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# The **MAGNET**

2/6



*"Here's another Guy!"*

# THE GLORIOUS 'FIFTH' AT GREYFRIARS!

By  
FRANK RICHARDS.



## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Unfit for Human Consumption!

"BOB, old chap!"

Bob Cherry was standing at the cupboard in his study—No. 13 in the Remove—and placing a small parcel therein, when the dulcet tones of Billy Bunter fell on his ears.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob glanced round.

Billy Bunter's ample form almost filled the study doorway. His little round eyes, behind his big round spectacles, were fixed on the parcel Bob had laid in the study cupboard.

It was tea-time, and the November dusk was thick in the quadrangle of Greyfriars, a damp mist blurring all windows. But inside Study No. 13 all was bright and cheery. A glowing fire burned ruddily in the grate, the table was set for tea, and the kettle sang merrily.

"Quelch wants you, old chap!" said Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob, in dismay.

Bob had reason to be dismayed. The parcel he had just brought in, contained a bundle of crackers!

On the great and glorious Fifth of November the Greyfriars fellows were allowed to spread themselves to any extent with crackers, squibs, roman candles, all sorts and conditions of fireworks.

But it was a rigid rule that fireworks should not be kept in the studies. There was a possibility of dangerous accidents—which the juniors were prepared to disregard, and which the masters were not!

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That rule, in point of fact, was more honoured in the breach than the observance! In spite of the rule, and the rigidity thereof, thoughtless fellows often did bring in fireworks, two or three days before the Fifth, and park them in their studies—as Bob had just done.

"Mean to say Quelch saw me coming in?" exclaimed Bob.

"Eh! Yes! No! I mean, you're to go to his study," said Bunter.

"Well, if he's in his study he can't have spotted me," said Bob. "It's too jolly thick in the quad for him to spot me from his window."

Comforted by that reflection, and by the further reflection that even Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes could not have penetrated thick brown-paper wrapping, even had they fallen on the parcel, Bob Cherry walked out of the study, and went down the Remove staircase.

Billy Bunter watched him, with a fat grin, till he disappeared, and then rolled into the study.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter.

He almost jumped to the study cupboard.

Whether Mr. Quelch had seen Bob Cherry come into the House with that parcel or not, Bunter had! If Quelch had seen it, it might have crossed his mind that it contained fireworks. But it did not cross Bunter's. Billy Bunter was not thinking of fireworks. He was not likely to think of such things at tea-time. Fireworks were not edible!

Bunter had even forgotten the great date that was near at hand; he did not even please to remember the Fifth of November, the gunpowder treason and plot! Such things were trifles light as air to Bunter at tea-time, when he had

had only one tea so far! In Billy Bunter's fat mind there was no doubt that Bob had brought in something for tea. What else could any sane fellow be bringing into his study at tea-time? And Bunter's fat hands were already on the brown-paper parcel when there was a footstep in the doorway, and Mark Linley came in.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

He spun round from the study cupboard.

Mark gave him a suspicious look.

"What are you up to here, Bunter?" he asked.

"Oh, really, Linley! I suppose Bob Cherry can ask a fellow to tea if he likes," said Bunter. "I—I'm waiting for him now. Did—did Wharton give you that message from Quelch?"

"No; I haven't seen Wharton."

"He's looking for you. I heard Quelch tell him to ask you to come to his study," said Bunter airily. "Perhaps he ain't going to give you the message, though; he's got his back up with you since Quelch made you head boy in his place! He, he, he!"

"Oh, rats!" grunted Mark, and he left the study rather hurriedly.

It was quite on the cards that Harry Wharton had failed to deliver a message given him by his Form master; Wharton seemed to be perpetually on the hunt for trouble these days. Mark, willing to save him from trouble if he could, lost no time in repairing to Mr. Quelch's study.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

He waited anxiously till Mark Linley's footsteps had died away down the Remove passage. Then he turned to the cupboard again. But he had waited a little too long. There was another footstep, and the dusky, smiling

face of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, appeared in the doorway. The junior from India's coral strand stared at Bunter as he came in.

"My esteemed fat Bunter—" he began.

Bunter rose to the situation. It really seemed as if every beast in the Remove was determined to butt into that study before the fat Owl could get at the contents of Bob's parcel. Presence of mind was not Bunter's long suit, but on this occasion he displayed wonderful presence of mind.

"Oh, here you are, Inky!" he exclaimed. "I came here to tell you! Quelch wants you in his study."

"Bless and blow the esteemed Quelch!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh; but he stepped out of the study again, and went down the passage.

Bunter gasped with relief.

Three fellows who belonged to that study had come and gone, and the Owl of the Remove hoped that he had a clear field now. Little Wun Lung, who also belonged to Study No. 13, was teasing along the passage, as Bunter knew, and was not likely to butt in. Bunter turned to the cupboard again.

But it never rains but it pours. His fat fingers were on the string that tied the parcel when two fellows came in together—Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent. Bunter spun round again.

"Bob not here yet?" asked Frank.

"Eh! Oh! No!" gasped Bunter.

"He went down to Courtfield," said Johnny Bull. "But he must be back by now—it's lock-up!"

"I say, you fellows, I came here for you. I—I thought you'd be teasing with old Bob! Quelch wants you in his study."

"What the thump for?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"He didn't say what for!" answered Bunter, an answer that was, for once, perfectly true. Quelch certainly hadn't said what he wanted the juniors for, as he had not said that he wanted them at all!

"Better go," said Frank, and the two juniors walked out.

Bunter glared after them. By this time he had dispatched no fewer than five Remove fellows to the study of their Form master, who had not sent for any of them.

Truth and Bunter had long been strangers—they would not have known one another had they met! It was rather a risky proceeding to send fellows to their Form master for nothing; but the matter was pressing. Bunter had to be left alone in Study No. 13 to deal with the parcel.

Every one of those five fellows was certain to kick Bunter hard when he learned that he had been spoofed. Bunter was not unused to kicking; but this was rather a large order, and he did not like the prospect. Still, a parcel of tuck was worth it when he was fearfully hungry.

Hoping from the bottom of his fat heart that no more beasts would butt in, Bunter untied the string of the parcel. No more beasts butted in; he was left to it.

Hastily he unwrapped the wrapping paper. Within was a smaller bundle in tissue paper. Bunter grunted discontentedly. There did not seem much here to reward him for so many kickings in prospect! Still, such as it was, there it was, and he unwrapped the tissue paper hopefully.

Then— Then, as the poet observes, a change came o'er the spirit of his dream! It was not tuck! It was a bundle of crackers! Bunter had the

appetite of an ostrich—a not-too-particular ostrich! But even Bunter could not eat paper, fuse, and gunpowder! Hungry as he was, he really couldn't!

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

Red wrath gathered in his fat face. It was for this—a bundle of crackers that even an ostrich would have rejected as diet—that he had booked himself for five absolutely certain kickings, one of them from the fellow with the biggest feet in the Remove!

"Beast!" gasped Bunter. "Rotter! Brute! Sweep! Tick! Fireworks! The silly ass! The blithering dummy! Crackers! Yah!"

And, in a gust of wrath, Billy Bunter hurled the bundle of crackers with a crash across the study.

Crash!

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bunter. "Oh!"

It was rather reckless to hurl a bundle of crackers across a room with a blazing fire in it without looking where it was going to land.

It landed in the fire—right in!

Bunter jumped.

Bunter was not a bright youth. But he knew what the result was likely to be when a fellow dropped fireworks into a fire. He made a rush towards the

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grate to hook out the package before it was too late.

But it was too late already!

Bang!

Bunter jumped back.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang! BANG! The bundle of crackers were going off all at once, with a roar like machine-guns in action.

"Oh crikey!" spluttered Bunter.

He jumped out of the study and rolled away. That terrific explosion was audible all over the House, and Bunter knew that it would be followed by trouble for somebody. He had a natural disinclination to be on the spot when the trouble accrued. He rolled out of Study No. 13, and a volume of smoke and a strong scent of gunpowder rolled after him, to the accompaniment of bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!—from the last of the crackers.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Startling!

"WHARTON!"  
Harry Wharton, captain of the Remove, was standing in the presence of his Form master. His manner was more or less respectful; but there was a glimmer in his eyes, half of mockery, half of defiance. Why Quelch had sent for him he did not know, but he cared little. He was used to being sent for to his

Form master's study this term. Quelch had a "down" on him and never lost a chance. The rebel of the Remove told himself that it did not matter what his offence was this time, Quelch would find some offence or other, anyhow.

"I have sent for you, Wharton—"

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "What is it now?"

He stressed the last word in a tone that made the Remove master's eyes glint.

"You are well aware, Wharton, that although celebrations are allowed on the anniversary of Guy Fawkes' Day, no Lower boy is allowed to bring fireworks into the school until the actual day."

"Yes, sir."

"Such articles are dangerous," said Mr. Quelch. "A fire was once caused by an explosion of fireworks in a study. The rule is very strict. Yet I am informed that you have fireworks in your possession. A prefect of the Sixth Form has reported as much to me."

Wharton's lip curled. He did not need to inquire the prefect's name. His old enemy, Loder of the Sixth, had evidently had an eye on him and officiously reported him to his Form master. Any other prefect, like Wingate or Gwynne, would have dealt with the trifling matter personally without bothering a master.

"I did not know that Loder was watching me, sir, when I showed my squib to a fellow," he said.

"The name of the prefect is quite immaterial," said Mr. Quelch, biting his lip, however. "Lay your fireworks on the table."

Wharton drew a squib from his pocket and laid it on the table. It was probable that fifty other juniors had some such article in their possession, but the dutiful Loder had not troubled his head about them. Gerald Loder was not a whale on duty, as a rule, but he could be very dutiful indeed in dealing with a fellow he disliked.

"Is that all you have, Wharton?"

"That is all, sir."

"If you have any other fireworks in your study—"

"I have said that that is all, sir!" said Harry Wharton very distinctly.

"You must not answer me in that tone, Wharton. I regret to say that I cannot wholly rely upon your word," said Mr. Quelch coldly. "However, the matter may rest where it is. This firework will be confiscated, and you will take a hundred lines. And—"

Tap! There was a knock at the study door, and it opened. The ruddy face and mop of flaxen hair belonging to Robert Cherry of the Remove were revealed. Bob walked in.

"Well, Cherry," rapped Mr. Quelch rather sharply, "what is it?"

Bob did not look at Wharton. Once the firmest of friends, they were strangers now, if not foes. Trifling incidents had started the trouble, but it had gathered like a snowball rolling downhill; and since the day when blows had been struck they had carefully ignored one another. The Co. stood by Bob, and Wharton was left on his own, and did not—so far as appearances went, at least—care. Bob Cherry fixed his eyes on Mr. Quelch, and appeared to be ignorant of the fact that the captain of the Remove was in the study at all.

"You sent for me, sir!" said Bob.

"What? I have no recollection of sending for you, Cherry!" said Mr. Quelch crossly. "What do you mean?"

"Eh? I was told you wanted me in your study, sir!" said Bob, puzzled. "I came at once—almost at once."

"Nonsense!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "I certainly did not send for you. I—" Tap! The door opened again and Mark Linley entered. Mr. Quelch turned from Bob to look at him inquiringly. As head boy of the Remove, Mark might have had business in his Form master's study.

"Yes, Linley, what is it?" asked Mr. Quelch kindly.

"You sent for me, sir," said Mark.

"What?"

Wharton, as he had not yet been told to go, remained where he was. Bob Cherry remained for the same reason. Mark glanced at them and looked back at Mr. Quelch, on whose face signs of wrath were gathering. This began to look like a rag to the Remove master.

"I did not send for you, Linley! What—"

Tap! Hurree Jamset Ram Singh walked in. The dusky junior glanced in some surprise at the three fellows already in the study.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch testily. "What do you want, Hurree Singh?"

"You sent for me, esteemed sir," answered the Nabob of Bhanipur. "I have arrivefully come with terrific promptitude."

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet. His brows were knitted.

"Is this intended as a jest—a jest at the expense of your Form master?" he demanded.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's eyes opened wide.

"The jestfulness is not great, esteemed sahib," he answered. "On receiving your absurd message I came with ludicrous quickness."

"I sent you no message, Hurree Singh."

"Oh, my esteemed hat!" ejaculated the nabob.

"You are the third boy to come to my study with a statement that I sent for you," said Mr. Quelch in a rumbling voice. "And I can only say— Upon my word, what do you want, Bull? What do you want, Nugent?"

Johnny Bull tapped at the door and entered with Frank Nugent. They had lost no time in getting to the study. It did not pay to keep Quelch waiting when he sent for a fellow, and they were quite unaware that he had not sent for them. His question surprised them.

"You sent for me, sir!" said Johnny.

"What?"

"You sent for me, sir!" said Nugent.

"Upon my word!" Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted. He had no doubt now that it was a rag. "I sent for none of you! I conclude that this is a foolish, thoughtless, unseemly jest! I am surprised, I may say shocked, to see that my head boy is concerned in it."

Harry Wharton smiled sarcastically. For once, Quelch was not pleased with his new head boy. That sarcastic smile caught Quelch's eye; few things escaped the gimlet eye of Henry Samuel Quelch. It irritated him intensely.

"Wharton, do you regard this as a laughing matter?" he hooted.

"Oh, no, sir!" answered Wharton meekly. "I am shocked, just as you are, sir, to see Linley mixed up in a rag."

"But it is not a rag, sir!" exclaimed Mark Linley. "I was certainly told that you wanted me in your study, sir. I understood that you had told Wharton to tell me so, sir."

Mr. Quelch caught at that like a fish at bait! Only too willing was Quelch to turn the vials of wrath on the rebel of the Form.

"I think I understand!" he rapped.

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"Wharton, this is another example of your reckless and insubordinate conduct. You have deluded these boys into coming here with a false message from me."

"Not at all, sir!" answered Harry. "I had no idea they were ragging! I have not spoken to Linley to-day." He paused a moment, and then added, with cool deliberation: "If he says that I told him to come here he is lying!"

Mark flushed crimson.

"I shall certainly take Linley's word in preference to yours, Wharton!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "And—"

"Wharton did not tell me, sir," cut in Mark hurriedly. "I did not mean that, sir."

"What?" Switched off from Wharton, Mr. Quelch glared at his unfortunate head boy. "What do you mean, Linley? That was what you said, or, at least, implied!"

"I meant, sir, a fellow told me that you had told Wharton to tell me to come here," stammered Mark. "As he did not mention it to me, I thought he had—had forgotten!"

"Give me the name of— Bless my soul! What—what—what— Goodness gracious! What—what—what—"

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang! It was at this moment that the explosion happened in Study No. 13 in the Remove.

The Remove quarters were at a considerable distance from Masters' Studies, but the roar of a bundle of crackers all going off at once was heard over the whole House. Mr. Quelch jumped clear of the floor. The juniors started and exchanged glances. Bang, bang, bang, bang! rang merrily from the distance. The voice of Prout, master of the Fifth, was heard:

"An explosion—fireworks—yes, fireworks in the House! In the Remove studies—the noise comes from that direction. Really, this is—is—is scandalous!"

Mr. Quelch's eye glittered at Wharton.

"Wharton, you have told me that you had no other fireworks in your possession."

"That is true, sir!"

"I trust," said Mr. Quelch in a grinding voice, "that it will prove to be true! That fearful explosion undoubtedly came from a Remove study! We shall see! Follow me at once!"

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Quelch whisked out of the study, and Wharton smiled as he followed him. More likely than not there were fireworks in Remove studies, but there were none in Wharton's study. Wherever that explosion had originated, it could not have been in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

The Co. and Mark Linley followed on. Mr. Quelch went up the stairs at a speed quite creditable in a gentleman of his years. Plenty of fellows followed on. Hardly an ear in the House had failed to hear that terrific explosion of crackers.

Mr. Quelch strode across the Remove landing. He was quite prepared to find that the explosion had occurred in Study No. 1—Wharton's study! Such an outrage was quite in keeping with Wharton's conduct since the beginning of the term! But as he swept into the Remove passage Mr. Quelch saw a volume of smoke rolling from an open door much farther up the passage. That was the study—not Study No. 1, but Study No. 13—his head boy's study! Remove fellows who had been at tea crowded out into the passage.

"What ass has been letting off

crackers here?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "It's Cherry's study—"

"Here comes Quelch!" murmured Tom Redwing.

Quelch, with thunder in his brow, swept by. He stopped at the open doorway of Study No. 13 and stared into the study. A final cracker in the grate, catching a spark, went off with a bang! The room reeked with the smell of gunpowder; smoke was thick inside, and streaming out of the doorway. Mr. Quelch caught it as he stared in, and his first remark was:

"Urrrrgh! Groooogh! Yurrrriggh!"

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Vials of Wrath!

**M**R. QUELCH coughed and sneezed.

Some of the fellows in the passage grinned.

But some looked serious—the fellows to whom that study belonged. Bob Cherry was quite dismayed.

He knew what fireworks must have exploded. How on earth a parcel of crackers, which he had left wrapped up in the study cupboard, could have gone off like this, was a mystery; but there could be no doubt of it. There was no clue to the mystery, for Billy Bunter, like the crackers, had gone off! Bunter was safe in Study No. 7, hoping fervently that Quelch would never know that he had been in Study No. 13.

"Groogh! Atchoooh! Chooop!" came from Quelch. "Upon my word, this is—is scandalous! Open the window—clear off the smoke! Who has done this?"

Bob Cherry ran hastily into the study and threw the window wide open. Hurree Singh waved a sheet of paper to dissipate the smoke. Mr. Quelch entered the study, gasping a little. Fellows crowded round the doorway; among them Harry Wharton, with a cool smile on his face.

"The boys belonging to this study—" began Mr. Quelch. His eyes gleamed at Wharton in the doorway. "What do you want here, Wharton? This is not your study."

Wharton raised his eyebrows.

"You told me to follow you, sir," he answered. Mr. Quelch had forgotten that for the moment.

"Had you anything to do with this explosion, Wharton?" In that moment of intense exasperation Mr. Quelch probably hoped that he had!

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Then you are not wanted here! Go!"

"Very well, sir!"

Wharton pushed his way through the thickening crowd in the passage and went. He winked at some of the fellows in passing, and there was a subdued chuckle, which Mr. Quelch did not fail to hear.

"Linley!"

"Yes, sir!" said Mark.

"You are head boy of my Form! I trust you! It is your duty to set an example to the Form, not to take the lead in serious infractions of the rules!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Yet it is in your study that this outrageous explosion has occurred."

As Wharton obviously was not concerned in the matter at all, Quelch was "taking it out" of his head boy. He did not realise himself, but every fellow in the passage knew that he would much rather have taken it out of Wharton. Wharton being unavailable, Linley had the benefit.

"Is this what I have a right to expect of you, Linley?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Is this the conduct of a trusted head boy?"

"But I—I—I never—" stammered the unfortunate Mark.

"This is your study—you must have known that the fireworks were here—"

"I—I did not—"

"They were mine, sir," exclaimed Bob Cherry hastily. One glance into the cupboard had shown him that his parcel was gone.

"Yours, Cherry? You confess—"

"Yes, sir! I—I brought them in—I—I can't imagine how they went off. Some ass—I mean, some fellow—must have been larking—" stammered Bob.

Cherry! I shall hold you responsible if there are any more accidents. It is your duty to see that the rules are not recklessly transgressed. Bear that in mind!"

With that the Remove master swept out of the study. Fellows in the passage who were grinning promptly ceased to grin until he was gone.

"Well, my only hat!" said Bob Cherry in dismay.

"The only-hatfulness is terrific!"

Mark Linley stood crimson with discomfort and mortification. He had been "slanged" before nearly all the Remove, and really he was not to blame.

"You ass, Bob!" he said. "What the thump did you bring fireworks in for?"

larked with my crackers! I'll scalp him! I'll burst him! Five bob's worth of crackers wasted—and 500 lines! I'll spifficate him!"

Five fellows tramped down the passage, through a laughing crowd, in search of Bunter. Bob hurled open the door of Study No. 7.

"Bunter!" he roared.

"Oh! I—I say, you fellows, I—I'm not here—"

"You fat scoundrel!" roared Johnny Bull. "You sent us to Quelch—"

"I—I—I didn't!"

"What?"

"I—I mean it—it was only a joke, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "You can take a j-j-joke! He, he, ho! I never



Bunter rushed towards the fire to hook out the bundle of fireworks. But he was too late! Bang, bang, bang! The crackers were going off all at once, with a roar like machine-guns in action. "Oh crikey!" spluttered the fat Remove, leaping out of the danger zone.

"You will take 500 lines, Cherry, for bringing fireworks into the House against the rules!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"And you, Linley—"

"Linley never knew, sir—" cut in Bob.

"Silence, Cherry! How dare you interrupt me! Another word and I shall cane you! Linley, these fireworks were in your study—brought in by your study-mate! You are head boy of the Remove, yet you allowed this! You see for yourself how dangerous it is to keep explosives in a study—the room might have been set on fire! You are very much to blame! You are not an unthinking boy like Cherry—I should never have made you my head boy if you had been! I am seriously displeased with you."

"But, sir, I—"

"You need make no excuses, Linley! You are very much to blame! Listen to me! Other boys in the Remove may have been as reckless and foolish as

"For the Fifth of November, old chap!"

"You've got me into a precious row! If you had to have fireworks here, you might have put them at a safe distance from the fire."

"So I jolly well did!" exclaimed Bob warmly. "I left them in a parcel in the cupboard."

"Did they walk across to the fire?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Oh, don't be a fathead! Some silly ass has been larking—and I jolly well know who it was!" roared Bob. "Where's Bunter?"

"Bunter?"

"That fat villain pulled my leg, and sent me to Quelch! I know now why he did it!" bawled Bob.

