers and chums, but unfortunately space does not allow of this. Some weeks ago my reader, who tells me that he is not in very affluent circumstances, sent in a couple of attempts to the "Poplets" Competition, which is, as all my chums know, one of the favourite features of our splendid companion paper, "The Penny Popular." Having sent his two attempts in, according to the rules, my chum then promptly forgot the matter altogether. The affair by no means ended there, however, for on opening his weekly copy of "The Penny Popular" as usual the other Friday morning, what was my chum's delight at seeing his name in the list of prize-winners which appears weekly on page 3! Sure enough, the next morning's post brought a cheque from the Amalgamated Press, Ltd., for a very nice little sum indeed, and it was to acknowledge this that my lucky chum wrote me his nice letter. My friend is particularly pleased, in that this piece of good fortune came to him at the most opportune possible moment—just as he was going away for his holidays, in fact, when a substantial sum to add to one's pocket-money comes in particularly useful.

"Your cheque will enable me to have a right royal time of it while I am away," runs the letter, "and I should like to send a message to all your 'Penny Popular' readers, and to Magnetites and Gemites as well. Tell them to take the chance while it is offered them, and go in for your splendid 'Poplets' Competition for all they're worth every week!"

That is the message of this chum of mine who had such a splendid surprise just before going away for his holidays, and I am sure that all my readers who would like to give themselves a chance of having the same sort of pleasant surprise happen to them, will see the wisdom of this advice.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

S. Walden (London).—Have you been trying the exercises recently published on this page?

Edith C. (Penge).—The "Empire Library" is no longer published. Articles dealing with short story writing will

shortly appear either on this page, or in our companion paper, "The Gem" Library.

L. Lancaster (Goodmayes).—Volume 7 is completed week ending September 27th.

T. R. Spencer (St. Kilda).—Thank you for your letter. The verses are a great improvement on the last lot, but they are still hardly up to the standard required for publication. Stick to it!

"An O. F. S. Chum" (W. M.).—Many thanks for your interesting letter.

F. P. P. (Bristol).—Thank you for your letter and verses.

E. Jackson (Nottingham).—I should advise you to consult an oculist at once.

"A Loyal Reader."—"Boys of England" is not now published. If you want some old numbers try H. Glaisher, 32, Charing Cross, London.

R. Lupton and S. Hudson (Blackpool).—Many thanks for photos.

J. C. Regina (Canada).—Ask your newsagent. I am sorry I cannot help you.

J. H. Jones (Middlesex).—Very sorry I cannot oblige you with No. 172. It is out of print, therefore unobtainable from this office.

E. D. Bennie (South Africa).—Sherlock Holmes is the name of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective character. I am surprised you have not heard of him.

"HOW TO RUN A SCHOOL MAGAZINE."—No. 4. SERIALS.

Before you decide to accept a serial, ask the author to let you see the first six chapters written up, together with the synopsis of the whole story in about five hundred words, upon which you will be able to judge. A serial should wind up each instalment with a good "curtain"—that is, you should leave the plot just at that point when readers want to know what is to happen next. The length of your short story depends upon the size of your paper. Generally, I should think about fifteen hundred words would be quite enough. For the serial, run to about twelve thousand in all, with each instalment of a thousand or so words. With each instalment there should be a synopsis of the whole story in brief—up to the point taken up in the present issue—for the benefit of those who commence to read it late.

VERSE.

Most boys like a good piece of poetry, provided it is written in a breezy style, and treats of something they are interested in. If you can find anyone who can write passable verse, commission some on subjects like football, cricket, swimming, general patriotic themes, Boy Scouts, Territorials, battles, etc. You will find that you want little poems occasionally to fill up corners.

ARTICLES.

Outside the school news, include one or two generally interesting articles, chiefly of the "How To Do It" nature, dealing with things you think fellows would like to try their hands at, such as repairing cycle tyres, cleaning bikes, oiling bats, and looking after pets. You will find that every boy makes a particular study of one thing, whether it be fishing, or taking his cycle to bits. Get each of your contributors, therefore, to give you the best of what he knows about his one subject.

A final warning ere I close this article: Keep your magazine work out of school work. It is fatal to his interests for a boy to be caught neglecting his school work and writing stuff for the magazine.

(Another article of this interesting series will appear in the Chat page next Monday.)

