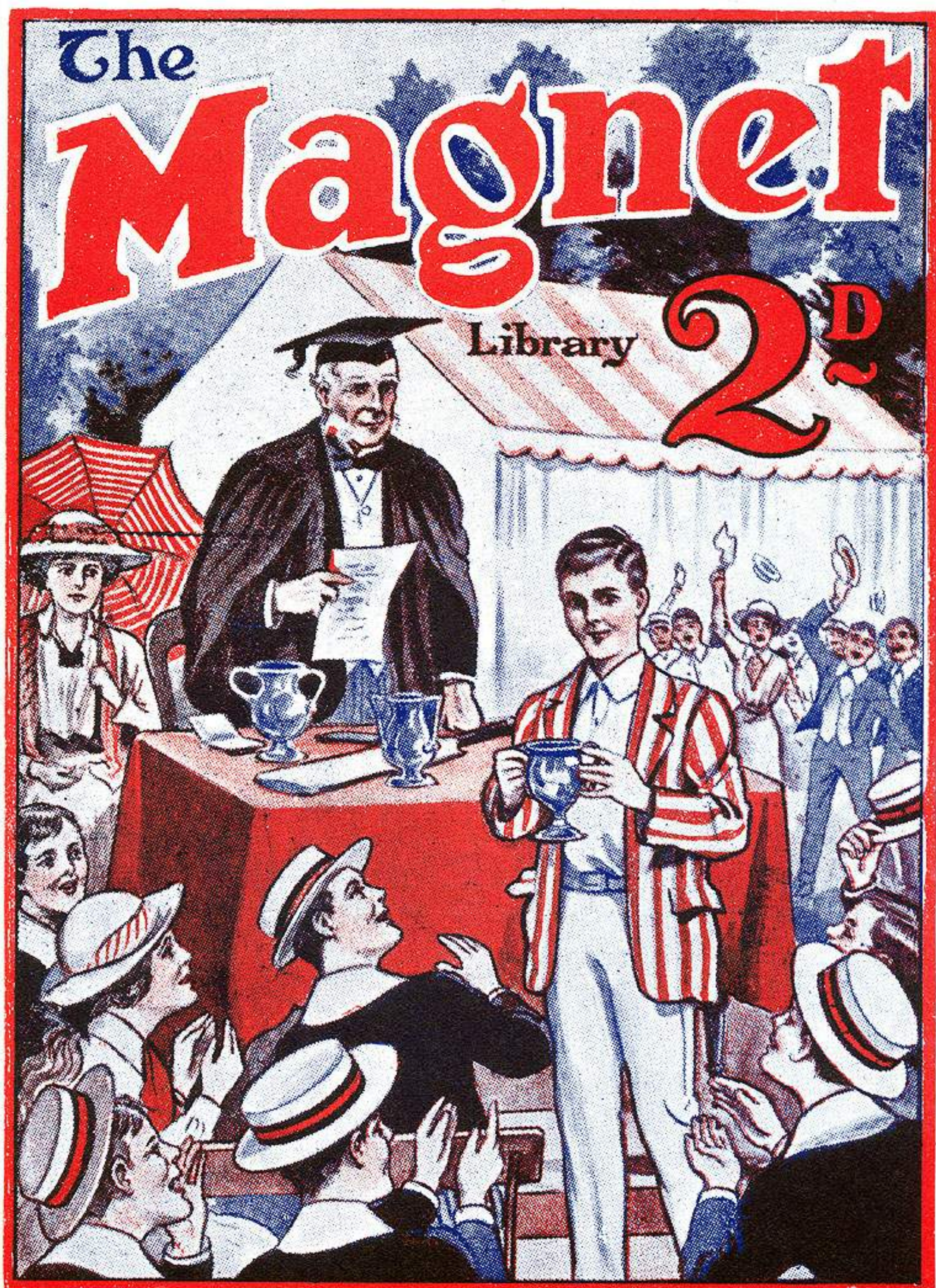


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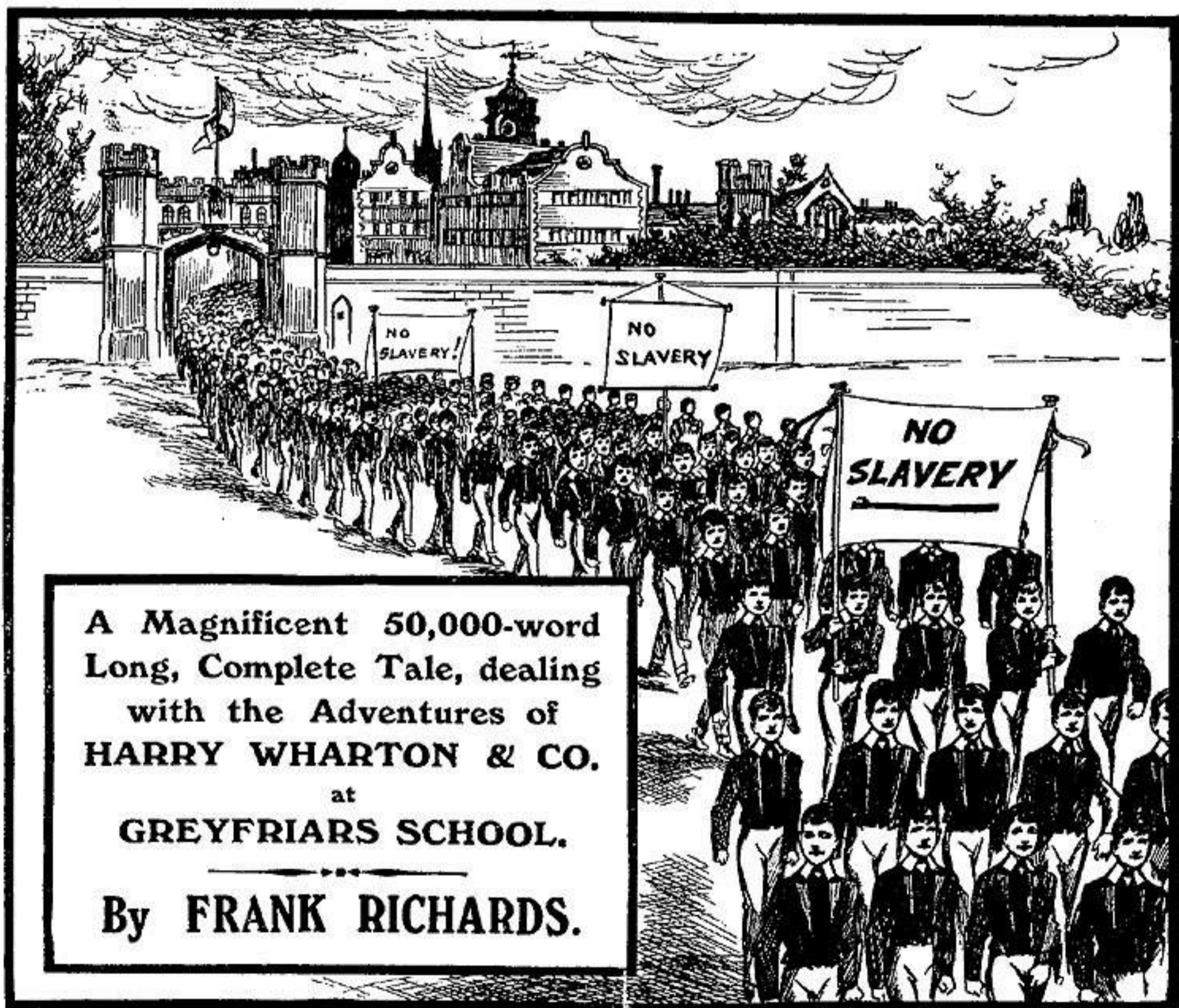
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at
GREYFRIARS SCHOOL.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Bunter, Too!

"GLORIOUS!"

Bob Cherry was referring to the weather. It was really glorious. The summer sun shone from a sky of cloudless blue. A soft breeze stirred the leaves of the old elms in the Close of Greyfriars.

Bob Cherry looked out of the doorway of the School House, and his ruddy face expressed the greatest satisfaction.

"Glorious!" repeated Harry Wharton.

And Hurree Janset Ram Singh, whose English was as remarkable as his complexion, declared that the gloriffulness was terrific.

Harry Wharton & Co. were generally a cheery company, but they were especially cheery that bright afternoon, for it was a half holiday, and a long-planned picnic on the island in the river was coming off. Funds were ample for once, and supplies were therefore on a lavish scale, and the weather was perfect. What more could they want?

"About time we got off," remarked Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter, of the Remove, joined the Famous Five in the doorway. Bunter's fat face was beaming.

There was a general chorus of:

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"I'm coming, you know," said Bunter. "Not that I care much about the picnic, but I want to help you fellows carry the bags!"

"Bow-wow!" said Bob Cherry. "Come on, you chaps!"

The Famous Five made their way to No. 1 Study, where the bags were ready packed. Billy Bunter followed in their wake.

There were three large bags packed, on the study table, and Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles at the sight of them.

"Which one shall I take?" he asked.

"None!" roared Bob Cherry. "Buzz off!"

"Now, look here, Bob," said Billy Bunter determinedly, "I'm coming. It's not really myself I'm thinking about, but as Marjorie will be there—"

"How do you know, tubby?" growled Johnny Bull.

"I happened to hear Wharton mention it. I know Hazel's gone over to Cliff House to fetch Marjorie and Clara," said Bunter. "Now, you know they'll be disappointed if I don't come!"

"Cheese it!"

"The fact is, I haven't seen them for some time, and I don't want them to think I'm neglecting them," explained Bunter. "I have so many engagements that I haven't been able to go over!"

"Oh, kick him out!" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Frank—"

"You fellows ready?" asked Squiff, looking in at the door.

"Yes, I'm ready," said Bunter.

Squiff stared at him.

"I didn't know Bunter was one of us," he said.

"And he isn't," said Harry Wharton wrathfully. "Marjorie can't stand him, and he's not going to spoil the afternoon. You can go and eat coke, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I don't think you ought to show jealousy like this!" said Bunter reproachfully. "I'm sure it's not my fault that girls prefer me. A fellow can't help being good-looking. Now, don't let's have any ragging! Just tell me where you're going to picnic, and I'll carry one of the bags part of the way!"

The chums of the Remove glared at Bunter. The fat junior picked up one of the bags, and grunted, and set it down again.

"I say, this is jolly heavy! Bob had better carry that one. You'd better let me carry the cake."

"What do you know about the cake?" growled Johnny Bull.

"I happened to hear you mention it." The number of things Bunter happened to hear mentioned was surprising.

"I say, where's that cake?"

Johnny Bull picked up a cricket stump. As a rule, the chums of the Remove were very easy-going with Bunter; but that afternoon Marjorie was to be in the party, and Marjorie's tastes had to be considered. Bunter had a fixed conviction that Marjorie was what he elegantly termed "spoons" in his direction. The fact that Miss Hazeldene froze whenever he was near her he attributed to coyness. He had encountered a steady and unchanging coyness on the part of Miss Hazeldene, but that did not alter his opinion.

Under the circumstances, the inclusion of the Owl of the Remove was not to be thought of. Johnny Bull, who was always a little heavy-handed, introduced a cricket stump into the discussion.

Billy Bunter promptly dodged round the table.

"Now, look here, Johnny—"

"Hold on!" said Bob Cherry.

Bob's eyes were twinkling.

"Let Bunter make himself useful for once," he said.

"Look here—" began Johnny Bull warmly.

"Why, you duffer—" Wharton commenced.

Bob Cherry closed one eye.

"Bunter wants to be useful," he said. "Let Bunter be useful. Leave it to me. Now, then, Bunter, it's understood that you've got to carry something?"

"Oh, certainly, Bob, old chap!"

"If you call me Bob, old chap, I'll—ahem!—all right," said Bob hastily. "Bunter can carry the parcel."

"The parcel!" repeated Wharton.

There was no parcel to be seen in the study. The supplies for the picnic were packed in the three big bags, ready to be placed in the boat.

"Yes, the parcel," said Bob. "Only it's got to be understood that Bunter carries it all the way to the priory."

The juniors grinned. The old priory was in an opposite

direction to that of the island where the picnic was to take place.

"Agreed!" said Wharton.

"Certainly," said Bunter. "If it isn't too heavy, of course. Where is it?"

"I'll get it," said Bob.

Bob Cherry hurried from the study.

Billy Bunter blinked triumphantly at the Removites.

"What I like about Bob," he remarked, "is that he isn't so jealous as you other chaps. I think it's ridiculous myself—as if I could help being attractive to girls! Some fellows are born that way, and some are not. Now, you're not, Wharton!"

"Oh!" said Wharton.

"It's nothing against you," said Bunter encouragingly. "It simply happens like that. It's the same with Bull. He can't help his face."

"What's the matter with my face?" demanded Johnny Bull, in a voice that resembled the rumble of thunder.

"Well, it's rather bulldoggy, isn't it?" said Bunter. "Not the kind of face girls would like. Then Squiff—he's a bit skinny, and a girl admires a good figure."

Bunter glanced down at his own figure, and smirked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter crossly.

"There's a glass over the mantelpiece," suggested Nugent.

"Oh, really, Frank—" Bunter dodged round the table again. "Look here, Nugent, you rotter—Keep that stump away, Bull, you beast!"

Billy Bunter took refuge behind the armchair, and blinked wrathfully at the juniors, as they awaited Bob Cherry's return. Bob was not long in coming. His heavy boots were heard in the passage, and he strode in with a large parcel under his arm.

"Here you are, Bunter! Be careful with that, mind!"

"Right-ho! I say, this is heavy!"

"If you don't want to come—"

"I do want to come. I don't mind carrying that parcel. Still, it's heavy. What's in it?"

"More than you could eat in a fortnight," said Bob Cherry.

"Mind you don't drop it, you owl! Come on, you chaps!"

Bob Cherry and Squiff and Wharton picked up a bag each, and the party left the study. Billy Bunter grunted and gasped as he came out into the quad with his heavy parcel.

"I say, you fellows, this is jolly heavy," he said. "Still, I don't mind. I'm not a slacker like some chaps, who lounge about with their hands in their pockets." He blinked at Hurree Singh and Nugent and Johnny Bull. "A decent chap might give me a hand with this. But I don't mind."

"Buck up, Bunter!"

"I'm coming as fast as I can, you rotters! Don't walk so fast. I'm getting out of breath!"

"Hurry up!"

The Famous Five and Squiff strode down to the gates at a good speed. Billy Bunter lagged after them, his fat little legs going like clockwork. Outside the gates he came to a halt.

"I say, you fellows, I can't keep up with you!" he yelled.

The Removites did not seem to hear. They strode away down the road at a rapid pace, and turned into the wood. Bunter tramped on furiously, changing the heavy parcel from one arm to the other occasionally. It was more than a mile to the old priory, and he was already panting and perspiring. Bob Cherry shouted back from the wood.

"Buck up, Bunter!"

"I'm bucking up as fast as I can, you beast! Wait for me!"

"Oh, hurry up!"

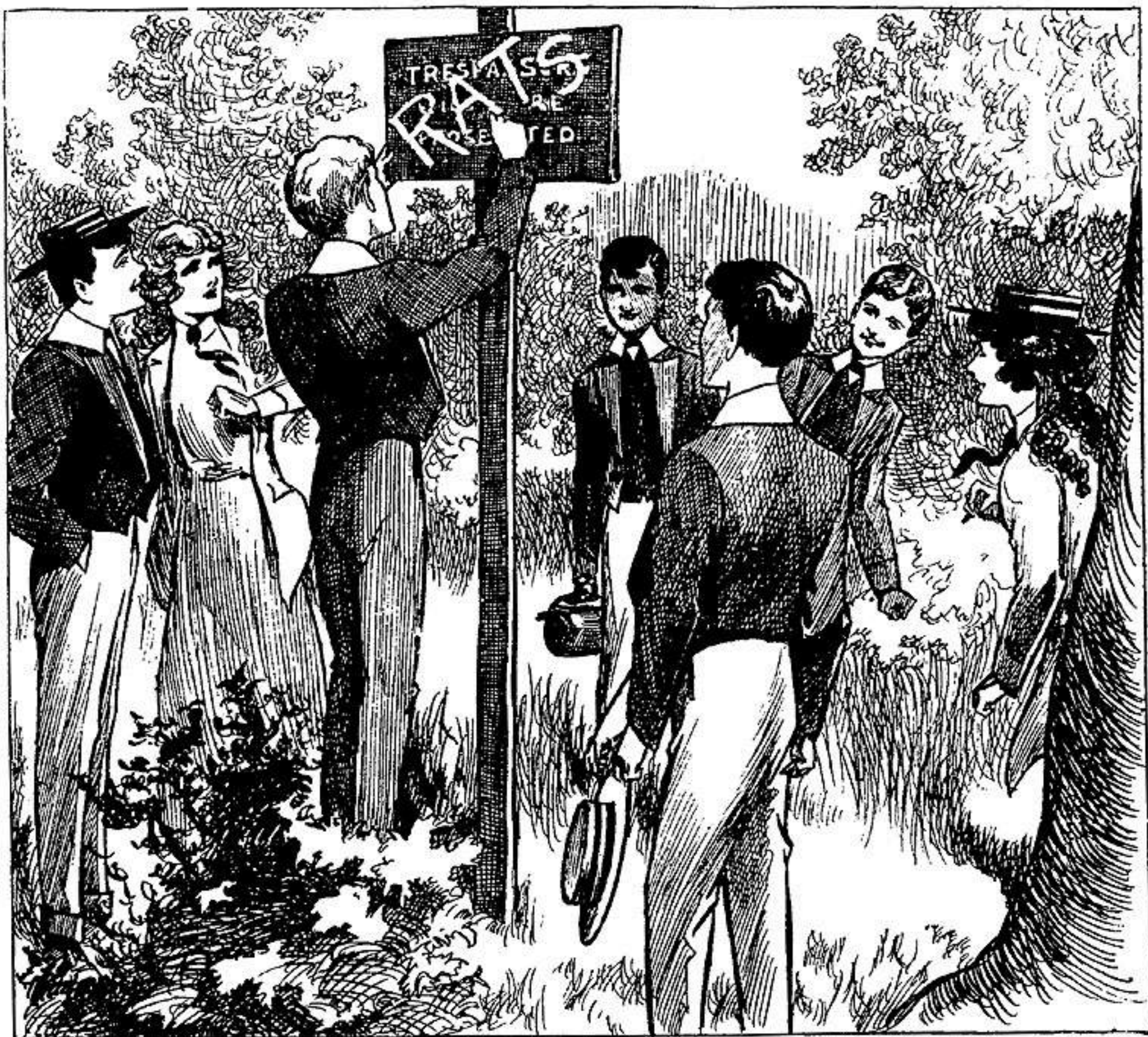
Billy Bunter tramped along the footpath. Harry Wharton & Co. had disappeared ahead in the wood. Silently they turned from the footpath, and took a short cut through the trees towards the river. Billy Bunter passed the spot where they had left the path, and tramped on, unsuspecting.

"Here we are again!" said Bob Cherry, as the party came out on the towing-path. "Kim on; The boat's ready."

The chums of the Remove deposited the bags in the boat, and jumped in after them, and pushed off. There was no sign of Bunter. Evidently he was still on his way to the old priory.

"I fancy we sha'n't see Bunter again this afternoon," remarked Bob Cherry, as he thrust his oar into the gleaming river. "We shall be deprived of the charms of his society. It's hard luck, but such is life."

"That's all very well!" growled Johnny Bull. "But he's got the parcel!"



Bob Cherry took the chalk, and proceeded to indite an inscription on the offending board, in very large letters.
"RATS!" (See Chapter 3.)

"Yes, he's got the parcel," agreed Bob. "That couldn't be helped. It was worth that parcel to get rid of Bunter."

"Bet you he won't go half-way to the priory, either. He'll just squat down in the wood and open the parcel."

"He's welcome to."

"And he'll scoff everything that's in it!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"He's welcome to do that, too," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "I fancy he won't, though. Bunter's got the digestion of an ostrich, but I fancy he'll draw the line at what's in the parcel."

"Eh? What's in it?"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Brickbats!" he replied.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of the Remove roared as they pulled away up the river.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Caught in the Act!

"STAND and deliver!"

Billy Bunter halted. Three juniors had appeared in the footpath before him—Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish, of the Remove. It was Skinner who hailed him:

Billy Bunter set the heavy parcel down on the grass. He

mopped his perspiring brow with his handkerchief. Bunter was not in good condition. His ample allowance of tuck and his small allowance of exercise prevented that.

"Oh, dear!" he gasped. "It's heavy! I say, you fellows, have you seen Wharton and those other beasts?"

"Not a beast of them," said Skinner. "What's in that parcel?"

"Tuck!"

"So you're in funds again?" grinned Skinner. "And you're leaving your old pals out of it."

"I guess that's mean," said Fisher T. Fish. "I kinder reckon we can't allow that, Bunter. I guess we're on in this scene!"

"Tain't mine!" gasped Bunter. "I'm going to the picnic, you know. The rotters urged me to come—simply begged me to come—and now they've gone on and left me behind! Beasts!"

"Rotters!" agreed Snoop. "Don't trouble about catching them up, Bunt. We'll help you look after the tuck."

"I guess we can do that," said Fisher T. Fish.

Bunter shook his head.

"I'm going on," he said. "You see, Marjorie's going to be there, and she'll be disappointed if I don't come."

"Disappointed if you do, you mean," said Skinner agreeably. "Let's make a bargain; you stand the feed, and I'll stand some fags after it. I've got a new box. We came out for a smoke, but we'll have a feed first."

Next Monday's Number of The "Magnet" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a Splendid, Long, Complete Story, entitled:

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!" By Frank Richards.

"Hear, hear!" said Snoop.

Billy Bunter hesitated. But it was a long way to the old priory, and the parcel was heavy. And he was hungry; he was always hungry. It was more than half an hour since dinner, and since then he had had only a tart and a chunk of toffee.

"It's a go!" said Bunter. "I'll stand the tuck, and you'll stand the smokes. After all, I'm not bound to catch those beasts up. They ought to have waited for me!"

"Of course they ought!" said Skinner.

"They ought to have carried the parcel, too," argued Bunter. "Lot of slackers, you know. After begging me to come with them they give me the heaviest parcel to carry!"

"Rotten! Don't carry it any further!"

"I jolly well won't!" said Bunter.

"Pretty heavy," said Skinner, lifting it, and his eyes glistened. "There must be an awful lot of tuck in that."

"I guess this hyer is a windfall!" remarked Fisher T. Fish.

Fish cut the cord. Skinner unwrapped the thick brown-paper. Billy Bunter mopped his perspiring brow, and looked on.

Inside the brown-paper was a wrapping of old sacking. Skinner looked surprised as it was disclosed to view.

"Did you pack this, Bunter?" he asked.

"No. Bob Cherry packed it."

"He's been awfully careful about it, then. Blessed if I ever saw tuck tied up in an old sack before," said Skinner.

He unrolled the sacking. Then he uttered a yell.

"Bricks!"

"Wha-a-at!" ejaculated Bunter, his little round eyes almost starting through his spectacles. "B-b-b-bricks!"

"You silly ass!" roared Snoop.

"Bub-bub-bricks!" stuttered Bunter.

"Where's the tuck?" howled Fisher T. Fish.

"There isn't any!" snorted Skinner. "They've given him a bundle of old bricks to carry, the silly fathead!"

"Oh, the—the rotters!" gasped Bunter. "That's why they let me come!"

"You said they begged you to come!" sneered Snoop.

"Bricks! Oh, the beasts! That's why they left me behind. I shouldn't wonder if they're not going to the old priory at all!" howled Bunter. "Now I come to think of it, Bob Cherry didn't say they were going there. He said I was to carry this parcel there. Oh, dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at, you rotters! Where are those beasts now?" roared Bunter. "Why, it was only a trick to get rid of me."

Skinner and Fish and Snoop roared with laughter. They were disappointed themselves, but Bunter's discomfiture consoled them. The fat junior was crimson with rage.

"Well, there won't be any feed, I guess," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "But we'll have that smoke all the same."

"I'll join you," said Bunter.

"You jolly well won't!" said Skinner promptly. "You can clear off, you fat owl! You can take your brickbats away with you if you like. Here you are, you chaps; light up."

The three young rascals seated themselves on the grass, and the cigarettes were lighted. Billy Bunter blinked at them savagely. Billy Bunter prided himself upon being a "blade" quite as much as Skinner & Co., but there were no smokes for him. Skinner did not like giving anything away.

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter.

"Oh, buzz off!" said Skinner. "Take your brickbats with you. A little exercise will bring down your fat, you know. Hallo, who's that?"

A tall, thin gentleman, with a white moustache, came along the footpath. The juniors recognised Sir Hilton Popper, a local landowner, with whom the Greyfriars fellows had sometimes had little difficulties. Sir Hilton Popper halted at the sight of the juniors, and stared at them from under his shaggy grey brows.

"Huh!" he ejaculated.

"Nice afternoon, sir!" said Skinner coolly.

"Huh! Young rascals! Smoking, by gad!"

Snoop and Fish looked a little nervous. But Skinner was quite cool. Sir Hilton was not a persona grata at Greyfriars, and Skinner did not think that he had anything to fear from him. So he could afford to be cheeky.

"May I offer you a cigarette, sir?" said Skinner blandly.

"What?" roared Sir Hilton.

"Cigarette?"

Snoop and Fish chuckled. The expression upon Sir Hilton Popper's ruddy face was simply terrific. The baronet seemed incapable of speech for a moment.

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"Huh!" he gasped at last. "Huh! Oh! Impertinent young scoundrel! So this is what Greyfriars is coming to—smoking and slacking, by gad!"

"Awfully kind of you to take an interest in Greyfriars, sir!" said Skinner affably.

There was another chuckle from Snoop and Fishy.

Sir Hilton Popper looked as if he were about to choke.

"What is your name?" he thundered.

Skinner blew out a little cloud of smoke instead of replying. He had no inclination to give Sir Hilton Popper his name.

"You may not be aware," said Sir Hilton, in a rumbling voice, "that I have recently become a governor of Greyfriars."

Skinner jumped.

That certainly was news to him, and not pleasant news. He had been caught smoking by a governor of the school!

Fish and Snoop pitched their cigarettes into the grass hastily. Skinner's seemed frozen to his lips. Billy Bunter burst into a chuckle. He was glad now that Skinner had not let him join the smoking-party.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter. "You're in for it, Skinner. Serve you jolly well right! Filthy habit, smoking! I'm disgusted at you!"

"Your names?" thundered Sir Hilton, taking out a pocket-book.

"Oh dear!" gasped Skinner.

"Give me your names at once, or I will march you back to the school by the scruff of your necks!" exclaimed the baronet.

"Oh, dear! Wharton, sir," stammered Skinner.

"Wharton? Good! And yours, please?"

"Wingate, sir," stuttered Fisher T. Fish.

"And yours?" Sir Hilton turned his basilisk eye on Snoop.

"Courtney, sir."

"Very good!" Sir Hilton Popper closed his pocket-book with a snap. "Wharton, Wingate, and Courtney, you will be reported to the Head for smoking! Huh!"

And Sir Hilton Popper strode on towards the river, leaving the three smokers in a state of dismay. Billy Bunter chuckled.

"He, he, he! Serve you right! He, he, he! Oh! Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as Skinner, exasperated, hurled one of the bricks at him.

Billy Bunter fled into the trees.

"I—I say, we're booked for a row!" said Snoop uneasily.

"Rot!" said Skinner. "The old ass will send in the names, and all we have to do is to keep it dark. Wharton, Wingate, and Courtney will be able to prove that they weren't smoking here. If they can't, so much the worse for them. We're all right."

"But fancy that old boulder being a governor of the school now!" said Snoop. "We've had no end of rows with him about picnicking on the island."

Skinner grinned.

"I shouldn't wonder if that's where Wharton is now. And old Popper's going up the river. My word!" He opened his packet again. "May as well finish our smoke now the old boulder is gone."

But Snoop and Fish shook their heads. They had had enough. And the black sheep of the Remove was left to finish his smoke alone.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Picnic!

BOB CHERRY jumped up in the boat, and dropped his oar, and waved his straw hat. On the grassy bank three figures appeared in sight—Hazeldene of the Remove, his sister Marjorie, and Clara Trevelyn, the girl chums of Cliff House School.

Harry Wharton & Co. drew in to the bank.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry cheerily, as the bows bumped into the reeds. "Here we are againfully, as Inky puts it."

Marjorie and Clara were helped into the boat. Hazeldene hesitated on the bank.

"Jump in, Hazel!" said Wharton.

Hazel flushed a little.

"The fact is, I am going to join Skinner," he remarked.

"Skinner and Snoop asked me—"

"Do come, Hazel," said Marjorie. "You'll enjoy the picnic, you know. Unless you've promised Skinner—"

"Well, I told him I might join him," said Hazel, hesitating.

"I thought you were joining us," said Harry Wharton.

"Let Skinner go for once, and jump in, old chap!"

"Give us the preference this time," said Nugent.

Hazel laughed.

"All right. I'll come."

He jumped into the boat.

The chums of the Remove pushed off again, and settled down to row. Four of them had the oars out, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh took the lines. Hazel sat with his hands in his pockets.

The juniors pulled away cheerfully. They were glad that Hazel had come with them, chiefly for Marjorie's sake. They knew very well the kind of little excursion Skinner would have that afternoon, and that the weak-natured Hazel would have been led into risky or rascally proceedings by the black sheep of the Remove. Marjorie probably knew it, too, for she looked very bright and contented when Hazel took his place in the boat.

Four stout oars pulled rapidly against the current, and the boat glided on between banks thickly wooded, glimmering with foliage.

The weather was glorious, and all the faces in the big boat were bright and cheery. Even Hazel forgot the neglected attractions of Skinner's smoking-party.

The island came in sight, a mass of green rising from the gleaming water.

"That's where we camp," said Johnny Bull.

Marjorie glanced at the island. It was a very attractive spot for a picnickers' camp. But she looked doubtful.

"Is it allowed?" she asked.

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry promptly.

"But the island is on the estate of Sir Hilton Popper——"

"That's all right!"

"But Sir Hilton objects. I have heard——"

"You see, he's got no right to object," Bob Cherry explained. "Greyfriars School has fishing rights all along the river, for a mile past the island. It dates back to Henry the Seventh, and there are the documents in one-eyed Latin in the school library to prove it. The school won't have a lawsuit over it, so Sir Hilton sets up his blessed board on the island. But he's a land-hog, you know. But we don't take any notice of his board."

"Not a bit," said Wharton.

"In fact, Toddy used his board once for a camp-fire, and he had to have another one put up," said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But Dr. Locke——" said Marjorie.

"Oh, the Head is peace at any price," said Squiff. "Never mind that. But if you'd rather not camp on the island——"

"I leave it to you," said Marjorie, smiling. "I don't want you to get into trouble with your headmaster. That would spoil the picnic."

"The giddy baronet is away, too," said Nugent. "I've heard that he's been over in Flanders. I suppose he was uneasy about the way French was doing things, and went to look after him a bit."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The boat bumped on the shore of the island, and the party landed. Prominent on the shore was a big board, bearing the legend:

**"TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED.
BY ORDER."**

"Cheek!" said Bob Cherry indignantly. "Nobody has a right to set up a board on this island. It's free to everybody in the county. It's just sheer cheek. It runs in the Popper family. I've heard that his pater fenced in half the village green at Friardale, clear against the law, but there was nobody to stop him. The village folk can't go to law with a big gun like old Popper. But he can't deal with the Greyfriars Remove like that. Did you bring that chalk, Franky?"

"Here you are!"

Bob Cherry took the chalk, and proceeded to indite an inscription on the offending board, in very large letters:

"Rats!"

"That's our answer to Sir Hilton Popper," grinned Bob.