"Oh, my hat! It was Bunter sent us!" exclaimed Nugent.

"And me!" said Mark.

"And my esteemed and absurd self—"

"The—the fat porker!" gasped Bob. "He was clearing the study while he

touched the parcel! I—I wouldn't, you know! That wasn't why I said Quelch wanted you! Besides, I thought there was tuck in it! How was I to know that a silly idiot was bringing in fireworks for tea—I mean at tea-time—"

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

"You let off the crackers!" roared Bob.

"I didn't!" yelled Bunter. "I never pitched them across the study—and if they fell into the fire, it was a sheer accident. Besides, you shouldn't have fireworks in the study. It's against the rules. It made me nearly jump out of my skin when they went banging. Not that I had anything to do with it, you know. I left the study before they went off—left them safe in the cupboard. The fact is I never touched the parcel at all. I say, you fellows—Whooooop!"

Bump!

"Yarooooop!"

"Kick him!"

"Give a fellow room!"

"Look here, it's my turn—"

"The terrific kickfulness—"

"Yaroooh! Help! I say, Toddy, rescue, old chap! Whoop! I never did it—I wasn't in the—whoop!—study. Leave off kicking me, you beasts! Yarooop!"

Billy Bunter had had a misgiving that he would be kicked. That misgiving proved to be well founded. He was kicked and kicked again and yet again—in fact, as the Nabob of Bhanipur declared, the kickfulness was terrific. By the time the indignant five left him, sprawling and roaring on the floor of Study No. 7, they were quite tired. But they were not so tired as Bunter!

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Shouting for It!

"**W**HAT have you got there?"

"Crackers!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Crackers!"

repeated

Harry Wharton innocently.

"Well, my only chapeau!" ejaculated Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, in blank astonishment.

It was near time for prep in the Remove, and most of the fellows were in the passage, a few in the studies. Wharton had just come up.

Under his arm was a small, oblong package that might have contained almost anything. It was wrapped in common wrapping-paper and tied with string. The captain of the Remove had, apparently, brought it up to his study—but was not in a hurry to deposit it there. He lounged across the Remove landing and stopped in the passage to exchange a word with a fellow here or there. If his object was to draw inquiry

as to what he had in the package, he succeeded perfectly. Smithy asked the question out of sheer good nature. If Wharton was "asking for it" again, Smithy wanted to tip him to be wary. After what had happened in Study No. 13, even the reckless Bounder would not have ventured to smuggle fireworks into the Remove quarters.

Linley, as head boy, had been specially ordered to report any such further infraction of the rules to his Form master. Mr. Quelch had announced that any boy found with fireworks in his study would be sent to Dr. Locke for a flogging. That was enough even for reckless Removites. Risk of fires in the studies they were ready to run, with the thoughtlessness of exuberant youth, but the certainty of a beak's whopping was quite another matter.

Skinuer observed that if, after that, any fellow asked for it, it would be Wharton—he was the man to ask! And several fellows wondered whether Skinner was right, as Wharton was seen with that package under his arm. But Wharton's cool and careless answer when Vernon-Smith put the question took them by surprise. Wharton seemed not only asking for it—but shouting for it!

Mark Linley was in the passage and he heard Wharton's answer—perhaps was intended to hear it. Anyhow, he could not help hearing it, and he looked round, colouring uncomfortably. Wharton did not seem to see him; he had a way of ignoring the fellow who had taken his place as head boy of the Remove. Some fellows glanced curiously at Mark. They had heard Quelch's orders to his head boy—orders that Linley could scarcely disregard.

Lord Mauleverer strolled along the passage and tapped the captain of the Remove on the arm. Wharton gave

him a smile. Old Mauly was the only fellow in the Form whom the wayward junior seemed still to like.

"Chuck it, old bean!" muttered Mauly. "Quelch has his rag out, and he's got an eye on you! If he gets wind of this—"

"I don't mind if he does!"

"No, I know you don't, old thing," assented Mauleverer. "But a Head's floggin' is no joke. Cut it out, old man. Loder may be up any minute, too."

"I'm not afraid of Loder."

"Of course not, old fellow." Mauleverer spoke soothingly, as if to a child. "But don't let him catch you on the hop. Look here, hand me that packet, and I'll get shut of it for you."

"But it's got my crackers in it, old chap!" said Wharton. "I'm going to keep them in my study."

"Well, if you will beg for it—" sighed Lord Mauleverer. And he drifted away, giving it up. Mauly never insisted on anything—insistence was too much fag for his lazy lordship.

"Look here, Wharton, don't be an ass!" said the Bounder in a low voice. "Between ourselves, Quelch would have been jolly glad to nail you for that shindy in Study No. 13 if it had been possible."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Don't I know it?" he answered.

"Well, don't give him a chance," urged the Bounder. "Loder's keener on it than Quelch, too. If you've forgotten punchin' Loder of the Sixth in the eye, I can tell you that Loder hasn't. Take my tip and chuck it."

Wharton shook his head.

At a little distance he could see his former friends—Bob and Johnny, Frank Nugent and the nabob. They were looking towards him, though he affected to be unaware of it. But they did not approach him or speak to him. Except in football matters, where they had to come in touch with the captain of the Form, the Co. had nothing to do with Wharton these days.

Probably they were concerned about the wayward fellow. His old and bitter enemy, Loder of the Sixth, was on duty that evening for Lower Fourth prep, and might appear any minute in the studies. If Loder's eye fell on that package under Wharton's arm he was certain to inquire what was in it—and then all the fat would be in the fire.

Wharton did not seem to care. He was not even in haste to get the package out of sight into his study. Some fellows guessed that he was seeking to "draw" the new head boy of the Form—to compel Mark Linley to exercise his authority. Mark evidently wanted to keep clear of the matter and avoid a dispute. But he was in a difficult position. He could have taken no notice of the package itself, but he could scarcely affect not to have heard Wharton's statement of what it contained.

He came towards the captain of the Remove at last. Wharton assumed a complete ignorance of his existence till he spoke; then he glanced at him coolly and contemptuously.

"This won't do, Wharton," said Mark quietly. "You'd better hand over that packet to me; I'll put it safe out of doors, and let you have it back on the Fifth."

"Thanks, I can take care of my own property," answered Wharton carelessly.

"You know what Quelch said—"

"Quelch says such a lot of things," drawled Wharton. "Which of his words of giddy wisdom do you mean this time?"

"I've got to report any fireworks in these studies. You know there was an

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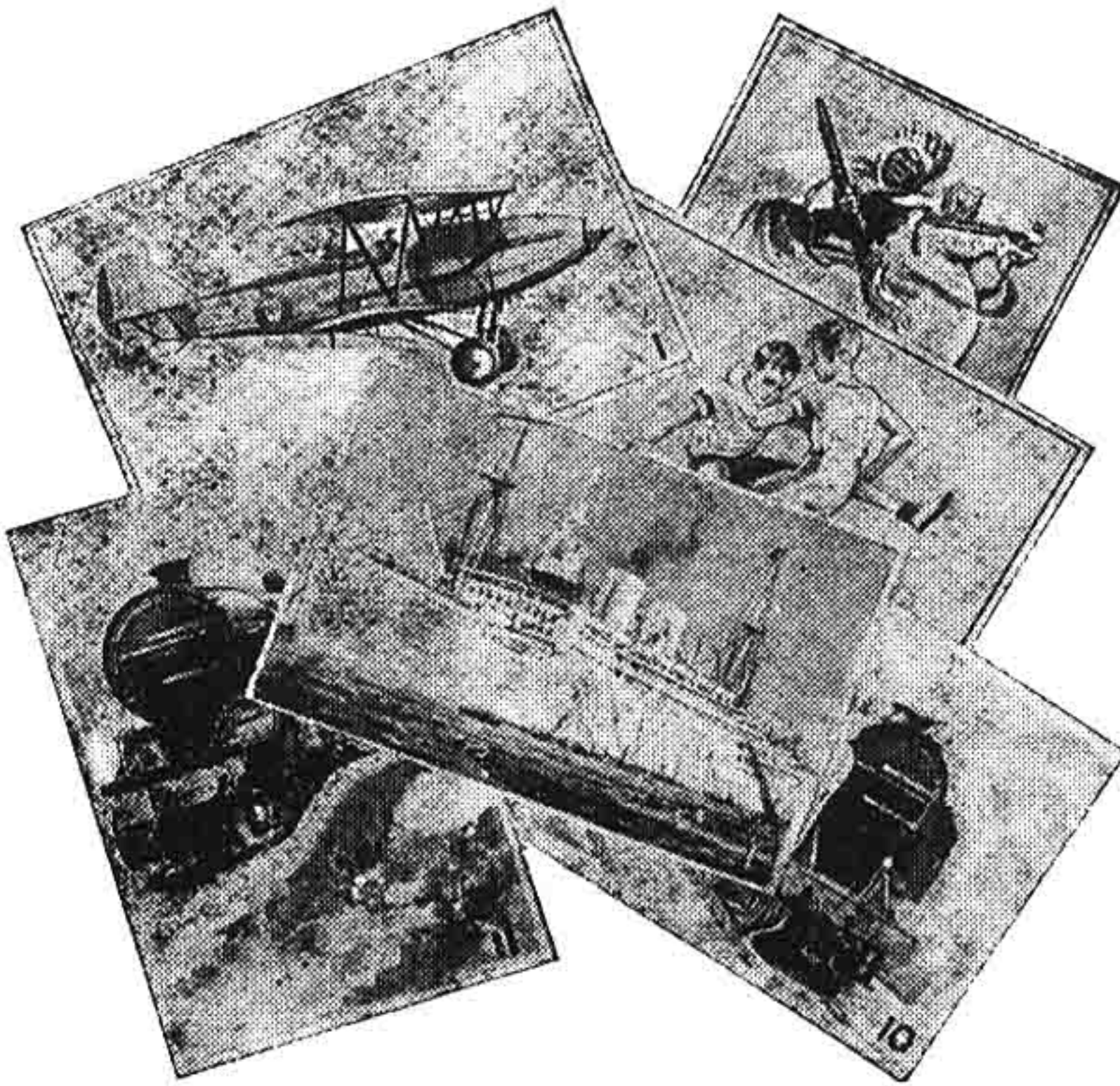
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explosion a few hours ago in my study—

"Yes. I'm surprised at you! Head boy of the Form should know better. Still, you needn't be afraid of Quelch; you've greased up to him pretty thoroughly."

Mark bit his lip.

"We won't argue about that," he said. "Will you hand over those crackers?"

"No, I won't."

"You know I shall have to report you, after what Quelch said."

"Report—and be blowed!" answered Wharton cheerfully. "Jump to it, Linley! It will give you a leg-up with Quelch if you succeed in getting me a beak's whopping! Don't lose a chance like this!"

"I say, you fellows, Loder's coming up!" squeaked Billy Bunter. Loder was in the offing on the Remove staircase.

There was a deep breath among the Removites. With Loder on the scene, the matter was getting serious. Mark might hesitate to report the reckless rebel, in spite of his Form master's strict instructions and his duty as head boy; but Loder was a Sixth Form prefect, and well known to have a malicious and inimical eye on Wharton. Loder had not forgotten—and was not likely to forget—that he had been knocked down in the quad by the rebel of the Remove.

"For goodness' sake, Wharton, don't be a fool!" whispered Mark. "Give me the crackers—or, at least, get them out of sight!"

"Loder will be here in a tick—chance for you to make your report," suggested Wharton, with a sneer. "Aren't you keen on it?"

Mark breathed hard, turned away, and walked to his own study. Evidently he had made up his mind not to inter-

fore further in the matter. Harry Wharton looked after him, and laughed.

"Cheeky ass, to think I'd hand him my crackers!" he exclaimed, apparently unconscious of the fact that Loder of the Sixth was now on the Remove landing and in hearing of an unsubdued voice in the passage. Wharton's voice was not in the least subdued.

Loder was seen to give a start. His eyes gleamed, and he came quickly into the passage. Wharton turned into his study and disappeared from sight.

But the fat was in the fire now! It was useless for him to get the package out of sight after what Loder had heard him say.

"Well," Smithy murmured to Tom Redwing, "Wharton's the man to ask for it! Does he enjoy whoppings?"

"Looks like it," muttered Redwing. "I wish he'd have a little more sense! I believe he meant Loder to hear that!"

"Anyhow, he heard it," grinned the Bounder. "He's on the jolly old trail!"

Loder of the Sixth came up to the open doorway of Study No. 1. The juniors in the passage looked on with keen interest. Fellows who had gone into their rooms to begin prep came out again. Almost all the Remove were in the passage now, thrilling with excitement.

"Wharton!" rapped out Loder.

"Here!" came Harry's voice from within Study No. 1.

He reappeared in the doorway of the study. There was no package to be seen now. But some wrapping-paper and a piece of string dangled in his hand. Apparently he had unwrapped the package.

"Anything wanted?" he asked coolly.

"Yes, you are!" said the bully of the Sixth grimly. "Hand over any fireworks you've got in your study, and come with me to your Form master."

"I'll come with you to my Form master with pleasure, Loder, if you want me to. But I can't hand over any fireworks!"

"What? I order you—"

"Because I haven't any!" explained Wharton.

"What?" gasped Loder.

"There are no fireworks in my study!" said Wharton.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Thrilling!

**L**ODER of the Sixth stared at the cool, careless-looking junior in the doorway of Study No. 1.

A score of fellows in the passage stared at him. Some of them grinned and some looked contemptuous. A fellow who was caught out was not expected to tell untruths. Wharton was really the last fellow in the Form who might have been expected to lie himself out of a scrape. He had changed much this term, and not for the better. But nobody supposed that the change had gone so deep as that. Yet if this was not a direct falsehood it was difficult to say what it was!

Loder himself was not very particular in matters of the truth. But even Loder was shocked and disgusted at this.

"Well, you lying little scoundrel," said Loder at last, "I may as well tell you that I heard what you said as I came up."

"Did you?" asked Wharton indifferently.

"Linley!" shouted Loder.

Mark Linley came back down the passage, with a harassed expression on his face.

"Yes, Loder!"

"You've been ordered to report any fireworks in this passage, after what happened this afternoon. You knew that Wharton had fireworks—he said so. Were you going to report him?"

Mark made no answer.

"I shall mention this to your Form master, Linley," said Loder.

"Very well, Loder," said Mark, in a low voice. He suppressed a sigh. He did not "grease" to Quelch, as Wharton believed, or chose to believe, but he did value his Form master's good opinion, and he did not want any more slanging from Quelch.

"Now, Wharton, hand over those fireworks at once!" rapped Loder.

"What fireworks?" asked Wharton innocently.

"Don't bandy words with me, you young rascal! Hand them over or I shall search your study for them!"

"You can search the study if you like, Loder, of course. I deny that I have any fireworks in the room at all!"

"Stop telling lies, for goodness' sake," said Loder, in disgust—and he pushed Wharton aside and strode into the study.

"I say, you fellows, what a fibber!" ejaculated Billy Bunter. "I say, you all heard him tell Smithy there were crackers in that packet—"

"Shut up, ass!" hissed Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy! Wharton's made out more than once that I tell whoppers!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Well, what do you think of him now, saying there's no fireworks in his study when we all heard him say—Whoop!"

Bunter broke off as Squiff stamped on his foot, and yelled.

"Will you shut up, fathead?" growled Squiff.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Bunter's fat voice had been heard by Loder in Study No. 1, of course. It would have convinced him—if he had needed convincing—that Wharton had been lying. It was plain to him that every fellow in the buzzing crowd knew that Wharton had crackers in Study No. 1.

Wharton lounged against the doorpost with his hands in his pockets, his face cool and careless. Fellows could not help admiring his nerve. It was a flogging when Loder found the fireworks. And he could scarcely fail to find them if they were in the study.

"I'll lend you some exercise-books to put in your bags, old bean," said Harold Skinner. "You'll need 'em!"

"Thanks!" said Wharton imperturbably. "I don't think I shall! I hardly fancy that Loder will find any fireworks here."

"Where the thump have you hidden them, then?" asked Ogilvy. "We saw you take the packet into the study."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Old bean, you've got me beat!" murmured Lord Mauleverer, joining Wharton again. "My jolly old brain won't handle it! Loder thinks you're tellin' lies!"

"Don't you?" smiled Wharton.

Maully shook his head.

"I know you're not," he answered placidly. "But I don't get it! Too much for a fellow's intellect."

"You silly ass, Maully!" said Skinner. "You jolly well know the chap's telling whoppers! He said there were crackers in the parcel. He took the parcel into his study—it's there now—and he says there are no fireworks in the study. How can it be anything but whoppers, you burbling ass?"

"I don't know the answer to that one," answered Lord Mauleverer. "Too much for my feeble old brain. But Wharton doesn't tell fibs, Skinner—nothin' in your line at all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly chump!" hooted Skinner. "You'll see Loder trot out with the crackers in another minute."

"Bow-wow!" said Lord Mauleverer.

Fellows in the Remove considered Maully rather an ass; yet often old Maully had been right when cleverer fellows were wrong. But how even an ass like Maully could believe Wharton now was rather a mystery. It seemed that he must have spoken untruthfully, either in saying that there were crackers in the parcel or in denying that there were fireworks in the study. But on the horns of that dilemma old Maully simply relied on his unfailing instinct. He knew that Wharton was no liar, and left it at that.

Every other fellow in the passage, however, expected to see Loder emerge from the study with fireworks in his possession.

Loder seemed rather a long time on his search. He reappeared in view at last empty-handed. He had searched the study cupboard, and found there a slice of ham and a packet of dry biscuits, apparently intended for supper. He had searched the window-seat and a box, and the bookcase. Nothing of a contraband nature had turned up. Loder was impatient and perplexed, and getting very angry.

"Wharton!" he snarled. "Where are those fireworks? Point out at once where you've hidden them, you young rascal!"

"There are no hiding-places in my study, Loder," said Wharton, in a cool, clear voice. "I never have to hide cigarettes or anything away, as I believe is the case in some studies."

There was a ripple of laughter along the crowded passage.

"A hit—a palpable hit!" the Bounder whispered to Redwing.

Plenty of fellows knew, or suspected, that Gerald Loder kept smokes in his own study.

"Will you tell me where those fireworks are hidden?" roared Loder furiously.

"I've told you I have none!"

"You miserable little liar!" hissed Loder. "Every fellow here knows that you have! Linley!"

"Yes, Loder!"

"Go down and call Mr. Quelch! Tell him I specially request him to step up to Wharton's study, as Wharton has fireworks hidden here!"

"Very well!"

Mark went down the stairs.

There was a buzz in the Remove. It was time for prep now, but no fellow was thinking of prep. Excitement was growing more intense. Evidently—to the Removites—Wharton had hidden those crackers very effectually. But if

Loder had failed to find them, it was not likely that Quelch would fail!

"Quelch will get his teeth into this!" whispered Smithy.

There was a hush as Mr. Quelch's majestic head was seen to rise into view on the Remove staircase. The Remove master had lost no time in getting on the scene. The glint in his eyes was not to be mistaken. He had never quite believed that that single, solitary squib was all the fireworks the rebel of the Form had in his possession. Now he had received positive information, after his formal warning that such an offence would be punished by a Head's flogging! Wharton was "for" it now!

"Loder, you have found—"

"I've found nothing so far, sir," said Loder. "Wharton denies that there are fireworks hidden in his study. But all the boys here know."

Mr. Quelch glanced round at the Removites. They made their faces as expressionless as possible; but it was easy for the Form master to read what they knew—or believed that they knew! His gimlet eye fixed on the captain of the Remove.

"Wharton, you deny that there are fireworks in your study?"

"Yes, sir!"

"What reason have you to believe, Loder—"

"The boy's own words, sir. I heard him speaking of crackers in his possession as I came up. Linley knew he had them, and should have reported it to you."

"Linley, were you aware that Wharton had fireworks here?"

"I—I heard him say so, sir! I never saw them," said Mark. "I did not think myself bound to report what he said."

"You should have ascertained the fact!" said Mr. Quelch sharply. "You have not forgotten my instructions, Linley! There has already been one dangerous explosion in this passage which might have caused a fire in the House! Did you take no notice of the matter at all?"

"I asked Wharton to hand over the packet to me, sir."

"What packet?"

"The packet of crackers, sir."

"Wharton had a packet of crackers, and you saw it?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I saw the packet, sir, and Wharton said there were crackers in it when Vernon-Smith asked him. But I did not see—"

"You hardly needed to see what was in the packet after Wharton's own admission of what it contained! You have not done your duty, Linley! I am glad to see that you, Loder, have more sense of duty than my head boy!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Loder smoothly. "In view of your very particular orders on the subject, sir, I felt bound to take the matter up."

"Undoubtedly! Wharton, where have you concealed your fireworks?"

"I have concealed no fireworks, sir."

"What—what! You have heard what Linley has said! Dare you persist that there are no fireworks in your study?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly, sir! I have had no fireworks to-day except the squib I handed over in your study."

"You dare to say so?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

"I shall search your study personally! You will aid me, Loder! Wharton, you are guilty of the most dishonourable prevarication!"

"Indeed, sir!"

Mr. Quelch passed him, with a glare.

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and whisked into the study. Form master and prefect proceeded on a search together—a search so thorough and so meticulous that it seemed impossible that the smallest firework could escape detection.

Harry Wharton, leaning on the wall beside the doorway, winked at the staring fellows in the passage. There was a chuckle, and then, as Mr. Quelch glared out, sudden silence. And, in tense excitement, the Removites waited for the result of the search.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Cream Crackers!

**“WHARTON!”** Mr. Quelch's voice as he called was not loud, but deep.

“Yes, sir!”

“Come into the study!”

“Certainly, sir!”