The Editor

AND SO THE POOR LION HAD NONE!

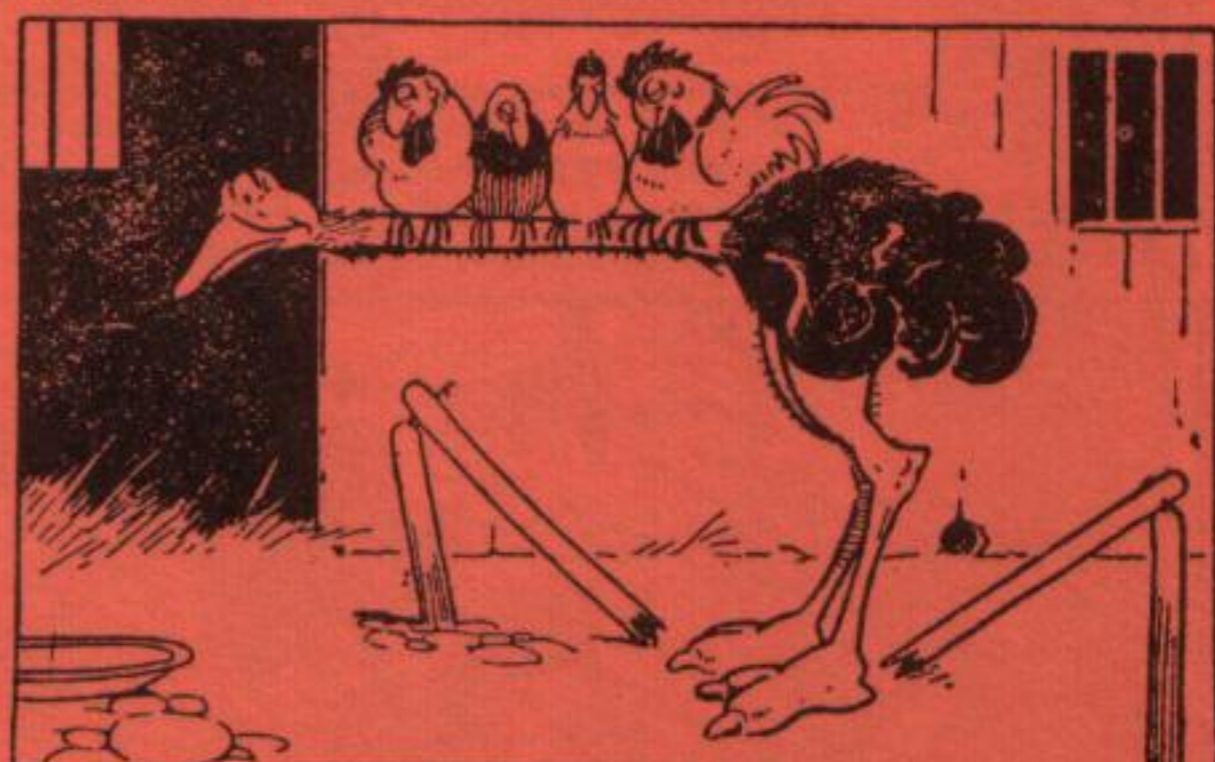
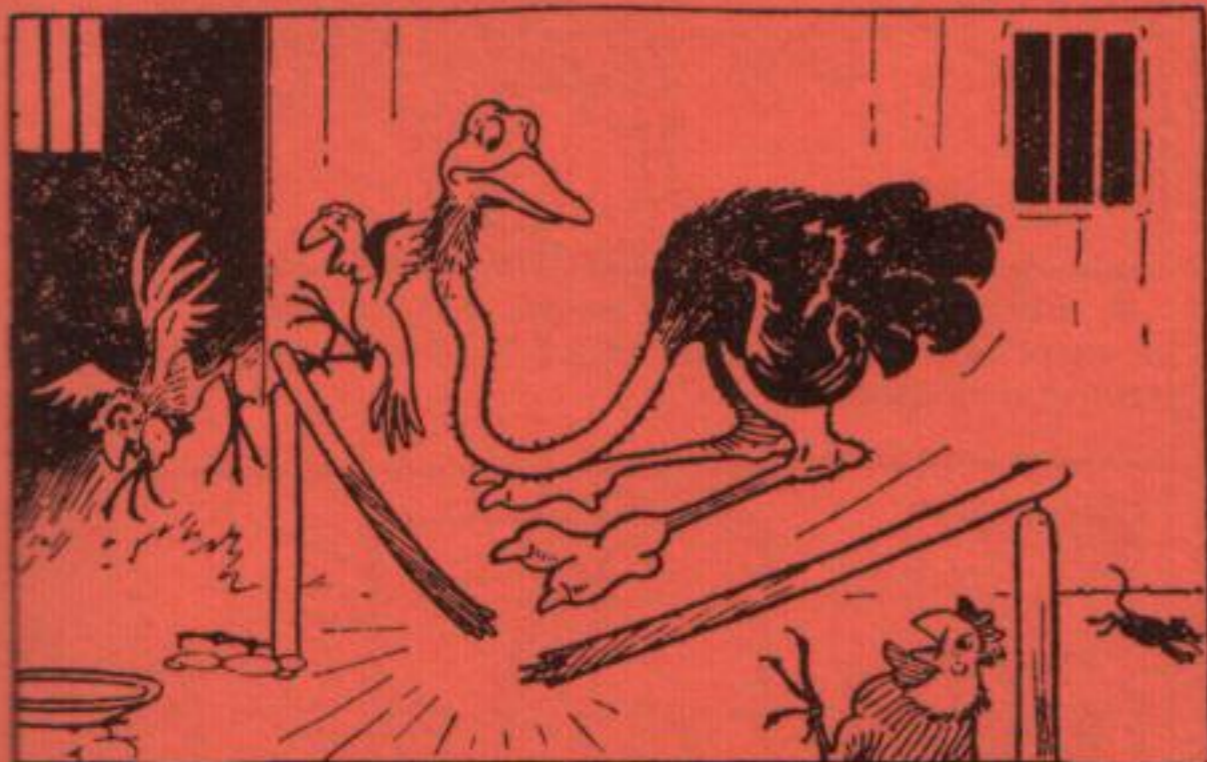