"Now we'll camp."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bags were turned out and opened, and the spirit-stove lighted, and the preparations for the picnic went on merrily. Marjorie made the tea on the spirit-stove, and Miss Clara cooked the sausages and rashers in a frying-pan that was as bright as a new pin, on a fire carefully built by Squiff, who was an adept in lighting camp-fires.

"This is something like!" remarked Bob Cherry, as he surveyed the busy scene. "Open the condensed milk, somebody. Hallo, hallo, hallo, who's that?"

A tall, angular figure in tweeds appeared on the opposite bank, on the towing-path. The white moustache, and the eyeglass gleaming in the eye, and the ruddy complexion and shaggy brows, were very familiar to the Greyfriars juniors.

"Popper, by Jove!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Sir Hilton or his ghost!" said Bob Cherry.

It was certainly not his ghost. It was Sir Hilton himself, and his fiery eye was turned upon the picnickers across the intervening expanse of water. He raised his stick and shook it at the juniors.

"What are you doing there?" he shouted.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 392.

Next Monday's Number of The "MAGNET" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a Splendid, Long, Complete Story, entitled:

NEXT
MONDAY

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ONE
PENNY.

Bob Cherry lifted his straw hat politely.

"Good-afternoon, sir!"

"Huh! What are you doing there?"

"Picnicking."

"Don't you know that you have no right on this property?"

"Oh, no!"

"That island is private land."

"You are misinformed, sir," said Bob, with great gravity.

"This island is free to all the county. If you doubt it, sir, you can ask Toddy, and he will tell you. Toddy is our tame lawyer."

"Boy!" roared Sir Hilton.

"Man!" shouted Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Do you know who I am?" shrieked Sir Hilton.

"Certainly, sir! You are the man who lets out boats to the summer visitors," said Bob innocently.

The juniors chuckled. Sir Hilton Popper turned quite purple. For the most extensive and most irascible land-owner in the district to be taken for the man who let out boats to the summer visitors was a little too much.

"Boy, I am Sir Hilton Popper!"

"Eh?"

"Sir Hilton Popper!"

"What?"

"Sir Hilton Popper!" raved the baronet, as Bob Cherry put his hand to his ear, as if to listen carefully.

"Did you say Whopper?" asked Bob.

"Popper!"

"Oh, Stopper! Very pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Stopper."

"You are perfectly well aware of my identity!" shouted the baronet. "And I know you! You are Greyfriars boys!"

"Go hon!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I said 'Go hon!' sir."

"The go-honfulness is terrific, esteemed sahib," said Hurree Singh.

"Get off that island immediately!"

"Eh?"

"Get off that island!"

"Which?"

"You—you—you young rascal! You impertinent young rascal——"

"Hear, hear!"

"If you do not immediately leave that island, I shall come and turn you out! Will you leave that island, or will you not leave that island?"

"Certainly, sir!" said Bob, in surprise. "We intend to leave it, sir. It's too heavy to carry away with us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sir Hilton Popper brandished his stick on the towing-path. He could not very well carry out his threat, for the water was wide and deep, and there was no boat at hand. Sir Hilton was not in trim for a swim. He brandished his stick furiously, and disappeared along the towing-path, fulminating.

"What a peppery old gent!" said Bob Cherry, with a sigh. "If he'd been civil we'd have asked him to join the picnic. But I don't like his manners."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the cheery party sat down to the picnic and forgot all about Sir Hilton Popper.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Britons Never Shall Be Slaves!

THAT picnic was very agreeable. The picnickers enjoyed it. Miss Clara had done the cooking, and it was agreed on all hands that the cooking was superb. When the solids had been disposed of there were tarts and cakes galore, and ginger-pop and lemonade to wash them down.

The sun was sinking in the west, and the river was like a stream of gold. After the merry feast Bob Cherry was prevailed upon to give his celebrated comic song, which he had composed himself—"A Kaiser Bill is Not a Happy Hun." Johnny Bull accompanied him on the mouth-organ—or, perhaps, pursued him would be a better description, as Bob was well ahead of his accompanist.

Then Johnny Bull gave a mouth-organ solo, which sounded across the river. The audience were applauding the solo, when there was a splash of oars in the water.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Popper again, by Jove!"

A boat was pulling down to the island, and two keepers were tugging at the oars, while Sir Hilton Popper sat in the stern.

The picnickers jumped up.

"Looks like more trouble," said Bob Cherry cheerily.

Marjorie looked anxious.

"I was afraid there would be trouble," she said. "Your headmaster will be angry."

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!"

By Frank Richards.

"Popper looks rather angry, don't he?" remarked Bob. "He's come to turn us off the island. How two chaps are going to turn off seven is a little mystery that Sir Hilton will have to find out."

The boat bumped on the rushes, and Sir Hilton sprang ashore, followed by his two keepers. He strode down to the camp.

"Huh!" he ejaculated. "You are still here!"

"And jolly glad to see you, sir," said Bob Cherry affably. "There are some sardines left, and a bottle of ginger-pop."

"What!"

"Sardines and ginger-pop, sir. If you'd come earlier you could have had a whack in the sosses. But you didn't tell us you were coming, and the sosses are finished. But I can recommend the sardines."

"Boy, I do not want any of your impertinence!"

"Well, we don't want any of yours, sir, but we're getting it," said Bob. "One good turn deserves another."

Sir Hilton grasped his stick hard.

"You will all give me your names, and then leave this island instantly!" he said. "Yours first. What is your name?"

"You want to know who I am, sir?"

"Yes—at once!"

"Very well, sir. I am Lord Kitchener."

"What!"

"Kitchener, sir."

"You young fool!"

"Dear me!" said Bob. "I always thought that baronets had nice manners."

"Will you tell me your name?" roared Sir Hilton.

"You don't like the one I gave you?" asked Bob, with undiminished affability. "Very well, sir. I'll make it French."

"What!"

"General French, sir."

"Is the boy mad?" gasped Sir Hilton Popper.

"You don't like that one?" asked Bob. "I'm an obliging chap. I'll change my name as fast as a naturalised German spy, sir, if it will put you into a good temper. If you please, I am Sir Ian Hamilton."

"You—you—you——" stuttered Sir Hilton.

"Me—me—me——" agreed Bob Cherry.

"Will you tell me who you are?" yelled Sir Hilton.

"King George the Fifth, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors, delighted by the expression on Sir Hilton's face. Even the two keepers were turning away their faces to hide their grins.

Sir Hilton Popper seemed on the verge of an apoplectic fit. He had no appreciation whatever for the humorous proclivities of the Greyfriars Remove.

"You refuse to acquaint me with your name?" he gasped at last.

"Not at all," said Bob. "I'll run through every name I know for the sake of obliging a nice polite gentleman like you, sir."

Sir Hilton Popper turned to Wharton, apparently giving up Bob Cherry as too hard a nut to crack.

"Tell me your name!" he snapped.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Tell me first what right you have to ask my name," he replied.

"I am the owner of this property!" shouted Sir Hilton.

"You are trespassers here!"

"We are not trespassers. This island is open to the public," said Wharton quietly. "You have no right to close it."

"No right!" stuttered Sir Hilton.

"None at all, excepting the right of a bully to take advantage of poor people who cannot defend their rights in the law courts."

"Wh-a-at!"

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull. "Put that in your pipe and smoke it, sir."

Sir Hilton was at a loss for speech. Never had he heard such plain speaking in his life before. He was accustomed to seeing his dependents tremble at his frown, and he was generally surrounded by persons to whose interest it was to keep in his good graces. The Removites were a surprise to him. He stuttered for some moments inarticulately.

"Huh!" he ejaculated, at last. "Impertinent young rascal! Bully, begad! Insolent young sweep. So this is what Greyfriars is coming to! Slacking and vice, by gad! Smoking here. I've no doubt, like those other young rascals!"

"Smoking!" exclaimed Wharton angrily.

"I've not the slightest doubt of it!" roared Sir Hilton.

"I'd just put my pipe away when you arrived, sir," said Bob Cherry. "I suppose you can't oblige me with a cigar?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, sir!" thundered Sir Hilton. "I will not oblige you with a cigar." Bob Cherry's humour was evidently com-

pletely wasted upon the baronet. "If I were your father, sir, I would thrash you till you could not walk, sir!"

"What a delightful parent to have!" murmured Bob.

"Your father, sir, has evidently left his duty undone," said Sir Hilton.

Bob Cherry's eyes gleamed.

"My father's at the front, fighting the Germans," he answered, "which is a bit better than playing the bully at home, as you're doing, sir!"

Sir Hilton choked again.

"I will see that there is a change in the school," he gasped. "Slacking here—picnicking, by gad, while the war's going on—picnicking, slacking, smoking—instead of learning to defend your country—slackers and cowards, all of you."

"We're not quite old enough for the Army, sir," said Harry Wharton. "When Lord Kitchener asks for recruits of fifteen, we're ready!"

"Slacking all through the country," pursued Sir Hilton, apparently having got upon a favourite topic. "Cricket instead of drilling, picnicking instead of learning to shoot! But I'll stop it at Greyfriars. I'll put an end to it there, by gad!"

"Have they appointed you headmaster by any chance, sir?" asked Nugent.

"I have been appointed a governor of the school," thundered Sir Hilton, "and there shall be a change. I promise you that. You refuse to give me your names, but I shall remember your faces. You will see me at Greyfriars to-morrow. Now leave this island instantly, or I will have you thrown into the water."

"Will you?" said Wharton, between his teeth. "Then you'd better get ahead with your throwing."

"Will you obey me?" raved the baronet.

"No."

Sir Hilton turned to the two keepers.

"Throw them off the island!" he said.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Trouble Ahead!

HARRY WHARTON & CO: lined up, shoulder to shoulder. They were intensely angry now, and if Sir Hilton had been ten times a governor of the school, they would not have yielded to his bullying dictation. Marjorie and Clara, looking a little scared, stood back—Sir Hilton had hardly noticed them. Apparently his truculent order did not apply to the girls—even the irate Sir Hilton would have drawn the line at that. But the seven juniors were to be "thrown," and the two keepers advanced in obedience to the baronet's order, not at all looking as if they enjoyed it. For it was a big order.

"Better go quiet, young gentlemen!" urged one of them.

"Don't talk to those young rascals, Giles. Throw them into the water!" rapped out Sir Hilton.

"Throw away!" said Bob Cherry.

"Let the throwfulness proceed, my esteemed friends," said Hurree Singh. "Perhaps the bootfulness will be on the other foot. But we shall see."

"Do you hear me?" roared Sir Hilton.

The two keepers advanced to the attack. The juniors promptly collared them, and pitched them over in the grass. They did not struggle very hard. Two were not of much use against seven, and they realised it.

"Your turn next, sir," said Bob.

Sir Hilton took him at his word. He rushed on Bob Cherry with his stick brandished. Johnny Bull put out a prompt foot, and the baronet stumbled over it, and rolled in the grass.

"Yooooooh!"

"Pitch 'em into their boat!" said Wharton.

Many hands were laid upon Sir Hilton Popper. The juniors were excited now. The baronet, gasping with rage, was lifted and pitched into his boat, his stick being pitched into the river. As he sprawled in the bottom of the boat, the two keepers were pitched in after him.

Then Wharton cast the boat loose, and shoved it out, and it floated on the current.

"Good-bye, little yellow bird!" sang Bob Cherry.

The two keepers sat up and seized the oars. Sir Hilton stood up and shook his fist at the island.

But the boat did not return.

Sir Hilton Popper seemed to have had enough of the Removites at close quarters. The boat pulled away up the river, till it disappeared.

"Good riddance!" remarked Nugent.

"Is—is he really a governor of the school?" asked Marjorie, looking very troubled.

"He says so. It's the first I've heard of it."



"Will you obey me?" raved the baronet. "No!" Sir Hilton turned to the two keepers. "Throw them off the island!" he said fiercely. (See Chapter 4.)

"Time we were off, too," remarked Wharton.

Somewhat silent, the picnickers entered the boat, and pushed off from the island. Sir Hilton's announcement that he was a governor of Greyfriars put a rather different complexion on the matter.

If the baronet was really a governor of the school, the consequences might be serious for the juniors. And it was hardly possible to doubt his statement.

The boat floated back down the river. Sir Hilton Popper had succeeded in spoiling that pleasant outing at the finish.

But the juniors kept up a determined appearance of cheerfulness. They did not want to give Marjorie and Clara the impression that there was serious trouble waiting for them at Greyfriars.

"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," was their motto; and there was no use in meeting troubles half-way.

They left the boat by the grassy bank, and walked home to Cliff House with the two girls, keeping up a cheery chat all the way. By the time they parted, Marjorie and Clara were somewhat reassured.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 592.

Next Monday's Number of The "Magnet" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a Splendid, Long, Complete Story, entitled:

But when they left Cliff House, to walk back to the river, the faces of the juniors were very grave.

"Looks like bad trouble," said Hazel uneasily. "We've laid hands on a governor of the school—you fellows have, at least!"

"We've got to face the music," said Wharton shortly. "We were in the right, anyway!"

"It might mean the sack."

"Can't be helped!"

"That's all very well," said Hazel irritably. "But I don't want to be sacked, if you do. We've got into a pretty mess, I must say."

"Might have been worse if you'd been with Skinner," said Johnny Bull drily. "The old bouncer mentioned having found some young rascals smoking. I shouldn't wonder if he's dropped in on Skinner's little party."

Hazel flushed, and made no reply. The juniors reached the river, and pulled back to the boat-house. In silence they walked up to the school.

Skinner of the Remove met them as they came into the Close.

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!" By Frank Richards.

"Seen anything of Popper?" he asked.
 "Yes," said Wharton. "He found us on the island, and we pitched him off!"
 Skinner whistled.
 "He's a governor of the school, now," he said.
 "Is that certain?"
 "Yes; I've asked Wingate, and he's heard it from Quelch. The Head told Quelch. It's true enough!"
 "Did he come on you?" asked Hazel.
 "Yes; confound him!"
 "Then you're as deep in the mud as we are in the mire," said Squiff, with a grimace.
 "He caught you smoking?" asked Hazel.
 "Yes; hang him! I cheeked him at first, too; I didn't know he was a governor of the school, you see," said Skinner ruefully. "We're all in this together, and we shall have to stand shoulder to shoulder. They can't sack the whole crowd of us, anyway."
 "Hold on," said Wharton curtly. "We're not exactly shoulder to shoulder. We happened to be in the right in our little row, you see. If old Popper found you smoking, it's quite right for him to report you to the Head, and you deserve what you get."
 "Thanks!" said Skinner, with a sneer.
 He shrugged his shoulders and turned away. The chums of the Remove went on into the School House, where Billy Bunter met them. He blinked at them through his big spectacles, and snorted.
 "Did you scoff what was in the parcel, Bunter?" asked Bob genially.
 Bunter waved a fat hand.
 "Don't speak to me, Cherry! I regard you with contempt. And if you think I'm going to stand—"
 "Not at all; you're going to sit!" said Bob cheerily. And he up-ended Billy Bunter, and sat him on the floor.
 "Yaroooh!"
 The Co. went on and left Bunter roaring. But half an hour later the Owl of the Remove blinked into Study No. 1 with a grinning face.
 "I've heard all about it," he chuckled. "He, he, he!"
 "What are you he-he-heing about?" growled Wharton.
 "You're jolly well going to be sacked, or flogged, at least," grinned Bunter. "I'm jolly glad! He, he, he!"
 And Bunter dodged away just in time to escape a cushion.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Going Through It!

THE next day there were some anxious faces in the Greyfriars Remove.
 The more Harry Wharton & Co. thought over the prospect, the less they liked it.
 Sir Hilton Popper was an unpleasant old gentleman, and a bully, and they had only stood up for their undoubted rights. But he was a governor of the school, and that made all the difference. As a landowner, he had no right to order them off the island. As a governor of Greyfriars, however, he was entitled to their obedience.
 There was undoubtedly trouble in store.
 Wharton had asked Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, and he had learned for certain that the baronet was now a member of the Governing Body. That settled it.
 After morning lessons that day, as Harry Wharton & Co. came out into the Close, they caught sight of the baronet.
 Sir Hilton Popper had just come in at the gates, and was striding across towards the School House.
 "This is where we get out of sight, my infants," said Squiff. "After all, he doesn't know our names."
 And the juniors, acting promptly upon the suggestion of Sampson Quincy Imley Field, beat a strategic retreat.
 Sir Hilton Popper had just come in at the gates, and was shown at once into the Head's study. A few minutes later, Trotter, the page, came in search of three fellows—Wharton, Wingate, and Courtney. He found Wharton in No. 1 Study—whither the Co. had retreated for cover till the baronet should be gone.
 "Head wants you, Master Wharton," said Trotter, putting his head into the study.
 "Is Sir Hilton Popper with him?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "Then he knows my name," said Harry. "Anybody else wanted, Trotty?"
 "Master Wingate and Courtney, sir."
 "My hat! Two of the Sixth!" said Bob Cherry. "The old chap is coming down heavy, if he's going for the Sixth. We'd better come with you, Harry."
 "No fear! He doesn't know you, and there's no need for all of us to go under the chopper. Stay where you are."
 "But—"

"Rats! Stay here!" said Harry.
 The captain of the Remove followed Trotter. He found Wingate and Courtney on their way to the Head's study—they had received the message. The two big Sixth-Formers were looking puzzled. Both of them were prefects, and Wingate was captain of the school. They stared at Wharton when he joined them.
 "I'm wanted, too," explained Harry.
 "Along with us?" exclaimed Courtney.
 "So it seems."
 "Jolly queer!" growled Wingate.
 Wingate knocked at the door of the Head's study, and the trio went in. Dr. Locke was looking worried, and Sir Hilton Popper stood by the window frowning portentously.
 He stared a little at the sight of the two seniors, and Wharton. Evidently they were not the persons he had expected to see.
 "Wingate, Courtney, and Wharton," said the Head. "I have sent for you, because Sir Hilton Popper has made a very grave statement to me. I am assured that there is some mistake—quite assured, but I must go into the matter. Is it a fact that you three boys were smoking together in the wood yesterday?"
 "My hat!" said Courtney involuntarily.
 Wingate frowned.
 "Certainly not, sir," he exclaimed, "and if I were to take to smoking, I should hardly select a junior of the Lower Fourth as my companion."
 "There is a mistake somewhere, Dr. Locke," broke in the baronet. "These are not the boys I found smoking in the wood. They were all juniors. They gave me, however, the names of Wingate, Courtney, and Wharton."
 "They must have given you false names, then, Sir Hilton," said the Head. "I am sorry for this mistake, my boys, but I was sure it was a mistake. I know perfectly well that you were above such conduct."
 "Thank you, sir!" said Wingate.
 "You may go."
 "One moment, sir," exclaimed Sir Hilton, "one of these boys—the junior—is one of the party on the island yesterday. The others I do not know."
 "You will stay, Wharton."
 "Yes, sir."
 Wingate and Courtney quitted the study looking and feeling annoyed. Some cheeky juniors had evidently used their names, which was quite enough to annoy the great men of the Sixth. And they did not like being called up before the Head like fags, even if it turned out to be a mistake.
 "Wharton," said the Head, "Sir Hilton Popper complains to me that a party of Greyfriars juniors treated him with disrespect and even violence yesterday afternoon. You were one of the party."
 "It is useless for him to deny it," rapped out Sir Hilton. "I recognise him."
 Wharton's eyes flashed.
 "I haven't any intention of denying what is true," he exclaimed fiercely.
 "Calm yourself, Wharton, please. You were, then, one of the party on the island?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "There were six others," said Sir Hilton.
 "Who were the others, Wharton?"
 Wharton was silent.
 "You were aware, Wharton, that Sir Hilton is a governor of the school?"
 "Not until he told us, sir."
 "Yet after that you used violence towards him."
 "No, sir; we defended ourselves. He set his keepers on us. I suppose we couldn't be expected to be thrown into the river quietly."
 "You should not have been on the island at all, Wharton. You are aware that the School does not enforce its rights over that property, and that the island is placed out of bounds, to avoid friction."
 "Yes, sir," said Harry. "I confess to breaking bounds, so far as that goes. But so far as Sir Hilton Popper is concerned, what I did was right. He had no right to interfere with us on public land."
 "That is the kind of insolence I received from them at the time," said Sir Hilton Popper. "The young rascals were there, slacking and smoking—"
 "That isn't true," said Wharton directly. "As for slacking, I don't call it slacking to picnic on a half-holiday. As for smoking, I have never smoked in my life, and there was certainly no smoking on the island."
 "You did not see them smoking, Sir Hilton?"
 "I did not, sir; but one of the party confessed that he had been smoking a pipe, and actually had the insolence to ask me for a cigar."
 "Bless my soul!"

Wharton grinned.

"That was only a joke, sir. Bob—I—I mean the chap, sir, was only pulling Sir Hilton's leg, sir. He hadn't a pipe."

"Rubbish!" snapped Sir Hilton.

"You see, sir, Sir Hilton had accused us of smoking, and so we—we were a bit ratty," said Harry. "He had no right to suppose we were smoking."

"The other young rascals were smoking," said Sir Hilton. "I have no doubt whatever that these boys were doing the same. It is all of a piece—slacking, trespassing, smoking, and insolence."

"The other boys must be found," said Dr. Locke. "I will order the Lower School to be assembled, and you may be able to pick them out, Sir Hilton."

"Quite easily."

Ten minutes later, the Greyfriars Lower School was assembled in Big Hall. Dr. Locke entered with Sir Hilton Popper, and the baronet glared from under his shaggy brows at the ranks of juniors.

There was some uneasiness in the ranks of the Remove. Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish betrayed a disposition to make themselves as small as possible, and hide behind the other fellows. Sir Hilton halted before the Removes, and stared at them grimly.

"They are all here," he said, "I recognise them all."

"Then they are all in the Remove," said the Head. "Kindly indicate the three boys who were smoking."

Sir Hilton's bony finger pointed at Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish in turn. At a sign from the Head, the three young rascals stepped reluctantly out.

"You were smoking in the wood yesterday," said the Head sternly, "and you lied to Sir Hilton, giving him false names."

The trio were silent. They had nothing to say. Skinner's device had not saved them, and they had to "go through it" now.

Sir Hilton looked on grimly while they were caned. The Head did not spare the rod. Probably he laid it on all the harder, because of his own annoyance at having a new governor of the school finding fault so promptly.

Skinner and Snoop and Fishy were simply wriggling when the Head had finished with them. They crawled back to their places, mumbling painfully, and not looking in the least like bold blades or doggish bucks.

"As for the others, I trust that they will be flogged," said Sir Hilton, as he pointed out the unlucky picnicers.

Dr. Locke looked sternly at the Co. The Co. stood firmly, only Hazel betraying any signs of uneasiness.

"You do not appear to realise how wrong your conduct has been," said the Head mildly. "The moment you learned that Sir Hilton was a governor of the school you should have obeyed him at once. You should, indeed, never have gone on the island at all, as it is placed out of bounds. I shall therefore cane you very severely."

"I suggest a flogging, sir," said Sir Hilton.

"I have decided that a caning will meet the case, Sir Hilton," said the Head coldly.

Sir Hilton snorted. He seemed to forget that the Head of Greyfriars was not a gamekeeper on his estate, to be bullied as much as he chose.

"I regard this leniency as little short of criminal!" he exclaimed. "It is this lack of firmness, sir, which is the cause of the utter slackness in this school. Of that I am convinced."

"I am not aware of any slackness in this school, Sir Hilton," said the Head, reddening, "and I am the best judge in dealing with my boys. I am answerable to the governing body, but not to any single governor; and I beg you, sir, to make no further remarks on the subject."

Sir Hilton seemed on the verge of an explosion, but he controlled himself, grunted, and strode out of the hall. Harry Wharton & Co. went through their caning. It was severe, but they felt that they could forgive the Head for it, after the way he had "shut up" the intolerable Sir Hilton.

They went out of the hall rubbing their hands, but not wholly dissatisfied.

"Didn't the Head bottle him up a treat!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Ow! My hands! The Head's a brick, all the same. Wow! The old boulder—Sir Hilton, I mean—has had his quietus."

Wharton looked dubious.

"He's a determined old beggar," he remarked. "Now he's a governor he can make trouble if he likes. He seems to have the idea in his head that we're all slackers and smokers and rotters generally. That may be true of some public schools, but it doesn't fit Greyfriars."

"Like his blessed cheek!" growled Johnny Bull. "Let's go and give him a groan; he's in the Close now."

"Bow-wow!" said Bob. "I've had enough."

Sir Hilton was suffered to depart without a groan. But the Greyfriars' fellows had not seen the last of the new governor. The new member of the august governing body of Greyfriars was destined to make his power felt in the old school.

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NEXT
MONDAY

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Something for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter was brimming with news.

It was three or four days since the encounter of the Removes with the new member of the Greyfriars governing body.

As yet nothing had been heard fresh from Sir Hilton, and the juniors had almost forgotten the incident.

Harry Wharton & Co. were talking cricket in the Close when the Owl of the Remove came up full of information. Billy Bunter's eyes were glistening behind his spectacles, and his manner was very excited. Evidently the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars had made a discovery.

"I say——"

"Well, get it out!" said Bob Cherry. "Are you expecting a postal order, and do you want us to cash it in advance? If so, apply next door."

"As a matter of fact," said Bunter, blinking at him, "I am expecting a postal order, and if you care to lend me——"

"I'll lend you a thick ear. That's the limit."

"After the rotten way you treated me at the picnic last week, Cherry, I should decline to accept a loan from you. I say, you fellows, there's news! It's about Sir Hilton Popper. There's been a meeting of the governing body."

"I haven't heard anything of it," said Wharton sceptically. "The governors generally meet here."

"It was at Sir Hilton Popper's place yesterday," said Bunter. "I'm the only chap who knows about it!" he added proudly.

"And how do you know?" asked Peter Todd.

"I happened to stop outside Mr. Quelch's study to tie my bootlace, and the Head was there speaking to him," explained Bunter. "It took me quite a long time to tie my bootlace. Ahem! That's where the Head went yesterday. You know he went out in the car in the afternoon."

"I didn't know," growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, you never notice anything!" said Bunter disdainfully. "I keep my eyes open. The Head was at the governors' meeting yesterday, and he told Quelch there was a regular kick-up."

"Yes, I can imagine the Head using that expression," grinned Harry Wharton. "Did he say there was a shindy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Did the Head get Sir Hilton's head in chancery?" asked Bob Cherry gravely.

"Oh, really, Cherry, of course he didn't! What he said was that there was almost a scene. Now I remember, he didn't actually use the words kick-up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sir Hilton ran down the school—said we were all slackers and smokers, and that kind of thing," said Bunter. "Check, I call it. As for smoking, I like a cigarette myself occasionally," said Bunter doggedly. "Yow-ow-ow-ow! Leggo my ear, Peter Todd, you beast!"

Peter Todd compressed the grip of his finger and thumb on Bunter's fat ear, and the Owl of the Remove almost curled up.

"What did you say about a cigarette?" asked Todd.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Nothing of the sort! Now, what did you say?"

"Yarooop!"

"That wasn't it, either. What did you say about a cigarette?"

"Gerroooh! I—I like a cigarette occasionally," wailed Bunter. "I don't like cigarettes at all. Yow-ow-ow!"

"That's better," said Peter Todd. He released the Owl's fat ear, and Bunter rubbed it and blinked at him furiously. "Stick to that, Bunter, old man, if you have any regard for your ears."

"You—you rotter!" roared Bunter. "I've a jolly good mind to wipe up the quad with you!"

"Go it!" said Peter encouragingly.

"Ahem! I say, you fellows, as I was saying, old Popper is down on us, and he's been jawing the governors, and there's going to be a change. The Head was ratty at the school being considered slack, and he's on his dignity about it. He told Quelch that if they didn't like the way he ran it, they could run it themselves, and be blowed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at now?" demanded Bunter wrathfully.

The juniors roared. The idea of the grave and reverend Head using the expressions Bunter put into his mouth was too funny.

"Well, he didn't put it exactly like that," said Bunter

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!"

By Frank Richards

hastily. "He said that if the governors instituted improvements, his duty would be to reserve his own judgment and see them carried out."

"That sounds a bit different," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "There are really some improvements wanted—lickings for eavesdroppers, for instance."

"Oh, really, Wharton, I heard all this quite by chance, you know. I should scorn to listen, I'm not like some fellows."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! You won't cackle so much when Sergeant Sharp gets here," growled Bunter.

"Who?" asked Bob Cherry in surprise.

"Which?" inquired Squiff.

"Sergeant Sharp!" said Bunter triumphantly, pleased at having made an impression at last. "He's coming tomorrow."

"New kid?" asked Bob Cherry.

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "How could a sergeant be a new kid? He's an old soldier, and was in the South African War—so they said. He's a regular drill-sergeant, and the governors are sending him here to buck us up."

"What!"

"There's going to be military drills, and rifle practice, and so on," said Bunter. "This sergeant is a cough-drop, according to what the Head said. The Head doesn't seem to cotton to the idea, but he's going to stand on his dignity and let the governors rip. The sergeant will be under his authority, of course, but he will be backed up by the governors, and the Head has undertaken to see the new rules carried out. He hopes it will be for the best—so he said. It sounded as if he didn't think it would, though."

"Well, it's not a bad idea," said Wharton thoughtfully. "Every fellow ought to learn to defend his country. If the German rotters ever landed here, every chap would be wanted. If this sergeant chap is an old soldier we'll give him a jolly good reception. He can put us up to a few wrinkles. We may be able to have a go at the Huns some day. Who knows?"

"You don't know it all yet," chuckled Bunter. "You should have heard what the Head said to Quelch."

"Well, I wasn't tying up my bootlace outside Quelch's keyhole," said Harry. "These sheer chances don't happen to anybody but you, Bunter."

"The Head said he'd heard of this Sharp chap before," said Bunter. "He was drill-instructor at a military school, and was sacked for thrashing a kid. There were legal proceedings about it, and somebody had to pay a big fine for him. The Head said he was an awful blighter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not in those very words, of course," said Bunter irritably. "He said he was an unconscionable bully and brute."

"Oh, my hat!"

"But he said the governors knew their own business best, and that their instructions would be carried out. He was awfully ratty at Sir Hilton saying it was a school for slackers. So now you know what to expect. The Head said a lot more, too. He said—"

"Don't tell us all he said," growled Peter Todd. "It seems to have taken you a jolly long time to tie your bootlace."

"Well, I've given you a tip," said Bunter. "You know what to expect now. I've put you on your guard. The Head said that this chap Sharp was a German on one side, but his father was English, and that he seemed to believe in German ideas and the Prussian system—bullying and punching, you know. He served in the German Army when he was a young fellow, and he had a job in Germany when the war broke out, and he had to come home. Looks to me as if we're going to be Prussianised. I'm not going to stand it, I know that."

"What will you do, Fatty? Lick the sergeant?" asked Squiff.

"Oh, really, Field! But what I was going to say was, I've given you a tip and put you on your guard, and you might do the decent thing in return. 'Tain't everybody who'd take all that trouble, after the way you've treated me. Now, I've been disappointed about a postal-order—"

"Bunter ought to have something for his trouble," said Squiff. "He must have been eavesdropping for about half an hour, I should think. Let's give him something for it."

"Hear, hear!"

"Here, I say, hands off! Yooop!" roared Bunter. "Oh, you rotters! Yaroo!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter sat in the quad, and groped wildly for his spectacles. Harry Wharton & Co. walked away, discussing the startling news.

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THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Sergeant Arrives!

THAT night the news was all over Greyfriars.

Everybody knew it, from Wingate, head of the Sixth, down to the youngest fag.

Greyfriars was more than a little excited.

Nobody was pleased. Most of the fellows had their backs up at once. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, had informed the prefects what was to be expected, and asked them to tell the school.

The news was official, therefore. All Greyfriars knew what was to be expected, and they did not like it—not in the least.