Harry Wharton stepped into Study No. 1. The Removites closed up round the doorway, eager to see what followed. The general expectation was that the fireworks had been found, and that Wharton was to be taken to the headmaster.

But a look at Mr. Quelch's speaking countenance banished that idea. He was angry, puzzled, perplexed, intensely irritated. Loder was angry and disappointed. Nothing, obviously, had been found. It was amazing, for it was certain that Quelch would have left no stone unturned. If the fireworks were in the study, surely his gimlet eye would have unearthed them. But the search had plainly been a failure, and now, it seemed, the Remove master hoped to elicit information from the fellow accused.

“I have failed to find forbidden articles in this study, Wharton,” said Mr. Quelch.

“I have told you that there are none here, sir,” said Wharton mildly. His voice was gentle as a cooing dove's.

The soft answer is said to turn away wrath. It did not have that effect on Mr. Quelch's. Rather, it had the effect of a red rag on a bull!

“Do not repeat palpable falsehoods, Wharton!” exclaimed the Remove master. “I will not listen to them! On your own statements, you are in possession of fireworks! I command you to inform me where they are concealed.”

“As I have none, sir—”

“Silence!” exclaimed Mr. Quelch in a formidable voice. “I will not hear these falsehoods! Nugent, you share this study with Wharton! Are you aware of any hidden and secret place in this room?”

“No, sir!” answered Frank Nugent.

“Is there a loose board in the floor, or anything of that kind?”

“Not that I know of, sir.”

“Have you any idea where Wharton has concealed his fireworks?”

“Not the slightest, sir.”

There was no help from Wharton's study-mate. He stood back again at an angry gesture from his Form master. Quelch was getting into a goaded state now. To punish a fellow—even the mutineer of the Form—on suspicion of an offence which he explicitly denied was scarcely practicable. Evidence of some kind had to be found. Both Quelch and Loder were convinced that the evidence was there, close at hand, if they could only have set eyes on it. It was intensely exasperating. One glance at the packed faces at the doorway told Quelch that all the juniors believed that the fireworks were there,

and that he had somehow missed them in his search. Yet how could he have missed them? What cunning hiding-place could have escaped his gimlet eye?

“Wharton”—Mr. Quelch's voice was almost husky with suppressed anger—“I command you to reveal the secret hiding-place in this study!”

“I know of none, sir!”

“Where have you concealed the fireworks?” almost shrieked Mr. Quelch.

“I have no fireworks, sir! I know of none in the Remove passage at all, except those that exploded this afternoon in your head boy's study, sir.”

The Removites almost gasped at this. Wharton was venturing to give Quelch a “dig” on the subject of his head boy!

“Very well, Wharton! Very well, indeed!” Quelch seemed near choking. “You persist in denying the obvious facts!”

“I persist in telling the truth, sir!” said Harry.

“The truth!” murmured Skinner to Snoop. “The truth, old bean! My only hat!”

And Snoop suppressed a giggle.

“I have not yet finished!” said Mr. Quelch. “You will not defeat the ends

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goes to Ian Gourlay, of 93, Victoria Road, Kirkcaldy, Fife, who submitted the following Greyfriars limerick:

Said Wharton to Cherry one day,  
“Let's go to the gym and be gay  
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But weak hearts had best stay  
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of justice so easily as this, you rebellious and disrespectful boy! Where is the packet that Linley states you brought into this study? You deny the possession of fireworks—do you deny the possession of the packet which was seen in your hands?”

“Not at all, sir!”

“Did you, or did you not, state, when asked, that that packet contained fireworks?”

Wharton paused a moment. The juniors hung on his reply. Half the Remove had heard what he said to the Bounder.

“No, sir!” said Wharton, at length.

“Fan me!” murmured Vernon-Smith.

“You—you—you did not?” gasped Mr. Quelch. “You deny what is perfectly well known to all the boys present?”

“I deny that I said there were fireworks in the packet, sir!” answered Wharton steadily. “Why not ask the fellow to whom I spoke, sir? Vernon-Smith will remember what I said.”

“Vernon-Smith, you asked Wharton what his packet contained?”

“Yes, sir,” said the Bounder reluctantly.

“What was his reply?”

The Bounder was silent. He was not going to give a fellow away, even under the terrifying frown of Henry Samuel Quelch.

“Cough it up, Smithy,” said Harry

quietly. “I've no objection—I want you to tell Mr. Quelch what I said, so that he will know the facts.”

“Wharton said crackers, sir!” answered the Bounder.

“You are sure that he said crackers?”

“Oh, yes, sir!”

“Do you deny this, Wharton?”

“Not at all, sir!”

“Ah! You confess, at last, that you admitted that there were fireworks in the packet?” exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

“Oh, no, sir! There were no fireworks in the packet,” said Harry, with cheerful coolness.

“Are you in your senses, boy? Were there, or were there not, crackers in the packet?” almost roared Mr. Quelch.

“Yes, sir!”

“That is enough! After all your miserable prevarication, Wharton, you have admitted the truth! Whether the crackers are discovered or not is immaterial. I shall take you to the Head at once.”

“Do you wish to take the crackers also, sir?” asked Harry, with a coolness that was quite icy. “They are in the cupboard if you want them, sir.”

“They are not in the cupboard—the cupboard has been searched—but if you choose to reveal them, I will allow you to do so.”

“I left them in the cupboard, sir.”

“That is another falsehood, sir,” said Loder. “Both of us have searched the cupboard, and there is nothing in it but some ham and biscuits.”

“Shall I point them out, sir?” asked Wharton demurely.

“If they are there, certainly!” snapped Mr. Quelch.

Wharton stepped to the study cupboard. Under the eyes of Mr. Quelch and Loder, and of as many fellows as could cram into the doorway, he pointed to an oblong paper packet in the study cupboard, which bore the celebrated name of Huntley and Palmer.

“There, sir!” he said meekly.

“Is this—is—is—this insolence, Wharton? What do you mean? You are pointing to a packet of biscuits!” raved Mr. Quelch.

“Yes, sir—my crackers!”

“Your what?”

“My crackers, sir—my cream-crackers,” said Wharton innocently. “I bought them from Mrs. Mible at the school shop, sir, for supper. I hope there is no harm in buying biscuits for supper, sir.”

Mr. Quelch's jaw dropped.

He gazed at the packet of biscuits—he discerned on the paper that contained them the words “Cream Crackers! Huntley and Palmer, Reading.” He gazed—he stared—he goggled—he almost gibbered.

That oblong packet of cream crackers had been under his eyes, and Loder's, all the time. There had been no concealment—Wharton had unwrapped the brown-paper from the parcel after taking it into the study. His answer to the Bounder, that the packet contained crackers, was true! There are crackers—and crackers—but certainly no fellow had dreamed that his crackers were cream-crackers—the harmless and necessary biscuit!

There was an instant of silence. Then, as the Remove fellows realised how gorgeously the leg of a prefect and a Form master had been pulled, there was a roar of laughter that woke every echo of the passage. Mr. Quelch's presence could not restrain it. The fellows roared—they fairly howled:

“Ha, ha, ha!”

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## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

## Not Guilty!

**K**IK - KIK - CREAM — cream crackers!" stuttered the Bounder. "Oh, my hat! This is too jolly rich! Kik-kik-cream crackers! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites. Harry Wharton did not laugh. His face was quiet and grave, though his eyes glimmered. Lord Mauleverer, grinning, gave him a rather reproachful look. Mauly had been utterly perplexed, for he, like the rest, had never dreamed that the packet of "crackers" would turn out to contain the variety of biscuits called "cream crackers." Puzzled as he was, Mauly's faith in Wharton had never wavered. He was impervious to evidence.

"Oh gad!" murmured Mauly. "It's too bad—ha, ha, ha!—it's too jolly thick, you know—ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared along the passage. Fellows downstairs heard that Homeric outburst of merriment and wondered what joke was on in the Remove.

"I say, you fellows," came Billy Bunter's squeak. "I say, Wharton's pulled Quelch's leg a treat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch, standing petrified in Study No. 1, gazed at the packet of biscuits for long seconds. Loder stood fairly quivering with rage. Both the master and the prefect realised what utter asses they looked. They had searched a junior study—searched and searched again—delayed prep—caused unbounded excitement—and all for nothing—all because of a trifling play on words—a pun—a jesting deception! They did not need that roar of laughter in the passage to tell them that they looked asses, and that the episode would become a standing joke for a long time to come. Loder was feeling apprehensive as well as furious, for he had called Quelch on the scene—he was responsible for the Remove master looking a fool to his Form.

Quelch found his voice at last. He turned a look on Wharton that might have scared any junior. Wharton met it with absolute calmness, and an expression of meek respect on his face that fairly goaded Mr. Quelch.

"Wharton! You—you say that—that those biscuits were contained in the packet you brought into this study, and which you stated contained crackers?"

"Yes, sir! Cream crackers, sir—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch, in a voice that banished merriment. "Wharton, when you stated that that packet contained crackers, but did not specify cream crackers, you intended to cause a misunderstanding."

"Do you think so, sir?" asked Wharton.

"I am absolutely assured of it," said Mr. Quelch savagely. "You have deliberately caused a deception—"

"I'm sure Smithy will excuse me, if I pulled his leg, sir," said Wharton meekly.

"What? What do you mean? What has Vernon-Smith to do with it?"

"It was Vernon-Smith I told that the packet contained crackers, sir. I told no one else. I can have deceived no one else, I suppose, only Vernon-Smith," said Wharton innocently.

The Bounder winked joyously at the fellows in the passage. He was enjoying this to the full. Wharton "had" his Form master—there was no doubt about that. He had him all along the line.

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"Did you think I meant the firework kind of cracker, Smithy?" asked Harry.

"Well, yes, rather!" grinned the Bounder.

"Sorry, old man, if I took you in," said Wharton gravely. "Merely a little joke—rather a feeble one, I admit. But no harm done."

"None at all!" chortled the Bounder.

Mark Linley was grinning, he could not help it. He was deeply glad that he had not, after all, reported those "fireworks"—which had turned out to be the harmless and necessary Huntley and Palmer. He knew now that Wharton had intended him to report—to make a fool of him—and that as he had not risen to the bait, Loder had been hooked instead. But Loder was a bigger fish to hook—and in his turn he had dragged Quelch into it—Wharton had reason to be satisfied with the result.

For a minute's reflection convinced Mr. Quelch that this young rascal could not possibly be punished.

It was only Smithy whom he had told that there were "crackers" in the packet. Loder had overheard and misunderstood. Wharton had denied all along that there were fireworks in his study. He had not denied that there were "crackers" there—cream crackers!

Mr. Quelch stood silent, looking at Wharton! How was he to punish a junior for saying to another junior that he had crackers in a parcel—when he had, in fact, cream crackers there? That was all that Wharton had done!

The look on Quelch's face checked merriment. But it was barely suppressed, ready to break out again. Every man in the Remove was enjoying this.

"Loder, you might really have ascertained the facts, before calling me on the scene." Quelch had to find a victim, and Loder was the only one to be found. "You have acted very thoughtlessly."

Loder gritted his teeth.

"Wharton meant me to hear what he said," he muttered savagely. "He meant to take me in—he meant—"

"No doubt," said Mr. Quelch bitterly. "But a remark by one junior boy to another was not a sufficient cause for calling me here. You have wasted my time, Loder! You have acted thoughtlessly and foolishly. You had better go."

Loder went—with feelings too deep for words. Mr. Quelch followed him from the study. He was chiefly anxious to get out of sight now.

"May I keep my crackers, sir?" asked

Wharton respectfully. He was rubbing it in.

"You may certainly keep your biscuits, Wharton. You know that very well," said Mr. Quelch, in a choking voice, and he rustled away to the Remove staircase. He turned on the landing. "Go into your studies at once, all of you—you are late for preparation already!"

Grinning fellows went into their studies.

Mr. Quelch whisked down the stairs and disappeared.

From every study in the Remove, after he was gone, came sounds of merriment. Any stranger dropping into the Remove passage that evening might have fancied that the juniors found prep very amusing.

"I say, you fellows, cream crackers!" chortled Billy Bunter. "Cream crackers, you know! Cream crackers! He, he, he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good job you never reported to Quelch, after all, Marky!" said Bob Cherry, chuckling, in Study No. 13.

"I'm afraid Wharton wanted me to," said Mark, laughing. "Lucky I didn't! Loder jumped at the chance. He was welcome to it."

"Ha, ha, ha! Poor old Loder!"

"The poorfulness of the esteemed old Loder is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

In Study No. 4 the Bounder chuckled loud and long.

"Ain't he a coughdrop, Reddy?" he asked. "Ain't he a prize-packet? Crackers—cream crackers! Loder fairly bit on it—and Quelch was gloating, just gloating! And it was all a spoof! Ha, ha, ha!"

Redwing laughed, but he shook his head.

"It's a dangerous game," he said. "Quelch went away as wild as a tiger—Wharton's asking for it."

"Shouting for it!" agreed the Bounder. "He will get it sooner or later—right in the jolly old neck! Jevver see a man look such a fool as Quelch looked? Ha, ha, ha!" The Bounder wiped his eyes. "They can't touch him—you can't whop a man for saying he's got crackers—cream crackers—and Wharton never did anything else—Loder and Quelch did the rest! Ha, ha, ha!"

After prep, when the Removites went down to the Rag, there was loud laughter in that apartment. Shell and Fourth Form fellows were told about it, and they roared with laughter. The Fifth got hold of it—Potter of the Fifth told them in the games-study, and they yelled. Even the Sixth Form men grinned over the absurdity of a master and a prefect rooting through a study in search of a packet of cream crackers! Mr. Quelch was well aware of the general merriment, and his feelings on the subject could not have been expressed in words. Not for the first time, he had been made a fool of by the rebel of his Form!

During the evening he passed the door of the Rag, and heard voices and laughter from within:

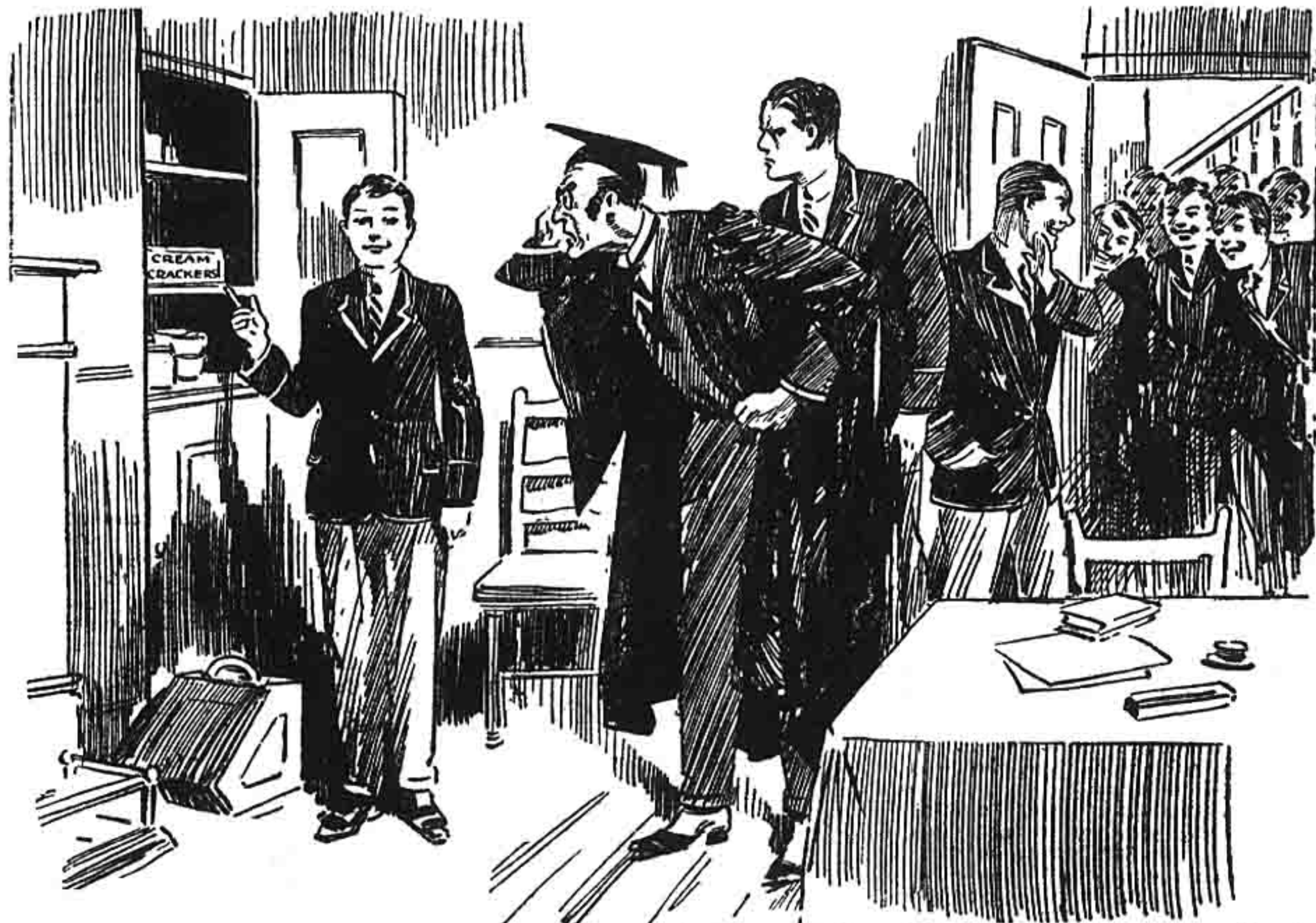
"I say, you fellows! Cream crackers, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch's ears burned as he walked on. The rebel of the Remove had scored; but it was, as Redwing said, a dangerous game to play! Henry Samuel Quelch was not likely to lose his chance when it came!

## NEW 'ERECTOR' TOY.

'Erector' Toys have always been famous, but here is a new novel toy—ERECTOR-BRIK, which is highly original and practical. This consists of small coloured bricks made to grip each other by a new method. The bricks are made in only two sizes, which means that a great variety of models can be made from even the simplest sets. BUNGALOWS, RAILWAY STATIONS, CHURCHES, BRIDGES, GARAGES, etc., can be built, and when completed with the simple roofs and windows supplied, have an extremely realistic appearance. The most fascinating models can be built with this toy in conjunction with an Erector Set. Prices of the ERECTOR-BRIK SETS are:—3/6d, 6/6d, 12/6d, and 18 6d, and the Manufacturers are The A. C. Gilbert Company, 109, Kingsway, W.C.2.



"The crackers are in the cupboard, sir, if you want them," said Wharton coolly. "I will point them out to you." He opened the door of the cupboard and pointed to an oblong packet. "There they are, sir." "What do you mean?" raved Mr. Quelch. "You are pointing to a packet of biscuits!" "Yes, sir—my crackers—my cream crackers!"

**THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.**

**Bunter, the Artist!**

"**B**UNTER! You ass!"  
It was the following day. Harry Wharton came up to Study No. 1 some time after class, expecting to find that apartment vacant.

Nugent, who shared the study with the captain of the Remove, was seldom there now. He had taken his books and other possessions along to Study No. 13, since the break in the Co., and generally did his prep and had his tea in that study. But Study No. 1 was not vacant at the present moment; Billy Bunter was there.

The Owl of the Remove was seated at the study table, grinning over a sheet of cardboard upon which he was drawing. Bunter was no artist, and when he drew it was a little difficult to tell whether he was depicting a Soccer match, a railway accident, or a fire at sea.

Wharton, stepping into the study and glancing over his fat shoulder, was puzzled to know what the fat junior was delineating. Some sort of a weird-looking figure was growing under Bunter's masterly pencil, but it might have represented almost anything.

But over the top of that weird figure Bunter wrote in capital letters:

"**HEAR'S ANUTHER GIY!**"

This, apparently, was Bunter's way of spelling "Here's another guy!" Bunter had his own methods in matters of orthography. This superscription indicated that Bunter's work of art had something to do with the anniversary of

Mr. Fawkes' celebrated attempt to cut off the gas in the House of Commons.

The fearsome object he had drawn was a "guy."

There was an ancient Greek painter who, in order that there should be no misapprehension, wrote under his picture: "This is an ox." Bunter appeared to be taking a tip from that old artist, for under his picture he wrote:

"**THIS IS OLD QUELCH!**"

Seeing this, Wharton understood what the fat junior was "at." He was drawing a "guy," supposed to represent Henry Samuel Quelch, the master of the Remove.

It was not like Quelch to look at. Really, it was like nothing in the heavens or the earth, or the waters under the earth.

But Bunter was evidently pleased with it, for he grinned over it, and emitted a fat chuckle.

Then he jumped, as he heard Wharton's voice over his shoulder.

He blinked round in alarm.

"Oh! Only you!" he said, in relief.

"I say, look at this, old chap! Some guy, what? He, he, he! This will make the fellows laugh!"

"It won't make you laugh if Quelch sees it, you ass!" answered Wharton. "More likely to make you howl!"

"Well, he won't know I did it," said Bunter. "How's he to know? When he finds it pinned on the blackboard in the Form-room, I suppose he won't guess that I drew it, will he? He doesn't know I can draw, really."

"And he won't find out—from that!" said Harry, laughing.

"I haven't finished yet," said Bunter,

He started again with the pencil, and drew a scroll from the mouth of the weird figure, bearing the words "BEND OVER!" He added a cane to the hand of the figure as long as the figure itself.

"Rather neat, what?" asked Bunter complacently. "This will make old Quelch jump! What?"

"Quelch will jump first, and you next!" said Harry.

Bunter blinked at him anxiously.

"You don't think he will guess it was me, do you?" he asked. "How's he going to guess, I'd like to know?"