1. The soldier boy seems in a bit of a fix between the lion and the deep cliff. How is he to escape ?

2. The artful boy will show you a point or two! Having put down the mushroom, he—

3. Simply did a giddy jump off the cliff, and was back in the camp in double-quick time, thank you!

HE GOT IT IN THE NECK!



1. "There, now you've done it!" said the chickens, when the ostrich broke down the perch they were roosting on.

2. And didn't the ostrich wear a worried look when they stood on his neck, as per above, for the rest of the night.

SHE DID THE HAT TRICK!

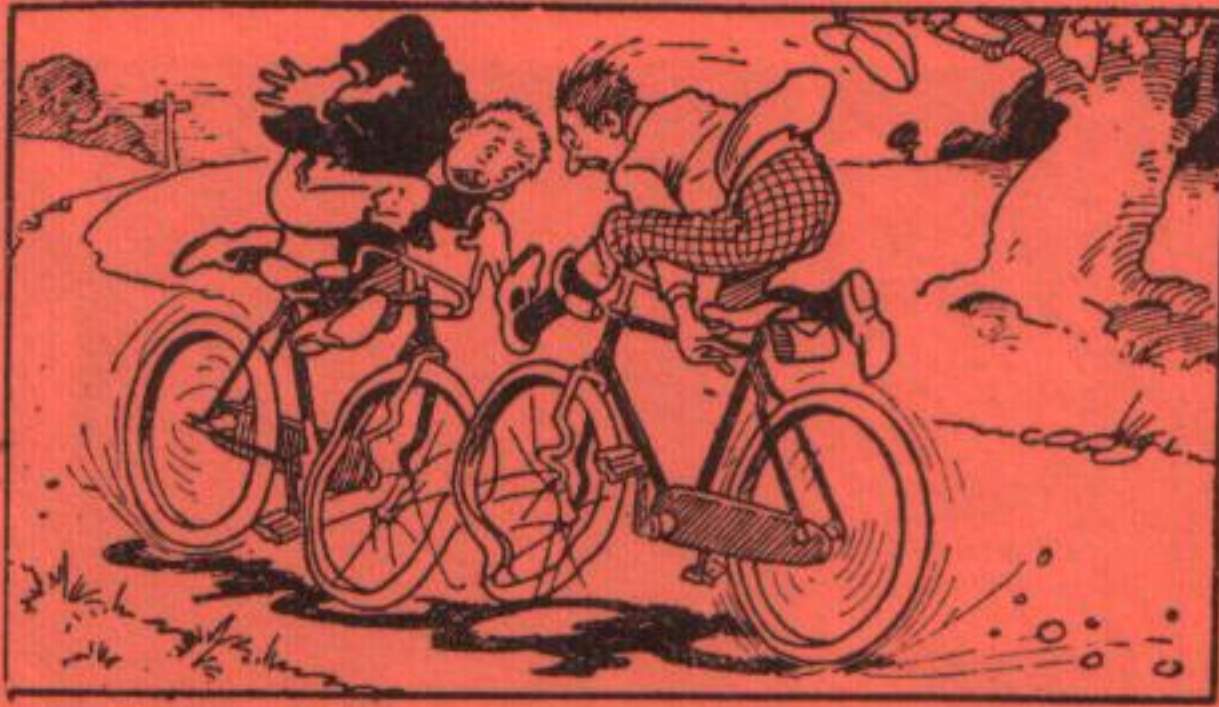


1. "She's a pretty miss," said the Customs officer, as he saw pretty Polly trip from the boat. "I wonder why she goes across the Channel so often?"

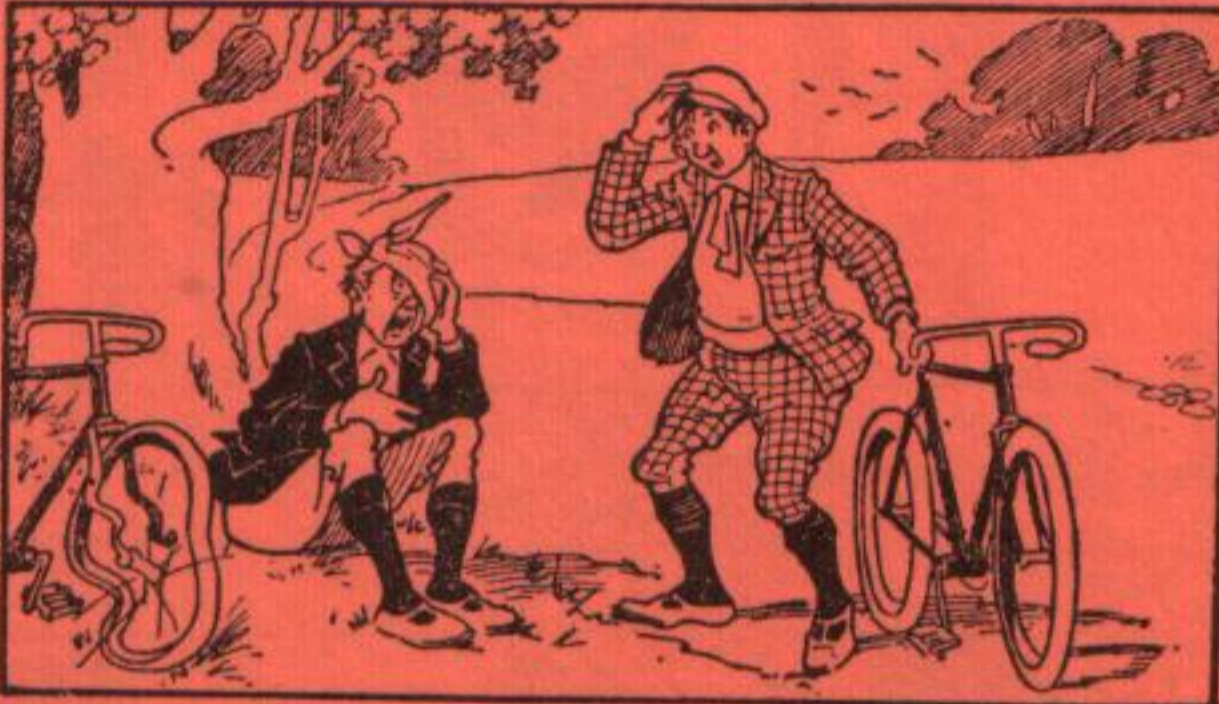
2. We think if the Customs officer had peeped into Polly's room a little later he would have been a bit surprised.