The fact that Sir Hilton Popper regarded Greyfriars as a school of slackers was distinctly irritating. The fact that he seemed to have brought the other governors round to his point of view was still more irritating. And the fact that measures were to be taken to counteract the supposed slackness was the most exasperating of all.

For Greyfriars was far from being a slack school, like Highcliffe, for instance. At Highcliffe the fellows mostly prided themselves upon a lofty indifference and an aristocratic slackness.

But at Greyfriars it was quite different. At Greyfriars they played hard and they worked hard.

Of course, there were slackers, as in every school and every collection of human beings anywhere. Lord Mauleverer of the Remove was a champion slacker, but a very good fellow. Skinner and Snoop were slackers, and decidedly bad fellows. But the majority were all right.

In the upper Forms, too, there were black sheep. Loder and Carne of the Sixth were certainly blackguards, though they kept their blackguardism very dark. They slacked and they belted and smoked. But most of the Sixth were the right sort.

The few black sheep, the few inveterate slackers, did not taint the whole school. The view the new governor had taken was wholly unjust.

He had seen a few juniors smoking, but he had no right to conclude that the rest were like them. He had found Harry Wharton & Co. picnicking. But what harm was there in a picnic? Certainly a fellow ought to take the war seriously, and not think of his usual pleasures while it was raging. But it was useless, or, rather, worse than useless, to keep a long face and to make oneself and everybody else miserable. Would the brave fellows at the front be any happier to know that fellows at home were going about in sackcloth and ashes? Would they not rather feel that in England their countrymen were leading normal and wholesome lives under their protection?

Harry Wharton's uncle had written to him from Flanders, telling him to keep up his cricket, to keep smiling, and to keep himself fit. That was the best way of getting ready to serve his country, if his country ever needed him.

But Sir Hilton Popper's ideas were quite different, it seemed, and from his influence on the governing body it appeared that his half-Prussian ideas were to be forced on Greyfriars.

Anything that smacked of Prussianism was naturally unpopular. Savage discipline and the hardest of hard training had turned Prussia into a country of savage barbarians, and incidentally caused a record of child-suicide in that unhappy country. That was not a result to be gloried in and imitated in a free country. Prussian organisation, no doubt, was admirable in war time. But there is, after all, more peace than war, and complete efficiency in war is dearly purchased at the price of complete slavery in peace.

In fact, the Greyfriars fellows took the natural British view that anything in Prussia was a thing to be avoided, not to be imitated. The training that turned human beings into brutes, lower than the beasts of the field, was not wanted under the British flag.

Sir Hilton was, in fact, as Bob Cherry remarked, a crusty old donkey. It was quite true that Greyfriars showed no sign of the hard training that distinguished a German school. And the general opinion was that Greyfriars was all the better for it. Greyfriars turned out men, not machines; human beings, not brutes.

"The cheek of it!" Bob Cherry said indignantly in No. 1 Study. "To think that British chaps could be bullied and driven like mere Germans! The old duffer forgets that we've been free for a thousand years and more, and that the Germans are a race of slaves. As for his half-bred sergeant, let him try the Prussian drill-sergeant with us, that's all."

Naturally all the backs at Greyfriars were up at the prospect.

The fellows looked eagerly forward to the arrival of the



Sir Hilton Popper halted at the sight of the juniors. "Nice afternoon, sir," said Skinner coolly. "Huh! Young rascals! Smoking, by gad!" (See Chapter 2.)

sergeant on the morrow. Knowing what they had to expect, they were not likely to give him a cordial reception.

From one source or another they had learned a good many details about Sergeant Sam Sharp. He had served in the German Army at one time, being half a German by descent. But he had served under the British flag after that, in the war in South Africa. Since then he had been employed in Germany. The outbreak of war had sent him home, and he had been drill-instructor at a school, where his trouble had occurred—a case of sheer brutality.

If he tried that on at Greyfriars there was certain to be trouble there. Coker of the Fifth confided to Potter and Greene, his study-mates, that he was prepared to wipe up the quadrangle with Mr. Sharp if Mr. Sharp said as much as half a word to him. And Coker of the Fifth was a tough customer.

The juniors were anxious to know what the Sixth thought about it, especially the prefects. But the prefects kept their own counsel.

It was known that Wingate and Courtney and North and the rest had received instructions to support the sergeant in whatever measures he took. Whatever their own view on the subject, they had their duty to do, and there was no doubt that they would do it.

How it would work out remained to be seen.

In the afternoon the sergeant arrived. When it was known that he was coming, a crowd gathered in the Close to see him in.

The hack from the station drove in at the gates, with a bronzed man seated inside. It was the sergeant.

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Two hundred pairs of eyes were turned upon him.

Sergeant Sharp did not seem conscious of it. He sat bolt upright, as stiff as a ramrod. He was a powerfully-built man, heavy and thick-set. His head was the shape of a bullet, his thick upper-lip adorned with a Kaiser moustache. His face strongly resembled that of a bulldog. His lower jaw, square and heavy, protruded. He looked like a man of hard and grim determination, as undoubtedly he was. He had a pair of small, deep-set eyes that gleamed like pin-points from under heavy brows. His complexion was almost the colour of mahogany.

"Not a bewt, by Jove!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Looks more like a rotten Prussian than anything else."

Sergeant Sharp disappeared into the house. Ten minutes later Wingate came to call the school into Big Hall.

In Big Hall the sergeant was presented to the whole school by the Head. Dr. Locke, with an expressionless face, made a short speech, explaining the views of the governors, and adding that Sergeant Sharp was there to carry them out. In all matters outside the Form-rooms the sergeant had full authority.

The fellows heard that important communication in grim silence. The sergeant stood like a ramrod while the Head was speaking. He did not speak himself, but he looked over the assembled school with his penetrating eyes, and his expression—so far as his bulldog face had any expression at all—was not one of approbation.

Apparently he did not think any better of Greyfriars than Greyfriars thought of him, which was saying a good deal.

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!"

By
Frank Richards

In silence the school marched out of Big Hall. But in the Close there was a buzz of voices.

"Wait till he begins," said Bob Cherry. "When he begins, we'll begin, too! We'll show him how much we want bucking up."

"Let him give me any of his rot, that's all!" said Coker, of the Fifth, in his booming voice. "I'll show him!"

"We'll all jolly well show him!" said Cecil Temple, of the Fourth Form.

"The governors are backing him up," said Skinner.

"Blow the governors!"

"Blow 'em as much as you like, but we shall have to toe the line," said Skinner. "He doesn't look an easy customer to tackle, either."

"I guess I'm not going to stand any of his old buck," said Fisher T. Fish disdainfully. "He won't come it with a free American citizen, you bet. I guess your sergeant cuts no ice with me. Your sergeant, sir, can go and chop chips!"

"Hah!"

Fish swung round in alarm as he heard that ejaculation. The sergeant had just stepped out of the School House. He had a walking-cane under his arm. His eyes fixed on the unfortunate Fish like gimlets.

He beckoned to the Yankee junior.

"Come here!"

Fisher T. Fish reluctantly approached. He did not like the look in the sergeant's eyes.

"What is your name?" rapped out Sergeant Sharp.

"Fish!"

"Fish what?" thundered the sergeant.

All the fellows were looking on. Now was the time for Fisher T. Fish to show how little he cared for any blessed sergeant. But he didn't. He replied weakly:

"Fish, sir."

"That is better. You were referring to me just now?"

"I—I guess——"

"Yes or no?" rapped out the sergeant.

"Yep!" muttered Fish.

"Very good. Hold out your hand!"

Fisher T. Fish held out his hand. The sergeant's cane came down with a swipe that made Fishy utter a yell of anguish. It was such a cut as the juniors never received from the Form-masters.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" yelled Fish, tucking his hand under his arm, and simply dancing with pain.

The sergeant gave him a cold, contemptuous glance, and stalked on into the quad. The juniors looked after him grimly.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Early Rising!

CLANG! Clang! Clang!

Harry Wharton sat up in bed in the Remove dormitory the following morning.

The early sunlight was stealing in at the high windows. Through the crisp, clear air the rising-bell clanged out.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry blinked across at Wharton. "Bet you it isn't seven yet. Gosling has got up too early for once."

Wharton looked at his watch.

"Half-past six!" he said.

"Half-past six, right enough!" said Vernon-Smith, consulting his watch. "What the dooce is the matter with Gosling?"

Bob Cherry settled down on his pillow again.

"Gosling can ring me up in another half-hour," he remarked.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Wharton did not settle down again. On fine mornings the juniors often turned out before rising-bell, and the morning was very fine and clear. But the captain of the Remove was puzzled. It was not like Gosling to get up too early. The old porter, whose duty it was to clang out the rising-bell in the morning, was not an early riser by choice.

"May as well turn out," said Harry.

But the rest of the Remove did not seem to think so. They closed their ears to the clang of the rising-bell.

Harry Wharton jumped out of bed, and looked from the window. The bell was still clanging. In the Close, he caught sight of a ramrod-like figure, stalking. It was Sergeant Sam Sharp. The sergeant was evidently an early riser.

He had his cane under his arm, his pug nose high in the air, his square chin protruding. Wharton could not help thinking that he looked a very tough customer. His manner was that of a man who regarded himself as monarch of all he surveyed. Backed by the authority of the governors, as he was, the sergeant was a very powerful personage in the

school, and he knew it; and it led to an assumption of "swank" that was not agreeable to look upon.

Sergeant Sharp happened to glance up, and caught sight of the junior's face looking from the open window of the dormitory. He made a sign to Wharton with his cane.

"Why are you not down?" he called out.

"It isn't time yet," said Harry.

"Are you deaf?"

"No."

"Then you have heard the rising-bell."

"Yes."

"It's been going ten minutes. Why aren't you down?" demanded the sergeant, standing with his bullet head thrown back, and staring up at Wharton.

"It's early. We rise at seven here," said Harry.

The sergeant grunted.

"You rise at half-past six," he replied. "I'll have no slackers here. The rule is altered. You rise when the rising-bell goes. Get a move on!"

"Oh!" said Wharton.

He stepped down from the window.

"Turn out, you chaps!" he called out.

"Eh! Wharrer marrer?" murmured Peter Todd drowsily.

"We have to turn out at half-past six now," said Harry, with a shrug of the shoulders. "It's a new rule!"

"Oh! Who made it?"

"The sergeant, it seems."

"The sergeant can go and eat coke!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Seven o'clock's the time, and we're sticking to it. Not that I care twopence; but we're not going to be bullied."

Wharton shook his head.

"The Head must have allowed it, or Gosling wouldn't be ringing the bell," he said. "Gosling wouldn't turn out early if he could help it. He must have had his orders from Dr. Locke."

"Better turn out, I suppose," said Bob Cherry dubiously.

"After all, it won't hurt us," said Harry. "We don't want to give the man an excuse for calling us slackers. When the time comes to stand out against him, we want to have a better reason than a wish to stay in bed in the morning."

"Well, there's something in that," agreed Vernon-Smith, and the Bouncer stepped out.

Most of the Remove followed his example. They were irritated, not so much by the extra early rising, as by the new-comer's interference with their manners and customs. But they felt that it was not a matter they could make a stand upon. They did not want to look like slackers.

Lord Mauleverer and Billy Bunter remained in bed. Bob Cherry shook his lordship by the shoulder.

"Turn out, Mauly!"

"Begad!" murmured his lordship. "Lemme alone! I'll get up at seven. Rats!"

"It's a quarter to seven already," urged Bob.

"Groooh! Lemme alone! Yarooooop!"

Lord Mauleverer bumped on the floor. He rolled in his bedclothes, and blinked wrathfully at Bob Cherry.

"Begad! Yow! You ass! Ow!"

"Now then, Bunter——"

"Look here, I'm not getting up!" howled Bunter. "It's bad enough to get up at seven. I prefer to stay in bed till nine. I'm not going to turn out yet, Bob Cherry, and you can keep your paws off! I'm going to stand up for the rights of the Remove, I can tell you. The beast isn't going to bully me!"

"You mean you're going to lie down for the rights of the Remove!" grinned the Bouncer.

There was a heavy step in the passage, and the door was flung open. Sergeant Sharp strode into the room.

He gave a grim glance round him, and noted that Billy Bunter was still in bed. A couple of strides took him to Bunter's bedside.

"Name?" he thundered.

Bunter jumped.

"Eh! What?"

"Your name?"

"Bunter."

"Bunter! Very good! You're in bed a quarter of an hour after rising-bell. I'm here to stop slacking, by hokey. Take that!"

Swish!

The sergeant's cane came down with a lash across Bunter, and the fat junior gave a wild howl, and bolted out of bed as if he had been electrified. He sat on the floor and roared.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

ANSWERS

"Stop that row!" roared the sergeant.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Get up!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Sergeant Sharp strode round the bed, and grasped Bunter by the neck, and yanked him to his feet. Bunter ceased to yell, in sheer terror.

Whack! whack! whack!

Bunter roared again, as the cane came lashing across his shoulders, protected only by the thin pyjamas. Harry Wharton started forward, his eyes blazing.

"You brute!" he shouted. "Let Bunter alone!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Help!" screamed Bunter.

"Dress yourself, Bunter!" rapped out the sergeant. "Do you hear? If you're not down in five minutes, you get some more."

"Yow-ow! Yes! All right! Yooop!"

Then the sergeant turned to Wharton, with a glitter in his little eyes, his jaw looking squarer than ever.

"Your name?" he snapped.

"Wharton."

"Come here, Wharton!"

"What for?"

"I am going to cane you for insolence and insubordination."

Harry Wharton did not stir. His eyes burned, and his breath came hard, and his hands were clenched. The tussle with the bully had come earlier than he had expected, but he had felt that it must come. He was prepared for it.

"Has the Head given you the right to cane us, Sergeant Sharp?" he asked.

"Full right."

"When the Head, or my Form-master tells me so, I will let you cane me," said Harry, "until then I shall refuse to let you do anything of the kind."

"Bravo!" chirruped Bob Cherry.

"Hear, hear!" from Squiff.

The sergeant's eyes glittered. His rough and knotty hand closed more tightly upon the cane.

"Will you come here, Wharton?"

"No."

"Will you hold out your hand?"

"No!"

Wharton's voice rang hard and clear. There was a murmur of approval from the Removites. The captain of the Form was standing up for the rights of the Remove, there was no doubt about that.

"Very good," said the sergeant, between his teeth. "I am here to enforce discipline. I'll have no slacking, and no mutiny, by hokey! I'll thrash you within an inch of your life."

And he strode straight at the captain of the Remove.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

First Round to the Remove!

HARRY WHARTON faced the bully fearlessly. The heavy hand dropped on his shoulder, and he struck it off with his clenched fist, without a moment's hesitation.

Sergeant Sharp uttered an ejaculation of pain. Wharton had hit hard; his temper was up.

"Mutiny, by hokey!" he exclaimed.

Slash!

The cane came down across Wharton's shoulder. Wharton set his teeth to keep back a cry of pain. His blood was up now. He made a leap forward, and struck out straight from the shoulder. His clenched fist landed on the square jaw, and the sergeant went reeling backwards.

It was as much surprise as the force of the blow that floored him; for the sergeant was a powerful man. He dropped to the floor of the dormitory with a bump. Wharton caught at the cane, jerked it from his hand and tossed it through the open window. It fell into the quad.

The sergeant sat for a moment or two, dazedly. The Removites looked on breathlessly. The tussle had come now with a vengeance.

"By hokey!" the sergeant muttered, through his set teeth. "You've struck me—by hokey!"

He sprang up, and rushed on the junior. Wharton was swept off his feet by the heavy rush of the powerful man, and he was helpless in the iron grasp that fastened upon him.

The sergeant's blows descended upon him like rain.

"Rescue!" shouted Wharton.

But it was not necessary to call. His chums were already rushing to the rescue. Bob Cherry and Squiff, Nugent and Johnny Bull, Tom Brown and Peter Todd, piled on the sergeant in a twinkling. They grasped him on all sides, and dragged him over. Again Sergeant Sharp went with a crash to the floor, dragging Wharton down with him.

Wharton tore himself loose and leaped up. He was aching and dazed from the brutal attack, and furious, too. The sergeant struggled fiercely in the grip of the juniors, and

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they swayed and rolled from side to side in a confused mass. Mark Linley and Vernon-Smith and Bulstrode rushed to their aid, and then Tom Dutton and Bolsover major and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. The burly sergeant almost disappeared from view under the swarm of juniors.

"Hold the beast!" panted Bob Cherry. "He's as strong as a horse. Pin him!"

"Jump on him!"

"Squash him!"

"The squashfulness is terrific!"

"Let go!" roared the sergeant. "You young scoundrels, let go! I'll have you flogged for this! Oh, by hokey!"

"Pin him!" said Harry Wharton, between his teeth.

"We'll show him, and Sir Hilton Popper, too, whether they can bully us. Pin the brute!"

The sergeant was securely pinned. Powerful as he was, he was no match for the swarm of angry juniors. Every limb of the burly man was grasped by two or three pairs of hands, and strong hands were entwined in his short thick hair, and fixed upon his large ears. He struggled still, though he could hardly move, and his bulldog face was red with rage.

"I'll have you flogged!" he roared. "Help!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior; and he thrust a cake of soap into the sergeant's open mouth.

"Gug-gug-gug-ugggg!"

"Now, you brute, we'll deal with you," said Harry Wharton. "Shove him against a bed and tie him there."

"Hurrah!"

Still resisting, the sergeant was dragged to the nearest bed. His arms were spread out along a rail, and bound there with twisted sheets. Then his legs were tied to the leg of the bed.

Sergeant Sharp was helpless now.

The Removites released him, panting. Some of them had received very hard knocks, and all of them were out of breath. The sergeant was a tough customer.

His face was crimson with fury. He spat out the soap, and gurgled:

"Let me go, you mutinous young rascals."

"You'll stay there," said Wharton, "and if we have any more of your rot, we'll give you some more—see?"

"I'll have you flogged!" roared the sergeant.

"Rats!"

"You're under my orders!" shouted Sergeant Sharp. "I'm sent here by the governors to take you in charge. I'm going to stop your slacking!"

"Well, we haven't been slacking the last few minutes, have we?" grinned Bob Cherry. "Do you think we were too gentle with you, sergeant?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help!" roared the sergeant.

"Put something over his head!" said Wharton. "We don't want the prefects up here."

"Here's a pillow-case," said Nugent.

"Grooooooh!" came from the sergeant, in muffled notes, as the pillow-case was pulled down over his head, and tied round his neck.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving the sergeant wriggling and grunting, the Removites turned to their bathing and dressing. From inside the pillow-case the most extraordinary sounds proceeded. Some of the juniors were grinning while they dressed, but some of them looked very serious. They were a little anxious about the results of their short and sharp dealing with the sergeant.

But nearly all the Remove were agreed that they had done the right thing. They were not going to be bullied and thrashed as if they were Germans. That was quite settled.

The Remove were down early that morning. Even Billy Bunter bucked up, and was down as soon as the others. He did not want to be on the scene when the sergeant got loose.

In the Close Harry Wharton & Co. found most of the Fourth and the Third and Second. They had turned out. None of the Fifth were to be seen, so far. It was not yet seven. The Fifth, being seniors, were probably still more determined than the Removites to stand up for their rights.

"Have you seen the sergeant?" Temple of the Fourth asked, as the Famous Five came out. "He looked in at our dorm."

"He's in our dorm now," said Harry—"tied up to a bed." Cecil Temple jumped.

"Tied up to a bed!" he gasped. "Oh, my only hat! There will be a row. The Head's backing him up, you know."

"We're not going to be bullied," growled Johnny Bull. "Might as well live in Germany, if we're going to be treated like slaves."

"There'll be trouble," remarked Temple.

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!"

By Frank Richards.

The heroes of the Remove were expecting trouble. When the bell rang for breakfast, and they went into the dining-room, they found their Form-master, Mr. Quelch, looking very grave. Sergeant Sharp was seated at a table by himself, looking as black as a thundercloud. Evidently he had been found and released. He gave the Removites a deadly stare.

The juniors expected some remark from Mr. Quelch, but he said nothing. When breakfast was over, however, it came.

"The Head will see you in the Form-room before lessons," said Mr. Quelch.

"Very well, sir," said Wharton.

And when the Remove went into the Form-room for first lesson, they looked very serious indeed.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Heavy Hand

DR. LOCKE entered the Remove Form-room, with rustling gown. His face was very stern and severe, and he had a cane under his arm. Sergeant Sharp followed him in, still looking black and thunderous.

The Remove stood up and waited.

"Boys!" The Head's voice was very stern. "Sergeant Sharp informs me that he was attacked in the Remove dormitory this morning, and tied to a bed. You are aware that the sergeant has been sent to this school by the Board of Governors to carry out certain alterations in our school system. He is supported by the authority of the governors, and by my authority as headmaster. You are aware that you are under his orders."

There was a grim silence.

"In all matters outside the Form-rooms you are under the authority of Sergeant Sharp," went on the Head. "Sergeant Sharp is empowered to administer corporal punishment when he deems it necessary. As you probably did not fully understand the state of affairs this morning, I shall not punish you so severely as I should otherwise have done. I shall, however, cane every boy who laid a hand upon the sergeant."

Silence and black looks. That was all.

"You may be aware," resumed the Head, "that the Board of Governors, and especially the chairman, Sir Hilton Popper, are not satisfied with the state of affairs in Greyfriars at present. They regard the school as being too slack in many respects, and Sergeant Sharp is sent here to carry out their wishes. You must treat the sergeant with the same respect that you show to myself."

"May I speak, sir?" asked Wharton respectfully.

"Certainly."

"We cannot respect Sergeant Sharp, sir, as he is a bully and a brute," said Harry steadily.

"Wharton!"

"I am telling you what the whole Form thinks, sir. Sergeant Sharp is half a German, and we dislike and despise Germans. The sergeant wishes to treat us as if we were German boys in a German school. We don't think that German methods ought to be used in any civilised country."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"If British boys are trained in the German manner, sir, we may grow up into a race of spies, bullies, slaves, and poisoners, like the Germans. That is not what we have come to Greyfriars for, sir."

"Bravo!" chirruped Squiff.

Mr. Quelch coughed, and the Head coughed. Wharton had put it quite straight, and probably his words found an echo in the hearts of the two masters.

"I have allowed you to speak, Wharton," said the Head, after a pause, "and now I can only repeat what I have said before, that you are under the orders of Sergeant Sharp, who is sent here with the full authority of the governing board to make certain alterations in our methods. This is, to some extent, in the nature of an experiment, and it depends largely upon the boys to make the experiment a success. Some of you will be soldiers when you are grown up, and you will then understand the value of strict discipline."

"If we are soldiers, sir, we shall be British soldiers," said Wharton. "We shall not need to learn German discipline. We shall not poison wells, we shall not murder wounded men, and we shall not starve prisoners, as the Germans do."

"Ahem! You need say no more, Wharton. You will understand that it is my wish, and my command, that you obey Sergeant Sharp implicitly."

"We shall always do anything you tell us, sir."

"Quite so—quite so! Now, Sergeant Sharp, kindly point out the boys who shared in the attack upon you."

"That isn't necessary, sir," said Wharton. "We are ready to own up. We are not ashamed of it."

Wharton stepped out, followed by nearly all the Remove.

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Only Billy Bunter and Fisher T. Fish remained in their places. Even Skinner and Snoop joined the rest of the Form.

"Then the whole Form was concerned in the outbreak?" exclaimed the Head.

"Nearly all, sir," said Wharton.

"Those boys who did not take part in it may take their seats at once," said Dr. Locke, frowning.

"Begad, we're all in it, sir!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I didn't touch the rotter, sir, but it was only because I was sittin' down at the time, and it didn't seem worth the trouble of gettin' up, sir."

"Take your place, Mauleverer!"

"Yaas, sir."

Lord Mauleverer shrugged his shoulders, and went back to his place.

"Any other boys who were not directly concerned in the matter are to take their places at once!" rapped out the Head.

Skinner and Snoop and Stott and two or three more went back to their places. They had felt called upon to back up the Form, but they were not sorry to escape the licking.

"The rest of you will be caned," said the Head. "You first, Wharton."

Swish! Swish!

Each of the delinquents received two cuts, and they were severe cuts. Sergeant Sharp looked on with a lowering brow. It was easy to see that he regarded the punishment as insufficient. Had the sergeant been administering it, certainly those cuts would have been heavier and more numerous.

The Removites went back to their desks, rubbing their hands, and the Head quitted the Form-room. Sergeant Sharp, after another lowering look at the juniors, followed him. The juniors could guess that from that moment the sergeant would keep a very special eye on the Remove.

It was not a happy morning for the Remove. They were smarting in body and in mind. Their spirits rose in rebellion against the bare idea of being under the orders of a bullying drill-sergeant, who had learned his methods among a low race in a degenerate country.

But, as Bob Cherry remarked, there was no backing up against the Head. So long as the Head supported the sergeant, the sergeant was cock of the walk. And the Head could scarcely decline to carry out the express wishes of the august Board of Governors.

The Removites felt that they were powerless; but they were not cowed. There was likely to be more trouble, though collaring the sergeant and tying him up was out of the question.

Mr. Quelch was very easy with his class that morning. The juniors could guess, though they could not know, that the Remove master was far from approving of Sergeant Sharp and his Hunnish methods.

Lessons ended at last, and the Remove came out of their Form-room. They were in a dissatisfied and discontented mood. But they soon cheered up. It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and there was a cricket match fixed between the Remove and the Upper Fourth. In the delights of cricket, and of licking Temple Dabney & Co. of the Fourth, the heroes of the Remove could afford to forget the sergeant and his unpleasant ways.

They little knew what the afternoon was to bring forth.

Billy Bunter was a most pathetic figure. The thrashing the sergeant had given him in the dormitory that morning had been severe, and Bunter felt it all the more because he was out of condition. The sergeant was undoubtedly right in regarding Bunter as a lazy slacker. What the Remove objected to was being classed as slackers along with Bunter. One black sheep could not be justly regarded as a specimen of the whole flock. The injustice of it rankled in their breasts. Because one or two fellows were slackers and smokers, apparently the whole school was condemned as slack and vicious.

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter pathetically, "I'm in awful pain, you know. I believe that brute has broken some of my ribs."

"Bow-wow!" said Bob Cherry. "They're too jolly well protected by fat, old chap. It's the layers of fat that are shaken up a bit, that's all."

"Well, anyway, I stood up for the rights of the Form, and you didn't," said Bunter.

"The right of slacking in bed isn't worth standing up for," said Wharton curtly.

"I'm paining all over," groaned Bunter. "When I'm in pain I always get extra hungry. I've been disappointed about a postal-order, too. I think one of you chaps might lend me a bob, and have it back out of my postal-order when it comes."

"When!" said Nugent.

"The whenfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "But

if an esteemed bob will make the fat Bunter happy, he is terrifically welcome."

"I say, Inky, you might make it two," said Bunter, as his fat fingers closed on the coin. "You see, my postal-order is certain—"

But the chums of the Remove were walking away, and Bunter was left to waste his eloquence on the desert air.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter.

The fat junior made a bee-line, as Fishy would have called it, for the tuckshop. Solomon of old asked to be comforted with oider; and Billy Bunter could always be comforted with tarts and ginger-pop.

But Bunter was not to be thus comforted on this occasion. Jam-tarts and ginger-pop had just been supplied by Mrs. Mimble when the terrifying figure of the sergeant loomed into the doorway of the school shop.

"Bunter!" rapped out the sergeant.

Billy Bunter blinked round in alarm.

"Ye-es, sir?" he stammered.

"Give me that rubbish!"

"It—it's mine!" stammered Bunter. "I—I'll stand you a tart with pleasure, sir, if you like."

"Give it here!"

Bunter groaned, and brought the plate of tarts and the glass of ginger-pop to the sergeant.

Mr. Sharp took them, and threw tarts and liquor into the Close. He set his heavy boot on the tarts and squashed them out of recognition. Bunter watched him in horror.

"I—I say!" he stuttered.

"Now listen to me!" said Sergeant Sharp harshly. "No more of this gormandising! If you are caught eating anything between meals I shall thrash you."

"Oh, dear!"

"You are out of condition through over-eating. Madam, you are not to serve Bunter with anything again without a written order from me."

"Very well," said Mrs. Mimble, with a sniff.

"Get out of this, Bunter!"

"I—I say—"

"You are out of condition," said the sergeant grimly.

"Run across the Close to the House and back again."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I shall time you." The sergeant took out his watch. "If you are more than two minutes, look out for squalls."

"Oh, dear!"

"Get a move on!" thundered the sergeant.

He swung Bunter out of the shop by the scruff of his neck. Bunter gasped, and started for the School House. He puffed and panted as he ran. He knew what to expect if he was not back in the specified time. Sergeant Sharp stood like a ram-rod, watching him grimly, watch in hand.

There was a shout from fellows in the Close as Bunter was seen sprinting. It was a very unaccustomed exercise for Bunter.

"Go it, Fatty!"

"Put it on!"

"Two to one on the porpoise."

Bunter panted on. He was certainly out of condition, and that run, short as it was, made him pour with perspiration, and his breath came in short gasps. The Close, the old elms, and the grey old buildings seemed to swim about him as he gasped and struggled on.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the little game, Billy?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, catching him by the shoulder.

"Ow! Don't stop me! Ow!"

Bunter tore himself away and staggered on to the steps of the School House. The juniors watched him in wonder.

At the steps he turned, and charged back across the Close towards the tuckshop. Tubb of the Third humorously stepped in his way—but he repented it. Bunter's heavy weight crashed against him, and he went rolling on the ground. Bunter charged on, breathless, gasping, perspiring, back to where the sergeant was waiting for him. He came to a halt before the sergeant, bathed in moisture and almost suffocating.

"I've done it!" he stuttered.

"Seven seconds over!" said the sergeant grimly. "Hold out your hand!"

Swish!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

The sergeant stalked away, leaving Bunter squeezing his hand under his fat arm, and pumping in breath like a grampus. His heart was beating in great jumps.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!" moaned Bunter. "Beast! Ow, ow, ow, ow!"

Billy Bunter sank on the bench outside the tuckshop, and for ten minutes he struggled with his breath. And during that time his feelings towards Sergeant Sharp were simply Hannish.

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ONE
PENNY

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

No Cricket!

"W E bat!" said Cecil Temple.

The cricketers were on Little Side. Temple of the Fourth had won the toss, and Harry Wharton & Co. prepared to go into the field.

The Removites had recovered their spirits. It was a pleasant sunny afternoon, and the pitch was in perfect condition, and they had a good game before them. They could afford to forget Sergeant Sharp and his knavish tricks.

The Remove eleven went into the field, looking and feeling very fit. Anyone who knew anything of the great game of cricket would not have taken Harry Wharton & Co. for slackers. For developing both muscle and character, cricket was infinitely superior to the dreary drills of the German schools. But such was not the opinion of Sergeant Sharp and Sir Hilton Popper.

Temple and Dabney went to the wickets. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had received the ball, and the game was about to begin, when the thick-set figure of the sergeant strode upon the field.

Sergeant Sharp marched upon the pitch and held up his hand. The cricketers glared at him. He was evidently there to stop the game. Hurree Singh was strongly tempted to bowl—at the sergeant, instead of the wicket.

"Stop this foolery!" rapped out the sergeant.

Wharton clenched his hands with anger.

"You are interrupting the game," he said.

"Game!" sneered the sergeant. "Is this a time for games? Do you know what is going on in Flanders and the Dardanelles? Aren't you ashamed to be playing games at such a time?"

Wharton crimsoned.

Well enough he knew what was going on in Flanders and the Dardanelles. He knew that his uncle and Bob Cherry's father were there, facing the hail of death and the poison-gas of the savage Huns. But that was no reason why the juniors of Greyfriars should mope about with long faces, instead of keeping themselves fit.