"Ha, ha, ha! He knows your spelling, old fat man!"

"What's the matter with the spelling?" asked Bunter warmly. "I suppose I can spell! Here is spelt h-e-a-r—I've seen it spelt h-e-e-r, but that's not correct, I'm pretty certain."

"Try h-e-r-e," said Harry, laughing.

"Sure?" asked Bunter, dubiously.

"Quite."

"Oh, all right!" Bunter used the indiarubber, and made the alteration. "Quelch makes out that I can't spell, you know. If there was a mistake in the spelling, he might tumble. Anything else?"

"Well, as a matter of taste, I should spell 'another' with an 'o,' not with a 'u,' said Harry."

Bunter changed the U into an O.

"All right now?" he asked.

"Might put the 'u' into the word 'guy'—it looks better than an 'i,'" suggested Wharton.

"That seems rather rot," said Bunter. "Giy seems right to me. Still, if you think it ought to be a 'u—'"

"Sure thing, fathead!"

"Oh, all right!"

Clues to the perpetrator, in matters of orthography, were eliminated.

"All safe now?" asked Bunter.

"Yes, but it would be safer to stick it in the study fire," said Harry. "It's not safe to lark with Quelch."

"Well, I like that, from you!" said Bunter derisively. "You're always larking with Quelch. What about the cream crackers yesterday? He, he, he!"

"Fathead! I can face the music, and you can't," said Harry. "Take my tip, and chuck that rubbish into the fire!"

"I'll watch it!" said Bunter.

"Well, take it out of my study, anyhow," said Harry. "I don't want it seen here. What the thump are you here at all for?"

Bunter grinned.

"Well, I didn't want to be seen drawing this guy," he explained. "Toddy would see it if I did it in Study No. 7—and Dutton. Of course, they wouldn't give a chap away—still, you can't be too careful. Quelch will raise Cain when he sees this pinned on the blackboard. Don't you think so?"

"No doubt about that!"

"I don't mind you seeing it, old chap; you're up against Quelch," said Bunter.

"In fact, I was going to suggest you taking it to the Form-room and pinning it on the blackboard, old fellow. A fellow might be spotted going there—I mean—that is—I—I mean—"

"I know what you mean," agreed Wharton, "and you can go and eat coke. Take your rubbish out of this study before it's seen here."

"That's all right," said Bunter. "Nobody's likely to come to this study—hardly anybody ever speaks to you, you know—nobody likes your company."

"What?"

"You're such an ill-tempered, touchy beast, you know," explained Bunter. "Most of the fellows are giving you the go-by this term, ain't they? You've rowed with nearly every man in the Remove, you know. I say, Wharton, what are you looking so waxy for? Anything the matter?"

Harry Wharton stared at the cheerful fat Owl, and then burst into a laugh. Really, Bunter was not worth kicking.

"Get out, fathead," he said, "and take your rubbish away! Loder may butt in and see it. He watches this study like a cat."

"He, he, he! You've got Loder's back up, you know! Punching a prefect in the eye—"

"Buzz off!"

"I say, do you think Loder's about?" asked Bunter anxiously. "I don't want to run into him with this, you know. If he saw me with it, he would make out that I did it, you know."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'll take a squint in the passage, and make sure," said the fat Owl. "I don't want to run into Loder!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of Study No. 1. Having finished his work of art, he wanted to convey it to the Remove Form-room, and pin it up there to be discovered later by Mr. Quelch. But he did not want to run into a Sixth Form prefect with the work of art in his possession. When a Remove fellow set out to "guy" Mr. Quelch, he could not be too careful. Bunter wanted to make quite, quite sure that the coast was clear, before he conveyed that disrespectful delineation of Mr. Quelch to its destination.

He rolled to the landing at the end of the passage, and blinked down the Remove staircase.

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"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Bunter.

Loder of the Sixth was coming up.

Billy Bunter stood rooted to the landing, blinking at the bully of the Sixth through his big spectacles. From the bottom of his fat heart he was thankful that he had been so wary, and that he had not the picture of Quelch with him.

Loder glanced at him carelessly as he crossed the landing, and went up the passage. He was not taking any interest in Billy Bunter—he had quite other game in the Remove passage.

"Oh lor'!" breathed Bunter.

And instead of returning to Study No. 1 for his picture, the fat Owl rolled away down the stairs. He did not intend to go back for that picture so long as Loder was in the offing.

Harry Wharton, in Study No. 1, stood looking at Bunter's absurd picture, frowning. He was rather anxious for the fatuous Owl to take it away. Since the happenings of the previous evening, Loder of the Sixth had been giving

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him altogether too much attention. Perhaps Loder still suspected that the rebel of the Remove had forbidden fire-works—or perhaps he only hoped so. Perhaps he hoped to "catch" him out in some other infraction of the rules. Certainly Gerald Loder would have given a great deal to catch the junior who had made a fool of him; and hope, as the poet says, springs eternal in the human breast.

Wharton turned at the sound of a footstep in the doorway. He supposed that it was Bunter coming in.

"Look here—" he began. "Oh!" He broke off as he saw Loder.

With a quick movement he drew a pad of blotting-paper over Bunter's picture. It was swiftly done, but not swiftly enough to escape Loder's eyes. The prefect stepped into the study.

"What's that?" he asked.

"What's what?" drawled Wharton.

"You're not hiding anything under the blotting-paper?" sneered Loder.

Wharton did not answer.

Loder stepped to the table and jerked the blotting-paper aside. What he was going to see he could not imagine; but

he knew that it was something that the junior did not want him to see, and that was enough for Loder. He stared blankly at the weird figure depicted on the cardboard. But for the words scrawled underneath, Loder assuredly would not have guessed that it was intended for Mr. Quelch. But the inscription left no doubt on that point.

"This is old Quelch!" Loder read aloud. "My hat! Guying your Form master, what? What were you going to do with this, Wharton?"

"Nothing."

"You drew it, just to leave on your study table?" grinned Loder.

"I did not draw it."

"Who did, then?" Loder paused. He was certain—as certain as he could be—that Wharton had drawn that ridiculous figure to "guy" the Remove master. But after his "bloomer" of the previous day, Loder was careful. "Nugent?"

"Hardly!"

"Well, who, if not yourself?" demanded Loder.

"I'm not bound to tell you that," answered Wharton coolly. "We're not sneaks in the Remove. I tell you that I never drew it, and that I found it lying on my study table, just as you did. That's all I can tell you."

"You can tell your Form master that!" said Loder. "Follow me!"

Loder marched out of the study and Wharton followed him. As they went downstairs, they passed Bunter on the lower landing. The fat Owl blinked at the sheet of cardboard in Loder's hand, in sheer horror. Evidently, Loder had discovered his work of art. To his immense relief, Loder took no notice of him. The prefect passed on down the stairs, cardboard in hand, and as Wharton followed down, Bunter realised how matters stood. Wharton, in whose study it had been found was judged guilty of that disrespectful delineation of Quelch.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

The fat junior had an impulse to do the right thing. He made a step after Loder, palpitating. He was bound to own up, and correct the mistake; he felt that. Any man—almost any man—in the Remove would have done so.

"Loder! I say, Loder!" gasped Bunter.

Loder glanced over his shoulder.

"Well, what?" he rapped.

"I—I—I say—" stammered Bunter.

"What?" snapped Loder, still more sharply.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Nothing! Nothing at all. I was going to say—er—I mean—nothing."

Loder stared at him.

"Take fifty lines, Bunter."

"Oh crikey!"

Loder marched on, with Wharton at his heels. Bunter blinked after them dismally. He had intended to own up; but, somehow, it wouldn't come out. Bunter had a conscience, of sorts. It rather worried him now. But the pangs of conscience were not so severe as the pangs of a whipping from Quelch. Of the two, Bunter preferred the pangs of conscience.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Loder's Luck!

**H**ORACE COKER, of the Fifth Form, came into the House quickly for his football. Potter and Greene of the Fifth were with Coker after class that day in the quad.

As had happened before, many a time and oft, the enlivening and improving company of Horace Coker had palled on his pals. Potter, who was one of  
(Continued at foot of next page.)

# "LINESMAN CALLING!"



If in doubt over any Soccer problem, chum, write to "Linesman," c/o The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. He'll be only too pleased to give you his expert opinion.

**T**HE game of football has undergone many changes in the past few years—changes in style, tactics, and so on. An interesting statement concerning one way in which the game has changed was made to me the other day by a manager who has been closely connected with football for many years.

"As the result of my observations and calculations," he said, "I am definitely of the opinion that the average age of the first-class footballer to-day, as compared with the average a few years back, is at least three years younger." That's the sort of news to make the lads sit up, isn't it?

## BANKING ON YOUTH!

As a matter of fact, I got this expression of opinion when I was doing a bit of research work myself with a view to getting information which would enable me to answer a question put to me by one of my MAGNET readers. The question was this: "Which First Division club has the youngest team?" I am now in a position to give the answer—Blackburn Rovers hold that distinction.

*The average age of the Blackburn Rovers' team which did duty in the first few matches of the present season was only twenty-three.*

I can't find that there is any other first-class football club which can beat that record. This is certainly the day of the young man in football, and the Rovers are banking on youth to see them through.

Derby County have gone in a lot for young players in recent times, too, and I remember Manager Jobey telling me that he would not think of signing even a player of repute who was over twenty-seven years of age. Mr. Peter Hodge, the manager of Leicester City, has the same idea. Mind you, it is hard work

getting a team of lads together who can hold their own with the more experienced players. But it is being done. And perhaps it will be done to an ever-increasing extent because the tendency is for the play to get faster and faster.

## "BOY" BASTIN!

**W**HAT is the earliest age at which a youth who has football skill can be said to be ready for the strain of first-class football? There can be no definite answer to that question. It all depends on the individual.

*At seventeen some lads are strong enough to stand all the rush and tear of big football. I remember Tom Browell—they used to call him "Boy" Browell, scoring goals for Hull City when he was only sixteen years of age. There have been players who have been capped for England before they reached their twentieth birthday—quite a lot of them.*

Take the case of young "Cliff" Bastin, the outside-left of Arsenal. He was signed on by Manager Chapman—who paid two thousand pounds for the signature—when he was eighteen. It was the Arsenal manager's idea to keep him in reserve, and to allow him to develop gradually for at least a season. But one day in an emergency, and just to enable Bastin to add a little to his experience, he was put into the Arsenal first team. And he played so well that he simply could not be left out afterwards.

*He played his part so efficiently that before he was twenty he had gained practically all the honours which are open to a footballer. He had been on the Cup-winning side, had been in a championship-winning side, and had played for England!*

those fellows with sudden bright ideas, had suggested that Coker should show them, in actual fact, the wonderful kick he would have brought off, if he had been playing in the St. Jude's match, and which he had been telling them about.

Nothing loath, Coker went in for his football to demonstrate exactly how he would have kicked it and taken a goal which Wingate, the Greyfriars captain, had failed to take. And immediately Coker's back was turned, Potter and Greene, pausing only to exchange a wink, had departed for parts unknown. Coker, when he came out with the football to demonstrate, was not likely to find them.

Unaware of this, Coker hurried in for the footer. When Coker was in a hurry, he naturally put on speed.

He cut upstairs to get to the Fifth-Form passage, where his study was, and where the footer was. With his head bent, and going on his highest gear, Coker did the stairs, and it was a sheer coincidence—a thing that no fellow

could have foreseen—that Loder came down from the landing at the same moment. At a more moderate pace, Coker doubtless would have seen him and avoided him, or at least Loder would have avoided Coker. Coming up like a bullet from a rifle, Coker neither saw nor avoided Loder—and Loder had no time to avoid him. Indeed, it was only a split second after Coker dawned on him, that Coker's bullet head smote Loder on his second waistcoat button.

"Urrrrrrrgh!" was all Loder said. He could not say more. Every ounce of breath was driven out of him by that sudden and terrific impact. He sat down, gurgling.

"What the thump!" exclaimed Coker. He staggered a little, rubbed the top of his head, and stared at Loder. Loder was gaping, gasping, and gurgling horribly. His eyes rolled. He clutched his waistcoat in anguish. He goggled and guggled. Harry Wharton came to a halt on the landing, and watched him with interest. Loder had told Wharton

**THE "THROW-IN."**  
**T**HERE has been a lot of talk this season about the "throw-in" at football. Sam Weaver, the Newcastle left-half, with his mighty throw, has been the cause of most of it, and there has been a sort of competition as to which footballer could get the ball the longest distance with a legitimate two-handed, over-the-head throw. Weaver has many challengers to the right of the title of throw-in champion.

Weaver tells me that the only way to become efficient in the art of the long throw-in is by constant practice.

*He started by throwing from the edge of the penalty area, and kept on trying until he could throw the ball well over the crossbar. He can now throw it from near the corner-flag to the far goalpost—a throw which is as good as a kick.*

There are several little points raised in readers' letters concerning the throw-in rule, and I am not surprised, because the wording of this rule is not nearly so clear as it might be. You know that it is now permissible for a player throwing the ball to stand with his feet on the line. The law says: "A player throwing the ball must stand on both feet on or outside the touch-line facing the field of play."

One reader who is a wing half-back in his school team wants to know whether this means that if he decides to stand on the touch-line it is necessary for him to have both feet on the line, or can he stand with one foot on the line and the other behind it?

I am quite sure that most linesmen would permit a player to stand in that way when throwing the ball—with one foot on the line and one behind it. But it might certainly be argued that the words I have quoted suggest that he should have both feet either on or behind the line.

Then there is the question of what is meant by the words "facing the field of play." Can a thrower of the ball be said to be facing the field of play if he is looking along the line towards the corner-flag. Literally he is sideways to the field of play—not facing it. I have never yet seen a footballer throwing the ball in with his back to the field of play, and perhaps the words were only put there to prevent him doing this.

As a last throw-in query, can the thrower raise his heels? He is allowed to do so by most linesmen, but here again the spirit of the rule, rather than the letter of it, is followed. I can't for the life of me see how it can be said that a player is "standing on both feet" if he is only on his toes. Are a fellow's toes his feet? I leave it to you to argue further.

to follow him; so the junior waited politely till Loder led on again. Instead of leading on, however, Loder sat on the stairs winded, struggling frantically for breath, and emitting strange, inarticulate, perfectly horrible sounds.

"Well, my hat!" said Coker. "Getting in a fellow's way—Great pip! What's that?"

The sheet of cardboard had dropped from Loder's hand. Coker stared at it, and picked it up. He stared at it hard, stared at Loder, and stared at the picture again.

"Well," said Coker, with a deep breath, "this is old Quelch, is it? Guying a Form master—a prefect of the Sixth Form! My hat! So this is the way you amuse yourself, is it, Loder? Lucky for you a beak hasn't seen this. All very well for a fag, but a Sixth Form prefect—My hat!"

Harry Wharton, on the landing above, smiled. Loder, sitting on the

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

stairs, gurgled and clasped his waistcoat. Coker of the Fifth held up Bunter's work of art, staring at it. From below, three or four fellows came up. It had not seemed to occur to Horace Coker's mighty brain that Loder was in need of help. But Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth, and Blundell of the Fifth, ran up, and after them came ponderous Mr. Prout, master of the Fifth.

Their eyes—all their eyes—fell on the remarkable work of art in Coker's hand. The seniors stared and grinned. Mr. Prout stared, but did not grin. Mr. Prout frowned portentously.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Prout. "Give that to me, Coker! Bless my soul! From the—the inscription, this hideous and absurd figure is apparently intended to represent my colleague, Quelch. Loder, I am amazed!"

"Urrrrgh!" said Loder. Wingate and Gwynne raised him up, one on either side. Loder hung on them heavily, wrestling for wind. Coker's bullet head, hard as heart of oak, had smitten hard, and Loder was almost in a state of asphyxiation.

"Amazed!" said Prout. "Astounded! I saw Coker take this—this disrespectful and insulting picture from you, Loder. I can scarcely believe my eyes! You, a senior boy, a Sixth Form boy, a prefect, have been guilty of this absurdity, this disrespectful absurdity! Upon my word!"

Harry Wharton, leaning on the banisters above, looked on with an air of detached interest. He appeared to have no concern in the matter. A dozen other fellows gathered on the landing, attracted by the deep boom of Prout's voice. Many eyes stared at the amazing picture which Prout held up, as if for the general inspection. Coker, who had taken it from Loder, naturally supposed that it belonged to Loder. Prout, who had seen him pick it up, fell into the same natural supposition. Loder could have enlightened him with a word. But Loder just then was incapable of a word, or even a syllable. All Loder could say was:

"Ooooooh!"

Which conveyed no meaning whatever. "Foolish and thoughtless disrespect on the part of a junior," boomed Prout, "is reprehensible enough! But on the part of a Sixth Form senior— Words fail me, Loder!"

Unfortunately for Loder words failed him, also.

"I shall take this," said Prout, "to Mr. Quelch. I shall place it in his hands. No doubt he will place the matter before Dr. Locke, and you will be called upon to answer for this outrageous prank, Loder."

"Urrrrgh!" gurgled Loder.

Prout turned to go.

Loder, realising his misapprehension, made a frantic effort to speak. But he

could only gurgle. He made a clutch at the cardboard in Prout's hand, and missed it. Prout jerked it promptly out of reach.

"Hands off, sir!" boomed Prout. "Dare you attempt to repossess yourself of this insulting placard, Loder?"

"Urrrrgh!" gurgled Loder.

Prout swept away.

Loder, leaning heavily on Wingate and Gwynne, tottered down the stairs. Horace Coker went to his study for his football. He was in a hurry to get out with it, to give Potter and Greene that promised demonstration. He got out with it a few minutes later; but he did not give the promised demonstration, Potter and Greene having vanished into thin air.

Meanwhile, Prout arrived at Mr. Quelch's study. He tapped on the door and marched in, placard in hand. Mr. Quelch, at his writing-table, glanced up.

"My dear Quelch," said Prout, "look at that!"

He laid the sheet of cardboard on the table before the Remove master. Mr. Quelch looked at it. He saw a drawn figure that might have been a Red Indian, a chimney-sweep, or a South Sea cannibal, or a mixture of all three. Over it he read the words "HERE'S ANOTHER GUY!" Under it he read the words, "THIS IS OLD QUELCH!" The capital letters gave no clue to the writer.

"What—what—what is this?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"An insult to you, my dear sir!" said Prout. "I am shocked, indignant! I felt it my duty to bring it to your notice at once."

Prout, no doubt, was shocked and indignant. But there was a gleam of relish in his eye. Seldom, indeed, did the ponderous and portentous Prout have a chance of patronising the Remove master. Now he was able to compassionate him, sympathise with him, condole with him, point out unmistakably that he had been insulted. Prout was going to leave no doubt on that point. Quelch had been insulted, held up to ridicule—guyed, in fact—and his sympathetic colleague was going to rub it in.

"An outrageous insult, my dear sir!" boomed Prout. "This ridiculous figure—this utterly absurd figure—is intended to represent you. The resemblance is slight—"

"I fail to understand you, sir!" yapped Mr. Quelch. "There is no resemblance at all—none whatever!"

"I will, if you desire, accompany you to the headmaster," pursued Prout. "I earnestly recommend placing the matter before Dr. Locke—"

"Nothing of the sort!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "As you have brought this piece of foolery here, sir, I conclude that you are aware of the perpetrator. I will deal with him myself."

"A Sixth Form boy—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"His name is Loder."

"Loder!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch blankly. Loder of the Sixth had been very much in Mr. Quelch's good graces this term. "Impossible!"

"I am speaking from my own knowledge, sir," said Prout. "This insulting and humiliating placard, which holds you up to ridicule, to mockery, to—to general derision, was taken from Loder of the Sixth Form under my own eyes. He made an attempt to snatch it back from me, when he learned that I intended to bring it to you. I am prepared to make this statement in the presence of Dr. Locke. If you desire my

evidence, my dear Quelch, I am entirely at your service."

And, leaving the placard on Quelch's table, Prout left the study, heading for Masters' Common-room, to tell the other "beaks" all about it, and express, with inexhaustible eloquence, his indignation, and his sympathy for poor insulted Quelch.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Before the Beak!

L ODER of the Sixth tapped at Mr. Quelch's door and opened it.

He had not recovered yet. He was breathing spasmodically; he had a pain under his waistcoat, and his complexion was ghastly.

But he realised that he had better lose no time in seeing Quelch. Prout's ridiculous mistake could not be corrected too soon.

He found Mr. Quelch standing in the study, the placard in his hand, and a very bitter expression on his face.

Amazed as he was, shocked and pained as he was, Quelch could not, of course, doubt Prout's assurance. Prout had taken that insulting picture from Loder of the Sixth—a prefect whom Mr. Quelch had trusted and treated with every consideration.

Loder's "down" on Wharton of the Remove had been rather a recommendation in the Remove master's eyes, now that he was so deeply and bitterly prejudiced against that member of his Form. He trusted Loder; he almost liked him, though perhaps some deep instinct, deeper than reason, prevented him from quite liking him. Only once had he spoken sharply to Loder—in Study No. 1 the previous evening—and surely there had been cause for that. Yet that petty incident, apparently, had caused Loder to be guilty of this offence—drawing a ridiculous figure to "guy" the Remove master, no doubt intending to show it about among the fellows and evoke disrespectful laughter at Quelch's expense.

It was bitterly offensive, bitterly humiliating, and the worst of it was that Loder, being in the Sixth Form, Quelch had no authority over him, and could not deal with him, as he would have liked to deal with him. Quelch would have given much to have Gerald Loder in the Lower Fourth for a few minutes. He would have laid on "six" with unheard of energy.

His only resource was to place the matter before the Head, and that he had decided upon, when Loder presented himself. Quelch's gimlet eyes fairly flashed at Loder as he appeared in the doorway.