Percy: "I had my character told the other day by a physiognomist. He said I was a vegetarian when he saw that I had carrotty hair, reddish checks, a turn-up nose, and a sage look—see?"

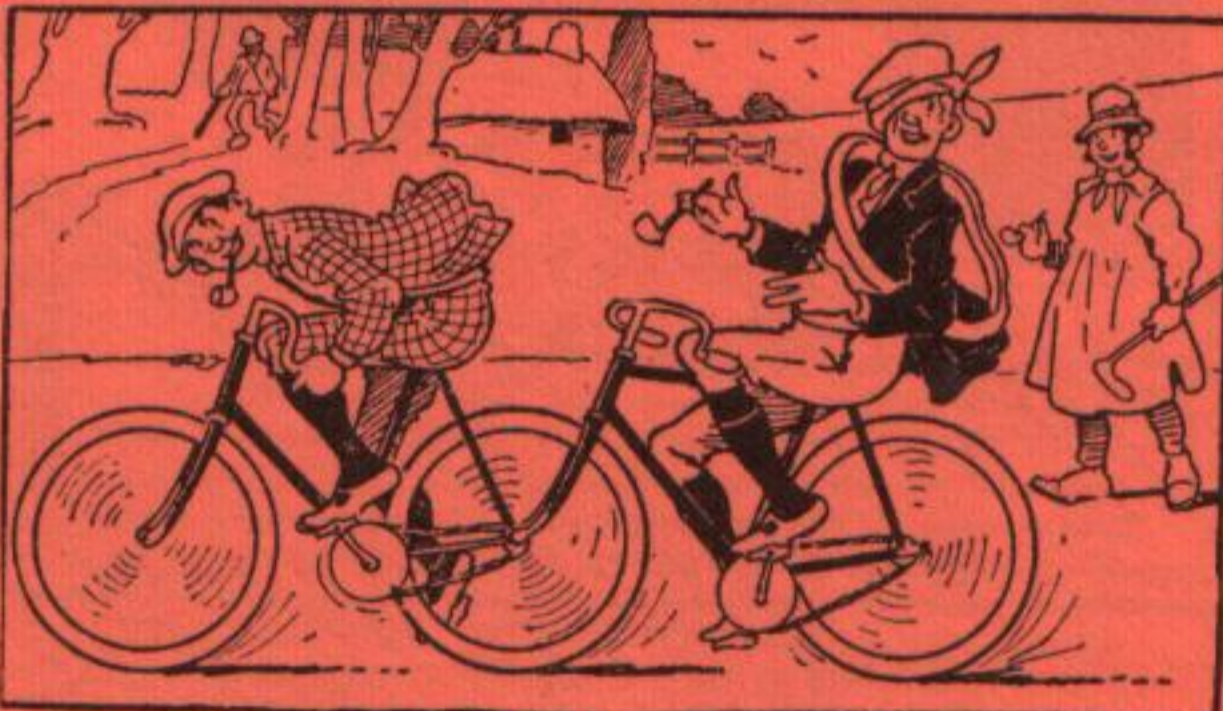
A RIM - ARKABLE WHEEZE!



1. Binks and Jinks were out cycling when they both took the wrong turning, consequently the wishbone in Jinks' front wheel became severely dislocated.