"You don't seem to understand, Sergeant Sharp," said Harry, keeping his temper with difficulty. "I don't suppose you mean to suggest that we could get into the Army if we tried."

"There are fellows here big enough for that, if they had the grit!" sneered the sergeant. "Not you youngers, certainly. But you can get yourselves ready for taking your places in the firing-line if the war lasts long enough. That's what I'm here to see that you do."

"We're doing it," said Harry. "Cricket is a way of keeping fit, though you don't appear to understand it. It isn't simply a game—like goose-stepping."

"I don't want any back-talk!" said Sergeant Sharp harshly. "You are not going to slack at games here!"

"If you watch us play you will see that we are not slackers."

"You are not going to play. Take those stumps up at once!" added the sergeant, turning to the umpires.

The umpires were Hobson and Hoskins of the Shell. They looked doubtfully at the sergeant, and then obeyed. The stumps were drawn.

"Are we going to stand this?" muttered Vernon-Smith. The Bounder's voice trembled with rage.

Wharton set his teeth.

"We've got to, I suppose. The Head has put us under that man's orders."

"By gad!" said Temple of the Fourth, coming away from the wicket. "By gad! This is rather thick! What are we going to do, Wharton?"

"Obey orders, I suppose."

"It's a bit too thick, I think!"

"Oh, rather!" muttered Dabney.

"Put that rubbish away!" said the sergeant, referring to the stumps, the balls, and the bats. "You've something better to do than to slack about this afternoon!"

"We're not slacking!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Don't talk to me! Temple—your name's Temple—"

"Yaas," drawled Temple as insolently as he could.

"Get the rest of your Form here. Wharton!"

"Well?"

"See that the whole of the Remove are here within five minutes!"

"What for?"

"Drill!"

"Drill!" exclaimed the juniors.

"Yes, drill!" said the sergeant emphatically. "You're going to make good use of the afternoon. You're going to learn the goose-step, that you don't seem to like! Perhaps you'll learn to like it!"

The cricketers regarded one another with looks of helpless rage. They trembled on the verge of another outbreak. But they knew that it was useless. It would only mean being called up before the Head and flogged—and placed again under the sergeant's orders. Sam Sharp had the upper hand, and they were under his thumb. His thumb was coming down hard.

Wharton and Temple left the field in silence. In a few minutes the whole of the Upper and Lower Fourth were gathered on the cricket-ground, with the exception of a few lucky fellows who had gone out for the afternoon.

To military drill, in itself, the juniors had no objection. They knew that, within reason, it was useful and necessary. Most of them were in the ranks of the junior cadets, and, as a matter of fact, they had got long past the "goose-step."

What they objected to was drill out of season, when other affairs occupied their minds. They objected, more than anything else, to the bullying and high-handed manner of the sergeant. Evidently it was Sam Sharp's intention to put an end to the school games, and to substitute drill on the German system. The juniors chafed and raged at the thought. They were not likely to let the bully turn them into machines if they could help it.

The sergeant rapped out orders, and he seemed a little surprised to see the juniors fall into their places in good order. They were not such slackers, and they were not so ignorant of drill, as he had chosen to suppose.

Just as the juniors had formed "fours," two graceful figures in white came on the cricket-ground. They gazed in amazement at the juniors. There was no sign of cricket, and the ground was getting badly trampled.

Harry Wharton ran to meet them.

"Sorry!" he said. "There's not going to be a match after all. Our military instructor has come down on it."

"Hard cheese," said Miss Clara sympathetically.

"Sir Hilton Popper has sent the man here to reform us," said Wharton bitterly. "We've had trouble with him, of course. But we've got to toe the line."

"Wharton!" roared the sergeant.

"Hurry back," said Marjorie anxiously. "The man looks very angry."

"Hang him!" said Harry.

But he hurried back.

The sergeant glared at him, with a thunderous brow.

"You young lubber, how dare you break ranks without orders!" he roared.

Wharton gritted his teeth, and was silent. In the usual drill instruction at the school he would never have dreamed of leaving the ranks unbidden. But it was different in the present circumstances.

"Fools and slackers, all of you!" growled the sergeant. "But I'll teach you to obey orders. I'll bring you to heel!"

"You will never bring me to heel," said Wharton disdainfully. "I am not a German savage, to be bullied into being a slave!"

The sergeant turned purple. He was half a German himself, as the juniors knew. He clenched his hand on his cane till his knuckles went white.

Wharton stepped back into the ranks. The sergeant's cane rose in the air, and there was a buzz in the ranks. Well they knew of the manners and customs of the German drill-sergeants—of wretched recruits standing tamely under a rain of blows and curses. But British flesh and blood were not likely to stand that, and perhaps the sergeant realised it, for he held his hand. If his cane had lashed at Wharton, the whole Remove would have piled on him at that moment regardless of the consequences.

He rapped out an order instead, after a deadly look at the captain of the Remove.

Marjorie and Clara walked quietly away to their bicycles. They knew that the Removites felt their humiliation more keenly in their presence.

To and fro on the cricket-field the juniors were marched under the hot sun. The sergeant was merciless. Billy Bunter fairly rolled in the grass at last. He was done.

Sergeant Sharp bore down on him, growling:

"Get up!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"I—I—I c-c-can't!" he groaned.

Swish!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Bunter found that he could get up. He got up in a great hurry, and rejoined the ranks. And Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish, who were thinking of falling out, decided to keep in.

Two long hours passed, and the juniors were kept at it without a moment's rest. They were hot and tired and savage. But they would not give the sergeant an excuse for calling them slackers, and kept at it grimly.

But Bunter could stand no more, at last, and he sat down.

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and refused to move. The sergeant's cane came across his shoulders, and he gasped, but did not get up. Harry Wharton's eyes blazed. Bunter was a slacker, and he certainly had no right to be so much out of condition. But there were limits. If the cane had descended on Bunter again trouble would have followed. But the sergeant did not strike twice. He could see that Bunter was exhausted.

"Get out of the way, you fat fool!" growled Sharp.

Bunter crawled away.

"Wait there! Don't go!"

"Yow! Yes!" moaned Bunter.

One by one the slackers were weeded out. Skinner and Snoop and Fish joined Bunter in the waiting squad. Every time he came near them the sergeant directed sarcastic and cutting remarks at them. The rest of the juniors struggled gamely to keep it up, to give the sergeant no excuse for putting them among the unfit slackers. But the sergeant did not know when to stop. If the boys had been seasoned veterans he could not have worked them harder.

Lord Mauleverer limped out of the ranks. Cecil Temple of the Fourth followed him, gasping. Junior after junior joined the hapless squad outside the pavilion, followed by bitter jeers from the sergeant. The burly man himself seemed to feel no fatigue, and he made no allowance for the boys.

Faster and faster the juniors were weeded out, every fellow who left the ranks being followed by a bitter gibe.

Harry Wharton & Co. stuck it out grimly to the last. They were in the pink of condition, and the savage drill told less upon them than upon the others. The sergeant gave the word to dismiss at last. Wharton knew that he had tried to wear them out, and that he only gave it up because he was fatigued himself.

Gladly the juniors broke ranks when the word of command came at last. They limped off the field.

Sergeant Sharp halted before the group of unhappy juniors who had not been able to stand the strain. They looked at him in silence, as his thick lip curled contemptuously.

"Precious set of weedy slackers!" said Sergeant Sharp. "But I'll get you into something like shape yet, by hokey!"

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I assure you, I can't stand four hours' drill on a hot afternoon, you know."

"Don't talk to me!"

"Begad, it isn't a pleasure talkin' to you, I assure you."

"I—I—I'm dying!" moaned Bunter.

The sergeant gave a scoffing laugh.

"You slacking dolls will be formed into the awkward squad," he said. "I'll drill you to ribbons yet! Every fool who cannot learn, and every slacker who is too lazy, will go into the awkward squad, and will take double drills. Bear that in mind, all of you! Get out of my sight!"

That was the sergeant's elegant manner of dismissing his unhappy victims. But the juniors were only too glad to get out of his sight.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Under His Thumb!

THERE was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth among the Removites and the Fourth-Formers that evening.

They were all tired out.

Most of them were aching to the bone. Even the most fit of the juniors felt the strain. They had been overworked and overdriven, and they ached with fatigue.

If Harry Wharton & Co. felt like that, it may be imagined what fellows like Billy Bunter and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish felt like.

Bunter collapsed in No. 7 Study, and did not move for hours. He even forgot tea-time. Snoop and Fish groaned all the evening. In fact, there was a chorus of groans.

And there was fury. Bolsover major wildly proposed "seragging" the sergeant. But the Removites, savage as they felt, knew that it would not do. Besides, they were too worn out to have laid a finger on the Hun of Greyfriars. That was the name they generally called him by now, "The Hun." It seemed to suit him better than his own name.

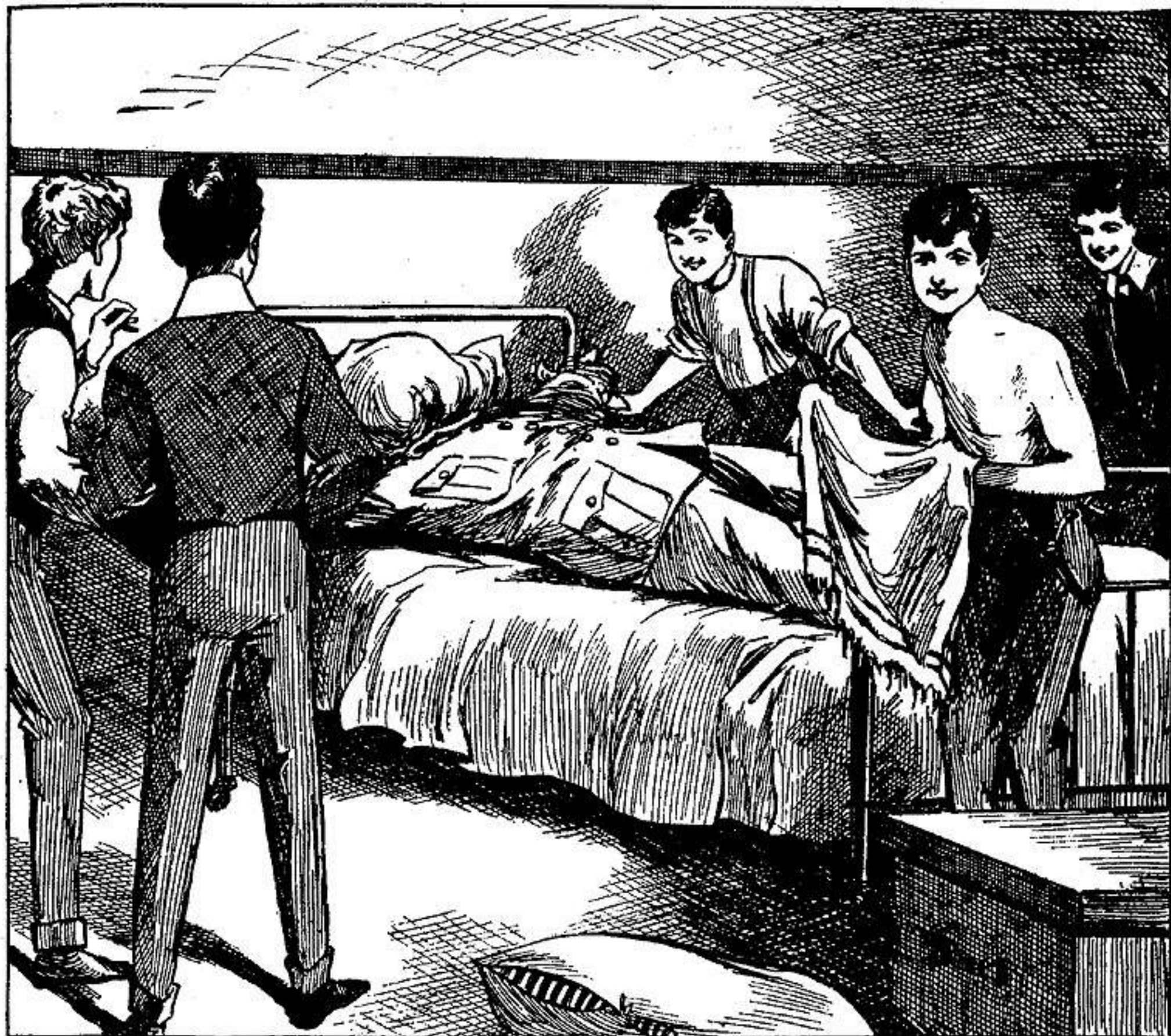
Coker of the Fifth looked into the junior common-room that evening, where a number of Removites were bemoaning their hard fate. Coker grinned.

"You look knocked out, and no mistake," he remarked.

"So would you, if you'd been through four hours' steady drill under a hot sun," said Bob Cherry.

"I don't say I like the sergeant," remarked Coker. "But I must say he's right to weed out the slackers and make an example of them. This will do you kids good. I always believed in being sharp with fags."

Some of the juniors glared at Coker, but they did not move.



Leaving the sergeant wriggling and grunting, the Removites turned to their bathing and dressing. From inside the pillow-case the most extraordinary sounds proceeded. (See Chapter 10.)

At any other time the great Horace would have gone out of their quarters "on his neck," for that remark. But the Removites were tamed by fatigue. Coker went on victoriously:

"I back the sergeant up there. This will do you fags heaps of good, and take some of the cheek out of you. Of course, it wouldn't do for the Fifth; we should not stand it."

"You'll have to," growled Russell.

Coker sniffed.

"Naturally, he will understand that seniors have to be treated decently," he said. "Otherwise, I should put my foot down. Well, I must say, you look a set of scarecrows. Buck up, and take it smiling!"

And Coker walked away—missed by a good yard by a cushion that Bob Cherry feebly hurled after him.

"Cheeky ass!" groaned Johnny Bull. "Anybody can cheek the Remove now. I haven't a punch left."

"What is it Shakespeare says on the subject?" mumbled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, blow Shakespeare!"

"Yes; but it hits off, you know," said Bob. "Lemme see—"

"'But yesterday the word of Cæsar might
Have stood against the world. Now lies he here,
And none so poor to do him reverence.'"

"Oh, ring off!" mumbled Peter Todd. "I've got three or
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four separate aches in every giddy limb, and I feel like a Hun myself when I think of that sergeant."

"But yesterday the Remove would have walloped Coker baldheaded!" went on Bob Cherry, paraphrasing Shakespeare. "Now lie we here, and Coker can be as funny as he likes without getting a thick ear!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Not dead yet, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I'm dying!" said Bunter faintly. "I feel that I shall never recover from this. I'm going to write to my pater to take me away from Greyfriars."

"Well, the sergeant will have done some good, then!" remarked Bulstrode.

"Oh, really, you know! Some of my ribs are sprained, I think, and both my legs are seriously injured, and my backbone is damaged somewhere. I think my lungs are also affected, and my heart is very, very weak!"

"My hat! It's like a green pill advertisement!" said Nugent. "Have you also got that tired feeling, and pains in the back? If so, you can't do better than take Mug-catcher's Terra-cotta Tabloids for Tender Tummies!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

It was an unhappy evening. Tempers were a little sore, too, and some of the sergeant's victims found a weary solace in ragging and nagging one another. The Remove slept very soundly that night. They were tired to death. There was no

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!" — By —
Frank Richards.

chatter or ragging in the dormitory. They just tumbled into bed, and slept like logs till the rising-bell rang.

They were still tired in the morning, though the fit members of the Form did not feel very bad. But Bunter and Snoop and Fish crawled out of bed wearily, and Lord Mauleverer looked as if he found life a weary burden. But they did not venture to stay in bed after rising-bell.

Before breakfast Lord Mauleverer cycled down to Friardale. This was so unaccustomed an exertion for his lordship that it attracted general attention. When he came in Bob Cherry asked him the reason of this "thusness."

"Begad, I've sent a telegram!" said his lordship, with a chuckle. "A wire to my uncle, you know. I shall be called away to-day."

"Oh, you deep bounder!" said Bob.

"It's the only way," said Lord Mauleverer. "I'm not goin' to let that ferocious Hun kill me, you know. And I can tell you I'm not comin' back till he's gone from Greyfriars."

"Oh!"

After morning lessons there was a telegram waiting for Lord Mauleverer. It was from his uncle, calling him home. The Head had received another, asking leave for the school-boy carl.

Envious glances followed Lord Mauleverer as he drove away in the big car that came to fetch him.

His lordship was something of a privileged person, and his uncle was very indulgent. The other fellows could not escape so easily.

They had to go through it.

Before dinner there was half an hour's drill, and the sergeant kept the juniors hard at it. After dinner they had a rest, as the terrible sergeant was devoting his attention to the Third and the Second. Tubb & Co. of the Third crawled away when he had done with them. Nugent minor of the Second confided to his major that if the sergeant was found scragged some day he would know who had done it.

As yet Sergeant Sharp had left the seniors alone. He was getting his hand in, as it were, with the juniors. Harry Wharton & Co. wondered what would happen when he tackled the Fifth and the Sixth. The truculent Coker would not be easy to deal with; and, as for the Sixth, surely those great guns would never put up with it. The juniors were very curious to see how Wingate and Courtney and Loder and the rest would stand the sergeant.

After lessons that afternoon there were fresh drills. Sam Sharp had no mercy upon weary limbs. Every fellow whom he chose to regard as a slacker was put into the awkward squad and given physical exercises that fairly doubled him up. Those who dropped out of the ranks from sheer exhaustion were treated to the bitter gibes of the "Hun."

Naturally, there was a keen desire on the part of the fellows to keep outside the "Awkward Squad."

Their pride was roused, and Harry Wharton & Co. would rather have drilled till they dropped than have been included in that squad.

The sergeant had an evil eye upon Wharton, to whom he seemed to have taken a special dislike. But the captain of the Remove gave him no excuse for fault-finding. Loder of the Sixth, who was a good deal of a bully and not unlike the sergeant in disposition, was placed in charge of the juniors—he was glad to make his own peace with the tyrant by slave-driving in his place. But even Loder was not quite so bad as the sergeant, and the juniors were glad of the change.

A buzz ran through the ranks of the juniors when the word was passed round that the Fifth had been called out for drill.

"Now's Coker's chance!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Let's see what Coker will do."

And all the juniors waited very keenly to see what Coker would do.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER. Coker Comes to Order!

COKER of the Fifth was in his study. He was at tea with Potter and Greene. Potter and Greene looked rather uneasy. They knew that the Fifth had been called up for drill; but Coker had decided not to go. He was having his tea, and he simply threw a loaf at the fag who brought the sergeant's message.

"We'd better go, you know," Potter remarked.

"There'll be trouble if we don't," said Greene uneasily.

Coker snorted.

"We're not going!"

"But—but—"

"I don't say I disapprove of the way the fellow is handling the juniors," said Coker; "I believe in having a heavy hand."

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with fags. It does 'em good. But, of course, he can't treat the Fifth like that."

"But the Head's orders!" urged Potter.

Another snort from Coker.

"The Head can't expect us to knuckle under to him. The Fifth Form has its dignity to consider."

"Suppose he comes here for us?"

"Let him!" said Coker.

Coker went on with his tea. A heavy tread rang in the passage, and the door was kicked open. The brick-red face of the sergeant looked in at the doorway.

"Why aren't you on the drill-ground?" he demanded.

"We're having tea," said Coker pleasantly.

Sergeant Sharp raised his hand.

"Go!" he said.

"Did you speak to me?" asked Coker.

"Yes."

"You're joking, I suppose?"

"What!"

"If you think you can treat the Fifth like fags, you're rather making a mistake!" explained Coker. "We're not taking any!"

"I order you to go at once!" roared the sergeant.

"Bow-wow!" said Coker.

Potter and Greene exchanged a hesitating glance, and left the study. They considered it wiser to obey orders. Horace Coker sat tight.

"You hear me, Coker?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Will you obey me?"

"No fear!"

Sergeant Sharp grasped his cane and started for Coker. The great man of the Fifth jumped up.

"You touch me with that cane, and you'll hear something drop, my man!" he said. "I'm Coker—Coker of the Fifth—not a fag, you know! Yaroo!"

"Out you go!" shouted the sergeant.

"My hat!" panted Coker. "I'll show you!"

Smash!

A plate of tarts broke on the sergeant's square chin. The sergeant meant business, and so did Coker.

The next moment Sergeant Sam Sharp grasped the Fifth-Former. Coker returned grip for grip.

There was a terrific struggle in the study.

Coker was a powerful fellow—there were a good many in the Sixth who did not care to tackle Coker. But he was no match for the burly sergeant. In about three minutes he was fairly knocked out, and he lay breathless on the floor, blinking at the Hun of Greyfriars.

"Are you going?" roared the sergeant.

"No!" stuttered Coker. "No you bully! No, you cad! Yah!"

"Then I'll carry you!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Coker struggled again as the sergeant grasped him. But he was lifted in the sinewy arms, and carried bodily out of the study, his arms and legs flying wildly in the air. Struggling and panting, Horace Coker was carried down the passage and the stairs, and out into the quadrangle.

With a grim face the sergeant marched on, with the struggling Fifth-Former in his grip.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Coker!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo!" roared Coker.

Bump!

Horace Coker was flung to the ground like a sack of potatoes. He panted and glared breathlessly. The sergeant's cane sang in the air over him.

"Take your place in the ranks!" thundered the sergeant.

"I'll see you hanged first!" panted Coker.

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!"

Never had the unfortunate Coker received such a terrific licking. Some of the juniors had been of opinion that a good licking was just what Horace Coker wanted. But they felt sorry for Coker now. Probably Coker felt sorry for himself. Certainly he was "going through it."

"Dash it all! Draw it mild, Sharp!" exclaimed Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, catching the sergeant by the shoulder.

Sergeant Sharp shoved him back so violently that he fell.

"Get up, Coker!"

"I'll get up!" mumbled Coker. "I'll smash you, you bullying beast! You Prussian pig, I'll pulverise you!"

Coker was hard to beat. He struggled up, and hurled himself at the sergeant. Sam Sharp's strong hand closed on his collar, and he was bent over, and the cane rose and fell again with great force.

"I'm not going to stand this!" said Potter. "Rescue, you chaps!"

"Stop!"

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, arrived on the scene. The Fifth-Formers, who were about to rush to the rescue of the unhappy Coker, held off. Sergeant Sharp lowered his cane.

"This boy refuses to obey orders!" he said savagely.

"Coker!" said Mr. Prout.

"Yow-ow-ow!" mumbled Coker. "I'll smash him!"

"Coker, you are under the orders of the sergeant. You have heard the Head's instructions."

"I'm not going to be bullied by a filthy German!" yelled Coker. "The man's a German—half-bred Hun. Hang him!"

"Coker, unless you obey the sergeant, I shall take you to the Head myself, and report you for a flogging!" said Mr. Prout sternly.

"A—a—a flogging!" gasped Coker. "Me!"

"Yes. You must obey orders!"

"I'll obey your orders, sir," said Coker. "But that beastly Hun—"

"I order you to obey the sergeant!"

Coker seemed to gulp something down.

"Very well, sir."

"Do as Sergeant Sharp tells you, Coker. But I must remark, sergeant, that I do not approve of such excessive punishment administered to boys of my Form," said Mr. Prout, with dignity.

The sergeant grunted.

"I am acting under instructions, sir, and I don't allow any interference!" he snapped.

"What?" Mr. Prout crimsoned. "Are you aware, sergeant, that you are speaking to a Form-master—the master of the Fifth?"

"Yes, I'm aware of it, and I'll be obliged to you if you'll clear off at once, and not interfere here. I don't allow it!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Prout.

He walked away with a very red face.

Then the drill proceeded. The Fifth Form went through it like lambs. Coker's lesson had perhaps had its effect on the rest. Coker himself was very subdued. The iron hand of the drill-sergeant was making itself felt.

And when the sergeant, dissatisfied with Coker, ordered him into the awkward squad, the great Horace obeyed without a word.

The Fifth had come to heel, as the sergeant would have expressed it. It only remained to see how the Sixth would stand it.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Prussianised!

GREYFRIARS hardly knew itself during the next few days.

Cricket, for one thing, was a thing of the past. The school matches had been stopped.

Walks and picnics were over.

Half-holidays were spent in drill. Every day, between and after lessons, there were drills—heavy and grinding.

Bunter and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish were in the sanatorium. They were quite knocked up. Lord Mauleverer was still away. But the rest of Greyfriars had to go through it.

The Sixth had disappointed the school.

Most of the fellows had supposed that old Wingate, at least, would stand out against the new tyranny.

But George Wingate, captain of Greyfriars, had taken it more quietly than any of the juniors.

Doubtless a little talk he had had with the Head helped him. Perhaps he realised that it was his duty to set an example of obedience and discipline to the school.

But the juniors were disappointed. They had pinned their faith to Wingate, and Wingate had failed them.

There seemed nothing left, on all sides, but to knuckle under.

Indeed, but for the difference of language, Greyfriars might have been taken for a German military school during those painful days.

The natural result of bullying and tyranny followed. Independent fellows became savage and resentful. Weak-natured fellows became toadying. Fellows like Skinner and Snoop toadied to and flattered the sergeant, to get into his good graces. The fellows who were the real slackers, and were known as thoroughgoing cads, were soon the prime favourites of the sergeant, though they probably hated him more than the better fellows did. Following his German methods, the sergeant encouraged spying and tale-bearing, and unexpected punishments and extra drills falling upon unsuspecting fellows showed that sneaking was the order of the day.

At the end of a week the sergeant flattered himself that

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ONE
PENNY

the new order of things was firmly established. On a half-holiday Sir Hilton Popper came to see the school at drill, and he was delighted with what he saw.

Sullen faces, savagely gleaming eyes, did not worry the baronet. Machine-like precision at drill was what he admired, and certainly that was being attained. Before the ranks of the incensed Greyfriars fellows, Sir Hilton Popper commended and congratulated the sergeant.

But the state of tension was not likely to last. It was pretty certain that there would be an explosion sooner or later.

For, like most bullies, and especially German bullies, the sergeant never knew where to stop. The more submission he received the harder he drove. In his experience in the German Army he had been accustomed to slavish obsequiousness; he had seen bearded men shrinking and crying under the lashing canes of brutal officers, and it was amid such revolting surroundings that he had learned his methods.

There were warm discussions in No. 1 Study. Harry Wharton & Co. were quite agreed that they would not stand it.

But exactly what was to be done was not easy to decide.

"He's got us by the short hairs!" said Bob Cherry dolorously. "I know jolly well that the Head doesn't like it. But he's backing up the governors."

"He can't very well do anything else, unless he resigns," said Nugent.

"But this can't go on," said Harry Wharton, frowning. "I wouldn't object to anything in reason. But we're not chucking cricket for the rest of the season to take on drills."

"The Sixth have cancelled the Redclyffe match," remarked Johnny Bull, "and we've had to cut the new match with Highcliffe."

"Something will have to be done!" growled Squiff. "This kind of thing may be suited to Germans. It won't do for human beings."

"I wish my uncle would come," muttered Wharton. "He's expecting his leave now; he's written to say so. And he's a governor; he might be able to stop it."

"Old Popper is leading the governors by the nose," said Nugent, "and some of them are away at the war, like your uncle. Since the war started a lot of silly idiots have been advocating German methods in this country. Old Popper's one of them. I don't see anything to admire in the beasts."

"Treachery, spying, murder, and incendiarism," said Wharton bitterly. "That's the outcome of Prussian training. We don't exactly want to be trained on those lines."

"If Greyfriars goes on like this a lot of fellows will clear out," remarked Peter Todd.

"But we don't want to clear out. It's got to stop!"

"How?" asked Vernon-Smith. And Hurree Singh remarked dolefully that the howfulness was terrific. There was the rub.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly, as there was a buzz in the quadrangle.

"More trouble!" said Squiff.

The council in No. 1 Study broke up hurriedly, and the juniors hastened out. It was the sergeant again, of course. The Third Form were at his tender mercies at that moment. Tubb & Co. of the Third, looking sullen and furious, were going through it.

It was upon Wingate minor that the sergeant's wrath had fallen. Jack Wingate was a somewhat delicate lad, and he was not standing it like tougher fellows like Tubb. A lash of the sergeant's cane, intended to buck him up, had caused Wingate minor to burst into tears—an outburst that was greeted with a storm of bitter gibing from the Hun of Greyfriars.

"Slackers and cry-babies, the lot of you!" growled the sergeant. "Good lord! Turn off the waterworks, or I'll give you something to howl for!"

Jack Wingate dug his knuckles into his eyes. He was bitterly ashamed of "blubbing" before the sergeant and his Form-fellows, but it was rather "nerves" than anything else that brought the tears into his eyes.

"Are you going to stop snivelling?" roared Sergeant Sharp.

"Let him alone!" muttered Paget.

"Yes, let him alone," said Tubb.

Smack! Smack!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Tubb and Paget rubbed their stinging ears, and looked daggers. Then Sergeant Sharp's cane whistled over Wingate minor. Harry Wharton ran forward.

"Let him alone, you brute!"

"Hallo! You again!" said the sergeant. "What's your name—Wharton?"

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!"

By Frank Richards.

"You know my name's Wharton," said Harry contemptuously, "more than I know your name is Sharp. I should expect it to be Schmidt or Guggenheim!"

"I'll deal with you later," said the sergeant. "Stand aside!"

"You're not going to touch Jack Wingate again!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes old Wingate!" muttered Bob Cherry.

Wingate of the Sixth was striding across the Close towards the scene with Courtney. The captain of Greyfriars had seen his minor's plight. The two seniors hurried up, as the sergeant thrust Wharton aside. The cane sang across the shrinking shoulders of Jack Wingate, and the fag gave a cry.

"Now stand up, and stop blubbing!" shouted Sergeant Sharp.

The cane rose in the air again.

Wingate of the Sixth sprang between, his eyes blazing.

"Stop that!" he exclaimed.

The Hun of Greyfriars glared at him.

"Get aside!"

"That's my young brother you're bullying," said Wingate, between his teeth. "I haven't interfered so far—I've got the Head's orders. But you won't touch that kid again!"

The two stood facing each other, and a thrill passed through the fellows crowding round. It had come at last—old Wingate was up against the tyrant.

All Greyfriars was ready to back him up. At a sign from the captain of the school, the whole crowd would have piled on the bully.

But Wingate alone was pretty well capable of dealing with the bully. The captain of Greyfriars would have given a good account of himself even against the burly sergeant.

With his lips set and his eyes gleaming, he faced the sergeant, his hands clenched hard.

There was a long pause. Sergeant Sharp gripped his cane hard, as if he would use it on Wingate. But he paused. Wingate was the only fellow in the school who was anything like a match for him. And the sergeant's long pause put a new thought into the minds of the juniors. Bullies are often cowards, and it looked as if the tyrant of Greyfriars was showing the white feather.

"I order you to get aside!" ordered the sergeant at last.

Wingate's lip curled.

"Jack, you can go in," he said.

Wingate minor left the ranks. Sergeant Sharp started forward.

"Fall in, there!" he shouted.

"Go in, Jack—into the house!"

Jack Wingate gave a nervous glance at the sergeant, but he obeyed his brother. He hurried away towards the School House.

The sergeant made a move to follow him, but he found Wingate major in his path. The captain of Greyfriars stood like a rock.

"You are interfering with my work," said the sergeant.

"I am interfering with your beastly bullying!" said Wingate. "You won't touch that kid again!"

"By hokey!" said the sergeant. "This is mutiny! I'll bring you to heel yet! I'll put you into the awkward squad, by hokey!"

"You won't!" said Wingate curtly.

He turned on his heel and walked away. The sergeant cast a deadly look after him.

Then the drilling of the Third went on, more savagely than ever. But the cane was not brought into use again. Wingate's chipping in had had that result. There was something in the cool, clear glance of the captain of Greyfriars that seemed to cow the bully.

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry breathlessly, as the Famous Five moved away. "That's the giddy limit! He's a funk!"