"Mr. Quelch—sir!" gasped Loder.

Quelch easily understood his breathless confusion and pallid looks. He knew what to expect, now that Quelch had found him out.

He raised a commanding hand.

"Not a word, Loder! Mr. Prout has acquainted me with the circumstances. You will accompany me to Dr. Locke."

"But, sir—"

"Follow me, Loder! You will answer for this to your headmaster. I will not bandy words with you," said Mr. Quelch, with biting scorn.

"I—I never—I—I mean—I—"

Mr. Quelch swept past him like a thundercloud, and started for the Head's study. Loder ran after him in dismay.

"Mr. Quelch, listen to me! Groogh! I say—"

"You may say what you have to say, sir, in the presence of your head-master!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Do not address me!"

He strode on, at an accelerated pace, and Loder, gasping, followed. Mr. Quelch tapped at the Head's door and entered.

Dr. Locke greeted him with a kind smile, which faded away at the sight of the expression on Mr. Quelch's face.

"My dear Quelch!" exclaimed the Head. "What—"

"I beg you, sir, to look at this," said Mr. Quelch, placing Bunter's work of art under the astonished eyes of Dr. Locke. "This, sir, is the work of a prefect of the Sixth Form—of Loder—and I have brought him here, sir, to place the matter in your hands."

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke blankly.

"If you please, sir—" gasped Loder, following the incensed Remove master into the study.

"Do not interrupt me, Loder!" barked Mr. Quelch. "Dr. Locke, this insulting placard, intending to hold me up to ridicule, was found in Loder's possession by Mr. Prout, who tells me that Loder attempted to snatch it away from him. Such a prank, sir, unworthy even of a foolish and thoughtless junior—"

"I can scarcely understand it," said the Head. "I should never have dreamed that a Sixth Form boy of Greyfriars could be guilty of such bad taste, of such disrespect, of such—"

"But, sir—" gasped Loder. "You are certain, Mr. Quelch, that Mr. Prout took this from Loder and—"

"He so informed me, sir, and has offered to repeat the statement to you. The matter is beyond doubt. Loder came to my study, indeed, a few minutes after Mr. Prout left, doubtless to attempt to make excuses—"

"No excuse is possible, or acceptable!" said the Head. "As there is no doubt in the matter, I shall deal with Loder. I regret—I very much regret—that the traditions of Greyfriars make it impossible to flog a boy in the Sixth Form. Otherwise, I should certainly flog you, Loder."

"But, sir," raved Loder, "I never—"

"What? You deny—"

"Yes, sir. I—I never—"

"Do you deny that Mr. Prout took this disgraceful and disrespectful drawing from you, Loder?" exclaimed the Head.

"No, sir! Oh, no! But—"

"Then say no more. I cannot flog you, Loder, but your punishment—"

"But I say—"

"Your punishment will be as severe as I can make it," said the Head sternly. "I shall deprive you of your rank of prefect, and of your Sixth Form privileges. You will be placed under detention for six half-holidays, and you will write out a whole book of Thucydides. And you will apologise to Mr. Quelch immediately, and in my presence—"

"I—I—"

"Or else," said the Head, in a deep voice, "or else, Loder, I shall expel you from the school. Make your choice at once."

"But, sir!" shrieked Loder. "But I tell you I never—"

Dr. Locke rose to his feet. "Waste no more time, Loder! Either you apologise to Mr. Quelch, in the humblest terms, here and now, or you

are expelled from Greyfriars. Will that satisfy you, Mr. Quelch?"

"Certainly, sir; and I thank you!" said the Remove master.

"Loder! I am waiting—"

Loder was almost foaming.

"Will you let me speak, sir?" he gasped. "I never—"

"Will you apologise this instant?" thundered the Head. "Otherwise, leave my study and pack your box!"

"I tell you I never—"

"Enough!" Dr. Locke raised his hand. "Go! I have given you your choice, and you decline to apologise. Go! You are expelled—"

"I never—"

"—from Greyfriars! Go and pack your box—"

"I never—never did—wasn't—never—oh crumbs! Never—didn't—"

Loder was almost gabbling.

"You will leave by the next train!"

"I wasn't—didn't—"

"I shall give you a letter for your father. And—"

"It was Wharton!" yelled Loder. The Head's commanding hand was fairly waving him out of the study, and Loder was desperate. "It wasn't me. It was young Wharton. I took it away from him—"

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered the Head.

The two masters gazed at Loder. At long last he had a chance to speak.

"It was Wharton—Wharton, of the Remove—who drew that picture," stuttered Loder. "I took it away from him. I was taking it to Mr. Quelch when that fool Coker—I mean when Coker, of the Fifth ran into me on the stairs and knocked me over; and then Prout—"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head blankly.

"I was taking it to Mr. Quelch, and told Wharton to follow me," gasped Loder. "Prout misunderstood—"

"Do you think this possible, Mr. Quelch?"

Quelch, for one moment, was dumbfounded. He knew nothing, of course, of the collision on the staircase and the winded and speechless state to which Loder had been reduced. But one moment was enough for him. He leaped at the name of Wharton like a pike at bait. There was an instantaneous change in his mind. Loder,

on the spot, was restored to his good graces. It was Wharton—Wharton, the rebel of the Remove—Wharton, the disrespectful young rascal—who was at the bottom of this.

"Possible, sir!" repeated Quelch. "I am certain of it!"

"But, sir, you stated positively that Loder—"

"I was acting on what Mr. Prout told me—evidently a mistake—"

"Really, Mr. Quelch, I think you might have ascertained whether there was a mistake in the matter before bringing a Sixth Form prefect before me as a culprit!" exclaimed the Head. Mr. Quelch crimsoned.

"I—I am sorry, sir. I am aware that I have wasted your time—I am very sorry indeed—"

"It appears, then, that Loder is not to be blamed in this matter," said Dr. Locke, very much irritated. "This whole scene, sir, is absurd—absurd! It is ridiculous, sir!"

Mr. Quelch was aware of that. The Head's majestic thunders had been discharged at Loder under a misapprehension. Those thunders had to be, as it were, bottled up again. That old ass, Prout— At that moment Mr. Quelch, in the privacy of his own mind, actually characterised his colleague as an old ass! But it was Wharton who was at the bottom of it—that young rascal, Wharton— Quelch caught at that!

"The blame is Wharton's, sir," he said, in a low and bitter voice. "Had not Wharton drawn this disrespectful and insulting picture, the error could not have arisen. The boy Wharton—"

"Let there be no further mistake in the matter, sir," said the Head acidly. "After your positive statement that Loder drew this picture, I shall require proof that it was the work of another hand. In what way is Wharton connected with the matter?"

"I found this picture in his study, sir," said Loder. "It was Wharton's work. I told him to follow me when I took it to Mr. Quelch—and then the accident happened on the stairs, and Mr. Prout—"

"Never mind that now!" snapped the Head. "Am I to understand that you are positive that it was the work of Wharton?"

(Continued on next page.)

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Loder did not hesitate. He was positive in his own mind; and perhaps it seemed justifiable to him to stretch a point in the way of evidence, to bolster up what was absolutely certain. Any doubt in the matter might revive suspicion in Quelch's mind; the thing had to be fixed on Wharton now. It was no time for hesitation, in Gerald Loder's opinion. His answer came at once.

"I am absolutely positive, sir! He was drawing this picture when I looked into his study, and covered it up with a sheet of blotting-paper to hide it. Having seen what he was doing, I insisted on removing the blotting-paper."

It hardly occurred to Loder, at that moment, that this was a falsehood. He had not the slightest doubt that Wharton had been drawing the picture a second before he looked into the study! He had found him alone there with the picture. He realised that he was stretching a point, but it was such a very little "stretch" that it did not seem to matter. He had to make the thing certain.

"Very well," said the Head. "I will send for Wharton!"

And Harry Wharton was sent for.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Loder's Lie I

"HARRY, old chap—"  
"You fat chump—"

It was rather an ungrateful reply to such an affectionate address. Billy Bunter really was concerned about the captain of the Remove. His fat conscience was quite worried. He had been looking for Wharton, and he found him in the Rag. After the collision on the staircase, when Loder had been helped away by two of the Sixth, Wharton had walked away to the Rag wondering how the queer affair would turn out, and whether he would be called on again.

Billy Bunter rolled up to him with quite an anxious blink.

"Harry, old chap! I say, was it a licking?" he asked.

Harry Wharton laughed. Evidently Bunter had not seen the mishap on the staircase, and, finding Wharton alone, supposed that the visit to Quelch's study had been paid. Perhaps he was anxious to know whether Wharton had been licked; but he was still more anxious to know whether he was to be licked himself! There was no "perhaps" about that!

"I haven't seen Quelch yet, ass," answered Harry, "and when I do, you'd better come and tell him that it was your fatheaded nonsense—see?"

"Oh dear! I thought it was over by this time!" sighed Bunter. "I say, old chap, you're not giving a pal away, are you?"

Wharton grunted.

"You'd better own up!" he snapped. "Loder thinks I drew that rotten picture, as it was in my study, and he's going to tell Quelch so."

"Well, you can say you didn't!" said Bunter. "You needn't mention me. Say a Fourth Form chap did it—"

"You potty porpoise—"

"Well, I suppose Quelch would want to know the man's name," said Bunter thoughtfully. "Look here, old fellow, you can mention any name you like, so long as it's not mine—see?"

"Fathead!"

Three or four fellows who heard these

remarks looked at the two rather curiously.

"What's on, you men?" asked the Bounder.

"Nothing!" said Bunter promptly. "Don't you be inquisitive, Smithy! I never could stand inquisitiveness! I never drew a guy of Quelch in Wharton's study, and Loder never found it there—"

"That fat idiot was caricaturing Quelch in my study," said Harry. "Loder's taken the rubbish, and he's going to report that I did it. Old Prout bagged it from Loder, and seems to think that Loder did it; but I expect they'll call on me any minute. If they do—"

He broke off and shrugged his shoulders.

"You won't give Bunter away?" said the Bounder.

"Of course not!" snapped Harry.

"Bunter ought to own up!" said Squiff.

"I can see him doing it!" grunted Wharton.

"Begad! You're bound to own up, Bunter, old bean," said Lord Maul-everer. "You can't leave Wharton to it!"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"You won't get it so bad as Wharton, either," said Mauleverer. "If they can make out that Wharton has insulted Quelch, he will get it hot and strong. But you will get off lighter, bein' known to be a born idiot, old fat bean!"

"Why, you cheeky beast—"

Trotter, the page, put his head into the Rag.

"Master Wharton here?" asked Trotter. "The 'Ead wants you in his study, sir. Mr. Quelch and Loder's there, sir!" added Trotter, by way of a good-natured warning to the captain of the Remove to be on his guard. Below stairs, as well as above, it was known that Harry Wharton was sailing in troubled waters these days.

"Thank you, kid!" said Harry quietly.

He left the Rag, and, with a cool, hard expression on his face, repaired to the Head's study. Prout's ridiculous mistake had, of course, made no difference to the outcome of the matter. Wharton had to face the music for Bunter's fatuous folly.

It was Quelch's chance, and, unless he gave Bunter away he was "for" it this time. He had no intention whatever of giving Bunter away. It was the duty of the Form master and the headmaster to discover the right culprit before administering punishment he told himself savagely; if they chose to punish the wrong man without proof, let them get on with it! It was only one more injustice, and he would get his own back somehow!

He tapped at the Head's door and entered.

Bunter's great work lay on the Head's table. Dr. Locke was looking grave and angry; Quelch intensely exasperated; Loder black and bitter. The junior felt rather as if he had stepped into a hornet's-nest.

"Wharton!" Dr. Locke pointed with a forefinger to the picture. "This is your work!"

"No, sir!" answered Wharton.

"Loder informs me that he took it from your study—"

"That is correct, sir," said Harry. "Another fellow had the cheek to do it in my study. I have not even touched it."

Mr. Quelch's lip curled contemptuously. Wharton caught his scornful glance, and coloured with anger. Why should his word be doubted?

"My Form master does not seem to

believe me, sir," he said steadily. "But I hope that you will do so. I give you my word, sir, that I never touched that sheet of cardboard!"

"Certainly I do not believe you, Wharton," said the Remove master. "Neither will Dr. Locke believe a palpable falsehood."

"I am speaking the truth, sir!" said Harry, with his eyes on his headmaster. "I admit that I covered that silly picture with a blotting-pad when I saw Loder looking in—to save another fellow from getting nailed for it. It is not my business to help a prefect spot a Lower boy!"

"Wharton, I cannot believe you," said the Head. "Loder's statement is positive that he saw you drawing this picture—"

Wharton started as if a serpent had stung him.

"Loder saw me cover it with the blotting-pad, sir! He does not say that he saw me drawing it. He could not say that!"

"He has said so!"

Wharton swung round towards Loder. Even the hard-faced bully of the Sixth dropped his eyes.

"Loder says he saw me drawing it!" burst out Wharton. "Do you say so, Loder, you cur? Do you dare to look me in the face and say so, you lying hound?"

"Boy!" almost shouted Mr. Quelch.

The Head uprose in majestic wrath!

"Wharton! How dare you use such expressions in my presence!"

"I say that Loder is a cur and a lying hound!" roared Wharton, lost to all prudence and to all sense of decorum in his rage. "I say he never saw what he says he saw; he could not have, because I never drew the picture and never touched it! I could give the fellow's name if I liked, and he would not deny it, though he hasn't the pluck to come here and own up!"

"If that is true, give the name!" said the Head sternly.

And Loder for a moment quaked. Had he made a mistake, after all?

"I cannot give the name!" exclaimed Wharton passionately, and Gerald Loder breathed again. "I should be hooted out of the Form if I sneaked about any fellow! I can't give him away, and Loder knows it!"

"There is no name to be given, sir," said Loder smoothly. "Even Wharton, bad as I think he is, will hardly accuse another boy falsely."

"You have accused me falsely, and you know it!" shouted Wharton. "You believe I drew that rotten silly picture, but you know you never saw me—"

"Silence! How dare you shout in my study?" exclaimed the Head. "This violence will not benefit you, Wharton. I have no choice, but to accept Loder's positive assurance—"

"And punish me for what I have not done! I do not expect justice from my Form master, sir, but I have a right to expect it from you!" panted Wharton.

"Dr. Locke!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "You hear this boy—"

"I hear him," said the Head grimly. "and the severest flogging that I have ever administered—"

Tap! The opening of the study door interrupted the headmaster of Greyfriars in full tide.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### The Right Thing!

LORD MAULEVERER tapped Billy Bunter gently on a fat shoulder.

The Owl of the Remove blinked at him lugubriously.





With his head bent, Coker flew up the stairs like a bullet from a rifle. Loder, who was coming down, had no time to avoid him. Indeed, it was only a split second after Coker awned on him that Coker's bullet head smote Loder on his second waistcoat button. "Urrrrrrgh!" gasped Loder. "What the thump!" exclaimed Coker.

Several fellows in the Rag had told Bunter what they thought of him, and left it at that. But Mauly was not going to leave it at that.

Bunter was not impervious to what fellows thought of him. But he did not want to be licked! Very much indeed he did not want to be licked! And now that the matter had come before the Head, it was evidently more serious than ever. Facing his Form master was bad enough. Facing his Form master and headmaster together was too terrifying a prospect for Bunter.

"Bunter, old fat bean," murmured Mauleverer, "I'll walk with you as far as the beak's study—"

"I—I'd rather go to your study, Mauly old chap. What about tea, old fellow?" asked Bunter feebly. "It—it's past tea-time."

"You've got to see the Head, Bunty."

"I—I haven't! The—the fact is, it—it's all a mistake!" groaned Bunter. "I never drew that picture, really! I never meant to pin it on the black-board for old Quelch to see! I—I'm not saying that Wharton did it, you know! But—but some other chap—who, I can't imagine! It—it—it's one of those mysteries, you know!"

"Come on!" said Mauleverer, and he tucked a slim arm under a fat one, and drew Billy Bunter to the doorway of the Rag.

"I—I—I say, where are you going?" squeaked Bunter, in alarm.

"Head's study, old chap!"

"Beast!" howled Bunter. "Leggo! I—I won't go! I—I've got some lines to do—lines for Loder—I mean, Wingate—"

"This way, Bunty."

"What I mean is, I've got to see

Lascelles—he's giving me extra maths. I—I'm rather keen on extra maths—"

"Oh gad! Look here, Bunter, come on!" Mauly hooked the reluctant fat Owl out of the Rag. "You can't leave Wharton to it! It's up to a man to own up when the wrong man's nailed. You can take a whopping."

"I—I—I don't want to be whopped!" wailed Bunter.

"Wharton would get it worse—"

"Well, that wouldn't matter so much, you know! Look here, if Quelch doesn't nail him on this he will nail him on something else! So—so it comes to the same thing, old chap!"

Gently but firmly Lord Mauleverer was edging Bunter towards Head's corridor. Mauly, if he could, was going to see that Bunter did the right thing. Bunter wanted to do the right thing, if it came to that! But he did not want to be whopped. He really preferred doing the right thing, if no whopping had been involved. As it was, he had a preference for the wrong thing and no whopping!

"Can't leave another man to take your gruel, old bean," said Mauly. "That's one of the things that aren't done, you know."

"I—I say, Mauly," groaned Bunter—"I say, old chap, l-l-let's go to your study first! I—I shouldn't mind seeing the Head after tea! Let—let's talk it over—over tea, what?"

"No time for talk," said Lord Mauleverer. "Wharton may be up for a flogging already! You'll get off with six with a cane."

"Yow-ow-ow! Think I want six with a cane, you blithering idiot?" howled Bunter. "Look here, Mauly, the fact is—the actual fact is—that I know

nothing whatever about that picture guying old Quelch! Really, I don't know for certain that there's a picture at all, as I've never seen it! I can't go to the Head and tell whoppers, Mauly! That wouldn't be right!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Mauleverer.

"Let's go to your study and have tea, and then—"

"Afterwards!" said Mauly. "I'll wait for you at the corner of the passage, Bunter, and we'll go up to my study and tea—a rippin' tea—any old thing you like—enough to burst you all over the Remove passage, what?"

"Oh!" said Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer had touched the right chord!

"Well, after all, what's a licking?" said Bunter. "I can stand a licking, Mauly! I'm not soft, you know!"

"Hard as nails!" said Mauly encouragingly.

"It needs pluck to face the Head," said Bunter. "Well, I've got pluck."

"Tons of it!" said Mauly.

"The fact is, pluck's my long suit," said Bunter. "You remember how I saved your life, Mauly, over and over again when we were out in Egypt in the vac?"

"Did you? Oh! Yaas! Saved it dozens of times," agreed Mauleverer. "Kept on savin' it, what? Much obliged, old chap—it's the only one I've got, you know! But come on—"

"Come on," agreed Bunter, and he rolled into Head's corridor. "Who's afraid to own up, I'd like to know! Not me! I shall go in and face the Head, Mauly, and say— Will there be a cake for tea, old chap?"

"Eh! You won't say that to the Head, will you?" gasped Mauly.

"No, ass, I'm saying that to you," said Bunter peevishly. "I suppose there will be a cake—"

"Two!" said Mauleverer.

"Oh, good! Come on! The sooner we get it over the better! I'm not going to see a fellow whopped for what he hasn't done! It wouldn't be manly," said Bunter. "What about jam, though?"

"Three kinds of jam, whole jar of each kind!" said Lord Mauleverer.

Billy Bunter smiled ecstatically. This was worth a caning—even a Head's whopping! Bunter felt that he could face the Head in his study like Daniel facing the lions in the den. Two cakes and three jars of jam—what was a whopping in comparison with that?

They reached the door of the Head's study. Arrived there, Bunter felt a sudden palpitation. His courage, which had been screwed up to the sticking-point, seemed to come suddenly unstuck.

"I—I say, Mauly—don't knock! I'll knock in—in—in a minute," he breathed. "I say, on second thoughts—second thoughts are best, you know—let's leave it till after tea— Beast!"

Lord Mauleverer knocked at the door. "Go in and win, old chap!" he whispered, and he opened the door and gave Billy Bunter a push behind, and the fat junior staggered in.

Mauly drew the door shut behind him. Bunter was fairly landed now! He stood in the Head's study, and the Head and Mr. Quelch and Loder of the Sixth and Harry Wharton all stared at him. The Head, interrupted in the full tide of majestic eloquence, not only stared—he glared.

"Who—who—what— Mr. Quelch, what does this boy of your Form want?" rapped the Head. "Am I to be constantly interrupted by Lower boys? Really—"

"Go away at once, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

Bunter wanted nothing better than to go away! Now that he was in the Head's awful presence, and under the gimlet eye of his Form master, even tea in Mauly's study seemed less attractive.

Bunter longed only to escape.

He turned to the door and grasped the handle. But it did not turn, and the door did not open. Evidently the door handle was held outside. Lord Mauleverer, it appeared, did not trust Bunter farther than he could see him. The fat Owl's escape was cut off.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "What is that boy doing? Why does that boy not leave my study?"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I—"

"Why have you come here, Bunter?" exclaimed the Head.

"I think Bunter may have something to tell you, sir!" said Harry Wharton. He, at least, was at no loss to guess why Bunter had come, though he could see that now the fat Owl was there he was too frightened to say what he had come to say.

"What? Be silent, Wharton! How dare you speak! Bunter—"

"Go it, Bunty!" came a whisper through the keyhole. The door handle was held outside in a grip of iron.

"Oh dear! I—I say, sir!" Bunter blinked at the Head and desperately made the plunge. "The fact is, sir— Oh lor'! I—I—I did it, sir!"

"What? You did what?"

"I—I—I mean—" Terror mastered Bunter again. "I—I mean, I didn't do it, sir! That—that's what I meant to say, sir!"