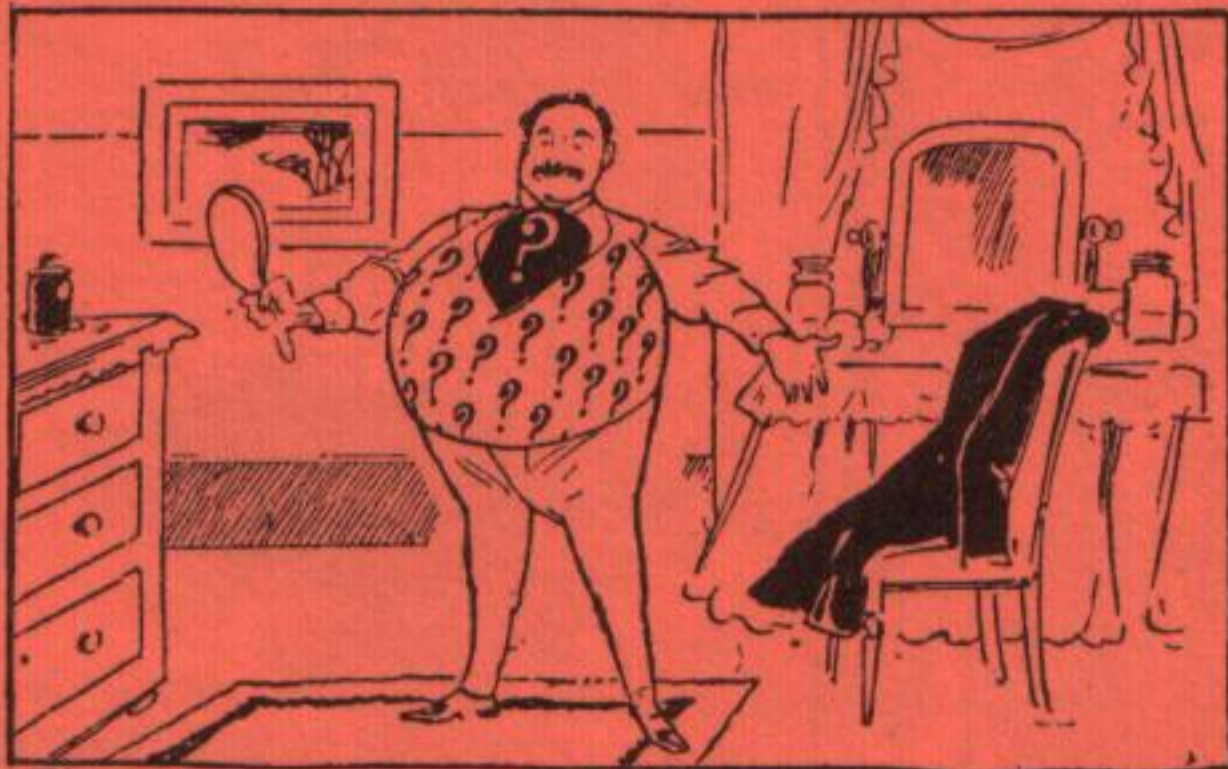


2. But, in the words of the poet, "Were they down-hearted?" NO! As you know, two heads are better than one, except when you have a toothache, so those two boys put their heads together, and thought a great think.