It was really the last straw. The bully and tyrant had been discovered in his true colours at last. He was a coward, too. At the first encounter with one who was anything like a match for him he had weakened. And that discovery, while it added to the juniors' contempt for him, was very encouraging. It seemed to make easier the project of dealing, somehow, successfully with the Hun of Greyfriars.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Face to Face!

WINGATE'S defiance of the Hun was not, however, followed by the results the juniors had hoped to see; for the captain of Greyfriars was in a responsible position, and he was called upon to set an example. In the Sixth-Form drills he obeyed the sergeant's voice without hesitation.

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All that the sergeant had a right to command him to do he did. When he was ordered into the awkward squad, he ignored the order, and the sergeant did not repeat it. But Wingate would not set an example of insubordination; he obeyed all reasonable orders without question.

And, needless to say, the sergeant's cane did not enter into his training, for the bully knew that the first touch of the cane would have been followed by a fight, and he was not looking for a fight with a fellow like Wingate.

In fact, the sergeant was making the discovery that British boys could not be bullied and driven like Germans. Up to a certain point he could have his way, backed with authority as he was, but beyond that point he could not go. There was truth in the old adage—that Britons never should be slaves.

The whole school was seeing this with discontent.

Where was it going to end? That was the question.

Wharton had been for some reason the object of the sergeant's special dislike from the beginning. Wingate shared in it now. But both of them regarded the bully's feelings with indifference and scorn.

When the Remove was under the sergeant's iron hand Wharton never escaped his eye. He gave no excuse for finding fault, but the sergeant did not always wait for an excuse.

"The Hun has his knife into you specially, Harry, old son," Bob Cherry remarked one day. "I've seen his eye on you lots of times. But you haven't backed up against him more than the rest of us. I don't quite catch on!"

Wharton did not quite "catch on" himself. But whenever the Remove were in training he knew what to expect.

He was ordered into the awkward squad at last—with slackers like Skinner and Snoop, and duffers like Fisher T. Fish. He obeyed; and the sergeant, who had probably expected resistance, drove him harder than ever when he was in the ranks of the "awkwards."

Skinner and Snoop had found means of placating the sergeant, and they were allowed to fall out on the least excuse; but there was no mercy for Wharton. He was kept at it pitilessly. He was not likely to seek the sergeant's good graces by toadying or tale-bearing. Any amount of bullying and nigger-driving would never have succeeded in Prussianising him.

"Don't scowl at me!" rapped out the sergeant. "I'm going to make you work, you slacker!"

Wharton did not reply.

"Do you hear me?" snarled the sergeant.

"I hear you," said Harry quietly.

"Answer then, you scowling slacker!"

"I am not scowling, and I am not a slacker," said Wharton.

"You are a bully and a brute. There's my answer!"

"By hokey!"

"If it weren't for the Head's orders, we shouldn't stand you for another minute," added Wharton.

The sergeant gave him a bitter look.

"The same sort!" he muttered. "The uncle over again in the nephew! But I'll bring you to heel, my buck!"

Wharton gave a start.

"You know my uncle!" he exclaimed.

The sergeant bit his lip. The reference to Colonel Wharton had escaped him involuntarily.

"No jaw, there!" he rapped out harshly. "Get on! Now then, no slacking!"

But that incident gave Wharton food for thought. The cat was out of the bag now. It was upon his uncle's account that the bully had taken that strange dislike to him. Had the sergeant come in contact with Colonel Wharton while in the Army, long years before? It was pretty certain that that was the case, and evidently the colonel had dealt sternly with the man.

Wharton knew that his uncle was coming home from the front on leave, and he was eagerly anticipating his visit to Greyfriars. Upon that he pinned his hope of a change in the state of the school.

For that the present state of affairs could not continue was certain. Some of the fellows were already proposing a barring-out. Others suggested seizing the sergeant in the quad and tarring and feathering him. Matters were bound to come to a head sooner or later.

It was less than a fortnight since that happy picnic on the island—where the Famous Five had fallen foul of Sir Hilton Popper. But what a change had taken place since then!

Greyfriars did not seem like the same school.

But the furious war-councils in the studies seemed to come to nothing. The sergeant still had his way.

Billy Bunter was the greatest sufferer. As a matter of fact, Bunter would have been all the better for his hard training if it had not been quite so hard. He was certainly growing thinner.

But the change was too sudden, and the driving was too

hard. Bunter looked as if he were on the verge of a collapse, and he had spent several days in the sanatorium.

For once his complaints found sympathy amongst his Form-fellows. He was the most awkward fellow in the awkward squad, and he blundered and stumbled helplessly through his evolutions, under the glibbing tongue of the sergeant, with an occasional lash of the cane.

Even the worm will turn, and Bunter turned at last. He locked himself up in No. 7 Study one afternoon, and refused to come out.

The sergeant missed him at once from the squad, and proceeded to the study, breathing wrath.

He hammered on the door.

"Bunter!"

"Go away," said Bunter faintly. "I'm not coming."

"Mutiny, by hokey! Open this door!"

"Sha'n't!"

Bang, bang, bang!

The sergeant was not to be trifled with. As Bunter did not open the door, the sergeant crashed his heavy boot on the lock, and burst it open. He strode into the study, and there was a yelp of terror from Bunter.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow! Help! Murder! Fire!" roared Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. crowded round the study doorway. Bunter's howls rang along the passage from end to end. Vernon-Smith bolted away to call Wingate. But Wingate had heard Bunter's yells, and he was hurrying on the scene. The Captain of Greyfriars pushed through the juniors and entered the study.

He grasped the sergeant's arm, without a word, and dragged him away from Bunter.

"Don't touch that boy again!" said Wingate, his voice trembling with anger.

"He's coming down to the drill!"

"He isn't in a condition to come. You can see that!"

"I don't see it!"

"Well, I do. Stay where you are, Bunter."

"Yes, Wingate," said the Owl of the Remove faintly.

"Give the word, Wingate, and we'll smash the bullying beast!" came Bob Cherry's voice from the passage.

Wingate frowned.

"Shut up, Cherry! Sergeant Sharp, you had better get out of this study."

The sergeant stared at him, his big hands clenching. Once more the juniors anticipated a scrap. But the sergeant held off.

"You dare to interfere with me in carrying out my duty!" snarled Sharp. "I'll have you expelled from the school."

Wingate shrugged his shoulders.

"You may be able to do that, but while I am here I shall do my duty, which is to protect the fags from brutality," he said.

The sergeant sneered bitterly.

"Your duty!" he said. "Your duty is at the front. If you had an ounce of pluck, you wouldn't be idling at home now. Perhaps you haven't heard of the war?"

Wingate flushed crimson.

"You know I am not old enough for the Army," he said.

"Seventeen! What!" sneered the sergeant. "There are fellows of seventeen in the trenches at this minute. They put down their ages as eighteen when they enlist. Lots of them. But you couldn't do that? You wouldn't! You prefer to skulk at home while others go out to fight. Pah!"

And, with a contemptuous snort, the sergeant strode out of the study.

He left Wingate reddening and paling by turns. The taunt had gone home. The captain of Greyfriars stood for some moments silent; then he turned and left the study without speaking. The juniors heard him go into his own study and close the door.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Straw!

"WINGATE!"

Mr. Quelch was taking the roll. The school were assembled in Big Hall to answer to their names. But the captain of Greyfriars was not in his usual place.

"Wingate!"

Mr. Quelch glanced towards the Sixth. Wingate was not there. But the head prefect of the school had privileges that were not shared by less important personages, and the Form-master made no comment.

But the fellows made comments enough as they crowded out of the hall. Where was Wingate?

Hazeldene had seen him leaving the gates an hour or so earlier. He had not come in. Gates were locked now. Wingate had been carrying a bag when he went out, according to Hazel, and he had handed to Gosling his key to the private gate. Why had he done that?

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NEXT
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ONE
PENNY.

It was Wingate's duty that night to see lights out for the Remove. But at bedtime there was no sign of him. He had not come in.

The Remove went to bed, and Courtney saw lights out. Courtney was looking very grave.

"Where the deuce can old Wingate be?" Bob Cherry said, when the prefect was gone.

"Hooked it!" said Skinner.

"Blessed if it doesn't look like it!" remarked Squiff. "Perhaps he's decided not to stand the sergeant any longer."

"All the worse for us now he's gone," groaned Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows that villain ought to be scragged somehow!"

"You'd better scrag him," sneered Snoop.

"I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of him one of these yere days," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I'll show him that he can't pull the ears of a free American citizen."

"Wingate was looking awfully solemn when he went out," said Hazeldene. "I saw him give Gosling his key. He can't be coming back."

Wingate's strange conduct was discussed for a long time before the juniors fell asleep. They did not need the rising-bell to call them up in the morning. They were down early, most of them, anxious for news of Wingate.

"Has Wingate come back, sir?" asked Wharton, as he met Mr. Quelch in the passage.

The Remove-master shook his head.

"He has not come back, Wharton."

"Has he left, sir?"

"At present the cause of his absence is unknown, Wharton."

Mr. Quelch said nothing more. The Famous Five went out into the Close. Sergeant Sharp was already down, and he was there, and the juniors caught the grin on his face. Evidently the departure of the one fellow he had feared pleased the Hun of Greyfriars.

"See the beast grinning!" muttered Bob Cherry. "He's jolly glad old Wingate's gone. But where has he gone, you chaps?"

"I think I can guess," said Wharton, in a low voice. "You heard what that brute said to him in Bunter's study yesterday? You saw how hard hit Wingate looked?"

"But I thought of that," said Nugent. "But—but he can't enlist. They won't take a kid of seventeen."

"There are chaps of seventeen who have enlisted," said Harry. "If they're big enough for their age, they can pass the recruiting-officer. Of course, they're not old enough to be of any use. If Kitchener wanted chaps of seventeen he would say so. But I can't help thinking that's what old Wingate has done."

"They won't take him in," said Johnny Bull.

"If they think he's eighteen they will. You can enlist at eighteen. I know Wingate is awfully keen to get into khaki, but he had to wait. Now he's gone to take his chance."

"It does look like it."

"It means trouble for him," said Bob. "It's running away from school, you know, and that's serious."

Wharton clenched his hands.

"All the fault of that grinning brute," he said. "This is the last straw, you fellows. Something's going to be done."

"There's a giddy review this afternoon," remarked Squiff. "Sir Hilton Popper is coming to inspect us again."

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"We'll give him something to inspect," he said. "You fellows are game? We're not standing it any longer."

"The gamefulness is terrific."

"For England, home, and beauty, and down with the Huns!" said Squiff. "We'll all back you up. So will the other fellows. We're all fed up, and you can bet the prefects won't interfere."

"The Head will," said Nugent.

"We'll keep it dark till the last moment," said Harry determinedly. "We can't back up against the Head. But we're not standing that bully any longer, and we'll show Sir Hilton Popper what we think of him and his Prussian dodges."

"Hear, hear!"

There was keen excitement at Greyfriars that day.

The Head was observed to be looking troubled, and all the masters were very grave. During the morning a letter arrived for the Head, and it leaked out that it was from Wingate. Soon after morning lessons all the school knew that Wingate had written that he was not coming back, and that he had not gone home, though he had not said where he had gone.

But Harry Wharton & Co., at least, knew where he had gone—at least, they felt pretty certain that they knew.

It was, as Wharton had said, the last straw.

Wingate had gone. There was no one to stand between the juniors and the Hun of Greyfriars. The sergeant had already shown how he rejoiced in his new freedom. Hi

craven heart had quailed before the captain of Greyfriars, but now there was no one for him to fear. Jack Wingate had already received a severe thrashing as a foretaste of what was to come.

But the hour was at hand, as Bob Cherry put it dramatically.

It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and Sir Hilton Popper was coming. The new governor of Greyfriars was to see the great results that had been wrought up to date by the system of Prussianising.

The heroes of the Remove had determined that he should see something that would surprise him. He would see the results, but not exactly the results he expected to see.

The word was passed round among the fellows—those who could be depended upon. Nearly all the Remove were in the secret, and even Tubb and the lads of the Third. Coker of the Fifth—a very subdued Coker in these days—was told of the great plot, and he entered into it heartily. And the big fists of Horace Coker were certain to be useful in helping to handle the sergeant.

The Famous Five made their preparations quietly.

A bucket of tar was obtained, and a large bag of feathers, and placed in readiness—for the review and what was to happen.

After dinner the fellows turned out, and they formed up under the bullying voice of the sergeant. The review was to begin when Sir Hilton Popper arrived, and the juniors waited eagerly to hear the buzz of his car.

The baronet arrived at last.

His big car glided in at the school gates. Dr. Locke had apparently declined the honour of joining in the inspection, for the governor came out alone.

The sergeant saluted him very respectfully—or, rather, obsequiously. The Greyfriars ranks were silent and grim.

"Huh!" said Sir Hilton. "A great improvement—a very great improvement since I was last here. That is better than wasting time at cricket and picnics."

"Rats!" came a voice from a rear rank.

There was a laugh.

Sir Hilton turned purple.

"What—what!" he ejaculated. "Who spoke?"

"Bow-wow!"

"Sergeant Sharp, is this your discipline?" rapped out the baronet angrily. "Is this the kind of order you keep?"

The sergeant was speechless. At the very moment when he fancied that he had reduced the whole school under the iron hand, and brought them into the slavish condition of German recruits, his authority seemed to be gone—gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream.

There was evidently insubordination in the ranks. There could be no mistake about that.

"Silence!" thundered the sergeant at last.

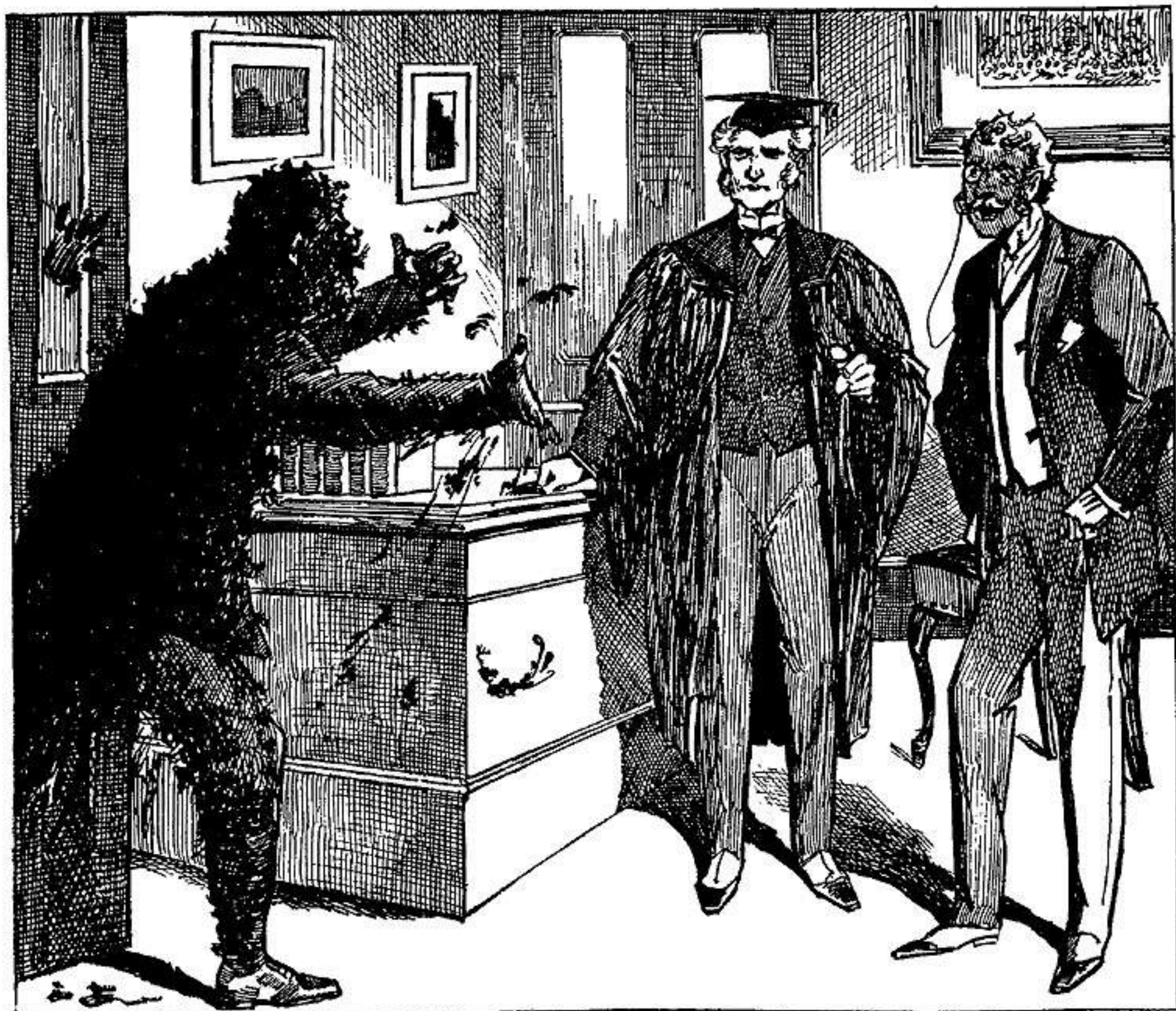
"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

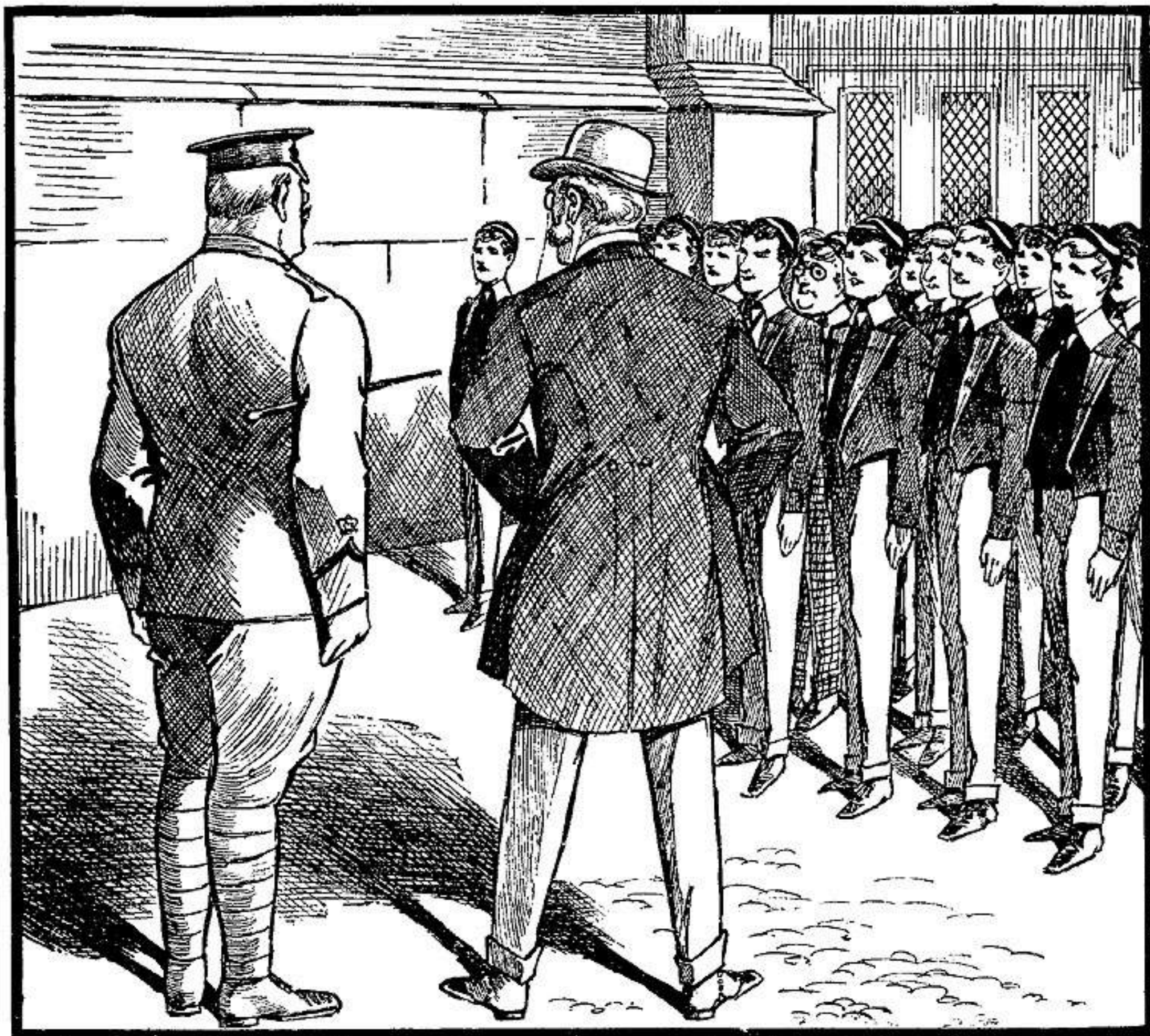
Readers are recommended to detach the 4-page Supplement inserted in the centre of this issue. They will then find that the School Tale runs on from page 22 to 23.

When you have detached "The Greyfriars Herald," fold your copy over once, and slit with a knife the top fold.

THE EDITOR.



A wild and weird figure rushed into the Head's study. He was unrecognisable, owing to the tar and feathers, but it was the sergeant. "They're after me!" he yelled. (See Chapter 18.)



"Huh!" said Sir Hilton. "This is better than wasting time at cricket and picnics." "Rats!" came a voice from a rear rank. "What—what?" ejaculated the baronet angrily. "Sergeant Sharp, is this your discipline?"
(See Chapter 17.)

"Go home!"

"Go back to Deutschland!"

"Prussian pig!"

It was a roar from the whole crowd. Sir Hilton gasped for breath. This was certainly not what he had expected.

Sergeant Sharp, crimson with rage, made a dash at Wharton, whose voice was the first and the loudest. He had time for just one cut with his cane, then the whole Remove were upon him like one man.

"Go for him!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"Down with the Hun!"

"Scrag him!"

"Hurrah!"

Sir Hilton Popper stood transfixed. His eyeglass dropped from his eye, and his mouth was open like that of a newly-landed fish. He had come to see the result of the Prussianising of Greyfriars.

He was seeing it!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Tar and Feathers!

"DOWN the cad!"

"Sit on his head, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Squash him!"

The sergeant was struggling desperately in the grasp of
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the juniors. His bricky face was savage at first, but the look was now of fear, for he had realised that the Greyfriars fellows were in desperate earnest, and that he was to pay at last for long bullying and tyranny.

Billy Bunter was generally last in a fray, but he was one of the first now. He was very anxious to sit on the sergeant. During the past fortnight he had thinned down a little, but his weight was still formidable. He sat on Mr. Sharp's head, and Mr. Sharp's prominent nose and square chin were ground into the earth. A muffled and suffocating gasp escaped the sergeant.

Held on all sides by strong hands, he was powerless. He struggled feebly in the vengeful grasp.

"Mutiny!" he stuttered. "Let go! Help! I'll thrash you! I'll flog you! Mutiny in the ranks, by hokey! Let me go!"

"Hold the cad tight!" said Harry Wharton. "Get the tar, Bob!"

"You bet!"

"Here are the feathers!" yelled Temple of the Fourth. "Buck up with the tar, Bob Cherry!"

"By gad!" gasped Sir Hilton Popper. "By gad! Am I dreaming? Huh!"

Tars and feathers were immediately upon the spot. Harry Wharton took the tar-bucket in his hands.

"Stand clear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors, giving the sergeant a last bump on the ground, wowed back. Billy Bunter scrambled off him just in time.

"Go it!" shrieked Coker of the Fifth.

Swoosh!

The tar descended like a torrent upon the sprawling sergeant.

It swamped him.

He sat up, snorting and gasping, and the tar ran down his cheeks and his neck in sticky streams. His hair was thickly matted with it. It covered his face like a mask. It clogged round his neck, and it smothered his clothes. He was half suffocated and blinded. He gasped inarticulately in the midst of the clinging, sticking, smelly tar.

The juniors almost danced round him with glee. It was the hour of triumph and retribution at last.

"Give him the feathers!" yelled Hobson.

"Go it, Temple!"

"Hurrah!"

Temple was ready with the feathers. As the sergeant sat up, clawing blindly at the tar, the bag was opened, and the feathers descended upon him in a shower. They stuck to the tar, and covered him like a blanket.

The sergeant staggered to his feet. Inarticulate gasps and grunts came from amid the tar and feathers. He looked oddly like some huge, shapeless bird.

"Groooh! Groooh! Groooh! Gug, gug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow, ow! By hokey! Grooooh!"

"Oh, dear!" gasped Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "Oh, my only Aunt Selina! There's a picture for you!"

"The picturefulness is terrific," sobbed Hurree Singh, wiping away his tears. "The esteemed sergeant is a joyful spectacle."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sir Hilton Popper strode forward. He seemed to wake, as it were, to what was going on. He had been stunned by the outbreak—his breath taken away. Now he came to himself, and came forward brandishing his cane.

"You young rascals!" he roared. "How dare you! You shall be expelled for this! I'll put it before the governors, by gad!"

"Bow wow!"

"Go home!"

"Rats!"

"What! What!" stuttered Sir Hilton. "You—you dare

—"

"Shut up!"

"Clear off!"

"Give him the same!" yelled Coker of the Fifth. "Got any more tar?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get some more tar and give him the same!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"You—you—you—" stuttered Sir Hilton. "Can I believe my eyes! I am a governor of the school! Are you mad? A governor—"

"Collar the old duffer!" shouted Johnny Bull.

The fellows were reckless now and ripe for anything. They were ready to serve the baronet as they had served the sergeant. Even expulsion had lost its terrors; for if the rule of Sir Hilton and Sergeant Sharp was to continue, Greyfriars would only be a good place to get out of.

There was a sudden rush of excited juniors at the baronet.

Sir Hilton's cane was torn away—his silk hat was knocked off, and it was immediately seized and used as a football by the fags.

Collared and tarred the baronet would indubitably have been had he not realised that prudence was the better part of valour, and taken to his heels.

With his eyeglass streaming at the end of its ribbon, and his scanty locks almost standing up on his head, Sir Hilton Popper streaked for the School House.

The sight of the baronet running was more than enough to excite the juniors to the highest pitch. The instincts of the chase were aroused.

"After him!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Collar the silly old ass!" shrieked Coker.

"Oh, chase me!" gasped Nugent. "Come on! Don't let him get to earth."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving the tarry and feathery sergeant moaning and mumbling alone, the whole crowd burst into wild chase after the baronet.

Sir Hilton heard them close behind, whooping, and he put on a desperate spurt. If he had been a Hun with a British bayonet behind him he could not have put on a more terrific speed.

"Put it on!" yelled Johnny Bull. "Collar him, Coker!"

Coker was ahead, as the baronet reached the steps of the

School House. He made a wild grasp at Sir Hilton, and grabbed his collar. The collar tore out as Sir Hilton plunged into the house.

Horace Coker was left with the torn collar in his hand. He stood on the steps and waved it in triumph. There was a roar of laughter.

Sir Hilton Popper had not paused. He was bolting for the Head's study—the only safe place for him. But was it safe? For the blood of all Greyfriars was up.

"He's taking cover!" yelled Hobson of the Shell. "After him! Rout him out! Who's game?"

There was a yell. Everybody was game. After the fleeing baronet the crowd went pouring and roaring down the passage.

Breathless, panting, perspiring, Sir Hilton Popper reached the Head's study. The door was open—Dr. Locke was there. The baronet reeled past him into the room.

"In Heaven's name—" began Dr. Locke, utterly aghast.

"Stop them!" Sir Hilton reeled against the mantelpiece, and clung to it, his breath coming and going in great throbs.

"Stop them, for mercy's sake! Oh! Ah! Oh! Ow!"

"But what—what—"

"Mutiny—the whole school! Help! Stop them!"

With a roar the mutineers came surging down the passage to the study doorway. But there was a sudden pause as the dignified figure of the Head stepped out before them. Dr. Locke raised his hand.

"Stop!"

The pursuit stopped.

"Disperse at once!"

A pause, and then somebody suggested a cheer for the Head. The suggestion was taken up at once, and the excited crowd gave the Head a ringing cheer, and retreated.

They streamed out into the quad, breathless, excited, joyous, and reckless. Never had such a pitch of excitement reigned in the old school; never had such a scene been witnessed by the ancient walls of Greyfriars.

"Where's the sergeant? Give him a ducking!" howled Coker. Coker was not satisfied yet.

There was a rush to find the sergeant. But the sergeant had vanished. He was lying very low. In their present mood, he did not want to see the Greyfriars fellows at close quarters again.

"Well," gasped Bob Cherry, mopping his brow—"well, this is a go! Gentlemen, this time we have been and gone and done it!"

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh averred that the been and gone and donefulness was terrific; and the other fellows agreed with him. It was terrific!

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Out of Hand!

"CRICKET!"

"Bravo!"

It was Harry Wharton who made the suggestion.

The school was out of hand—quite out of hand. In the Head's study Sir Hilton Popper was gasping for breath, and pouring out his wrath and indignation at the same time. The Head was at his wits' end.

The suggestion of cricket was hailed with enthusiasm. Drills were over, the Prussianising of Greyfriars had ended—for the present, at least. The Remove and the Fourth changed into flannels, and crowded down to the cricket-ground.

They were keen to play cricket again, and still more keen to show the sergeant and the baronet that the reign of terror was over.

Cricket, under the very nose of Sir Hilton Popper, was the very idea. The juniors knew that from the window of the Head's study the baronet would see them. He might chip in, and they hoped he would. The bats were likely to swipe at something other than the leather if Sir Hilton Popper ventured upon Little Side that afternoon.

The merry click of bat and ball, the shouts of the onlookers, soon rang from the cricket-field.

A big crowd gathered round to see the match between the Remove and the Fourth. On Big Side the Fifth were playing the Shell. Loud were the shouts—loud the cheers, specially designed to reach the infuriated ears of the new governor.

Coker was not playing or looking on, however. Coker's valuable services were not required in the Fifth Form eleven; and, besides, Coker had other business on hand. With Potter and Greene and Fitzgerald, and a few other choice spirits, Coker was searching for the sergeant.

Sergeant Sharp was lying low; but Coker was determined to find him. He had not finished with the Hun of Greyfriars yet.

"By gad!" Sir Hilton Popper simply gasped, as he looked from the Head's window, and noted the white-clad figures

on the distant cricket-pitch. "Py-gad! They're playing—playing cricket!"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"A pretty state of affairs!" snorted the baronet. "A governor of the school attacked and chased by the boys of Greyfriars! Unheard of!"

"Certainly unheard of before to-day!" said the Head drily.

"A pretty state of discipline, sir!"

"There was nothing lacking in the school's discipline before the new regime was started," said Dr. Locke. "It was inaugurated against my judgment. I protested at the meeting of the governors; but I loyally did my best to carry out their wishes. I take no responsibility for the outcome."

"It is disgraceful!"

"It is not a proud moment, certainly," said the Head. "But I cannot wholly blame the boys. They have been driven too hard. You are aware—I am informed—that the captain of the school has run away—"

"A pretty state of affairs!"

"I have only too much reason to believe that he was driven to it by the taunts of the sergeant, who twitted him with not being in khaki, though knowing well that he is under age. What has become of Wingate I do not know. If anything should happen to him, there will be a heavy responsibility for someone."

There was a tramp of hurried feet in the passage, and the door burst open. A wild and weird figure rushed in.

It was that of a man smothered from head to foot with tar and feathers. He was unrecognisable, but it was the sergeant.

"They're after me!" he yelled.

"Here he is!" roared Coker's voice in the passage.

The pursuers arrived in the doorway.

"Coker!" said the Head sternly.

"We're after that bullying brute, sir," said Coker warmly. "He's skulked in here, the rotten funk!"