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"Is this boy of your Form in his right senses, Mr. Quelch?"

"I cannot understand the boy, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "He is certainly the stupidest boy in the Remove. Bunter, why—"

"Oh lor'!"

"Have you anything to say to me, Bunter?" asked Dr. Locke, more gently. It occurred to him that Bunter's extraordinary antics might have some connection with the matter in hand. In fact, a glimmering of the truth dawned on the Head's mind.

"Oh! Yes! I—I mean no, sir! I—I—I don't want to be whopped!" wailed Bunter. "I—I'd own up like a shot, sir, only—only I—I don't want to be whopped, sir."

"You would own up to what, Bunter?" asked the Head. "If you have anything to tell me in connection with this—" He tapped the picture on his table with his forefinger.

Bunter groaned.

"It—it—it was only a j-j-joke, sir! I—I never meant to pin it on the black-board for Quelch to see, sir! Oh crikey! I—I wish I'd put it in the fire now when Wharton told me to! Oh lor'!"

Mr. Quelch gazed at him, transfixed. Loder turned almost green. Both of them understood now why Bunter was there. Loder felt an unpleasant palpitation at his heart. He had stated that he had actually seen Wharton drawing that picture! And now Bunter—

"Speak freely, Bunter," said the Head quietly. "If you have come here of your own accord to tell me the truth I shall request your Form master to deal with you leniently."

Bunter brightened up.

"Oh! Thank you, sir! I—I—I did it, sir! I—I—I did it in Wharton's study, sir! It was only a—a—a lark! I wish I'd put it in the fire when he told me to—"

"You drew this absurd picture?"

"Ow! Yes!"

"Wharton advised you to put it in the fire?"

"He—he said it wasn't safe to lark with Quelch!" groaned Bunter. "He told me to chuck it into the fire. Oh lor'! I wish I had! The fact is, I—I was going to, but—but I didn't! I didn't know Loder was coming up spying in Wharton's study that very minute! Oh dear!"

"Wharton did not draw the picture?"

"No, sir! Oh dear!"

"Did he touch it at all?"

"Ow! No! I—I just left it on his table while I went out to see whether Loder was about, and—and almost ran into the beast—I—I mean Loder—and—and I never knew he would think Wharton had done it, sir! I—I didn't mean to put it on Wharton! I—I—" Bunter's voice trailed off.

There was a dead silence in the Head's study. Dr. Locke's eyes were fixed on Gerald Loder now with a cold, penetrating look that sent a chill down Loder's marrow.

"Loder! Do you adhere to your statement that you saw Wharton drawing this picture in his study?" asked the Head, in a voice that seemed to proceed direct from the depths of a refrigerator.

Loder hardly breathed.

"I—I certainly thought so, sir! It—it was on his study table—he was bending over it. I certainly had the impression that he was drawing it—"

"Do you adhere to your statement that he was drawing it, in view of what Bunter has just stated?"

"N-no, sir! I—I conclude that I was—was mistaken! In the—the circumstances, the—the error was a natural one, I think—"

"Quite a natural one, in the circumstances, I think," said Mr. Quelch, coming to the rescue of the hapless prefect. "As Wharton was alone in the study, with the picture—"

"Such an error should not be made by a Sixth Form boy in the position of a prefect," said the Head. "But for this boy Bunter's confession I should have flogged Wharton, on your evidence, Loder, which turns out to be unfounded. I must believe that you thought you were speaking the truth, but you were in error—an error so serious that you have very nearly caused your headmaster to commit an act of injustice! I cannot overlook this, Loder! No prefect should make such a mistake."

The Head paused a moment.

"For the rest of this term, Loder, you are deprived of your prefectship! I shall consider whether to reinstate you next term! You may go!"

Loder almost tottered from the study. In his campaign against the junior he loathed he had sailed very near the wind several times. Now he had gone over the limit, and the chopper had come down. Loder's feelings were inexpressible as he left the Head's study. He was no longer a prefect—the power of the asphalt was taken from his hands. Whopping fellows he disliked was a thing of the past. From that moment Loder had no more authority to whop Wharton than Wharton had to whop Loder! Loder passed Lord Mauleverer in the passage with an expression on his face that made his lordship jump as he saw it.

"It appears, Mr. Quelch," said the Head coldly, "that Wharton had nothing to do with this matter except to give this foolish boy Bunter excellent advice. On another occasion, Bunter, you will do well to take advice from Wharton, who has a wiser head than your own. I presume that Wharton may be dismissed now, Mr. Quelch."

"I—I—I think so, sir!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "As—as Loder was in—in error—"

"You may go, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton left the study, and Lord Mauleverer linked arms with him in the passage and walked him away.

"All serene—what?" asked Mauly.

"Quite! Did you make that fat idiot own up?"

"Well, sort of," agreed Mauly. "I'm sure he wanted to do the right thing, and I sort of helped to persuade him. What's the matter with Loder?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Chucked out of his prefect's job."

"Oh gad! That's good news!"

Mr. Quelch came away from the Head's study, followed by Bunter. He affected not to see Wharton in the passage. Bunter blinked dolorously at the two juniors as he followed his Form master. The Head had requested Mr. Quelch to deal leniently with Bunter, in view of his confession; but the look on Quelch's face made Bunter feel very doubtful about the leniency. Judging by the howls that were heard shortly afterwards from Quelch's study, Bunter's doubts were well founded.

It was a dismal and dolorous Owl that tottered into Lord Mauleverer's study afterwards. Mauly and Wharton were there, and tea was on the table. Bunter, for once, was a fellow who his lordship and the captain of the Remove, delighted to honour. It was a gorgeous spread.

"Ow! Wow, wow!" said Bunter, as he trickled in. "Ow! That beast Quelch has taken it out of me—wow! I've had six—ow! He said he would have made it twelve if I hadn't owned

up! Yow-ow! I don't believe he was glad I owned up, really—he wanted Wharton to have it! Wow! Wow!"

"Tea's ready, old bean!" said Mauly.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"I've got three cakes——"

"Wow!"

"Three jars of jam——"

"Whoooh-oooh!"

"Ham and eggs and sosses——"

Bunter ceased to groan.

"Meringues and cream puffs and eclairs——"

Bunter smiled.

"Tuck in, old chap!"

Bunter tucked in.

And all was calm and bright.

**THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.**  
The Fall of the Mighty!

**B**UMP!  
Herbert Vernon-Smith, cutting across the path in break the next morning, ran into Loder of the Sixth.

He bumped right into Loder's back, and the Sixth-Former staggered.

He recovered himself and spun round, his eyes flaming at the Bounder.

"Oh! Sorry, Loder!" said Smithy coolly.

"Go to my study, Vernon-Smith, and wait for me there!" roared Loder.

"I'll watch it!" grinned Smithy.

And he shoved his hands into his pockets and walked away whistling.

Loder stared after him.

He remembered.

He was no longer a prefect! He had no power to order a junior to go to his study for a whopping.

Loder had wielded his prefect's powers so long, and got so used to them, that it was a little difficult to realise the change.

He had wielded those powers to the full—to the utmost possible extent—using them to cover his natural proclivities towards bullying—and, naturally, he had been extremely unpopular in the Lower School.

The news had spread like wildfire through Greyfriars that Loder of the Sixth was no longer a prefect. And that bump in the back, which had nearly knocked him over, was one of the first results!

Sixth Form men had to be treated with some respect, prefects or not. But Loder, shorn of his authority, was likely to get the very minimum of respect from the juniors. All he could do now was to report a cheeky junior to a prefect, and leave it at that—or take the law into his own hands and punch a fellow, as if he were a Lower boy himself!

It was a great and mortifying change! Only on sufferance now could he enter the prefects' room—not unless a prefect asked him. No longer could he walk with an ash-plant tucked under his arm, the terror of Lower boys! No longer could he utter the words "Bend over!" Like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, he had fallen from his high estate, and great was the fall thereof!

The real trouble was that Loder was not a fellow anybody would have respected on his own, as it were. As a prefect he had been dreaded. Had he been a "Blood"—a great man at games—he would have been looked up to with awe. Blundell of the Fifth, for instance, was nobody from an official point of view—merely a Fifth Form man, like Coker or Greene—but being a First Eleven man, Blundell was great! Nobody would have dreamed of bumping Blundell in the back as he walked in the quad—the thing was unthinkable.

But Loder was a slacker at games, as at everything else. Only on rare occasions did he fill a vacant place in the First Eleven games. Had Wingate or Gwynne lost his rank as prefect he would still have been the object of awe and admiration as a tremendous "Blood."

But Loder had nothing to fall back on—he was not even good in class. He was, in fact, good at nothing—and good for nothing! Now that he was no longer a prefect he was not feared—and he had never been liked or respected or admired. It was borne in upon his mind that a lot of old scores would be paid off, now that he was no longer an object of terror.

He tramped along the path with knitted brows, savagely. Bumped in the back by a cheeky junior—good heavens! He heard a titter as he went. He was unaware, so far, that that cheeky young scoundrel, Vernon-Smith, had had an ulterior motive in bumping him in the back. In the moment of collision Smithy had hooked a card to the back

(Continued on next page.)

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of Loder's coat-tail with a fish hook. The card bore the inscription, in large capital letters:

"HERE'S ANOTHER GUY!"

Loder walked on in happy unconsciousness of that placard on his back. In the days of his prefectship it would have been impossible. Now it was possible, and Smithy had done it! It was not surprising that a titter followed Loder as he went. The quad was crowded with fellows in break, and many eyes fell on the card on Loder's back.

"Here's another guy!" yelled Tubb of the Third.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Billy Bunter, "here's another guy! He, he, he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker of the Fifth. "See that, you men? Look at Loder! Some guy—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, look at Loder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder's face crimsoned as he tramped on. He was the object of the general attention—fellows stared at him on all sides, and laughed. They would not have dared, when he was a prefect! But what the dickens were they laughing at? Loder could see nothing to laugh at.

He passed Bob Cherry and his friends, who looked puzzled as he came up—not being able to see through Loder, they did not see the card on his back as he came up, and were as puzzled as Loder to know what the merriment was about. But when he passed them, and they saw the card, they yelled.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Here's another guy!"

"The guyfulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder glared round at them. Never had he missed so sorely the power of the ashplant! He would have given a term's pocket-money to order those cheeky young rascals to bend over and take six! But they would only have laughed at such an order from a fellow who was not a prefect. He tramped on savagely.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a sudden yell from Harry Wharton as he passed the captain of the Remove, and Wharton spotted the placard.

Loder spun round on him furiously. It was this junior—this mutinous young scoundrel—who had caused him to fall from his high estate! He owed it all to Wharton! He did not choose to remember that he owed it to the fact that he had told lies about Wharton to the Head. He strode at the captain of the Remove, his eyes blazing.

Wharton jumped back.

"Hands off, you rotter!" he said coolly. "Put a paw on me, Loder, and I'll knock you spinning! It won't be the sack now to give you a prize nose, you cur!"

At the beginning of the term Wharton had had a narrow escape of the "sack" for punching Loder. But Loder had been a prefect then! That made all the difference! A prefect represented the headmaster—to punch a prefect was, in effect, to punch all authority! But punching a fellow who was not a prefect, was simply punching a fellow! Certainly it was a risky proceeding for a junior to tackle a big Sixth Form man who towered over him. But that was all the risk there was in it—there was no authority now behind Loder.

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Harry Wharton backed away a few paces, his hands up, watching the bully of the Sixth warily. He had no chance in a scrap with a Sixth Form man; but he was prepared to give a good account of himself. And once he had knocked Loder down! Loder came striding at him savagely.

"You cheeky little rotter—"

"You cheeky big rotter!" retorted Wharton.

Blows were struck the next moment. There was a yell from a dozen directions.

"I say, you fellows, they're scrapping!"

"Loder and Wharton—my hat! Lend a hand, you men!" shouted the Bounder.

"Back up, Remove!"

There was a rush of juniors to the spot. Wingate of the Sixth strode up with a frowning brow. He grabbed Loder unceremoniously by the arm, and dragged him back. Loder panted with fury.

"Hands off, you fool!" he roared.

"What? Mind what you say, Loder!" snapped the Greyfriars captain. "Let that kid alone! Haven't you sense enough not to scrap in the quad with a fag—you a Sixth Form man! Chuck it this instant!"

"Mind your own business!" roared Loder.

He tore his arm free from Wingate's grasp, and made a jump towards Wharton. Wharton's hands went up again like lightning. But Wingate's voice broke in.

"I've told you to chuck it, Loder! Do you want me to tell you to bend over and take six?"

Loder started convulsively.

He stared almost dazedly at the head prefect of Greyfriars, his hands dropping to his sides.

That was another outcome of his loss of prefect's rank! It was true that seniors were seldom or never "whopped." But it was equally true that seniors, even Sixth Form men, could be whipped if a prefect saw fit to whop them! Wingate, had he liked, could have ordered Loder to bend over, just as Loder had been accustomed to ordering fags.

Loder, almost foaming, turned and tramped away. He was feeling rather like Cain of old, that his punishment was greater than he could bear. Wingate, glancing after him, saw the placard on his back, and burst into a laugh.

Loder tramped into the House. Prout glanced at his furious face, and frowned. Then, as Loder passed, he glanced at his back and jumped.

"Loder!" he rapped out. "You ridiculous boy, take that off your coat at once! How can you—a Sixth Form boy—be so utterly absurd?"

"What?" stammered Loder.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from the quad. "Another guy! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I understand," boomed Prout, "that you are no longer a prefect, Loder! I am not surprised at it when you are guilty of such childish pranks! But at all events, you might have some respect for the Form to which you belong—some sense of propriety, Loder! How dare you, a senior, play such infantile pranks?"

"What do you mean?" shrieked Loder.

"Do not raise your voice in addressing me, Loder! I am not to be treated with impertinence!" boomed Prout. "Have a care, sir! Take that off your back! You have caused enough unseemly merriment, Loder."

"Is there anything on my back?" gasped the bewildered Loder.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled a dozen fellows.

Loder twisted round, trying to look at his back. It dawned upon him that there was some hidden cause for the outburst of hilarity in the quad. He looked so oddly like a kitten chasing its tail, as he twisted round, that there was a fresh yell of laughter.

"Take it off!" boomed Prout. "Take it off at once! Upon my word—a Sixth-Form boy holding himself up to ridicule in this manner—upon my word! Have you no self-respect, Loder? Have you no sense of the dignity of a senior Form? Upon my word!"

"I can't see anything—I—what—what—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Prout stepped up to Loder, and jerked the card off his back. Then Loder saw it and understood.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"Take it!" said Prout. "Take it away!" He thrust the card into Loder's hands. "If you were in my Form, Loder, I should punish you severely for this absurd prank. Parading the quad—ringle with a ridiculous placard on your back—upon my word! Loder, I warn you that if you play another such prank, I shall bring the matter to the notice of the Head! I repeat—"

But Loder did not wait for Prout to repeat himself. He rushed away, spluttering with rage; and a yell of laughter followed him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's another guy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Looking for Loder!

"TOO thick!" said Bob Cherry, shaking his head.

"The thickfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh.

Grunt, from the Bounder.

Smithy was full of it! It was the Fifth of November—and after dusk there was to be the usual bonfire and celebration; and Smithy had original ideas on the subject. But he required support in the rag he was planning—and he came along to the Co. for it. But the Co. shook their heads.

"Not quite the thing, I think," said Johnny Bull.

"Do you?" growled the Bounder. "And when did you start thinking—and what the thump are you doing it with?"

"Keep your temper, old chap!" said Frank Nugent, laughing. "It's really too thick! Leave Loder alone!"

"I'll leave him alone—when I've done with him," said Vernon-Smith. "Not before! Can't you men see what a chance this is? He will squirm in as a prefect again sooner or later—Quelch is backing him, and Quelch has a lot of influence with the beak. If we're going to pay off old scores, now's our time. Hasn't every man in the Remove got something up against that rotten bully?"

"Well, yes; but—"

"Well, we can rag the cad now he's not a prefect! What the dickens are you afraid of?" jeered the Bounder.

"Nothing in the wide world, old bean," answered Bob Cherry cheerfully. "But leave Loder alone! He's letting us alone now."

"Only because he has to."

"Very likely," agreed Bob. "Still, there it is! I hear that Coker of the Fifth knocked his hat off in the quad."



"Loder!" rapped out Mr. Prout. "You ridiculous boy, take that card off your back at once!" "Wh-what?" stuttered Loder. "Take it off!" boomed the Fifth Form master. "Have you no self-respect, Loder? Have you no sense of dignity? Upon my word!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the crowd of onlookers. "Another guy! Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker's an ass! Loder's down on his luck, and why hit a man when he's down?"

"He will begin on us fast enough when he gets up again!" growled Smithy.

"Wait till he does!" suggested the good-natured Bob.

"Oh, rats!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith swung away in dudgeon. He had expected enthusiastic support from the Co. old enemies of the Sixth Form bully. Plenty of fellows were letting Loder know what they thought of him, now that he was under the frown of fortune. But the Co. did not enthuse.

Tramping away by the studies, Smithy spotted the captain of the Remove in the window-seat on the landing, and joined him there. Wharton was the man he wanted. A few weeks ago Wharton would doubtless have expressed the same views as Bob Cherry. But Smithy did not expect him to express the same view now. Wharton had hardened a great deal in those few weeks—and in some ways he was developing a likeness to the Bounder himself. In this new phase he was a kindred spirit.

"You're on for a rag, old bean?" asked Smithy.

"I'm your man," answered Harry at once.

"It's Loder!"

"Anything you like!" Wharton laughed. "By gum, we can make that cur sorry for himself now that his teeth are drawn!"

The Bounder laughed, too. He had judged correctly. Forbearance towards a fallen enemy was not in Wharton's thoughts. Loder's enmity had been too bitter and unscrupulous for forgiveness—in Wharton's present mood, at least.

"The rotter's getting what a lot of fellows have owed him for a long time," went on Harry. "I hear that Coker

knocked his hat off—and Loder just picked it up and put it on again. He funks Coker—now he's not a prefect. And that's the bully who threw his weight about all over the school!"

"Thus are the mighty fallen!" grinned the Bounder.

"Some of the men are talking about shipping his study," said Harry. "But I suppose the prefects would butt in if they started shipping a study in the Sixth!"

"I've got a better stunt than that," said Vernon-Smith. "It's Guy Fawkes night to-night, old bean, and the celebration will soon be on. I've got a bucket of tar in a safe place. I bagged it from Gosling's shed."

"Tar?" repeated Wharton.

"And a bag of feathers—"

"Oh, my hat! For Loder?" yelled Wharton.

"Why not? We want a guy on Guy Fawkes night. And Loder, done up in tar and feathers, will make some guy, believe me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.

"You're on!" grinned the Bounder. "I've asked your old pals—but they've turned it down. Bolsover major will help—he's keen enough—and the three of us can handle Loder. A dose of tar and feathers will show all Greyfriars what we think of Loder."

"Right as rain!" chuckled Wharton.

"Of course, it's a bit risky! The Sixth ain't proud of Loder, but they think a lot of the jolly old dignity of their Form! We may get six all round from the prefects—"

"Or from Quelch!" said Wharton, with a curl of the lip. "Loder's his favourite these days. I don't care if I get six, or sixty, so long as we show Quelch what the school thinks of his favourite."

"Good man! Tar and feathers will show that pretty plainly. But we can

shove on Guy Fawkes masks when we handle Loder," added the Bounder cautiously. "There will be a hundred fellows with masks on, and who's to tell which from which? I've got the tar and feathers hidden in the ivy—and we've got to catch Loder on the hop!"

"I'm on, you bet!"

Bob Cherry & Co. saw Wharton go down the Remove staircase with the Bounder, and join Bolsover major below. They exchanged glances, but said nothing. The scapegrace of the Remove was evidently hunting trouble again; but it was not for his parted pals to intervene.

After tea the November evening was dark, but lock-up was later than usual on account of the Guy Fawkes celebration. In the Cloister Field a great bonfire had been erected, fellows stacking up all sorts of inflammable things, and at six o'clock it was to be lighted. Already crackers were cracking, and squibs squibbing here and there, eager fags of the Third and Second being unable to restrain their impatience.

Some of the fellows were already parading a "guy," which was to be burned on the bonfire. Wharton, Smithy, and Bolsover major mingled in the crowd, looking for Loder.

Prefects of the Sixth Form affected a lofty indifference to firework celebrations; but, by the instructions of the Head, all the prefects were on duty to keep the excitement within bounds. On such festive occasions fellows were liable to get a little "above" themselves, and the presence of the prefects, with their ashplants, was very likely to be needed. Loder of the Sixth, being no longer a prefect, escaped that duty, but the Bounder & Co. expected to find him somewhere in the crowd. Hardly a man was remaining in the studies.

"There's Loder!" murmured the Bounder.

Loder of the Sixth was talking to Carne and Walker in the quad. The three juniors soon spotted him, and eyed him from a distance. They could not collar Loder in the presence of two prefects, and they waited for the seniors to separate.

They did not have to wait long, as Carne and Walker, with the other prefects, were wanted in the Cloister Field, where the celebration was beginning. A match had been put to the big bonfire, and a red glare of flame danced in the thick November dusk.

Carne and Walker proceeded in that direction, and Loder lounged away by himself, the juniors watching him like hawks.

Loder was scowling. He was not keen on performing a prefect's duties, but he felt his exclusion very keenly indeed. Even his dear pals, Carne and Walker, let him see quite plainly that they no longer regarded him as one of themselves.

He loafed away, with his hands in his pockets, and a scowl on his face, and disappeared along the Elm Walk. That path was thickly shaded by trees, and in the November evening it was as dark as the inside of a hat.

"Our luck's in!" breathed the Bounder.