3. In a few shakes of a hen's bootlace they were sailing gaily along the road in the above style, and arrived home in time for tea none the worse for their adventure.

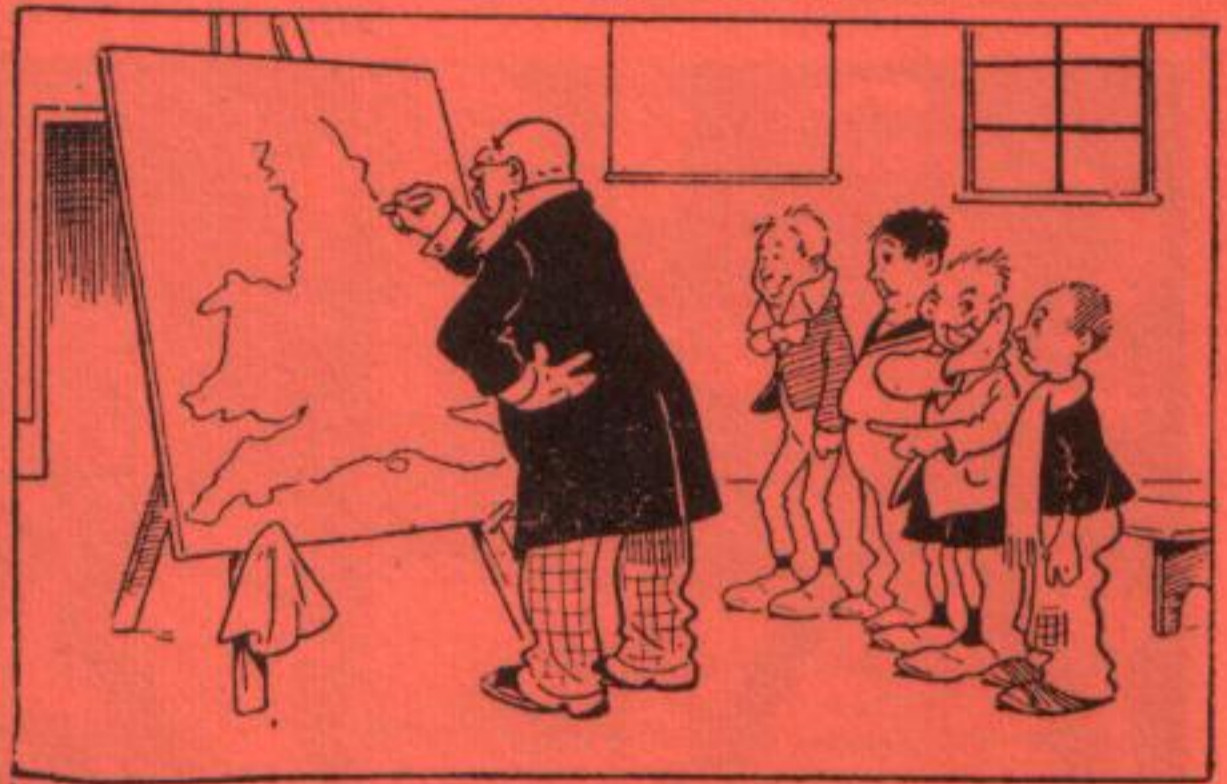
BASHFUL READERS, PLEASE NOTE!