Sergeant Sharp dodged behind the Head's desk, gasping with terror. He left traces of tar and fragments of feathers wherever he moved.

"Coker!" thundered Sir Hilton Popper. "How dare you!"

Coker sniffed.

"Oh, come off!" he said disrespectfully.

"What!"

"Shut up!" said Coker. "We're fed-up with you. If it wasn't for the Head, we'd treat you the same!"

"What! What! You know that I am a governor of the school."

"All the worse for the school," said Coker. "We don't take any notice of you, Sir Hilton Popper. You are a silly old duffer!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"But we're going to have that bully, and kick him out of the gates of Greyfriars," said Coker.

"Coker, retire at once," said the Head.

Sir Hilton trembled with rage.

"Dr. Locke, I demand the expulsion of that boy Coker from the school—at once."

Coker laughed jeeringly.

"Oh, cheese it!" he said.

"And the expulsion of all the other ringleaders," roared Sir Hilton, "to take effect this very afternoon!"

"Bow-wow!" said Coker.

"Faith, if Coker goes, we all go," said Fitzgerald, "we're all agreed on that—if one goes, all Greyfriars goes. Not a single fellow will stay in the school, and we'll chance it with our people."

"That's the programme," said Coker. "Dr. Locke can expel me if he chooses. Every fellow in the Fifth Form will walk out of Greyfriars with me. We've agreed on that."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"By gad!" said Sir Hilton, fuming. "It is a conspiracy, by gad. But the ringleaders shall be punished."

"Coker, and all of you, retire from my study at once," said the Head.

"Yes, sir," said Coker. "We always obey you, sir; you know that what's happened to-day doesn't mean any disrespect to you, sir."

"Hear, hear!" said Fitzgerald.

"Come on, you fellows," said Coker, "we'll catch that scoundrel somewhere else another time, when he isn't skulking behind the Head, the cowardly Hun!"

Coker and Co. marched out of the study.

Sergeant Sharp limped out, panting, from behind the desk. Dr. Locke looked at the miserable object with a curling lip.

"You had better go and clean yourself, my man," he snapped. "You are not in a fit state to be in any decent room."

"Oh, by hokey!" groaned the sergeant. "The young scoundrels—"

"Silence, sir!"

"Go and get yourself cleaned, sergeant," said Sir Hilton. "You may be sure that the authors of this outrage will be severely punished, and that you will be restored to full authority."

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ONE
PENNY.

"They're waiting for me outside," said the sergeant, mumbling.

"I will come with you and protect you," said the Head contemptuously.

Coker and Co. were waiting at the end of the passage. There was a whoop as the tarry and feathery sergeant was seen; but it died away at the sight of the Head. The disappointed raggers marched off, and the Head conducted the sergeant to a bath-room, where he locked himself in and proceeded to clean—a long and difficult task, for the work of the avengers had been done thoroughly.

Dr. Locke returned very thoughtfully to his study. He found Sir Hilton Popper striding to and fro, fuming.

The baronet fixed his eyes upon the Head.

"What is to be done, sir?" he rapped out. "This state of affairs cannot, I presume, be allowed to continue?"

"I should recommend withdrawing the sergeant from the school, and restoring the old order of things," said Dr. Locke.

"Never!"

"Then I cannot answer for the results."

"You are headmaster, sir; it is your duty to keep the school in a state of proper discipline!"

"I do not require anyone to teach me my duty!" said the Head tartly. "With interference from outside, no headmaster could keep a school in a proper state of discipline. I am willing to retire from my position, if that is the wish of the governors."

Sir Hilton fumed.

"Then what is to be done, sir?"

"That is for the Board to decide," said the Head drily.

"You are welcome to call the governors together as soon as you please. They will promulgate their decision. Until then, the sergeant may remain here, but he will have no authority over the boys. So long as I am headmaster of Greyfriars I will not allow it."

"Dr. Locke!"

"I have watched the new order of things, sir, with uneasiness and disapproval," said Dr. Locke. "I do not approve of German methods, of German training, of anything German, in short. I regard the Germans as a lower race than ourselves, from whom we have little or nothing to learn. Above all, I regard with abhorrence the system of training which has produced a nation of vainglorious and treacherous self-seekers, spies, and poisoners, sir. Until the governors choose to dismiss me from my post, I shall see that nothing of the sort is instituted in this school. I will not resign—I shall not willingly leave Greyfriars at the mercy of a faddist, sir!"

"A—a—a faddist!" stuttered Sir Hilton.

"I am speaking plainly, sir—the time has come for plain speech. I regard you as a faddist—and your admiration of German methods as mistaken and foolish."

"Sir!"

"That is all that has to be said. Call the governors together, and propose to them my dismissal," said the Head.

"Until then, I am in authority here, and I will not allow the new regime to continue. Upon that point I am determined."

Sir Hilton seemed about to choke.

"You will not remain headmaster long, sir," he stuttered at last. "I shall see to that, by gad! I wish you a very good-afternoon, sir!"

Sir Hilton stamped out of the study. A few minutes later his car bore him away from Greyfriars—followed by a yell of contempt and derision from the crowd in the Close.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

"Private Wingate."

EXACTLY what would follow that extraordinary outbreak the Greyfriars fellows did not know—and while the excitement lasted, they did not care much.

But when the excitement died away they asked themselves the question very seriously.

That the sergeant should never give them an order again they were resolved. That his first attempt at a resumption of authority should be followed by his forcible ejection from the school they were agreed.

But what was to come of it?

Flogging, if floggings were ordered, they had made up their minds to endure, rather than rebel against the authority of the Head. But if a single fellow was expelled from the school, the whole school had resolved to march out with him. Even slackers like Skinner and Snoop and Fish agreed to that. They had not much choice about agreeing—for any fellow who had wished to stay behind would have had to accompany the main body—in a frog's march.

Greyfriars had its back up at last.

But there were no expulsions. The outbreak was not even referred to by the Head. The next day classes went on as usual; and the fellows were on their very best behaviour. They wanted to show the Head that the revolt had only been against the Prussianising of Greyfriars, and that he was regarded with as much respect as ever.

After lessons they were ready for the sergeant—if the sergeant had come forward. But he did not. He kept to his room—and it was understood that he was unwell. The fellows knew very well that this was simply an excuse for keeping out of sight, and they were willing to allow the sergeant to remain ill as long as he chose. When he attempted to resume the upper hand, they were ready for him.

Several days passed, and Greyfriars looked like its old self again. The drills were things of the past, the sergeant kept out of sight, and cricket reigned once more.

Nothing had been seen of Sir Hilton Popper. But it came out that a meeting of the governing board was fixed for the following week, and it was surmised that when the meeting took place there would be a contest between the Head and the new governor—between the old regime and the new.

The Greyfriars fellows waited grimly for the time to come. They knew that the Head, inwardly at least, was on their side, and they were willing to trust to him. But if the faddists had the upper hand, they were prepared to stand up for their rights as forcibly as before.

Meanwhile, nothing was heard of George Wingate.

His father had come down to Greyfriars, and had been shut up with the Head for some time, and had departed looking very grave and worried. Jack Wingate was looking woe-begone. The disappearance of his brother weighed on his mind.

Harry Wharton & Co. were convinced that their theory was correct, and that Wingate had gone to join the Colours. As nothing was heard of him, either at the school or at his home, it could only be surmised that he had succeeded in his object, and that he was now in khaki.

"Seems like old times, doesn't it?" Bob Cherry remarked on Wednesday afternoon. "Or it would if old Wingate was back. We're playing the Shell this afternoon. Shall we send the sergeant a special invitation to see the match?"

The juniors grinned at the idea.

But Harry Wharton was looking thoughtful.

"I'm thinking of cutting the cricket this afternoon, you chaps," he said. "Mark Linley can captain the side. I'm going over to Wapshot."

"What on earth for?" asked Nugent.

"There are ten thousand Kitchener's boys in training there," said Harry.

"Oh! You think——"

"It's the nearest camp," said Harry. "It's just the place old Wingate would make for if he was going to enlist. We might see him if he's there. I'd like to know that he's well, anyway."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"But if we spot him——"

"We can't give him away, of course. But we can tell young Jack that we've seen him, and he's all right. But we've got to spot him first."

"I'll come," said Bob.

"Same here."

"The samefulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh. "It would be an esteemed pleasure to see old Wingate again."

And, leaving the lesser lights of the Remove cricket club to deal with the Shell, the Famous Five mounted their bicycles that afternoon and pedalled away to Wapshot. It was a ride of nearly twenty miles, but that did not daunt the hardy Removites.

They arrived in Wapshot; but Wharton's idea of "spotting" Wingate, if he was there, was not exactly feasible. If the captain of Greyfriars was one of the innumerable figures in khaki, it was not easy to pick him out.

"N. G.!" was Bob Cherry's verdict.

And late in the afternoon Harry Wharton had to confess that it was "N. G.," as Bob expressed it, and they rode home.

As the warm and dusty bunch of cyclists came through a leafy lane, on the way to Friardale, there was a beat of a drum and a blare of wind instruments. Between the green hedges a long line of khaki appeared—recruits on a route march.

The Famous Five jumped down, and rested their machines against a stile to let the men in khaki go by.

They looked with keen interest at the dusty ranks. Men of forty, youths of twenty, fellows of all ages between, were in the ranks, marching to the soul-stirring sound of the drum. Fellows who had left shop and counter, field and farm, bank or office, to answer their country's call—throwing aside everything to strike a blow for the Empire in the hour of need. It was a stirring sight—the sight of freemen

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freely answering the call of duty, to struggle against and to overthrow the blackest despotism the world has ever seen; to face, not only the bullet and bayonet of honourable warfare, but the poison-gas of treacherous foes.

Bob Cherry uttered a sudden exclamation, and caught Wharton by the arm.

"Look!" he breathed

"My hat!"

"It's him!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, breathlessly and ungrammatically.

In the khaki ranks an athletic form came swinging by, with a boyish face under the khaki cap.

It was a face the juniors knew well.

The youth in khaki caught sight of them at the same moment, and he started and coloured.

Harry Wharton & Co. waved their hands, and the lad in khaki smiled and made a quick sign, and passed on.

The men in khaki marched on, Private Wingate with the rest, to the sound of the drum.

The long column wound away down the leafy lane with sloping rifles. The tread of feet died away in the distance, the drum sounded faintly from afar.

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Good old Wingate!" he said. "They're going back to Wapshot Camp; he's there, after all. Good old Wingate!"

"If a chap was only a few years older!" sighed Bob Cherry. "My hat, what wouldn't a chap give to be carrying a rifle now!"

"It won't do to mention this at Greyfriars, though," said Nugent. "That's what Wingate meant, when he signed to us. He doesn't want to be found at Wapshot. His pater would make him get his discharge."

"Not a word!" said Wharton.

The juniors rode back to the school in a thoughtful mood. Wingate was in the ranks; he was one of Kitchener's boys now.

When would Greyfriars see him again—if ever?

Jack Wingate met them as they came in, with a clouded face. Bob Cherry clapped the Third-Former on the shoulder.

"It's all serene, kid!" he said.

Wingate minor caught his breath.

"You've seen him?"

"Yes."

"You can keep a secret?" said Harry Wharton. "Mind, it wouldn't be fair on your major to say a word about it. He's fit—as fit as a fiddle, and looks as happy as a king. And he's in khaki."

Jack Wingate nodded. His eyes were bright.

"I'm proud of him," he said. "And I sha'n't say anything, of course. I—I only wanted to know what had become of him. And—and he's a soldier now?"

"One of Kitchener's boys!" said Bob Cherry. "Lucky bargee! Some fellows have all the luck!"

Excepting to their own special chums, not a word was said of that meeting with the new recruit. But the juniors thought often of their old captain—marching, rifle-shooting, and forming fours over at Wapshot Camp—and in their hearts they envied Private Wingate.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Fishy Says "Yep"!

"NOW for the giddy tug-of-war!" Bob Cherry remarked, a few days later.

There was subdued but almost breathless excitement at Greyfriars that day.

The governors had met.

Sir Hilton Popper had arrived, amid black looks from the Greyfriars fellows. The Board were deep in discussion. Sergeant Sharp had been called in before them, and the juniors had noted that the sergeant had gone in with a jaunty step. After his eclipse, so to speak, the Hun of Greyfriars evidently expected his star to be in the ascendant again.

The order had gone forth for the whole school to assemble at four o'clock. Naturally, the fellows were excited.

It was, as Bob Cherry said, the tug-of-war at last.

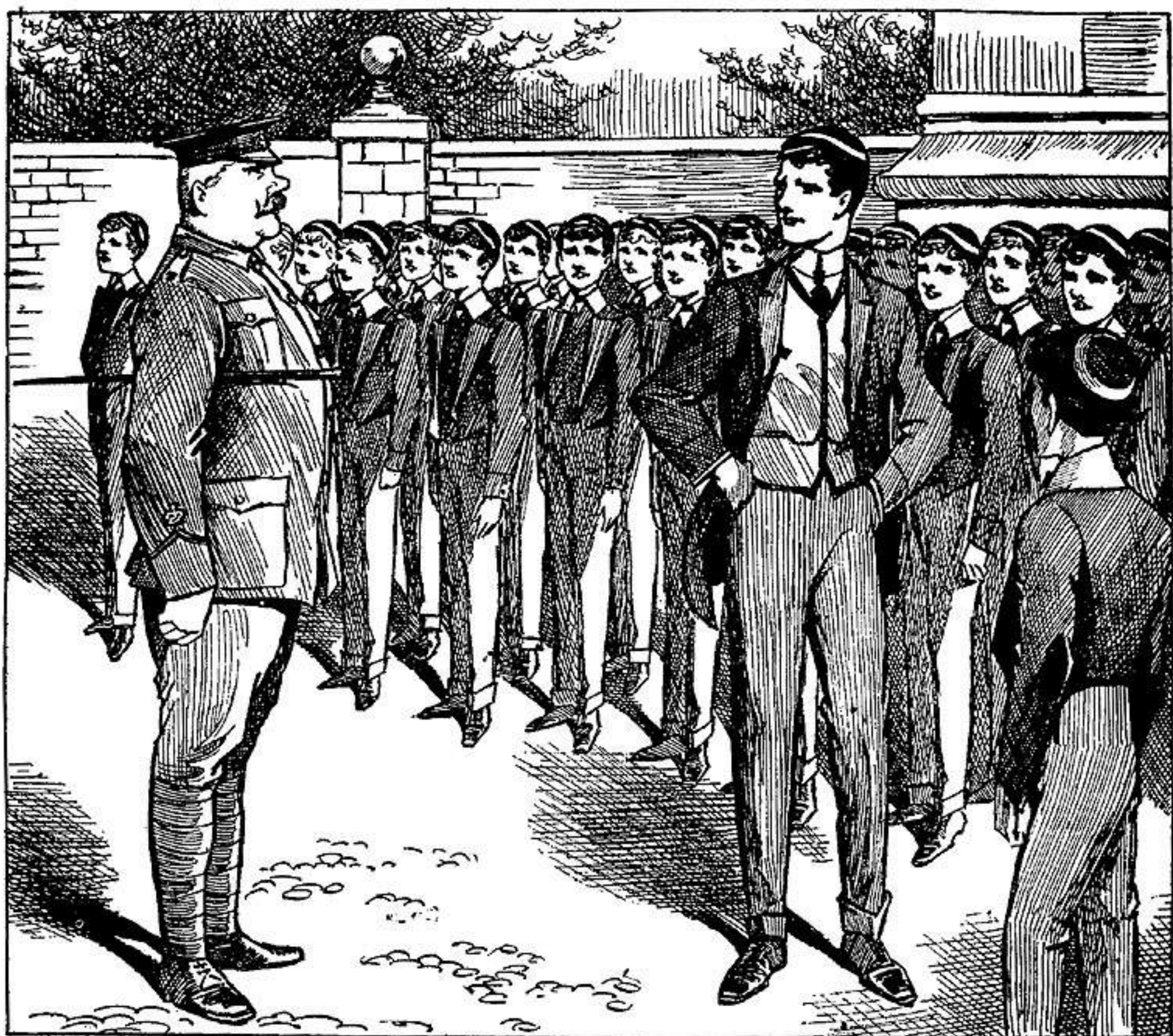
If the governors over-ruled the Head, the sergeant was to be reinstated with full powers; and then the struggle would come.

"We're not giving in!" said Johnny Bull. "They can decide what they like, but we're not giving an inch."

"Not an esteemed fraction of an inch," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, nodding his dusky head. "We will show them the stuff-fulness we are made of!"

Wharton compressed his lips.

"If my uncle could be here, it would make a difference," he said. "He has a lot of influence with the governors. Now, old Popper is leading them by the nose—the fat-headed



Wingate minor left the ranks. Sergeant Sharp started forward. "Fall in, there!" he shouted. "Go in, Jack—into the house," said the captain of Greyfriars. Jack Wingate gave a nervous glance at the sergeant, but he obeyed his brother. (See Chapter 15.)

faddist! And four of the governors are away at the war—just when they're wanted at home, as it happens. If they could be here, they'd turn the scale against the faddists."

"But they can't," said Squiff. "And we've got to turn the scale ourselves."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Have you been tying up your boot-lace outside the governors' room, Tubby?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—As a matter of fact, I've just heard something, by sheer chance, of course—"

"The chancefulness is terrific!"

"You see, the window's open, and I happened to pass it, and happened to stop just under it to—admire the landscape," explained Billy Bunter. "I—I'm gone on scenery, you know. Old Popper was talking in a loud voice—in fact, shouting—"

"And you couldn't help hearing, of course," said Bob Cherry. "What a lot of things you can't help hearing, Bunter. You ought to be a German!"

"They're going it hammer and tongs," said Bunter, unheeding. "Never heard such an awful lot of jaw. There's seven of the old Johnnies, you know, and they're all excited. There are three against the old chump, but he's going to have his way. One old Johnny wants the matter left over till the other governors can have a voice in it—Colonel Wharton and the rest. He says they're all coming home on leave shortly."

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Next Monday's Number of The "MAGNET" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a Splendid Long, Complete Story, entitled:

"Good egg!"

"But old Popper is a regular Hun—he won't listen to anything. You should hear how he's running us down!" said Bunter. "Says the whole school is slack—"

"Bow-wow!"

"And that what's needed is iron discipline—something to buck up Greyfriars and make men of us. Then the Head said—"

"And you were admiring the scenery all that time?" asked Bob.

"Ye-es, of course. I suppose you know I wouldn't listen—I should scorn anything of the sort—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. I—"

"Oh, go and admire the scenery," said Bob, with a snort. "Don't tell me what you've got by eavesdropping, you fat boulder!"

"But I say, you fellows, Coker's going to be sacked—"

"Rats!"

"And Wharton, too—"

"What!"

"They're the ringleaders, old Popper says, and he insists upon it," said Bunter triumphantly. "I'm really sorry for you, Wharton—"

"You can keep your sorrow," said Harry curtly. "Whatever happens to me, the whole Remove will stand by me."

"You bet!" said Bob Cherry emphatically.

"The standbyfulness will be terrific," said Hurree Singh;

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!" By Frank Richards.

"The esteemed sackfulness will fall upon all of us together-fully."

"And I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, cheese it!"

Billy Bunter was full of news; evidently he had been admiring the scenery for quite a long time under the open window of the governors' room. But the Famous Five did not want to hear it. Bunter rolled away to impart his information to more willing ears.

The Remove were soon buzzing with excitement. The captain of the Form was to be expelled, but the Form did not mean to desert him. The arrangements for that eventuality had long been made.

"We all go together," said Bolsover major. "It may be our turn next—any one of us. If we don't stand shoulder to shoulder, we're done for."

"I guess——" remarked Fisher T. Fish.

Bolsover major glared at him.

"Well, what do you guess?" he demanded.

"I guess my popper in Noo York won't be pleased if I get into trouble yere," said Fisher T. Fish. "I kinder reckon I sha'n't vamoose the ranch. I ain't interfering with you galoots, but I'm not taking any."

"We're all going to chance it with our people," said Mark Linley quietly. "We're bound to stand by Wharton. I shall lose more than you, Fish, as my scholarship may be taken away."

"And mine," said Penfold. "I'm chancing that."

"I guess I'm not chancing anything," said Fisher T. Fish. "It ain't business. I reckon I don't believe in running my cabeza against a stone wall—not by long chalks."

"You'll run it against something just as hard," said Bolsover major. "I tell you the Remove are all sticking together. Even Bunter is backing up. You're standing by the rest of us, Fishy."

"Nope."

"Then I'll argue with you," said Bolsover major.

"I guess you can argue till you're black in the face, but I ain't biting off more than I can chew," said Fish obstinately. "'Tain't business. Yaroooh! Wharrer you at, you galoot!"

"Arguing with you," said Bolsover major, as he grasped the Yankee junior. "I'm not going to argue till I'm black in the face. I'm going to argue till you're black in the face, my pippin!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo! What's the thumping row?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, arriving on the scene. Fisher T. Fish's head was in chancery, and Bolsover major was pommelling away as if he took Fishy's face for a punching-ball.

"Fishy says he isn't going to back up the Form," gasped Bolsover. "I'm arguing with him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroop! Oh, Jerusalem crickets! Help!"

Fisher T. Fish struggled wildly in the grasp of Bolsover. But there was no help for him. The Removites looked on and roared with laughter. Fisher T. Fish roared, too, though not with laughter. He did not feel like laughing.

"Are you backing up the Form, Fishy?" asked Bolsover.

"Yow! Nope! Yah! Oh! I mean yep!" wailed Fisher T. Fish. "Leggo, you mugwump! I calculate I'll make shavings of you. Yaroooooh! Yep! Yep! Yep!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Honour bright?" demanded Bolsover major.

"Yep! Sure! Yaroooooh!"

Bolsover major released the hapless Fish, who staggered against the wall, mopping his long, thin nose with his handkerchief. His nose was streaming. Bolsover major was a heavy-handed youth.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" mumbled Fish. "Yow-ow-ow! I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of you! Yooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Courtney of the Sixth came along the passage.

"Into the hall with you," he said. "It's time. The governors are there already. Get a move on!"

"This way to the merry meeting!" sang out Bob Cherry; and the Removites trooped off to Big Hall.

Fisher T. Fish mopped his unfortunate nose as he went. He had made up his mind by this time to back up the rest of the Remove. Bolsover major's arguments were unanswerable. Fisher T. Fish was not generally a very reliable young gentleman; but this time he had said yep and he meant yep.

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OUR COMPANION THE BOYS' FRIEND, Every Monday.

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THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

Shoulder to Shoulder!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. took their places in Big Hall. The great room was crowded. A buzz of subdued voices ascended to the vaulted roof and the old stained windows. It was such an occasion as had never been known before in the history of Greyfriars, and down to the youngest fag all felt the seriousness of the moment.

For the authority of the governors was absolute. Against their decision the fellows had no redress save to ask their people to withdraw them from the school. For that step, even if feasible, there was no time. Greyfriars had to act itself, and the school was ready to act. That the new departure would lead to the ruin and breaking-up of the old school seemed only too probable—unless it was stopped in time. For the Prussianising tendencies of Sir Hilton Popper and his fellow-faddists were not likely to be approved of by the "paters" concerned. If it went on Greyfriars was likely to become a school without pupils, or, at least, to change its character entirely—and for the worse.

On the dais at the upper end of the hall the governors were seen. They were all looking very grave. They were not all there. The dissentients were staying away. But Sir Hilton Popper and his backers were there in all their glory. And the Head was there—looking older and more worn than the fellows had ever seen him looking before.

The traces of the mental struggle he had gone through were only too evident in Dr. Locke's face. He had been faced with the alternative of carrying out the wishes of the majority of the governing board, or of resigning his position. Doubtless he had considered it his duty not to abandon the old school at this crisis in its history—for he was still there. Probably he nourished a hope of reversing the present state of affairs, when a full meeting of the governing board was possible.

There were grim faces on all sides—seniors and juniors were at one. Whether the Sixth would join in so disrespectful a proceeding as a revolt was a dubious question. But revolt was in the minds of all the Lower School—and the Fifth were solid behind Coker. Coker of the Fifth might be several sorts of an ass, but his Form were standing by him now. The whisper had gone forth that Horace Coker was to be "sacked," and the Fifth did not mean to desert him.

The Head's voice was low when he began to speak—low and agitated, and his words could only be heard by those near him. Courtney and Loder called for silence.

The buzz in the hall died away. Then the voice of the Head came more clearly:

"Coker of the Fifth Form, and Wharton of the Lower Fourth, will stand out."

Coker of the Fifth Form grunted, and strode out at once. There was no sign of trepidation in his rugged face.

"Buck up, old chap!" whispered Bob Cherry, as Wharton moved forward. "We're all in the game, you know."

Wharton nodded and smiled faintly, and followed Coker up the hall. They stopped before the dais.

The school hung on the next words of the Head.

"Coker and Wharton, you have been adjudged the ring-leaders in the late outbreak."

"Yes, sir," said Coker promptly. "I don't know about that kid, but I was a leader. The fellows expect me to lead."

There was a faint chuckle in the hall. Coker had succeeded in breaking down the gravity of the school for a moment.

"The Board of Governors have reached a decision in your case. You have the choice of apologising to Sergeant Sharp for the attack upon him, and of promising amendment in the future, or of leaving Greyfriars!"

"Or of being expelled from the school!" snapped Sir Hilton Popper, to make the Head's meaning quite clear.

Sergeant Sharp, who was standing close at hand, squared his shoulders and grinned. He fully expected the apology and the promise of amendment.

"You hear me, Coker and Wharton?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"Certainly," said Coker.

"Very well. You will express your regret to the sergeant——"

"Nothing of the kind, sir," said Coker. "I don't feel any regret. If the sergeant comes any of his Prussian bizney with me again, he'll get some more of the same, and warmer. That's all I've got to say, sir."

"That will do, Coker. And you, Wharton——"

"I cannot apologise to the sergeant, sir. I do not think I have done any wrong. I think the sergeant is a bully and a brute, and I do not believe he is half English as he pretends."

The sergeant bit his lip hard.
 "There was a pause."
 "You understand the consequences?" said the Head.
 "You will be required to leave Greyfriars to-day. Such is the decision of the governors."
 "I am ready, sir," said Harry.
 "The Fifth will all go with me, sir," said Coker.
 "Enough of this insolence, boy!" broke in Sir Hilton Popper. "You are expelled from the school. Go!"
 Coker did not move.
 "Do you hear me?" shouted Sir Hilton.
 Coker seemed deaf.
 "You may go, Coker," said the Head.
 "Yes, sir," said Coker.
 He walked back down the hall. Harry Wharton followed him.
 "Three cheers for Coker and Wharton!" shouted Bob Cherry.
 A thunderous roar burst forth. The old roof rang with it.
 "Silence!" shouted Sir Hilton Popper.
 "Bravo, Coker! Hurrah!"
 The cheers rang out again and again. Sir Hilton turned purple. Coker and Wharton walked on towards the door, and the school broke ranks and crowded after them.
 "Keep your places!" roared Sir Hilton Popper. "The school is not yet dismissed. Keep your places!"
 His voice was hardly heard in the din of shouting. Nobody heeded him. The school crowded out at the big doors, out into the sunshine of the Close. Only the Sixth remained in the hall.
 "Sacked!" said Bob Cherry, clapping Wharton on the shoulder. "Well, we're all sacked, too. Form up, Remove!"
 "Hurrah!"
 "I say, you fellows!"
 "Get into line, Bunter!"
 "Yes; but I say, hadn't we better take some sandwiches?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Kick him into line!"
 "Yaroooooh!"
 "I guess I— Leggo my year, Bolsover! I'm coming, ain't I?" yelled Fisher T. Fish.
 "I'll see that you do!" said Bolsover major grimly.
 The Remove formed up in the quadrangle as if on parade, and marched for the gates. Sir Hilton Popper strode out of the doorway, and hurried to intercept them. Even the obstinate and foolish baronet was alarmed by the result of this latest proceedings.
 "Stop!" he shouted.
 "Rats!"
 "Get aside!"
 "I order you back!" shouted Sir Hilton. "Do you understand that I am a governor?"
 "Shift him!" said Peter Todd.
 "By gad! Oh—ah—ugh!"
 The baronet was shoved roughly aside, and he staggered and fell. The Remove marched on, and left him sitting in the quadrangle. He gasped for breath, and blinked dazedly after the Removites as they disappeared through the old gateway.
 "By gad!" he gasped. "By gad!"
 Coker of the Fifth came forth with the rest of the Fifth. Not a fellow of them had remained behind. Some of them carried hastily-packed bags, and some had coats on their arms. All of them looked resolute. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, called to them almost hysterically.
 "My dear boys— Blundell, I appeal to you as head of the Form—"
 "Sorry, sir," said Blundell. "We stand by Coker! Coker's only done what we've all done. Good-bye, sir!"
 "But—but—but—" stammered Mr. Prout.
 The Fifth walked on, and disappeared out of the gates after the Remove. Mr. Prout was left almost tearing his hair. Mr. Quelch had not appeared; apparently the Remove master did not care to interfere.
 In Big Hall consternation reigned.
 The Sixth had gone out quietly. The governors remained, utterly at a loss, and at their wits' end.
 Sir Hilton came in, minus his hat, his tie torn out, his collar disarranged. He was covered with dust, and red with fury.
 "The school is in mutiny!" he roared. "Dr. Locke, this is your business! Do you know what has happened, sir?"
 "I have seen what has happened, and I feared it, sir," said the Head sternly, "and I wash my hands of all responsibility!"
 "What! What! By gad!"
 "The governors have taken the matter out of my hands. I leave it to them, sir, and to you. You appear to be bent
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upon the ruin of Greyfriars, and I have no power to check you. I wash my hands of it!"
 The Head rustled away, trembling with anger and indignation. Sir Hilton Popper, and his supporters were left to quell the storm they had raised—if they could.

THE TWENTY-THIRD CHAPTER.

Camping Out!

WHITHER now, O King?"
 Bob Cherry was in great spirits. The revolt of the Remove seemed serious enough to some of the fellows, but to the exuberant Bob it presented itself in the light of a tremendous lark.
 "Give your orders, mighty chief!" chirruped Peter Todd.
 Harry Wharton's face was grave.
 "We're out of Greyfriars," he said. "We're not going back, unless the old order is restored, and the sergeant dismissed!"
 "Hear, hear!"
 "We're not going home, either," went on Harry. "We don't want to spring this on our people, and we've got to stick together."
 "Bravo!"
 "The other Forms will follow us if the sergeant starts on them," said Vernon-Smith. "That's arranged."
 Wharton smiled slightly.
 "I don't think the sergeant will start on them," he said.
 "Even Sir Hilton Popper will have sense enough not to empty the school. We've shown him what to expect if he doesn't draw in his horns. We've got to consider what we're going to do, but it's settled that we don't give in."
 "Never!"
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Courtney!"
 Courtney of the Sixth came out of the gates. The juniors looked at him grimly; they were not prepared to take any notice of a prefect's orders just then. But Courtney had not come to give them orders.
 "I've a message from the governors," he said.
 "Go ahead!" said Wharton tersely.
 "I'm simply delivering the message, not advising you what to do," said the prefect. "The governors are willing to overlook this if you all go back at once."
 "Including Wharton?" asked Squiff.
 "No."
 "Gentlemen, you hear?" said Bob Cherry. "If we desert our leader, and act like rotten Huns, we can crawl back and be bullied by the sergeant. What offers?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "No takers!" grinned the Bounder.
 Courtney grinned, too.
 "Well, what's your answer?" he asked. "I'm not advising you. I'm to take your answer back to the governors, that's all."
 "Tell 'em to go and eat coke!" said Johnny Bull.
 "I guess it's a good offer. I guess— Yow-ow! Leggo my year!" wailed Fisher T. Fish.
 "Give him our answer, Wharton."
 "You leave it to me?" asked Wharton.
 "Yes, rather! Go ahead!"
 "Very well." Wharton turned to Courtney. "Here's our answer to the governors. If they withdraw the expulsion of Coker and myself, and dismiss Sergeant Sharp from the school, we will come back. Otherwise we will not."
 "Do you all say the same?"
 "Every man jack of us!" said Bob Cherry. And there was a roar of approval.
 Courtney nodded, and went back the way he had come. The effect of that answer upon Sir Hilton Popper and his fellow-governors the juniors could only surmise.
 "Let's see what Coker's going to do," said Bob Cherry.
 "We stand in with the Fifth, you know."
 Coker & Co. were consulting in the road. But the great Coker greeted the Removites with a frown as they came up. Coker had his virtues, but he was always Coker.
 "The best thing you fags can do is to go back," he said.
 "What!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.
 "I don't believe in cheek from fags," explained Coker, "and we can't be mixed up with a gang of cheeky kids from the Lower School. We've got the dignity of the Fifth to consider."
 "Well, you cheeky ass—"
 Coker raised his hand.
 "Sheer off!" he said.
 "Oh, bump him!"