Peering through the dusk under the old branches, the juniors could not see Loder, but they spotted a red, glowing point of the cigarette in the darkness. The black sheep of the Sixth had strolled into that secluded path to smoke a cigarette unobserved. He could not have played more effectually into the hands of the raggars.

"Asking for it!" grinned Bolsover major. "Let's get the stuff here, and catch him as he comes back!"

"You keep an eye on him, Wharton! We'll be here in a jiffy!" muttered Vernon-Smith.

"Right-ho!"

Vernon-Smith and Bolsover major cut away to get the tar and feathers. Harry Wharton remained under the elms, keeping an eye on the glowing end of the cigarette up the dark path.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The Wrong Man!

"WHARTON!"

It was Mr. Quelch's voice. Harry Wharton gave a start, and spun round. He was looking up the path under the old elms, and had not been aware of the Remove master's approach behind him. "Oh! Yes, sir!" he stammered.

The glowing end of the cigarette was instantly extinguished. Loder was at a distance, but he had heard Quelch's voice.

Mr. Quelch eyed Wharton grimly. "Have you done your lines, Wharton?"

"My—my lines?"

Wharton had lines to do—he was seldom without them these days. A bitter look came over his face. Plenty of other fellows had lines, but they were not likely to be asked for them by any master when the Guy Fawkes celebrations were just beginning. The severest master would stretch a point on such an occasion. But the scapegrace of the Remove had nothing to expect from his Form master but inflexible severity.

"You have a hundred lines, Wharton, which you should have brought to my study at six o'clock. Have you written them?"

"No!" muttered Wharton.

"They are doubled!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Go into the House at once, Wharton, and write out your imposition!"

Wharton breathed hard.

Loder's footsteps came back along the path. There was no sign of a cigarette now. Mr. Quelch glanced at him.

"Loder!"

"Yes, sir!" said Loder smoothly.

"Although you are no longer a prefect, Loder, may I ask you to see this junior into the House, and to take him to the Form-room. I cannot trust him to obey my commands!" said Mr. Quelch bitterly.

Loder smiled. He was more than willing to oblige Mr. Quelch in that little matter. Marching Wharton into the House, and keeping him away from the

bonfire and the fireworks, was quite a palatable task.

"Certainly, sir!"

"You will go to the House with Loder, Wharton."

"But, sir—"

"Not a word!" Mr. Quelch raised his hand sternly. "Go! If you leave the House before your imposition is written, I shall cane you."

"It's bonfire night, sir—"

"That is immaterial! Go!"

There was no help for it, and Wharton went into the House with Loder. The Sixth-Former marched him into the Form-room.

"Get on with it!" he said agreeably. "No fireworks for you to-night, my pippin!"

Wharton eyed him savagely.

What would happen when Smithy got back with the tar and feathers? It was as black as a hat on the elm walk. If there was an awful mistake in the dark—

"Look here, Loder—"

"Shut up, and get on with your lines!" grinned Loder. "I'll keep you company for a bit, my beauty! I fancy you'll cut the minute you're left alone—what? No fireworks for you!"

And Loder, closing the Form-room door, stood with his back to it, watching the dismayed captain of the Remove, with a cheery grin. It was easy enough for him to see that Wharton would not have remained in the Form-room if left alone there—which Loder could only attribute to his keenness to join in the Guy Fawkes celebrations. Loder had nothing to do, and it was a sheer pleasure to him to disappoint the junior he loathed and who had been the cause of his fall from his high estate.

There was no help for it. And Wharton found comfort in remembering that his comrades intended to don Guy Fawkes masks before collaring their victim. The chances were that, whatever happened, they would not be identified. Wharton sat down to his lines, and Loder, leaning on the Form-room door, watched him, with a gloating grin.

Meanwhile, Mr. Quelch, in a meditative mood, was pacing up and down the shadowed elm walk. And Herbert Vernon-Smith and Bolsover major were arriving on the spot, the former with a tin bucket of tar, the latter with a large bag of feathers.

"Where's Wharton?" muttered Bolsover, glancing round in the dusk. "I say, Wharton—"

"Quiet!" muttered the Bounder.

"Don't yell, you ass!"

"Wharton's not here!"

"Bother Wharton! So long as Loder's here, it's all right!"

Why Wharton had gone the Bounder did not know, neither did he care. He stepped under the trees with the bucket of tar and peered up the path in the gloom. Bolsover major followed him.

There was no glowing end of a cigarette to be seen. But on the dead leaves on the path there was a footprint. Faintly, a dark shadow among shadows, a figure could be barely discerned.

Swiftly Vernon-Smith and Bolsover major donned their Guy Fawkes masks. The moment of action had arrived.

They had not the faintest doubt that it was Loder, strolling back to the quad after smoking a cigarette or two. Not for a moment did they dream of what had happened during their brief absence.

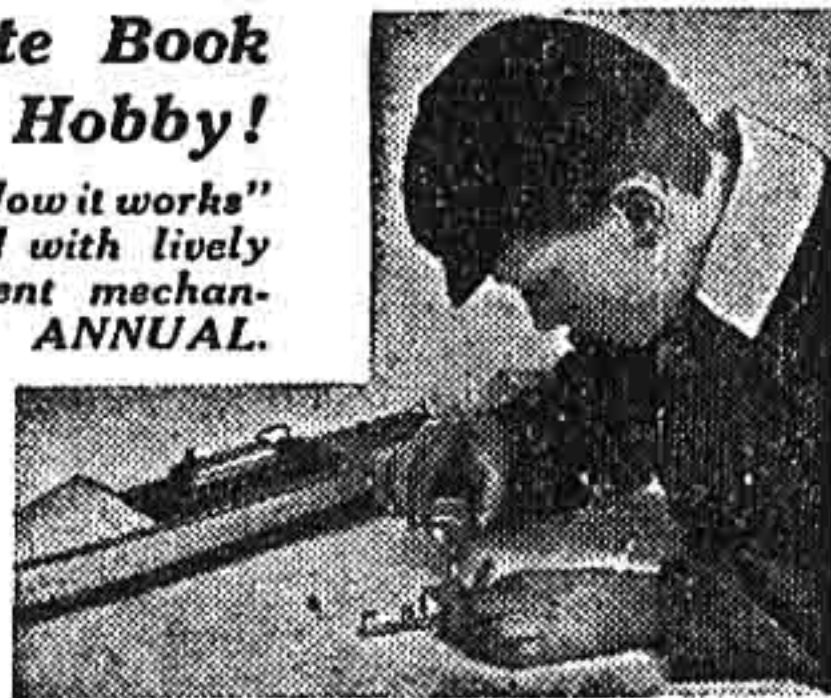
One on either side of the path, invisible in the darkness, they waited, tar and feathers ready.

The footsteps came nearer.

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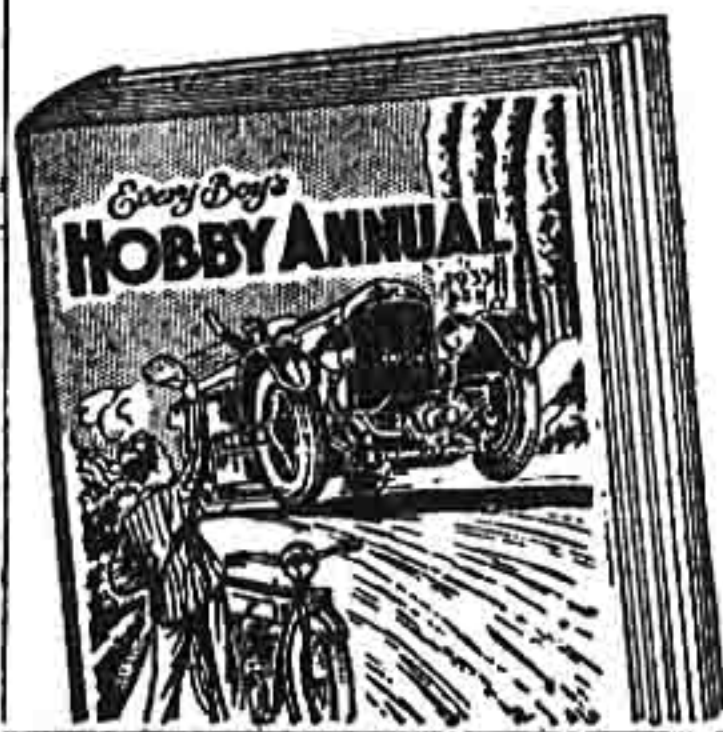
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They could see nothing but the dimmest of shadows in the darkness, but they could hear.

Nearer and nearer!

Vernon-Smith had set the bucket on the ground beside him. He made a sudden spring, grasped at the unseen figure, and hooked its leg. There was a crash and a gasp as it went down. And as it went, Bolsover major swiped with the bag, catching the unseen face with a heavy thud, and the hapless victim was flattened down.

It sat up the next moment, gurgling.

The bucket of tar was in the Bounder's hands again in a twinkling. As the gurgling figure sat up, Smithy upended the bucket over its head.

Tar streamed out in a torrent.

It streamed and splashed and rolled over the hapless head of the victim, rolled down its face, down its neck, over its clothes, smothering it.

Bolsover major, with a breathless chuckle, opened the end of the bag, and shook out the feathers over the tarred figure that gurgled and gasped and spluttered and howled.

The feathers descended in a shower, sticking to the tar.

"Cut!" breathed the Bounder.

They jumped away from the gurgling figure. Horrible sounds followed them.

"Grooogh! Ooooh! Gug-gug-gug-gug! Urrrrrggggh!"

The tin bucket and the bag were flung away among the dark trees. The two young rascals fairly raced from the spot.

"Yurrrrrgggh!"

Any eyes that fell on two running juniors only saw two fellows whose identity was completely concealed by Guy Fawkes masks. And in a very few moments Vernon-Smith and Bolsover major were mingling with the crowd, joining in the shouting and letting off fireworks. Loder, as they supposed, was left to the tar and feathers! They did not yet know that it was not Loder!

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

### Not Wharton!

**M**R. QUELCH sat and spluttered, and dabbed tar with sticky fingers, and wondered whether this was some awful dream.

Life is full of surprises. But never had the Remove master of Greyfriars been so surprised as now.

He staggered up at last.

He lurched away, spluttering and gasping. In the Cloister Field the huge bonfire was blazing and roaring and casting ruddy light for a great distance. Crackers cracked, squibs fizzed, streams of sparks shot across the dusky sky. Voices shouted and cheered. And louder shouts than ever were heard when the wild, weird, and unrecognisable figure of the Remove master staggered into view.

"I say, you fellows, who's that?" yelled Billy Bunter. "Look!"

"Here's another guy!" roared the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that Loder?" gasped Bob Cherry, remembering the Bounder's scheme. "My hat! There's a picture for you!"

"The picturefulness is terrific!" chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"It's too thick!" grinned Nugent. "Even Loder—"

"That's not Loder!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Taller than Loder! It's a man— My hat! It's a master!"

"Phew!"

"Please to remember the Fifth of November!" roared Bolsover major.

"Here's another guy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooogh! Oooogh! Whooh!" came from the startling figure.

A buzzing crowd surrounded it at once, staring and laughing and cheering. But the fellows kept at a safe distance. Tar was sticky.

"Hallo! What's this?" Wingate of the Sixth came up. "Is that a guy? What on earth is it? What—"

"It's—it's tar and—and feathers!" stuttered Gwynne. "Who the dooce—"

"Grooogh! Help me! Ooooh! I am—am smothered! I—I am almost suff-suff-suffocated! Ooooooch!" gurgled Mr. Quelch. "I have been attacked—assaulted—smothered— Yooooooch!"

"Great pip!"

"That's Quelch's voice," said Wingate dazedly. "It—it can't be Quelch! It—it just can't!"

"Quelch!" Bolsover major ceased to chortle, and his face became ghastly under its mask. "Quelch! Oh, holy smoke!"

"Quelch!" gasped the Bounder, horror-stricken.

"Oooch! Wingate—Gwynne—help me! I—I am smothered! I—I think it is—is tar and—and feathers! I was attacked in the—groogh—dark! Oooh!"

"That idiot Smithy!" breathed Bob Cherry. "He's got Quelch instead of Loder! How the dickens—"

Mr. Quelch was totally unrecognisable. Streaming with tar, to which feathers clung in myriads, he had a strange resemblance to some queer fowl. But his voice was known. It was Quelch—there was no doubt that it was Quelch—but Quelch as no human eye had ever viewed him before!

"Oooogh! Grooogh! Find that young rascal—"

"You—you know who has done this, Mr. Quelch?" gasped Wingate, gazing in horror at the master of the Remove. "You—you saw him?"

"I cannot see in the—ooogh—dark!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "But I have not the slightest doubt—not the slightest. It was I am sure, Wharton! No other boy at Greyfriars would have the—oooch—audacity! Find Wharton at once, Wingate! Oooooochooch!"

Mr. Quelch staggered to the House. He left a stream of tar and fluttering feathers behind him as he went.

A buzzing crowd followed on. Prout and Capper, Wiggins and Twigg, and other masters had gathered round Mr. Quelch, gazing with horror at him. He stood in the lighted House, reeking with tar, smothered with feathers, a sight for gods and men! There was a rustle as the Head arrived on the scene.

"Who—what—?" The Head fairly jumped.

"Another guy!" came in a yell from the quad.

"It—it—it is—oooch—it is I, sir!" gurgled Mr. Quelch. "I have been attacked—assaulted! I accuse Wharton—Wharton of my Form—"

Mr. Quelch had not the slightest doubt on that point.

"I hear that Wharton is in the Form-room, sir!" gasped Wingate.

"I sent him there, but he cannot have remained there. I am absolutely certain that—"

"If Wharton has been guilty of this he shall be expelled on the spot, Mr. Quelch," said the Head. "But we must ascertain the facts. I will go to the Form-room at once."

Half Greyfriars followed the Head to the Remove-room. Mr. Quelch, boiling with wrath and indignation, was close behind him. Dr. Locke threw open the door of the Form-room, and there was a startled ejaculation from a Sixth-Former who was leaning on it inside.

Loder stared round at the crowd in the doorway. Harry Wharton stared from his desk.

"Wharton is here!" said the Head.

"Here!" gurgled Mr. Quelch.

He blinked in with tarry eyes. Wharton was there!

He rose to his feet, his eyes on the tarry, feathery figure. He had wondered whether Smithy would blunder in the dark. Evidently Smithy had.

"Wharton, how long have you been here?" demanded the Head.

"Ever since Mr. Quelch sent me in, sir," said Wharton meekly. "About a quarter of an hour, sir. Loder has been here all the time."

"Loder! You have been here, Loder?"

"Mr. Quelch asked me to bring this junior in, sir, and as I was aware that he intended to go back to the bonfire, I remained," said Loder.

"Bless my soul!"

Wharton's "alibi" could not have been more complete. His tarry Form master gazed at him and had to believe. Wharton was there—had been there, under Loder's eye—ever since Quelch had seen him to the House. Whoever had tarred and feathered Quelch, obviously it was not Wharton. He had not been, and could not have been, anywhere near the spot.

"Mr. Quelch," said the Head in a deep voice, "it appears—"

"It—it appears that it was not—oooch!—Wharton! It was—was—was somebody!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Oooooooh!"

"The culprit must be searched for and found," said the Head coldly. "But hasty and unfounded accusations serve no purpose, sir!"

Mr. Quelch swallowed that as best he could as he tottered away to get rid of the tar and feathers. Harry Wharton sat down to finish his lines, smiling. He had finished the lines long before Mr. Quelch was finished with hot water and soap. The Greyfriars fellows crowded back to the bonfire, chortling. Bolsover major grabbed the Bounder's arm.

"It—it—it was Quelch!" he gasped.

"Mum's the word!" grinned the Bounder. "Quelch butted in and asked for it—and, by gum, he got it! Mum's the word!"

Harry Wharton finished his lines and came out in time for the wind-up of the celebration. Meanwhile, the prefects were hunting high and low for the young rascal—or rascals—who had tarred and feathered Quelch. The Head had declared that the culprit should be searched for and found. He was searched for, but not found. Fellows who knew, or suspected, were very careful to keep their own counsel. Only one fact was perfectly clear—indubitably clear and undeniable—and that was that Harry Wharton was not the man. His alibi was unquestionable; Loder of the Sixth, quite unintentionally, had helped to make it so!

Who had tarred and feathered Quelch remained a mystery. It was not Wharton. Mr. Quelch had to admit that it was not the rebel of the Remove. But if it was not Wharton, Mr. Quelch could not imagine who it was. And the Bounder of Greyfriars was very glad that he couldn't!

THE END.

(Next Saturday's yarn in this novel series is entitled: "HUNTING FOR TROUBLE!" It's absolutely ripping, chums, and so are the six picture stamps which will be presented FREE with this issue. See that you order it in good time!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,290.

# THE RED FALCON!

By ARTHUR STEFFENS

## READ THIS FIRST.

Convicted of robbing the Earl of Huntford of a diamond star, Hal Lovett and Jerry McLean are conveyed to the convict hulk Ethalion, anchored at Woolwich. As the result of a prearranged plan, the convicts fire the ship, and Hal and Jerry escape. After a series of exciting adventures they pay a nocturnal visit to Huntford Hall, the home of their enemy. They are surprised in the act, however, but thanks to the timely intervention of Isaac Quilt, who happens to be on the same lay, manage to evade capture. Acting on the advice of Quilt, they cross the Thames to the Essex Coast, and eventually reach the Grey Mill Inn, Epping, where they nearly fall into the hands of the Bow Street Runners. Resting in the forest for the night, they return in the morning to find the Runners setting off in the direction of London.

### The Grey Mill Inn!

"GONE to London, Hal," said Jerry McLean. "And that's a bit of luck. Now let's get out our nags and ride up to the inn like a couple of gentlemen."

They dodged among the trees, found their horses, mounted, and rode them boldly into the inn yard, where Jerry handed them to a staring ostler to groom and feed.

"And mind you keep them out of sight," said Jerry, as he slipped a silver coin into the ostler's palm. "They're nervous horses, and they get excited if they see a crowd."

The ostler, a plain-looking, tow-headed fellow, with a spreading mouth, winked, and led the horses away. Jerry and Harry entered the Grey Mill Inn.

Simon Babbett, a stout, rubicund personage, dressed in a plum coloured suit with brown stockings and black buckled shoes, was waiting for them inside. He had watched their arrival, and now eyed them keenly, a glint of fear in his grey eyes. He invited them into the bar parlour, then closed the door and pulled a curtain across the glass.

"In what way can I serve you, gentlemen?" he asked, perspiration starting out upon his broad forehead.

"Isaac Quilt sent us to you, Mr. Babbett," explained Jerry. "We have made Kent just a bit too hot to hold us and came over in a barge belonging to Charlie Marten. I was given to understand that you would help us."

The landlord shrugged his shoulders and spread wide his arms in perplexity.

"Why, yes, gentlemen, to be sure," he said. "But your friend's horse, sir? The last time it was here it belonged to Mr. Cosgrave, the Bow Street Runner, and now—"

Jerry laughed heartily, setting back his handsome head.

"Why, your Runners have gone," he said. "We watched them depart. By good luck we saw Martin Cosgrave talking to you last night, and now we are safe."

"The Runners have gone back to London, true enough," agreed the landlord. "But my customers know that chestnut horse. You must be careful, gentlemen. I would suggest that you eat and rest till near sundown, and leave my house in the evening."

"To be sure, Babbett," said Jerry lightly. "But you must tell us where to go."

The landlord drew them to the far end of the bar parlour.

"Since you are friends of Quilt's," he whispered, leaning across the table, "you are seeking the Retreat, I take it?"

"The Retreat?" questioned Jerry McLean.

"That is where Isaac Quilt sometimes hides," explained the landlord. "I know some of the lads are staying there now. I saw Colonel York go by yesterday. And there are others."

Jerry's eyebrows met in a frown of annoyance. York! The rascal who had betrayed them at the Huntford Arms. He had been quick, and it was not very pleasing news to know that he was in the neighbourhood.

"Hark-ye, landlord," said Jerry, "all we need until we find suitable lodgings in London, is a safe place to hide. I have been told you are to be trusted."

"You'll find safe shelter at the Retreat," said Simon Babbett. "You enter the forest between the King's Oak and the Loughton Road. People won't go near the place. They believe it's haunted. I'll ride myself, and show you the way."

The landlord next asked their names. For a moment Jerry hesitated. Then, remembering how Quilt had secured for them a safe crossing, he complied with the landlord's request.

Simon Babbett stared hard at them, and then produced a crumpled paper from his pocket which he spread out for them to see. It was a reward bill, offering £100 reward for the apprehension of Jerry McLean, highwayman, and Hal Lovett, thief, convicts escaped from the hulk Ethalion.

"And it was about you two Martin Cosgrave talked half through the night," said the landlord nervously. "Wanted to know if I had seen you come this way. Oh, yes, we had better wait till it is nearly dark."

The two adventurers spent the day in a private room, eating and resting, and, between times, marvelling at the sort of freemasonry which existed between certain gentlemen of the road and the landlords of various inns, who often went right out of their way to help the highwaymen.

"I wonder why they do it?" asked Hal thoughtfully.

"Well, boy, there's not so much to wonder at," answered Jerry, as he sprawled full length on a sofa and stretched his arms. "We pay handsomely when we can. These landlords make a lot of money out of us, and, besides, we treat them decently. Why, there isn't an ostler who wouldn't almost give his life for us. We give the lads silver and gold, not mouldy copper or a surly rebuff."

Jerry pulled off his coat and slung it

across a chair, then he wriggled his head into the sofa cushions and closed his eyes.