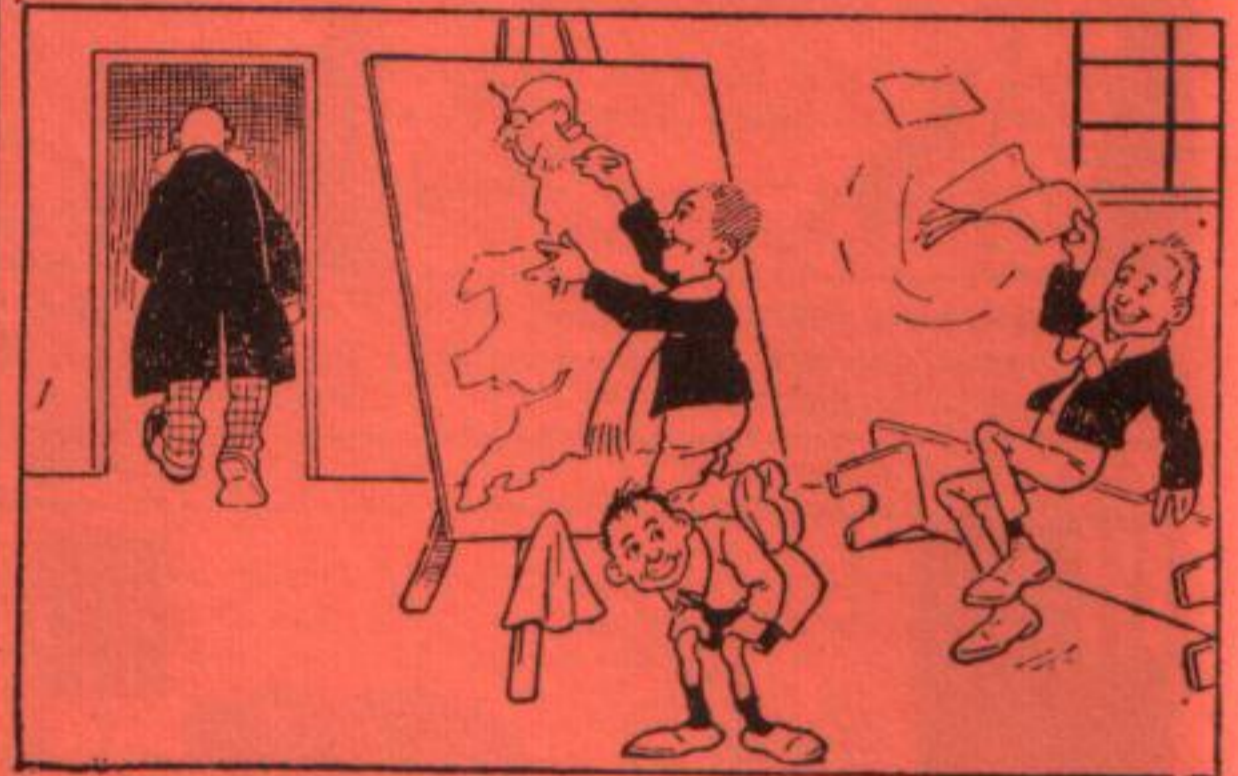
Bashful Bertie: "Yes, I'm too nervous to propose to Gladys, so I'll wear this waistcoat with the question marks. Perhaps she will take the hint, and accept me."