"Hold on," said Harry Wharton. "No ragging now. Coker can go and eat coke! We don't want that fathead bungling things for us, anyway!"

The Remove marched on, leaving Coker unbumped.

The Fifth were left in somewhat warm discussion. They had backed up Coker, as in duty bound. But Coker seemed to assume from that that he was leader, and that the Fifth were bound to listen to him as to an oracle. He was discovering his mistake. The Removites looked back at the bend in the road, and grinned as they saw Coker and Blundell engaged in deadly combat. There was disunion among the Fifth already—and one or two of them could be seen going in quietly at the gates.

"The Fifth won't stick it out," remarked Bob Cherry. "They're fed-up with Coker already, and I'll bet you they'll knuckle under. The Remove won't!"

"No jolly fear!"

"The no-fearfulness is terrific! But what is going to be the next proceedfulness, my esteemed chums?" asked Hurree Singh.

"Camp-out!" said Wharton.

"Ripping idea!" said Bob Cherry. "The weather's topping!"

"I say, you fellows, it's tea-time——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I'm hungry!"

"We're not jolly well fitted for camping-out," said Bolsover major.

"We've got tin," said Wharton. "We can get what we want in the village. We can camp-out at the old barn."

"Till——" said Nugent.

"Till the governors give in," said Harry.

"Ahem!"

"Or till the other governors come home," said Wharton. "They're on leave now—and, anyway, my uncle may be down here any day now. But if we have to camp-out the whole summer, we're not giving in!"

"Hurrah!"

The decision having been come to, there was a general pooling of funds. Vernon-Smith was rolling in money, as usual, and several of the fellows were well provided. It was a case of every fellow standing what he had. And there was no grudging. As Bob Cherry put it in the words of the poet:

"Then none were for a party,
Then all were for the State;
Then the rich man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great!"

The arrangement was eminently satisfactory to Billy Bunter especially. Indeed, the Owl of the Remove showed much public spirit, to the extent of regretting that his celebrated postal-order had not arrived in time to be whacked out with the rest.

Uncle Clegg, in the village tuckshop, was astonished by the invasion of a horde of Removites, and still more astonished by the extensive purchases they made. Never had Uncle Clegg done so much business in an afternoon. The rebels of Greyfriars very nearly cleared out the little shop.

Laden with their purchases, the Removites marched to the old barn. It was a deserted and disused building, in a state of great dilapidation; but it was spacious, and afforded sufficient shelter for the fine weather.

In the keen excitement of arranging the camp and building a camp-fire and cooking their provisions, the Removites almost forgot the peculiar circumstances under which they had left Greyfriars. It was a holiday for them, and they dismissed considerations of the future.

But the holiday was a holiday within limits. When Skinner and Snoop started cigarettes after tea they were promptly seized and bumped, and their cigarettes taken away and tossed into the camp-fire.

"Look here! We're revolting, ain't we?" howled Skinner.

"Why shouldn't we do as we like?"

"We're going to be decent," said Wharton. "It's your rotten smoking that gave old Popper an excuse against us in the first place. You can clear off if you like; but in this camp we're going to do the decent thing, and giddy goats will be bumped on their necks."

"I say, you fellows, I think that's rot!" remarked Billy Bunter. "Now that we're on the loose, you know, I think—— Yow! Ow, ow! Toddy, you beast, leggo my ear! I'm not going to smoke, you rotter! Yow! Ow, ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sun set beyond the river, and darkness stole over the green fields and woods. The juniors half-expected a visit from someone in authority at Greyfriars, but no visit was paid. The camp overlooked the road, and by the fact that no cars had passed from the school, they knew that the governors

had not departed. Doubtless the dismayed Board was holding consultations as to what was to be done in the present unprecedented state of affairs.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes somebody!" exclaimed Bob Cherry at last.

But it was only Wingate minor of the Third. He came breathlessly into the camp.

"I've been looking for you chaps," he said. "I thought you like to know what was going on. Old Popper's simply raging. The sergeant's started on the Shell, and Hobby and the rest pitched him into the fountain, and left him there."

"Good old Hobby!" chorused the juniors.

"Some of the Fifth have gone in, but Coker and most of them have gone down to the Red Cow, and they're putting up there for the night," said Wingate minor. "The Head's shut up in his study. The masters are looking as serious as boiled owls. Nobody knows how it's going to end, but they say old Popper is demanding the expulsion of every fellow who's out of gates."

"Let him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Give him our love when you go back," said Bob Cherry, "and tell him where to find us, and that we'll give him a warm reception if he comes!"

Wingate minor grinned.

"I'm not going back," he said. "Old Popper started on me with his cane, because I checked him in the quad, and I bolted. You fellows will let me stay here?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Welcome as the giddy flowers in May!" said Nugent. "If Popper keeps on, there'll soon be more fellows here than there are in Greyfriars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jack Wingate stayed in the camp, and when bedtime came he rolled himself up contentedly in hay in the loft, and went to sleep. The barn was pretty well packed with sleepy juniors, and Harry Wharton & Co., as the hardiest, camped in the open air.

The stars came out in the summer sky, and shone down upon the schoolboy camp. They shone down upon a less peaceful scene at Greyfriars, where there was still turmoil and confusion, and even Sir Hilton Popper was beginning to feel that it would not do.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Pluck of Private Wingate.

POM, pom, pom!

The sun was rising over the fields and the woods, and the camp of the Removites was astir when the tattoo of the drum rang through the crisp air. Harry Wharton & Co. were already up, though a good many of the fellows were still sleeping, enjoying the respite from rising-bell.

Down the road came long lines of men in khaki on the march. It was an early-morning march of the recruits in training at Wapshot.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's old Wingate's lot!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Let's give 'em a yell."

The camp-fire and half-cooked breakfast were abandoned, and the juniors crowded down to the road. The stirring beat of the drum called out sleeper after sleeper, and even Billy Bunter rolled out, though perhaps it was rather the smell of cooking than the beat of the drum that called him forth.

Harry Wharton & Co. wondered whether Wingate was in the khaki ranks that were swinging by. There were a good many Greyfriars fellows there to recognise him if he was among the marching recruits.

Suddenly a sharp word of command rang out, and the men in khaki halted. An officer on horseback was looking back at the group of juniors at the barn behind them. Wharton looked round.

"My hat!" he exclaimed, in dismay.

A thick column of smoke was rising from the old barn.

"Fire!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Fire! By Jove! Get back! Quick!"

The juniors rushed back to the camp.

Doubtless the wind had carried sparks from the camp-fire, and they had caught the old hay and straw littered in the barn. The place was as dry as tinder from long days of burning sunshine. It had flared up, and before the juniors reached it flames were spouting out of the doorway and the broken windows. Thick smoke rose in a cloud against the clear, blue sky.

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "There goes our giddy camp! Lucky it was only a ruin, and wasn't worth much."

"Is anybody inside?" exclaimed Wharton anxiously. "Get together, you fellows, and I'll call the roll!"



The above picture depicts an amusing scene in "PONSONBY'S PLOT!" another grand, long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in next Monday's issue of The "Magnet" Library. Order now!

"I think everybody was out, even Bunter."
"There's no blessed water near, either," said Johnny Bull.
"There can't be anybody inside—"
"Call the roll—quick!"
"Here come the giddy soldiers!" said Bob Cherry. "They can't do anything. It will have to burn out."
A young lieutenant and a number of men in khaki were hurrying across the field towards the fire. Wharton was hastily calling the roll of the Remove. Every fellow answered to his name.
"All serene!" exclaimed Squiff.
"Hold on! What about young Wingate?"
"Great Scott! Wingate minor!" roared Bob Cherry.
"Where are you? Jack Wingate!"
"Anybody seen Wingate minor?"
"He—he was in the loft!" stammered Billy Bunter. "He was fast asleep there when I came out."
"Good heavens!"
Harry Wharton made a dash towards the barn. Jack Wingate was still there in the loft in the midst of the flames.
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Evidently he had become overpowered by the smoke, for not a cry had come from the barn, and nothing was to be seen at the little window of the loft.

"Get a ladder, if you can!" shouted Harry, without looking back.

"Harry, stop! You can't—"

"I'm going to try."

Wharton had reached the burning building when a hand of iron descended upon his shoulder and swung him back. In the rush of the smoke he dimly made out a figure in khaki. It was one of the recruits.

"Let me go!" he panted. "There's one of our fellows in there—a kid!"

"My brother!"

Wharton jumped.

"Wingate, old man—"

It was Wingate. His face showed pale with horror through the haze of smoke. But there was no fear in his look. He swung the junior back.

Next Monday's Number of The "MAGNET" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a Splendid, Long, Complete Story, entitled:

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!" By Frank Richards.

"Stand back, Wharton! You can do nothing. Get a ladder, if you can, to the window. This is my business."

"Wingate—"

But the lad in khaki was gone.

He had disappeared into the smoke of the burning barn.

Wharton staggered back.

"Who was it?" cried Bob Cherry, catching him by the arm. "Was it—"

"Wingate!" groaned Wharton. "And he's in there—in that furnace! Help me to get a ladder, and we may save them yet."

The heat of the blaze drove the crowd back from the barn. They looked on with white and horror-stricken faces. Amid that dense mass of smoke and flame, Wingate of the Sixth—Private Wingate of Kitchener's Army—was struggling for his life, and there was no help for him. A dozen fellows were racing away to the farmhouse for a ladder, but with little hope in their hearts that they would be in time to help the gallant lad in khaki.

Blinded by the smoke, fanned and scorched by the flame, Wingate was fighting his way through. He knew the old barn well, he knew where was the clamped ladder that led to the trapdoor in the loft, and he groped his way blindly to it and clambered up. His hands were burnt—the ladder was burning—but he hardly seemed to feel the pain. He plunged into the loft in blinding, choking smoke, and as he groped there the flames roared below, and the last fragments of the ladder he had ascended collapsed. He was cut off from escape below. Below him was a furnace. But he did not think of that. He was groping blindly for his brother.

Where was Jack Wingate?

He could see nothing; the smoke was like a thick veil. He called his brother's names in husky tones, but he knew it was in vain to call. He stumbled along the big loft, groping with his hands. And his hands came into contact with something that lay on the floor—still, inert.

It was the form of a human being, and he knew that it was his brother. He could not see him. He could not see whether he was living or dead. He caught up the fag in his strong arms and staggered for the window.

From the little window the smoke was pouring in a thick volume, soaring away to the blue sky.

Wingate put out his head, choked, gasping, almost overcome. His face was black and scorched.

There was a yell from below.

"There he is!"

Wingate looked dizzily down. The window was high up from the ground. To drop from it meant death, and there was no means of descent. Behind him the flames were creeping closer.

He pushed his brother through the window, and held him upon the narrow sill. The plank floor under his feet was trembling; at any moment it might collapse and hurl him into the raging fire below.

"The ladder! Quick, quick!"

"Buck up, Wharton!"

Across the field from the farmhouse Wharton and Bob Cherry came in sight, bearing a ladder between them. Several of the soldiers rushed towards them, seized the ladder, and rushed it up to the barn. It was planted beneath the window, and a brawny sergeant mounted.

"Take him," muttered Wingate, with dry lips.

The non. com. took the insensible fag from his hands and descended the ladder with him.

Wingate swung himself from the window and hung on, and felt for the rungs of the ladder with his feet.

He was at the end of his strength, his senses were reeling. But he held himself in hand and fought back the dizziness that was overcoming him. His feet rested on the ladder, he clambered down.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry rushed forward and caught him as he slid down. They held him firmly, and drew him away and laid him in the grass.

"Wingate, old man—"

Wingate peered at them from under burnt and blackened brows.

"Jack—is he safe?"

"Yes, yes!"

Wingate's eyes closed.

"You know this lad?" The lieutenant was looking down at the two juniors.

"He's Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars," muttered Wharton. "He enlisted because he was taunted with cowardice. The bravest fellow that ever breathed—"

Wharton's voice broke. His eyes were thick with tears as he looked down at the blackened, insensible face of the captain of Greyfriars.

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THE TWENTY-FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Colonel Arrives!

THERE were grim and serious faces in the schoolboy camp that morning. Wingate of the Sixth lay in bed in the farmhouse. The doctor had been called from Friardale. The recruit was in no condition to march with his comrades. The men in khaki were gone, and Wingate remained, still unconscious. Jack Wingate was by his brother's bedside, silent, pale. He was little the worse for the danger he had passed through; but Wingate's case was more serious. He had been badly burned, and for a time the hearts of the juniors were heavy with anxiety. When the doctor left the farmhouse and came back towards his trap they stopped him with anxious questions. But Dr. Pillbury's reply reassured them. The captain of Greyfriars was not in danger. His burns were bad, but he had recovered his senses. He was suffering a great deal of pain, but his recovery was only a matter of time.

"He ought to be taken to Greyfriars!" said Bob Cherry, when the doctor was gone. "Anyway, he won't go back to Wapshot. His people won't let him stay in the ranks, now that they know."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Thank Heaven it's no worse!" he said. "What a splendid chap he is! And to think that the brute Sharp taunted him with being a coward!"

"Wingate's answered that to-day," said Squiff. "He will have to go back to Greyfriars now. The Head will send for him as soon as he knows, and old Pillbury will tell him. But we're not going back."

"Not so long as Sergeant Sharp stays!" said Wharton grimly.

The nearness of a tragedy had sobered the schoolboy rebels and cast a shadow on the camp, but their determination was unshaken.

A motor-car hooted on the road, and the juniors glanced idly towards it. Harry Wharton sprang suddenly to his feet.

"By Jove! It's my uncle!"

"Colonel Wharton, by jingo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

The car halted in the road.

There were four gentlemen seated in it—four officers in khaki. Three of them were unknown to the juniors, but the fourth was Colonel Wharton. He had seen them and the camp, and the blackened and still smoking ruins of the barn. The colonel sprang from the car and strode towards the camp.

Harry Wharton & Co. met him, somewhat uneasy in their minds. The colonel was a governor of the school, and he was a strict disciplinarian. They could not help wondering what view he would take of the revolt of the Remove.

"Harry, my boy!" The colonel shook hands with his nephew. "What the dooce are you doing here? Is it a holiday?"

"Ahem!"

"A—a—a sort of holiday, sir," said Bob Cherry. "The fact is—"

"The factfulness," said Hurree Singh, "is—is—is—"

"Ahem!" remarked Nugent.

Colonel Wharton looked at them very curiously. That something very unusual was going on he did not require to be told. A somewhat stern expression came over his bronzed face.

"What does this mean?" he asked. "You are not absent from school without leave, surely? You should be at your lessons now."

"We have rebelled, sir!" said Harry, taking the plunge.

"What!"

"We've left Greyfriars."

"Left Greyfriars!" almost shouted the colonel.

"Yes, uncle. I have been expelled."

"Expelled!" said the colonel dazedly.

"And the whole Form is standing by me," said Harry. "They've sacked Coker, too, and the Fifth have left with him."

"Good gad!"

"It really wasn't our fault, sir," said Nugent. "We were—ahem!—as innocent as lambs."

"Dr. Lock has expelled you from the school, Harry?" said the colonel sternly. "And for what?"

"For what we've all done—the same as Harry has, sir," said Bob Cherry. "We're all in it. We won't knuckle under to that German bully."

"Oh!" The colonel's face relaxed a little. "Dr. Locke has written to me an account of what has been done at Greyfriars. I need not say that I do not approve of it. The other governors and myself have come down to-day to take a hand in the proceedings." He tugged at his white moustache. "Tell me exactly what has happened, Harry."

The story was told amply. Colonel Wharton listened without interrupting once.

"By gad!" he said, when all was told. "So that is what Greyfriars has come to! Lucky I am here! And what does this mean?" He made a gesture towards the blackened barn. "Is that your doing, you young rascals?"

Wharton explained further.

The colonel was silent for some moments.

"Where is Wingate?" he asked. "Take me to him."

Wharton led the way to the farmhouse.

Wingate, covered with bandages, was in bed. Jack Wingate was there, looking the picture of misery. The captain of Greyfriars blinked from amid the bandages as the colonel came in.

Colonel Wharton regarded him grimly.

"Sorry I cannot salute, sir," said Wingate coolly. "You see how I am bandaged up!"

"Never mind that, my lad. So you are in the Army now?"

"Private Wingate, No. 11864," said the captain of Greyfriars.

"And how do you like it?"

"Ripping, sir!"

"You look in a pretty state," said the colonel.

"It's not so bad as it looks, sir—only a few burns," said Wingate. "It hurts a bit, but that's all. Only it's rotten for a fellow to be lying on his back when he wants to be training."

"So you are not tired of the khaki yet?"

"No fear!"

"And you want to go to Flanders and fight the Germans—what?"

"I hope so, sir."

"Well, you young rascal, you won't do anything of the kind! You will wait till you are older for that," said the colonel. "I shall communicate at once with your commanding officer, and you will be discharged, and you will go back to Greyfriars."

"I'm afraid my people would insist on it, anyway, sir, now that they'll be able to find me," said Wingate. "But I've made up my mind about one thing—I'm not going back to Greyfriars while Sergeant Sharp is there."

"Sergeant Sharp will not be there in two hours from now," said the colonel. "I can guarantee that. Do you think the present state of affairs is going to be allowed to continue? As soon as I learned what was going on I beat up the governors and brought them down—they're in my car now. Sir Hilton Popper will be asked to resign from the Board; and as for that rascal Sharp, he will be kicked out of the school."

"Good egg!" said Harry Wharton.

Wingate grinned through his bandages.

"That's good news, sir! Greyfriars is going to the dogs, and I'm jolly glad it's going to be stopped. I shall be glad to go back—though I don't want to give up the khaki. Dr. Pillbury said I ought to be moved at once into the school sanatorium, but—"

"Then you will be," said the colonel. "I have room for you in my car. I will take you there."

"I am under your orders, sir," said Private Wingate.

Half an hour later the car was on its way to the school again, and Wingate of the Sixth was in it, with the colonel and his companions. And the Remove were under severe orders from the colonel to return to the school at once.

But that they were only too eager to do.

The assurance that Sergeant Sharp was to be kicked out was glorious news. And the heroes of the Remove were anxious to be on the spot when the Hun of Greyfriars was driven from the gates.

"And we shall be in time for dinner, too," remarked Billy Bunter, rubbing his fat hands. "Camping-out is all very well, but I was very doubtful about dinner—very doubtful."

Billy Bunter had been very thoughtful that morning. That had been the subject of his reflections.

The Remove marched back to Greyfriars in great spirits. They did not lose any time on the way, and they arrived very soon after the colonel.

Old Gosling stared at them grimly as they came in. Bob Cherry, in the exuberance of his spirits, greeted the old porter with a terrific clap on the back, which made him stagger.

"Wow!" gasped Gosling.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old scout! Have you missed us?" asked Bob affectionately.

"Yow-ow! Wot I says is this 'ere, if I was the 'Ead—"

"Lucky you're not!" grinned Squiff. "Don't tell us what you'd do, Gossy; we can guess that! Where's Wingate?"

"Which Master Wingate is in the sanatorium," said Gosling; "and a pretty picture he looks, too! Your uncle 'avo come, Master Wharton, and the rest of the governors. Which I'm glad of it. Things 'ave been in a pretty state, with everything hinside-hout and hupside-down, and Sir 'Ilton ragin' like a Polar bear—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 392.

NEXT
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY

"Where are they now?" asked Wharton.

"Which they're in the governor's room, and they're a-goin' it 'ammer and tongs!" said Gosling, with a snort. "Sir 'Ilton looked surprised when they came, and he didn't look pleased, neither. And my opinion is that that sergeant is going to be sacked, and all this new-fangled rubbish throwed up. And I'm glad of it!"

"Hear, hear!"

The juniors hurried on towards the House. They were not surprised to hear that the governors were "going it hammer and tongs," as Gosling expressed it—and they hoped and believed that Colonel Wharton and his supporters would carry the day.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH CHAPTER. The Order of the Boot!

OUTSIDE the governors' room a crowd had gathered. From within, a murmur of voices could be heard. Occasionally the loud voice of Sir Hilton Popper rose above the rest, and some of his words were distinguishable.

Certainly they were going it "hammer and tongs." Never had there been so warm a discussion in the governors' room at Greyfriars—never had debate waxed so hot. The great majority was against Sir Hilton Popper and his few supporters, but the obstinate faddist was resisting every inch of the way.

The big oaken door swung open at last.

Mr. Quelch appeared, and he called to Trotter.

"Find Sergeant Sharp and send him here, Trotter."

"Yessir!"

The page scurried away.

He returned in a few minutes with the sergeant.

Sergeant Sharp was not looking his old bombastic self. Evidently he was nervous at being called before the governors. He scowled at the Removees as he came striding along the passage.

"Here we are again!" grinned Bob Cherry.

The sergeant did not reply.

He strode into the governor's room, and left the big door half-open behind him. The juniors were glad of it. They had a glimpse now of the august proceedings.

"Popper's simply raging!" murmured Squiff.

"Looks like a giddy volcano!" remarked Nugent. "He don't look like a winner."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The great polished table and the collection of august personages, and the Head in his gown, in the subdued light from the stained windows made an imposing picture. Sergeant Sharp advanced to the table.

His eyes fell upon Colonel Wharton standing grim and bronzed.

The sergeant quailed.

The juniors, peering in at the door, noted it.

"Look at the beast crumpling up," murmured Bob Cherry.

"It's your uncle's giddy eye, Harry. Looks like a gimlet boring into him."

"They've met before," said Harry, in a low voice. "The sergeant let it out; I knew that it was upon my uncle's account that he was down on me. He is afraid of the colonel for some reason."

"He looks like it, by Jove!" said Johnny Bull.

"Shush!"

Sir Hilton Popper was speaking. The baronet was backing up his favourite to the end.

"Sergeant Sharp, you have been sent for—What is the matter with you, man? Pull yourself together; there is nothing to be afraid of."

"Ye-e-es, sir!" stammered the sergeant.

"Those of us who have supported the new regime in the school are perfectly satisfied with you—perfectly. Colonel Wharton has some complaint to make of you, which I have no doubt at all you will be able to answer."

Sergeant Sharp did not speak. He wiped his brow. The juniors, unnoticed at the door, looked on in eager wonder.

Colonel Wharton's eyes were fixed upon the bully. Sergeant Sharp did not look much like a bully now, however. He was cringing.

"Look me in face, man!" rapped out the colonel.

"Sergeant Sharp is not afraid to look you in the face, sir," snapped Sir Hilton Popper.

"Let him speak for himself, Sir Hilton. Look at me, my man. You call yourself Sergeant Sharp."

"Yes, sir."

"You know me?"

"I—I have seen you before, sir," mumbled the sergeant.

"You have seen me before," agreed the colonel. "You

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Next Monday's Number of The "Magnet" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a Splendid, Long, Complete Story, entitled:

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!" By Frank Richards.

were under my command in South Africa. You were turned out of the Army for cowardice, and were more than suspected of conveying secret information to the enemy."

"What!" ejaculated Sir Hilton.

"You called yourself an Englishman," resumed the colonel.

"But it was clearly established that you were, in fact, a German, but had lived in England. You have no more English blood in your veins than any Hun in Flanders."

"The man assured me—" began Sir Hilton.

"He told you falsehoods, sir. Falsehoods come easy to a German," said Colonel Wharton. "He would be in his own country now, or fighting against us, but for the fact that he is a miserable coward. Did this man tell you the circumstances under which he left our Army, after disgracing it?"

"I—I understood that his discharge was quite in order," faltered the baronet.

"He deceived you, and appears to have done so very easily," said the colonel, with a curl of the lip. "He is a German. He ran away from the German Army rather than go on active service in Africa at that time. He joined our Army under a false name, and doubtless was very much disconcerted when active service came along again. He proved himself a coward; and had the evidence been a little clearer, he would have been shot for treachery. As it was, he was dismissed. The proofs are easy to come by, sir, if the rascal dares to deny it!"

"Speak up, man!" snapped Sir Hilton.

But the sergeant did not speak up.

He was tongue-tied with dismay.

"Well?" rapped out Colonel Wharton.

The sergeant did not speak.

"You are aware," resumed the colonel, "that you could be sent to prison for obtaining a post here under false pretences. Unless you register yourself as an enemy alien this very day, I will see that you are sent to prison. Meanwhile, relieve us of your presence. You will leave this school instantly. Go!"

The colonel's raised hand pointed towards the door.

Without a word, and with faltering steps, the Hun of Greyfriars limped away to the door.

He passed through the crowd of juniors again with bowed head.

They let him pass in silence.

He was under-dog now; his power was gone. If ever a man deserved to be thoroughly ragged, the Hun of Greyfriars did. But they let him pass. To hit a man who was down was not the British way; and they were not Prussians. The sergeant tramped away down the passage and disappeared.

The colonel was speaking again.

"So much for the man you sent here, Sir Hilton Popper, to reform this school. I trust you are satisfied?"

"I am satisfied that that man should go, undoubtedly," said Sir Hilton Popper, finding his voice. "But another may be found to take his place and to carry on the new regime."

"You are not yet satisfied, sir, with the harm that has been done?" exclaimed the colonel. "That man is a specimen of what is produced by Prussian training, and you yet desire to institute Prussian training at Greyfriars. It is for the board to decide."

"Hurrah!" came an involuntary chirrup from Bob Cherry, at the door.

The colonel glanced towards the door with a frown, observing the juniors for the first time. He made a gesture, and the door was closed.

"Rotten!" growled Bob Cherry, in disgust. "It was as good as a cinema."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

What the august governing board would have thought, if they had known that their sublime proceedings were regarded as being as good as a cinema, cannot even be guessed. Fortunately they did not know.

The juniors waited. There was a murmur of voices from the other side of the big oak door.

"Going it strong!" murmured Squiff. "Blessed if I don't feel inclined to understudy Bunter, and try the keyhole!"

But the juniors manfully resisted that desire, though they were intensely curious.

The minutes passed, and still there was a murmur of voices. Then the loud, staccato tones of Sir Hilton Popper, raised in anger, came through the door.

"Then I resign from the board, gentlemen."

"Hurrah!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, what a little bit of luck!" sang Peter Todd softly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The big door was thrown open.

Sir Hilton Popper, his cheeks red, his nose white, his very moustache bristling with rage, strode forth.

He did not even glance at the juniors.

He strode away, and a few minutes later the buzz of his car was heard in the Close. Sir Hilton Popper was gone—and the Hun of Greyfriars was gone—and the old school was itself again.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER

All Serene!

GREYFRIARS was itself again.

Needless to say, there were great rejoicings.

Nothing more was said on the subject of the expulsion of Wharton and Coker. It was rescinded, and that was all.

The new regime had collapsed; and the revolt of the Remove was passed over in silence. It had been justified; and it was clearly a case for judicious forgetfulness. Bygones were allowed to be bygones.

Harmony had been restored to the school, and that was enough.

Drills were a thing of the past, excepting the customary drills of the school cadets. Of the Prussianising of Greyfriars nothing more was heard. The old school had been saved.

Coker of the Fifth naturally took the whole credit to himself. Coker was convinced that it was the stand made by him, Horace Coker, that had done the whole business.

Coker held forth on that subject to Potter and Greene till Potter and Greene almost wished that the great Horace had been expelled after all.

The Remove, on the other hand, considered that it was the action of the Remove that had "done it." Billy Bunter and Fisher T. Fish especially took great credit to themselves. Fisher T. Fish "guessed" that if he hadn't been there, things would have ended very differently—yep!

When Wingate came out of sanatorium, he was enthusiastically greeted. "Private Wingate" had taken his discharge, and George Wingate of the Sixth resumed his old place as captain of Greyfriars.

"It's a giddy victory all along the line," Bob Cherry remarked in No. 1 Study. "As Spokeshave—I mean Shakespeare—remarks, 'Richard is himself again.' And, under the circumstances, a special celebration is called for."

"Hear, hear!" said all the Co. heartily.

"I suggest a picnic on the island—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll get Hazel to fetch Marjorie and Clara, and make it a regular beano," said Bob. "And—"

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter blinked in at the door.

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Bob! Of course, I'm coming. After the way I've stood up against the Hun, and got you fellows out of trouble—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, Marjorie will be there, and you know Marjorie would like— Yaroo!"

A cushion caught Bunter under the chin, and he disappeared into the passage.

But when the next half-holiday came round, Billy Bunter was allowed to join the large party for the picnic. In fact, nearly all the Remove were there, and it was a great success. Good times had returned once more, after the short but exciting reign of the Hun of Greyfriars.

THE END.

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THE RIVAL RAIDERS!

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CHAPTER 1.

"THAT'S the lot, I think!"

Harry Wharton let his arms drop to his side with a sign of relief. He had been busily packing a cricket-bag with all sorts of comestibles, and now all that remained to do was to close the bulgy bag—a task which promised to be no easy one.

"It'll jolly well have to be the lot!" gasped Bob Cherry, as he manfully struggled with the bag in a vain attempt to snap it shut. "Anything not already in has jolly well got to be left out!"

"Anyhow, there surely ought to be enough grub there for our little lot," said Harry. "Lemme see, there'll be our five noble selves, and the Cliff House girls. That makes eight altogether. Quite a jolly little party, and, with the weather as it is, we ought to have a merry little picnic. What do you say, Inky?"

"The merriffulness of the esteemed picnic will be terrific!" responded Hurree Singh, the coloured member of the Famous Five, in that wonderful and fearful English of his.

"Right-ho! Well, we're all ready, and we don't want to keep the girls waiting," said Harry. "It wouldn't do, you know. It's a girl's privilege to keep a fellow waiting, but vice versa is out of the question. Sure there's nothing else, Bob?"

Bob Cherry did not reply. Instead, he stood alert, with his ears cocked, as Nugent elegantly put it, and then tiptoed to the door. With a quick movement he turned the handle and threw it open.

There was a smothered gasp, and then a portly form bundled into the room, rolling head over heels as the result of the sudden receding of the door.

"Bunter!" gasped several voices in unison.

"I thought as much!" cried Bob Cherry wrathfully. "I heard a noise outside the door, and I guessed that that fat, spying toad was up to his tricks again!"

"Oh, really, Cherry!" gasped Bunter, hastily putting his disarranged spectacles straight on his fat little nose. "I wasn't listening at all. I—I was stooping down to tie up my bootlace, which had come undone!"

"Rather an unfortunate habit it's got, isn't it?" suggested Bob, with heavy sarcasm, which was entirely lost on the obtuse Owl of the Remove.

"Really, I hope you wouldn't think me capable of doing such a thing as listening at keyholes!" cried Bunter, in tones of injured dignity. "As a matter of fact, I didn't hear a word of what you were talking about. In fact, I've no idea that you're going on a picnic this afternoon with the Cliff House girls—I mean, I was going to ask you if you'd put me in the cricket team for the match with the Fourth on Saturday!"