Hal Lovett listened to Jerry's snorings whilst he watched the hands of the grandfather's clock tick move slowly onward to a steady tick-tock, tick-tock!

### The Retreat!

THERE were a dozen rustics gossiping outside the inn when Jerry McLean, Hal Lovett, and Simon Babbett rode out of the yard and turned their faces north. But they cantered past the gossips and vanished along the dusty road before the yokels could say much more than:

"Well, I'll be danged if that ain't Simon Babbett goin' a ridin'!"

Simon rode with the two adventurers for about a mile and a half, and then branched off into the forest. He showed them where a well-worn trail wound its way among the beeches and the oaks.

"Follow that," he said, "and presently you'll come to a sort of railed-in plantation. There's a notice board—'Private! Trespassers will be prosecuted!' But Squire Agglethorpe didn't put that notice up, though the property belongs to him. You can get through among the brambles a little way from that. Follow the maze-like path, and you'll reach the Retreat."

"And you say we shall find friends there?"

"Yes," answered the landlord. "You'll find friends there. But be careful. You'll be challenged and asked for the password. The word is 'Tyburn.'"

Jerry thanked the worthy landlord, who waved his hand and swung his horse about, seemingly relieved at their parting.

"We'll be looking in when we start for London, Simon," he said.

"To be sure. But be wary. My nerves seem all upset since Martin Cosgrave and his Runners arrived last night. I hope none of my gossips recognised your young friend's horse."

"No fear of that!" said Jerry reassuringly.

As soon as the landlord had departed, Jerry and Hal walked their horses onward. The day was drawing to a close now. The path narrowed, but they could see, clearly imprinted, the marks of horses' hoofs.

Suddenly Jerry caught his breath and reined in his horse. He had heard



leaves rustling in the forest, the cracking of a twig.

The two chums listened and caught the sound of stealthy footsteps, which seemed to be moving away from them. Jerry swung himself from the saddle and dropped lightly to the grass, Hal following suit.

Taking a short hold of the reins, they led their horses onward, keeping to the path and treading lightly. The horses seemed to understand. Galloper and Bow Street Beauty dropped their iron-shod hoofs with cat-like caution, making even less noise than the cracking of twigs and displacement of leaves that rustled ahead of them.

Hal and Jerry could see nothing but the weather-cleaned boles of the magnificent trees. Suddenly they came to a place where the view opened out.

Here the branches met overhead in a cathedral-like effect, and a double line of trees formed a sort of avenue. On the right was a dense undergrowth, where brambles and rhododendrons towered ten feet high among the trees.

About two hundred yards up this forest avenue they made out a notice-board set up near a gate. Here was the place Simon Babbett had talked about. Somewhere in that density of bushes was hidden the Retreat.

It was not their recognition of the place that made the adventurers' hearts beat faster, but the sight of a man who was pacing slowly along the avenue, with his hands clasped behind his broad back, his three-cornered hat stuck hard down on his head, which was bowed so that his eyes were fixed upon the trail. At the man's side a sword swung.

The man was Martin Cosgrave!

The Bow Street Runner had been smart enough to smell out the secret hiding-place which had housed notorious highwaymen and other lawbreakers for years.

Jerry darted behind a tree and pulled Galloper after him. Hal had already gained the shelter of the forest.

"Gad, Hal, lad! Cosgrave!" said Jerry. "Do you get the significance of that, my boy? The man is as keen as a ferret. That notice-board won't fool him! I'm ready to wager a hundred guineas to a pinch of snuff that he discovers the Retreat; and if he does there'll be the devil to pay. What are we going to do about it?"

"I wonder," mused Hal, "if he has come here alone?"

"Perhaps," said Jerry, his teeth snapping together. "But you can wager the pack won't be far away. Hal, boy, I think it is our duty to find and warn our friends somehow, you see—"

Jerry, however, did not complete the sentence, and whatever Hal might have been enabled to see was lost in a sudden, loud outcry in the forest, the pounding of many running feet, the sound of oaths and blows, and the clash of steel on steel.

Jerry darted one look into the forest avenue, then vaulted into the saddle and urged Galloper out into the open. Hal was but a moment after him, and, as they raced along among the deepening shadows they saw Martin Cosgrave with his back set against a tree, keeping half a dozen powerful men at bay with his hanger. The darting steel shone like silver as the night closed in.

The men were buzzing round the Bow Street Runner like flies, some of them cutting at him with their swords, others trying to brain him with their

bludgeons. The Bow Street Runner had lost his hat, but with the utmost coolness parried and backed away, trying to get among the undergrowth.

"Brain him!" bawled a hard, complaining voice. "Cut him down!"

The men closed in with a rush, but the Runner pierced one through the shoulder and moved his ground. As the man reeled back, another burly man, who had not attacked Cosgrave so far, darted in under the Bow Street Runner's guard, turned the sword-blade aside and gripped the wrist that held it.

The Runner was beaten. Blows rattled on his head and shoulders, and the rest of the men closing with him, seized him by the arms and dragged him away from the tree.

By this time, short and sharp though the struggle had been, Hal and Jerry McLean were close upon the group of men.

Hearing the heavy beat of thudding hoofs, the men turned, still gripping their prisoner.

"The Runners!" bawled one of them.

But as soon as they saw that the riders were strangers they dropped their arms and permitted them to approach.

Hal and Jerry then saw that the big man who had disarmed Cosgrave was their old friend John Pryce, of the convict hulk Ethalion, the man who had stopped and robbed the Maidstone coach.

Still another of the men was known

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to them—Colonel York, the highwayman, whose eyes narrowed as he recognised them.

"Tip those gentry out of the saddle, take what they've got, and send them tripping!" bawled York.

The men closed round, with threatening cries, but John Pryce intervened.

"Wait!" he cried. "These are friends of mine!"

"Friends!" cried York, advancing a pace and pulling out a loaded pistol. "Then let them give the password!"

"Ay, let them give us the password!" chorused some of the other men.

"Tyburn," said Jerry easily, leaning slightly forward in the saddle, hand on hip.

York's face grew black as thunder.

"Why let Cosgrave into our secrets?" he snarled.

Hal saw his eyes light up evilly and his lips tighten.

The Bow Street Runner, recovering from the effect of the blows that had stunned him, shook his head and tried to wrench his arms from the grip of his captors. Then York levelled his pistol at Martin Cosgrave's head.

"He's found out our hiding-place!" he cried. "Dead men tell no tales!"

He pulled the trigger and the pistol flashed. But the ball intended for the Runner's brain whistled among the leaves, and the roar of the explosion

died in mocking echoes among the trees.

Hal had urged Bow Street Beauty up to York, and, leaning over in the saddle, struck the man's arm up even as he pulled the trigger.

York reeled back and drew his sword. But Pryce got between them.

"The boy was right, York!" he cried. "We want no murder in the forest. That means the sure road to Tyburn."

"Well, we'll get there, murder or no murder!" snapped York. "I vote we kill the Bow Street rat!"

"Then let him have a fair trial," said John Pryce, holding up his hand and ordering the men back. "Take him to the Retreat, boys. As to my friends, I'll answer for them. Surely you've heard enough about Jerry McLean and Hal Lovett? They were my pals aboard the hulks."

The angry cries died down, and threatening frowns changed to smiles. A minute later Martin Cosgrave, his hands tied behind him, was being hurried through a maze of bushes and brambles to a cave in the forest which was known to the highwaymen as the Retreat.

Who had built the cave, and when, it would have been hard to guess. Certainly it was of no recent date.

It was a large, vaulted place, and had been excavated out of a huge mound. Inside, a passage branched to right and left. The living quarters were in the middle, and consisted of a huge, domed main chamber, at the back of which was a great fireplace. A log fire was burning in the great chimney, yet no smoke was to be seen within the room. The outlet of chimney, Hal was told a long while afterwards, was artfully concealed among a dense growth of trees two hundred yards away.

The stables were to the right, and there were store-rooms and sleeping quarters to the left.

Hal and Jerry were shown where to stall their horses. Then back again to the great room they went, to find the men grouped round the prisoner.

Martin Cosgrave was still pinioned. A chair had been placed for him, and his hat had been stuck aslant upon his head, giving to his grim, serious face a comical expression. The Runner was staring round him defiantly.

One of the men had heated an iron in the fire and was threatening Cosgrave with it. Colonel York was urging him on to use it, but John Pryce was ordering the man to stand aside.

"You can kill Cosgrave if you all agree on it," he said, "but I won't have him tortured!"

"A dirty Bow Street Runner!" said the man who held the red-hot iron.

"No reason why you should torture him," said Pryce coldly.

"How else can we find out whether there are any more spies lurking out there in the forest?"

Martin Cosgrave answered without persuasion.

"I can tell you," he said. "My men are waiting at Chingford. They know I came here to investigate. That is all."

The Runner spoke quietly, and with a half-amused smile. His head was cut and bruised, and his lips were swollen, yet he was as cool as any man there.

"Boys," said York, "we're wasting time. Let's hang him!"

*(Next week's chapters of this grand "old-time" story simply teem with thrills. And don't forget your next copy of the MAGNET will contain six more picture stamps.)*

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,290.

## COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

ONE of my chums, who signs himself "A MAGNET Reader," is a little puzzled about our free gift scheme. He wants to know if he has got to take all the companion papers in order to complete his full set of picture stamps.

No, this is not necessary. If you take the MAGNET each week, and one other paper—either the "Modern Boy" or the "Ranger"—you will be able to "swap" your duplicate stamps with your chums, and thus complete your collection. If you take the three papers each week, you will find that you can complete two albums. I have arranged that specially, in order that two chums can club together to take three papers between them, and thus each of them will be able to complete his album without the slightest difficulty.

By the way, if you were not fortunate enough to get the special Album—to stick your stamps in—which was presented free with "Modern Boy" a few weeks back, you can do so now by filling in the coupon on page 17 of this issue and complying with the instructions given.

### THIS WEEK'S FREE GIFT STAMPS.

Dog lovers have got a treat this week, for two of our free gift picture stamps portray two of the finest breeds of dogs in existence. I feel quite bucked about the picture of the Alsatian, for it looks exactly like my own dog. It is only of recent years that the Alsatian has been a popular dog in this country—since the War, in fact.

In Germany, these dogs have long been appreciated, and during the War they were used for Red Cross work, and also for carrying dispatches. As I mentioned in one of my previous chats, Rin-Tin-Tin, the famous screen Alsatian, was a German dog. He was left behind when the Germans retreated, and was adopted by an American airman. By the way, it is not true that Alsations have a wolf strain in them. In their country of origin they are known as "Schaferhunds"—or sheep dogs.

The finest Alsations are those which are trained for police work, and it is claimed that they have a keen sense of scent which beats even that of a bloodhound.

The Persian Saluki is sometimes known as the "gazelle hound." It belongs to the Eastern group of the greyhound family, and, in its own country, is used for hunting.

Now for the "Royal Scot." This loco. is one of the giants of the L.M.S. Railway, and it hauls the famous train of the same name over the 400 mile run between London and Glasgow in 7 hr. 55 m. during the winter months and 7 hr. 40 m. during the summer months. Its weight, with tender, is 127½ tons, and it has four guiding wheels and six driving wheels, but no trailing wheels (4-6-0 using the technical term). There are at least seventy engines of the Royal Scot class and a number of them are named after famous regiments.

The Fairy "Gordon" aeroplane, which is picture No. 8 in our "Aircraft" series, is fitted with a 525 h.p. Armstrong Siddeley "Panther" radial air-cooled engine and its war-time job is day bombing. Picture No. 8 of the "Self Defence" series shows the walking-stick trick. If your attacker is approaching you, bring

your stick into action and give him a sharp blow on the inside of the knee with it. Gee! And won't he howl with the pain. Picture No. 9 of the same series is the method known as the Half-Nelson. The fellow on top is applying the hold. By the leverage of his right arm and hand against his victim's head and arm, he can turn him flat on his back with the utmost ease.

I HAVE had so much to tell you concerning this week's free picture stamps that I have been compelled to hold over many answers to readers' queries. However, I will do my best to oblige in this direction next week.

### NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAMME.

There are more treats in store for you in next Saturday's free gift issue of the MAGNET, chums! First and foremost comes:

#### "HUNTING FOR TROUBLE!" By Frank Richards.

Don't forget to let me know your opinion of our present series of Greyfriars yarns when next you write to me, will you? Frank Richards certainly knows how to keep on the top line where school-boy fiction is concerned, and you'll find next week's long complete yarn one of the best he has written.

There'll be another stirring instalment of our splendid serial; "The Red Falcon!" and a rib-tickling "Greyfriars Herald" supplement that is calculated to make a bronzo imago smile, while "Linesman" will answer a few more Soccer queries.

And don't forget—six more tip-top picture stamps for your collection will be given FREE with this issue. Snap 'em up, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.



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# THE NEW Greysfriars Herald

EXTRA GOOD EDITION

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

November 5th, 1932.

No. 6 (New Series).

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## AS OTHERS SEE THEM

### What I Think of Percy Bolsover

By LORD MAULEVERER

They say that first impressions are everything. If it is so, I'm afraid I must be prejudiced against dear old Bolsover, for my first impression of him was that he was an escapist, elephant charging across the quad! But I fancy I've managed to live that impression down by this time.

Master of fact, Bolsover is one of the jolly old best.

When I say that, of course, you've got to overlook certain minor faults of the old bean. I have a rooted objection to vigorous clappies, and Bolsover's really frightfully vigorous, it's his chief fault, in fact!

Another fault in Bolsover is his habit of twisting facts' arms and kicking' people like Bunter. Bolsover has an extraordinary knack of doing it just when Bunter isn't in need of it!

Neither does Bolsover's gift of repartee meet with my unqualified approval. There was an instance of it in the quad yesterday, when Squiff brightly remarked: "What's that funny thing in the middle of your face, Bolsover? Oh, I'm sorry! I can see now that it's your nose!" Bolsover responded to that cheery remark by punching' Squiff on the head: that's the kind of brilliant repartee he goes in for!

Still, as I remarked before, Bolsover's really one of the jolly old best. An honest heart beats beneath the good old gruff exterior, and many a kick of Bolsover's contains a kindly thought, if you look on it in the right way, I know.

If you fellows need any proof that Bolsover's sound, just remind yourselves of that celebrated time when Bolsover minor was suspected of theft. Remember the way Bolsover Major took the blame on his own shoulders—only to find that the 'mission' property had merely been lost all the time? Not a bad little spot of self-sacrifice, that.

Summing' up, Bolsover is a rare old rip-snot, a fire-eater, a fag-frightener, with a lot too much vigour and a really awful voice. Yet he's quite a sound old horse when it comes to the point—and that's the main thing, isn't it, dear men?

## GUY FAWKES' DAY AT GREYFRIARS

### Great Night of Fun and Frolic

As we write, the last rocket has been fired and the last drying embers of the great bonfire in the quad have vanished.

The cheering crowds that are now swarming back into the House are all agreed on one point—that this has been the greatest "Fifth" in the memory of the present generation of Friars!

Conditions were ideal, the weather being dry and crisp with sufficient cloud to obscure the trivial competition we might have had to endure from the moon. Prep being abolished for the occasion, we were able to spend the entire evening out of doors. No need to ask whether we made the most of it—we did!

From the point of view of the Remove, the evening was particularly enjoyable, for we managed to bag the Head's prize of an extra "halfer" for the best amateur "set-piece". Practically the entire Form has been busy on it for a week, and the results justified the energy expended, for it went off without a hitch. We called it "Bend Over!" It was a fireworks representation of a kid receiving "six" from a beak, and it fairly brought down the house. It would really have done your ears good to hear the row that went up. The masters laughed even more than the fellows!

After that striking success, the Remove were naturally in fine fettle. They made more noise than any two of the other Forms round the bonfire, and their war-whoops as they marched round in the procession of Guy's must have been heard in Courfield.

## COKER INSPIRES "FAMOUS" SCULPTOR

### Result Surprises Him

The most exciting event of the evening occurred when two men jumped out of a window on the ground floor of the House at the very moment when a set-piece, arranged aside, was being started. They got tangled up in the "work", just as the piece lit up, and their frantic struggles to get away from it caused tremendous excitement. On freeing themselves, they made a dash for the gates, but a crowd of at least a hundred followed them and rounded them up. They were found to be two enterprising burglars who had seized the opportunity of a deserted house to help themselves to a spare cash they could find. The police at Courfield took them over, and no doubt they are now repenting their feat in visiting Greyfriars at Guy Fawkes' Night!

Well, it's all over now, lads. We've had a night that will certainly live in our memories for many a long day. And so to bed, said he, hanging his trousers over the gas jacket and tripping over the ladder.

**FIREWORKS**

Bunter thought that "Hidden Rain" meant the success of big tips he gets from his little relations!

Dutton's hearing may be improving. When six simple crackerers went off simultaneously, he innocently enquired whether he had just heard somebody drop a box of matches!

Sir Hilton Popper is piping to the Governors a new system of discipline for the Friars involving regular things for the Fifth Form.

Can it be that he has had the idea of the identity of the gentleman who formed the subject of the Fifth Form? It can be—and if you ask our opinion it jolly well is!

## "FIREWORKS AN AWFUL BORE!"

### Says Bored Sixth-Former

Hearing that Carne of the door!" sighed Carne. "I Sixth didn't intend to take part in the fireworks celebration, our representative rushed down to investigate. He found Carne dozing in an armchair in his study."

"Is it true that you're not celebrating the Fifth?" he demanded.

Carne yawned.

"The Fifth? What do you mean? Is it someone's birthday or something?"

"Great pip!" our representative gasped. "Mean to say you don't even know that the Fifth is Guy Fawkes' Day?"

"Oh, gad! Is it? Well, what about it?"

"What about it!" echoed our representative, in amazement. "Why, it's the day we celebrate with bonfires and fireworks, of course!"

"Gad! What an awful bore!" yawned Carne. "I seem to remember seeing a fireworks somewhere or other, once. Kind of kids' playthings, aren't they?"

"Kids' playthings, rats! Fireworks are jolly interesting scientific inventions! Have you never thrilled at the soaring flight of a multi-coloured rocket—at the—"

"Thanks, but would you mind finishing what you're saying" on the other side of that of fireworks!

"You don't?" grinned our representative. "Well, see if you can't get a kick out of this lot, then!"

He then drew out half a dozen assorted "specials" from his pocket, hurried them on the fire, and then booted. Several violent explosions rang out as he fled down the passage. They were followed by a series of wild whoops and yells from Carne.

Apparently the languid Sixth-former succeeded in his mind finish, what you're getting a decided "kick" out of fireworks!

## Lonzy's Little Letters

Dear Editor.—Referring to the unpleasantly-termed "celebrations" attaching to the Fifth of November, I feel I must make a declaration expressive of remonstrative opinion in respect of the unrestrained monetary disbursement at present proceeding on the ludicrous devices, with their qualities of excessive brilliancy and inordinate sonorificity of those purposeless parades, the pyrotechnists.

Surely dear Editor, a better application of the wealth so dissipated would take the direction of elementary contributions towards the Fund to Provide Necker Garments for Natives of Nyasaland?

Yours despairingly,  
 ALONZO TODD.

## WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Dicky Nugent of the Second is the cheekiest fag at Greyfriars, and gets probably more cuffs in a term than all the rest of the lads put together!

Horace Coker complains loudly that Nature is forcing him to shave every day. (Believe it or not!)

Napoleon Dupont, the First Rank Courtenay, has turned the Higglethorn race—by rolling home. It was a crowd of slakers into a fighting force!

Johnny Bull, the Remove full-back, is a dead shot with a penalty-kick!

## GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT

A thousand thanks, but that is not the object of my visit!" smiled Mr. Frankenstein. "I came to find a perfect specimen of youthful physical beauty to use as a model for a piece of sculpture. In you, I think I have found what I want."

"Oh, I see. Well, of course, it's downright certainly that you couldn't have found anyone at Greyfriars more healthy and muscular and good-looking than I am," said Coker, with his customary modesty.

"It will be merely a matter of five minutes," said Mr. Frankenstein. "I have some putty with me, and if I just take a rough cast of your face and hands, I can do the rest in my studio from memory."

Coker then stood in front of the fire. If an ungainly and extremely hefty fellow of seventeen with a snub nose, slightly crossed eyes, and protruding jaw is considered beautiful, then Coker looked beautiful enough to satisfy any artist!

Anyway, he satisfied Mr. Frankenstein, who got busy with his putty, and in five minutes had progressed sufficiently to release his model.

"When shall I be able to see the finished article?" asked Coker, when he had his great good-bye on the School House steps.

"In two days," time—on November the Fifth," was the artist's reply, and Coker was content.

The artist was as good as his word. This morning, Mr. Frankenstein, alias William Whibley, of the Remove, led the first procession of revelers round the quad. In their midst was a "guy" whose face and hands, though violently exaggerated, bore a striking resemblance to those of Coker.

When Coker saw it, he had to catch hold of a balustrade for support. When he saw "Frankenstein" take off his beard and reveal the smiling face of a Removite, he collapsed on the steps.

Everybody who saw it declared it to be the finest and most lifelike "guy" ever seen at Greyfriars. But Coker wasn't a bit satisfied.

## SHOW THIS TO COKER

We hear that Miss Rosie Lookie, the Head's daughter, frowned and yawned noticeably at her father's tea party while Coker was airing his views.

Which inspires Bob Cherry to remark: "She was only a schoolmaster's daughter, but she gave him a black, bored look!"

**DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM**

Hop Hi made us all lark like anything this morning by tying fireworks to our Form master's gown and setting 'em alite when he left us.

There's no telling how far they'll go when the Chinese "cracker" jolt!

**PASSING THOUGHT**

Temple of the Fourth imagines that he's always at the top of the tree. But most of the time he seems to be merely up the pole!