N

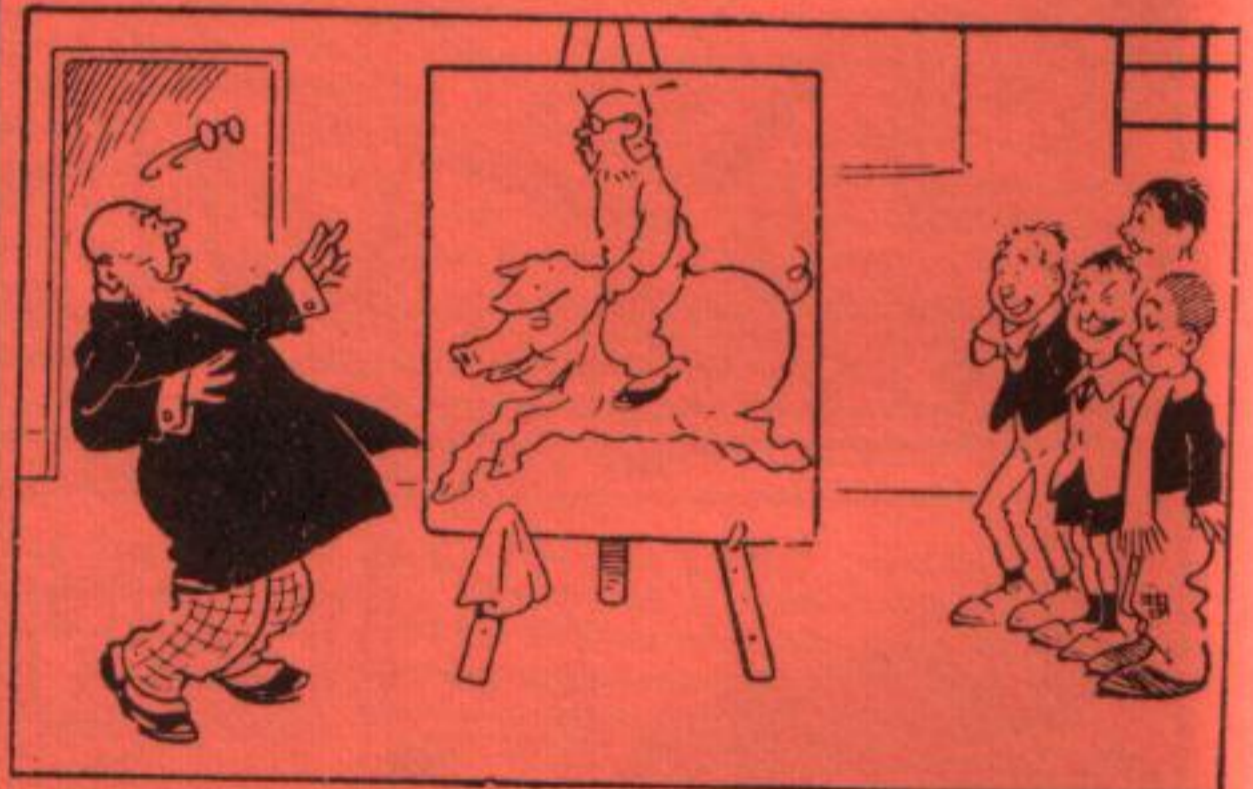
IT "MAPPED OUT" ALL RIGHT!



1. The teacher was drawing a map of England from memory, when the headmaster called him aside to borrow sixpence off him; so as soon as he toddled off—



2. Archie, the schoolboy artist, got to work. "Won't he be surprised when he sees this?" he said, as he made a few strokes and splashes.



3. And that teacher nearly had five fits following each other when he saw the above work of art on the board—that's a fact.

A TACTLESS QUESTION!

Servant (to dentist): "Please, sir, missus's compliments, and will you please lend her your forceps, 'cos she wants to pull some tacks out of the floor?"