"Oh, give it up!" snorted Harry contemptuously. "You know jolly well that you were listening at the keyhole, and you heard us discussing the picnic this afternoon!"

"I suppose that's the grub for it in that bag?" exclaimed Bunter, altering his tone, and putting on his most ingratiating smile as he walked further into the room. "My word, you're going to do yourself well! Of course, I'm coming!"

"Your mistake, Bunter!" cried Bob Cherry sweetly. "You're not coming at all, you're going!"

"Oh, really, Cherry, don't be a pig, you know!" cried Bunter, backing a little in alarm as Bob carelessly picked up an ebony ruler.

"Marjorie is expecting me, I'm sure," continued Bunter. "As a matter of fact, I know that she's very gone on me. Of course, I don't wonder at it. I've got such a fetching way with the girls, and—Wow! Yow! Stoppit, Cherry, you beast! What are you doing?"

Bob answered not in words, but proceeded to belabour Bunter's fat person with the ebony ruler, giving angry snorts every time it fell. The dust flew from Bunter's pants in clouds, and the fat junior yelled as he wriggled and squirmed.

"Wow! Yow! Yaroooh! Help! Fire! Thieves!" he

roared. "I'm being murdered! Yow! You've broken every bone in my body!"

The howling Bunter was gradually edged towards the open door, round which several laughing juniors were crowding. Dropping the ruler, Bob gave Bunter a final heave that sent him spinning half a dozen yards along the passage. Then, feeling somewhat satisfied, he went back into the study, and slammed the door with a loud and angry slam.

"Ow! Oo-er! Yaroooooh!" moaned Bunter feebly, sitting up and groping for his spectacles, which had fallen off in the affray. "I'm dying! Fetch a doctor, quick! I'm poisoned—I mean, I'm bruised all over! Ow! Some of you chaps carry me up to the dorm!"

None of the chaps showed any desire to help the hapless Bunter. Instead, they crowded round him, laughing at his woes. They knew Bunter of old, and they were not inclined to be sympathetic.

"Oh, my back—my shoulder!" moaned Bunter. "I shall never be able to move again! If anything happens to me, tell Cherry that I forgive him!"

The door of Study No. 1 opened, and Bob Cherry looked out.

"What, you still here, Bunter?" he cried wrathfully. "I suppose you're waiting for some more. I didn't know you liked it so much. Pass me that ruler again, you chaps!"

But the ruler was quite unnecessary, as Bob knew it would be. With a roar of terror, Bunter got to his feet, and fled with surprising alacrity for one in such a terrible state as he had made himself out to be.

CHAPTER 2.

"BUCK up, you chaps!" cried Harry Wharton, as the Famous Five passed through the school gates. "We'd better cut through the woods. We sha'n't run so much risk of meeting the Courtfield bounders. It wouldn't do to run into them with all this tuck!"

"Not much fear of that, though," granted Bob Cherry, who was manfully struggling with the bag of tuck. "At the same time, we'd better keep our eyes open in case of accidents. If we don't run into the Courtfield fellows, we might meet Bunter. He's just the sort of cad to try and push himself forward when we'd started the picnic, knowing that he'd be safe from harm in the presence of the girls!"

"Oh, there's no need to worry about him!" cried Johnny Bull. "He hasn't got over the whacking with the ruler yet!"

But that's just where Johnny Bull was wrong. Bunter had recovered from his chastisement, although tinglings in various parts of his anatomy still served to remind him painfully of it.

The greedy junior was all the more determined now to be in at that feed, and he had already hit on the idea to suddenly appear on the scene when the picnic was in full progress, trusting to the presence of the ladies to save him from any harm.

The five juniors turned into the woods just then. Little did they know that Bunter was within a few feet of them, hiding behind a tree, and had overheard every word they had said. He had sneaked out before the others, intending to follow them to the scene of the outing.

"Well, all I can say is, if he does try any of those tricks he'd better look out for himself, that's all!" cried Harry Wharton. "We'll be picnicking on that grassy bit by the river, and it won't be much trouble to heave Bunter in!"

Billy Bunter in his hiding-place shivered at the words. He was not a lover of cold water at any time, and on the mornings when he did wash his ablutions were confined to a cat's lick, as Bob Cherry expressively put it.

"The—the beasts!" muttered Bunter. "I've a good mind not to go to their mouldy old picnic now, only—only it seems such a pity to miss all that good grub."

And, having allowed the others to go on a bit, the fat junior cautiously followed. Several times he incautiously

trod on a twig, and the noise made him suddenly scuttle out of sight behind the nearest tree, his heart beating with fright. But never once did the others suspect his presence.

"Better not get too near!" he muttered, waiting for a bit, so as to allow the others to still further increase their lead. "I'm not safe till the Cliff House girls appear on the scene."

And with commendable discretion he waited for some moments behind a tree. He was just about to resume his tracking, when suddenly a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and he gave a smothered yell.

"Wow! W-w-what is it?" he cried, as he was swung round, to find himself in the clutches of Trumper & Co., the juniors from the Courtfield Council School.

Bunter gave a gasp of dismay. The Courtfield fellows were keen rivals of the Greyfriars Fourth-Formers, although the rivalry was a healthy one. The Council scholars were not likely to do anything mean or unsportsmanlike, but Bunter did not think of that. All he remembered was that he was in the hands of the enemy quite alone. Help was at hand, it was true, but he hardly knew if he dared call for it under the circumstances, and Bunter shivered at his helplessness.

"I—I say, you fellows," he began, stammering, "no larks, you know!"

"Whither away, fair Bunter?" cried Trumper. "Off to some quiet spot to gorge yourself on a feed you've buried till you could get at it and wolf it all on your lonesome, I suppose?"

"N-n-no, I'm n-n-not!" stammered Bunter. "I'm not going to a f-f-feed."

The others put on airs of great surprise and incredulity. Bunter watched them keenly, and as he did so his cunning little brain worked rapidly. He must get on the right side of his captors at all costs, and he thought he saw a way how to do so.

"I mean—er—that is to say," he hurriedly went on, gaining confidence rapidly, "I had intended going to a feed—a real slap-up feed, too. But the beasts haven't invited me, and they won't let me come."

"What a shame, Bunter!" cried Trumper solemnly. "They must know you, I should think. Perhaps they didn't ask you because they wanted just a snack for themselves."

"But who's the 'they'?" asked Grahame. "Some of your fellows, I suppose? Who are they, and how many are there of 'em?"

"Ah! Wouldn't you like to know?" chuckled Bunter, pretending to make a great mystery of it.

"We should like to know, certainly, Bunter," cried Trumper. "What's more, we're going to know. Otherwise you're going back to school in such a state that your own grandmother wouldn't know you."

"Here, hold on!" cried Bunter hurriedly, backing away in alarm. "It was only my—my joke, you know. I meant to tell you all the time, of course."

"Of course, you did, Bunter!" said Trumper. "Now, then, let's have the list of names. The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, mind."

"Better explain to him what the word 'truth' means," suggested Wickers; but Trumper silenced him with a gesture.

"There's Wharton, Bob Cherry, Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh," Bunter informed them.

"H'm! Five of them, and there's only three of us," said Trumper. "It'll be rather a tall order raiding their feed."

"There'll be more than five of them," went on Bunter. "The Cliff House girls are joining them—three of them, so there'll be eight altogether."

"The Cliff House girls, eh?" cried Trumper, raising his eyebrows. "That complicates matters. Of course, it's up to us to raid the feed, it's too good a chance to miss. But how are we to do it? We can't in front of the girls."

"Then we shall have to do it before they turn up," said Grahame. "But how do we know it's true? Perhaps this over-fed porpoise is only spinning us a yarn to put us off the scent and let him go."

"Then if that's his idea, the sooner he disillusion himself the better," cried Trumper, obtaining a firmer grip on Bunter's coat-collar. "He's told us this little tale, and he's got to prove his words. Otherwise, he's going through it. Quick march, Bunter! Show us where the feed is to be!"

"Ow! Leggo!" gasped Bunter, as Trumper shook him to make him get a move on. "You'll make my spectacles fall off if you shake me like that, and if you break them, you'll have to pay for them."

"You needn't worry yourself about that, Bunter," cried Trumper. "Come on! Forward, march!"

Motioning to his companions to take hold of Bunter, Trumper went carefully forward. A few yards away, and he came to a clearing. Keeping well behind a tree, he gazed at an interesting scene.

Several juniors were busily engaged in spreading a cloth on

the grass, piling all sorts of comestibles on it in tempting array. They evidently intended to do themselves very well, and Trumper let up a low whistle.

"I say, you chaps, it's quite true!" he cried, going back to his companions. "There's a proper picnic being prepared. Bunter's told the truth for once."

"Who said the age of miracles was passed?" murmured Grahame.

"Oh, really—" began Bunter in injured tones.

"The thing is," went on Trumper, "how are we three to raid that feed, when there's five of 'em against us? Bunter's one of 'em, too, but he don't count. He'd only attack the eatables. Anybody got any ideas?"

"Let's rush them and chance it," suggested Grahame.

"Too risky!" cried Trumper, shaking his head. "We shouldn't stand an earthly, and the stream is too handy. Any more ideas? We shall have to be quick, or the girls will be on the scene."

The trio promptly began thinking deeply. Bunter thought, too, in fact, he had been already thinking for some moments.

"I—I've got an idea," he ventured at last, and the others turned on him in surprise. "I'll make my way to the opposite bank of the stream. When they see me they're sure to come after me. You see, they haven't asked me to the picnic. In fact, they actually said that they didn't want me, the beasts!"

"How strange!" murmured Trumper. "Fancy not wanting dear old Bunter at their picnic! I wonder why?"

"There's a little bridge across the stream just where they are," went on Bunter. "It's only a loose plank. You see, my idea is this. They'll come across after me, and then you appear on the scene. Remove the plank, and they're landed on the opposite side, leaving the feed to you. I'll manage to dodge 'em all right, and join you later."

"It's a good idea, Bunter!" cried Trumper admiringly. "Of course, you're not thinking of letting us in for it, or dodging off, I suppose?"

"Really, Trumper, I hope that you can take my word!" cried Bunter loftily. "Of course, you won't start the feed till I come on the scene. I want my fair share, you know."

"Don't worry about that," cried Trumper. "We'll see that you get your just deserts! Off you go, and no larks, mind, or next time I meet you I'll wallop you till you can't stand!"

Bunter took his departure, only too anxious to carry out his share of the programme, and thus get at the feed, the very thought of which made his mouth water. He had no intention of playing into Harry Wharton's hands, as he knew full well that he would not be allowed a look in at the picnic from the Famous Five.

He made a wide detour, crossing the stream by another plank-bridge about a hundred yards higher up. While he was gone, the three raiders got as close to the picknickers as possible without betraying themselves.

"What do you think of Bunter?" exclaimed Trumper. "Nice sort of chap to betray his own friends, ain't he?"

"But we'll keep our promise all right," laughed Grahame. "We'll see that he gets his just deserts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Meanwhile, Bunter had worked his way along until he suddenly burst out before the view of the Famous Five on the opposite bank.

"I say, you fellows—" he called out.

"Bunter!" gasped the others in chorus.

"Chuck him out of it, quick!" cried Harry. "I see what his game is. He's trying to force himself on us. Look sharp, the girls will be here any minute now!"

Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Johnny Bull promptly dashed across the plank-bridge in pursuit of Bunter, who ran off into the thick woods. Wharton and Hurree Singh stood on the edge of the bank wrathfully watching the chase. So intent were they in doing so, that they never noticed three forms stealing up behind them.

"Sock into 'em!" cried Trumper; and the three raiders threw themselves on their two rivals.

The attack was quite unexpected, and the pair were taken by surprise. Before they quite knew what was the matter, they had been grabbed and hurled into the stream.

Splash! Splash!

Two forms smote the water simultaneously, and under they went. They soon came to the surface, and for the first time saw their assailants, who were standing on the bank grinning.

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Trumper. "Who's top school now?"

"You—you rotters!" spluttered Harry Wharton, trying to scramble on shore, only to be pushed back again. "Rescue, Remove!"

Hearing the shouts, the other three promptly gave up their chase of Bunter. They arrived at the opposite bank, and stopped short, gazing in astonishment at the sight that met their gaze.

"It's those Courtfield rotters!" roared Bob Cherry, recovering himself. "Go for 'em!"

And he got on to the plank bridge, and started making his way across it, the other two following him. He took three steps, and then stopped short.

For Trumper & Co. were ready for them. While Grahame and Wickers busily pushed Wharton and Hurree Singh back into the water every time they tried to scramble out, Trumper took from his pocket a small pocket-mirror.

Holding it out, he caught the sun's rays so that they were reflected full in Bob Cherry's eyes. It blinded him for the minute, and caused him to sway. That sway proved fatal.

The plank was too narrow for any swaying business to be played on it. Bob missed his footing, gave a yell, and into the stream he went—splash!

"That's one," chuckled Trumper. "Now for the others!"

And he repeated the process. The Greyfriars juniors could have gone back, seeing what the game was. But it was not the Greyfriars way to retreat before the enemy, and they manfully stuck it. But with no better luck.

Trumper did deadly work with the mirror. A wild wave of the arms, a yell, and another splash announced that Johnny Bull had gone in. He was soon followed by Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the triumphant Courtfieldites. "This is where we smile!"

"You—you rotters!" spluttered the five angry juniors, all of them in the stream.

"I say, you fellows, you haven't started yet, I hope?" cried a voice. "You know what you promised me—my fair share!"

"Hallo, here's Bunter!" cried Trumper turning round and beholding the fat junior, who had worked his way back.

"Don't worry, Bunter, we promised you your just deserts, and you're going to get 'em. Grab him, you chaps!"

"Here, I say, you know!" gasped Bunter in alarm. "Don't be rotten beasts! What's the game?"

"You're going to get your just deserts, Bunter!" cried Trumper amiably. "We promised them to you, and we're going to carry out our word. Give him his reward for playing the traitor, chaps! In with him!"

And the luckless Bunter was swung into the air, yelling and screaming.

"Yow! Help! Yaroooh!" he howled; then there was a splash, and his voice was heard no more for some time.

"Why, whatever's the matter?" cried a girlish voice, and Trumper swung round. The Cliff House girls had arrived.

"Good afternoon!" said Trumper, as he and his friends raised their caps politely. "So delighted to have your company at the picnic!"

"But—but I thought we were being entertained by Harry Wharton and his friends?" began Marjorie Hazeldene, in surprise.

"Yes, that is so," agreed Trumper. "But you see, they've met with an unfortunate accident, and fallen in the water. Of course, they couldn't stand about in their wet clothes. They'll have to hurry back and change, so you must excuse them. That's right, isn't it, Wharton?"

"Y-yes, that's r-right!" muttered Wharton, breathing sulphurously. "So—so sorry, Marjorie, but it can't be helped!"

The Greyfriars juniors scrambled out to the opposite bank. Bunter was already there, declaiming loudly against the treatment he had just received, and which he had richly deserved.

"Well, it's no good standing about here," cried Wharton, his teeth chattering. "We'll catch our death of cold. We're done to the wide, and we may as well admit it, and by those Courtfield bounders, too!"

"And it's all through this overted porpoise!" growled Bob Cherry. "There's one consolation, we can give him the licking of his life when we get back to the school. Come on, run for it!"

And away they ran, glad to warm themselves, and anxious to change into drier garments and also to carry out their threat against Bunter, leaving the spoils in the hands of the enemy, who entertained their charming visitors right royally with the raided feed.

CHAPTER 3.

"COUNT me in!"

Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior in the Greyfriars Remove, made that remark.

And Harry Wharton & Co., who were deep in discussion in the junior common-room at Greyfriars, sniffed.

When the chums of the Remove were planning a surprise for their rivals, Trumper & Co., of Courtfield County Council School, they were not likely to "count in" Fisher T. Fish. Fish, indeed, had a great opinion of his abilities in any and every line. But that opinion was not shared in the least by the other juniors. In fact, there was only one fellow in the Remove who did not think that Fisher T. Fish was a duffer—and that fellow was Fisher T. Fish himself.

Bob Cherry raised a finger to point to the door.

"Buzz off!" he said. "We're talking bizney. This is above your weight. Seat!"

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ONE
PENNY

"I guess——"

"Oh, travel off, Fishy, there's a good chap!"

"I reckon——"

"Well, if you won't travel off, shut up, anyway!" said Johnny Bull. "Now, you were saying, Wharton——"

"Five of us will be quite enough, without any silly ass chipping in to help us," said Harry Wharton, evidently referring to the American junior. "I've got the plan cut and dried. Trumper & Co.—three of them—have gone to the horse show at Redelyffe, on their bikes. They're staying for the cinema, and that closes at ten, so it will be about half-past ten, roughly, when they pass along the road on their way home, right past the school wall. As they're on their bikes, there isn't any other way for them to get home, and we can time them pretty well. Anyway, they couldn't pass before ten, and if we're ready for them at ten it will be all serene."

"But bedtime's half-past nine," remarked Frank Nugent. "After lights out, Harry!"

"I suppose we can get out of the dorm for once?"

"We've done it before," grinned Bob Cherry, "and this is a great occasion. But are you sure about the time they'll be leaving Redelyffe?"

"Quite! Trumper told Bunter, and Bunter says the bounders were sniggering because they're allowed to be at the cinema when we've gone to bed like good little boys. That was how they put it. It's adding insult to injury after sneaking our grub!"

"Cheek!" said Bob. "They're not allowed to stay out late, either, only once in a blue moon. We'll give 'em something to snigger for."

"That's my idea," agreed Wharton. "Anybody who dares to get up on his hind legs and snigger at the Greyfriars Remove has got to——"

"Die the giddy death?" suggested Bob.

"Yes, exactly! We're going to show them that we're not in bed asleep like good little boys; that we're jolly wide-awake, in fact. And we're going to give them something to snigger for—something really worth a snigger. The five of us will be on the road, in a nice quiet spot, waiting for them, and we'll take a tin of tar with us. We can borrow the tar from Gosling's pot quite easily. In a couple of jiffies we'll have the bounders off their bikes, and tar their chivvies. And when they get home to Courtfield and look in the glass they will see something really worth sniggering at."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are you still there, Fishy?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, looking round. "Why don't you run away and play?"

Fisher T. Fish snorted.

"I guess you'd better count me in," he said. "You galoots will make a muck of this. And those Courtfield chaps may put up a fight, and you'll want me. I should be all there if it came to a scrap."

"When it's a running match, Fishy, we'll count you in," grinned Bob. "But in a scrap you are N.G."

"The N.G.-fulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Fishy had better go and eat coke."

"Look hyer, you galoots!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish wrathfully. "I tell you I'm on in this—just a few! I'm the very antelope you want."

"Rats! Now, at ten minutes to ten we turn out," said Harry Wharton. "We'll put the tin of tar in the wood-shed all ready, and it won't take many minutes to fetch it after we're once out of the house. Then we make for the corner of the wall—same old place—and clear off. We'll find a good spot on the road for the ambush, and——"

"And everything in the garden will be lovely."

"Hear, hear!"

"Look hyer, I guess——"

But the Famous Five did not stay to listen to what Fisher T. Fish "guessed." The council of war being over, they walked out of the common-room, leaving F. T. Fish to waste his sweetness on the desert air, so to speak.

Fisher T. Fish simply glared after them.

With a full consciousness of the fact that he was "all there," and that what he didn't know wasn't worth knowing, it was exasperating to the American junior to feel that his value as an auxiliary, in the eyes of his form-fellows, was precisely nil.

"Silly jays!" growled Fish. "They'll make a muck of it—some! I guess it will go wrong if I'm not there to lend a hand—just a few. But I kinder reckon I'm not going to be left out of this. Fisher T. Fish never gets left. I'm on in this leetle game, right on; and when they find me along

(Continued on page iv of cover.)

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!" By Frank Richards

OPENING CHAPTERS. START TO-DAY!



Driven to Sea!

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THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Dick Damer, an orphan, is invited by his uncle out to Australia. On arriving he hears of his uncle's death, from a man named Wesley Crane.

Wesley Crane, for some sinister purpose, has Dick drugged and smuggled aboard the Rainbow, a small schooner commanded by Captain Cripps.

The Rainbow sights a derelict. Captain Cripps and Dick, going aboard the vessel, find a youth, who is overpowered by gas fumes, has been left aboard her.

Dick and the youth, Barry Freeland, reach the Rainbow safely; but Captain Cripps, staying longer on the derelict, is apparently drowned, owing to a storm rising, which causes the vessel to founder.

Barry Freeland takes charge of the Rainbow, and, finding some papers relating to pearls on a mysterious island, decides to go in search of the treasure, which rightfully belongs to Dick.

On reaching the island, however, they are informed by Captain Kempster, whom they find stranded there, that he is the sole survivor of the Stella, which was originally commissioned by Dick's uncle to recover the pearls. The Stella was attacked by the Brant—a vessel captained by a pirate named Burke, who steals the pearls.

While on the way to the Solomon Islands in search of Burke, the comrades on the Rainbow pick up three of his colleagues, and one of them, Barstow, helps in the recovery of the pearls, which were hidden on the island of San Cristobal.

They encounter the pirate, and he is made prisoner and taken aboard the Rainbow.

Finding that a tidal wave which struck the Rainbow and drove it aground has also broken one of the masts, Dick and Barry, with two other members of the crew, go ashore in order to find a tree suitable to make a new one.

They complete their task, and on returning to the water's edge, are startled by the sound of shots on the Rainbow. At the same time they notice a strange craft coming towards the island.

Dick scans the new vessel with his glasses, and is surprised to see, standing on the bridge, Captain Cripps and Wesley Crane.

(Now go on with the story.)

Cut off from the Rainbow.

"I never saw either of the blighters before," replied Barry, as he lowered the glasses. I was gassed when Cripps came aboard the Kauri. But I take your word for it. I reckon they're after the pearls, too, ain't they?"

"Not a doubt of it," said Dick sharply; "though how

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Cripps got safe seems a sort of miracle. I thought the Kauri had gone down in that squall."

"She couldn't have. But never mind that now. Hop into the boat—sharp. We've got to get back to the Rainbow before they board her, or it's all up with the pearls and everything else."

"Not with the pearls," put in Dick quietly. "You see, I brought 'em ashore with me."

Barry stopped short and stared.

"Well, you are the holy limit! What did ye do that for?"

"I thought it was safest," Dick replied apologetically. "You see, I couldn't feel they were safe, with Burke aboard the Rainbow."

"Safest!" exploded Barry. "Gosh, you're the only one o' the bunch that's got a head on his shoulders! But what are we going to do with 'em now?"

"Bury them, I think," said Dick. "It will be safer, in case of accidents."

"Right! Slap 'em in under that rock there. Sharp, before the Chinks come down. Hurry! That darned steamer will be right up against the Rainbow before we can get out!"

Dick wasted no time at all in burying the two bags of pearls, and a minute later he and Barry and the two Chinamen were in the boat. Barry took one oar, Chang the other, and the little whale-boat fairly lifted across the crested ripples.

"Shall we do it?" panted Barry, laying his back into it till the blade bent.

"I'm afraid not. She's coming in very fast."

A whiplike crack came from the steamer, and a bullet smacked the water an oar's-length from the boat, and went skipping shorewards, sending up little puffs of foam as it struck the waves. Almost instantly came a second shot, and then a third, which struck and splintered Barry's oar-blade.

Barry gave an angry exclamation.

"And we haven't got a gun among the bunch of us!" he exclaimed.

"It's no use," said Dick. "They'll only pick us all off. We'd best get back."

As he spoke Chang gave a cry. A bullet had grazed his arm.

"Round! Put her round, Dick!" cried Barry; and Dick instantly obeyed.

The boat skimmed back, Dick steering so as to bring her under the spit which projected on the inner side of the beach which they had just left.

The firing from the steamer still continued, but it was very wild; and though several bullets came unpleasantly near, no one was hit again, and they shot in under cover.

"All right, Barry," said Dick. "Vast pulling."

Barry turned, and shook his big fist in the direction of the steamer.

"You blighter!" he growled. "You shall pay for this!"

Dick did not say anything, but he was wondering how Barry meant to make good his threat. They were four, and unarmed. How were they to tackle the crew of the steamer, all, no doubt, armed to the teeth, and led by the redoubtable Cripps?

"What's to be done now?" demanded Barry. "Hang it all! We can't even go back to the beach and get our pearls?"

"Never mind that. They'll be safe enough where they are. The question is rather, what will they do?"

"Cripps, you mean, and Crane? Why, they'll collar the Rainbow, and tow her off, I suppose. Probably they'll murder Kempster and Barstow."

"I don't think they will," Dick answered thoughtfully.

"Cripps might, but Wesley Crane will be thinking of nothing but the pearls. He'll hang on to Kempster, in the hope that Kempster will tell him where they are."

"But Kempster don't know where they are."

"That's true, but Crane won't believe him; so I don't think that either Kempster or Barstow are in any immediate danger."

"And what will they do with Burke?" asked Barry.

"Keep him where he is; or, more likely, jam him down in the hold," Dick answered. "Cripps knows Burke all right. You may be sure of that."

Barry nodded.

"I reckon he does; but that don't help us a mite. Here are we, without grub or shooting-irons, and presently we'll be without a ship. Strikes me we're up against it worse than ever we were."

"It does look rather that way," allowed Dick. "All the same, we're not quite done for yet. There's always the Brant."

"Gosh, so there is! I'd clean forgotten the old hooker." He paused for a moment. "But I say, Dick, don't you reckon that wave last night busted her to blazes?"

"It very likely lifted her, but it's hardly likely to have sunk her. You see, being up that inlet, she'd have been out of the full force of it. Even if she is wrecked, we can get aboard her, and there are probably weapons of some sort in her."

"It's good enough to try, anyhow," said Barry. "If we sneak along inshore we ought to be able to reach her without getting another dose o' lead. And if she's afloat, we can hold her against a boat attack. Pull on, Chang."

"Wait a minute," said Dick. "I'll just put a handkerchief round that arm of his. It's bleeding a bit."

"Not velly much bad," observed Chang, as he rolled up his loose sleeve. "But him bleedee vellee lot."

"No; there's not much wrong," said Dick, as he bound up the wound. "All the same, Sam had better row, I think, Barry."

The change was made, and the boat moved off again. It was all right so long as they had the spit between them and the steamer. But a quarter of a mile further on they lost this protection, and Dick turned and steered boldly across the bay towards the northern inlet where the Brant lay.

As soon as ever they were in the open the firing began again. But now the range was a good thousand yards, and the bullets went very wide.

"They haven't got anyone up to your form, Dick," chuckled Barry.

"Me allee same glad," observed Chang, breaking his usual silence. "Mistel Dick too muchee good shot."

"Thank you, Chang," said Dick, with a smile. "That's a very nice compliment."

Barry and Sam pulled hard, and in a few minutes they were behind the mangrove spit, and safe from the fire from the steamer.

Dick gave a sudden exclamation.

"The Brant's gone!"

"Told you so!" said Barry grimly. "That blessed wave has finished her. She's at the bottom, right enough."

"Well, pull on a bit," said Dick. "We ought to see her masts. It's not deep here."

Barry bent his back again to his oar, and Dick steered out a little, so as to get a better view of the inlet which, just beyond, curved inwards to the right, like a bent finger.

Suddenly Dick shouted again, but this time it was a joyful yell.

"She's not sunk! There she is! Quite close in under this shore. On a level keel, too!"

The boat drove on with renewed vigour.

Presently Chang spoke.

"Me tinkum she floatee."

"By Jove, I believe he's right!" said Dick eagerly, as he bent forward, and, shading his eyes with one hand from the sun glare, stared at the schooner.

"She is afloat, if I'm not badly mistaken. Barry, that wave did us a good turn, after all."

"Can't see that," Barry said grumpily. "If it hadn't come, we'd have been off and away this morning."

"Yes; and, like as not, run into that thundering old pirate Cripps somewhere outside. He'd have been coming up on our course, and what earthly chance should we have had then? He'd have slit our throats, chucked us overboard, and gone off with the pearls!"

"You're mighty buckish over it all," said Barry, looking oddly at Dick.

"Well, I am," replied Dick. "There certainly don't seem to be much to buck about, but I've a sort of notion that we're coming out topside after all."

"I hope to goodness we are," said Barry doubtfully. "But I can't say prospects look rosy to me. Seems as if our only possible chance was a night attack, and it's hardly likely we shall take 'em by surprise. If we don't, the odds are a darned sight too long to give us any sort of show."

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"Easy, all!" said Dick, as the boat glided alongside the Brant. "Hurrah, she is afloat!"

"So she is," answered Barry; though it beats me how it happened. Now, by gosh, I see! Her anchor chain held when she was washed off that other shoal, and her hook has caught again, and saved her going ashore."

As he spoke he sprang aboard, and Dick followed.

For a moment Dick stood staring round, first at the decks, then at the masts. Then he turned to Barry.

"She seems sound, her rigging's all right. What's to hinder us from sailing her out and fetching help?"

But Barry shook his head.

"The bay's too narrow, old son. And these nights are too light. They'd spot us for a certainty as we passed, and the steamer would run us down. Then Cripps would follow the programme you suggested just now."

Dick's face fell.

"I suppose you're right," he said, with a sigh. "Well, let's turn to and see if there are any rifles aboard."

A Night Attack.

"Nary a gun," said Barry, as he met Dick half an hour later in the dirty, ill-smelling cabin. "I can't find a rifle or a pistol or even a scatter gun. Guess Burke took 'em all ashore. He may have been afraid of the niggers getting hold of 'em."

"I expect that was it," Dick answered. "I haven't found any guns either. But if they're ashore we'd best go and have a hunt in Burke's old camp."

"Fat lot o' good that would be! Why, the niggers will have raided every last stick left there, down to the empty cartridge-cases!"

"We've got to have something to tackle Cripps with," said Dick doggedly. "I'll tell you what there is down in the hold—a barrel of black powder. Couldn't we make bombs or something?"

"Black powder!" exclaimed Barry. "Gee! That must have been for their old cannon. Don't you remember Kempster said that they sunk his craft at Nameless Island with a gun?"

Dick drew a long breath.

"I'd clean forgotten. But where's the gun?"

"I don't see it," he added, looking all round.

Barry made a sudden dive for a boat which lay on the deck forward, turned upside-down.

"Here, Dick—Chang, give me a hand!"

Dick trembled with eagerness as, between them, they managed to lift the boat, and turn it over. Underneath was something covered with a tarpaulin, which was carefully laced jo eyes fixed in the deck planks.

Dick's fingers shook as, without waiting to unlace the cords, he cut them with his knife.

Next moment the tarpaulin was ripped away, and even Barry shouted with delight. For there, on a swivel, was the gun itself.

Barry examined it rapidly.

"A twelve-pounder," he said. "A regular old-time muzzle loader, but she's all right, and in first chop condition. Say, Dick, this beats rifles."

"Beats them silly, if we can only use it. Have you ever fired a gun?"

"Yes; a small signal gun."

"But this has got to be aimed," said Dick doubtfully.

"We'll aim her all right," Barry answered. "We'll go close enough to make sure of hitting," he added, with a grim chuckle.

Dick nodded.

"Yes, that'll be the best plan. But if we do they'll be banging away with their rifles. Couldn't we fix up a gun shield, something like what they have on a battleship?"

"Good egg!" said Barry. "We'll rake out some timber from down below, and build up some sort of a fence round her."

"And we might arrange a few dummy figures to draw their fire," suggested Dick.

"Gosh, it's you have got the head on you, Dick!" replied Barry, with hearty approval. "We'll make you skipper of this old hooker."

Chang had been standing by, listening to the conversation, and taking it all in.

"Me tinkum velly good plan," he remarked. "Me tinkum go below, cook suppel, then makee them dummy men."

"You can make all the dummies you like, Chang," said Barry, "but as for supper, we'll have to wait for that until we've fixed up this gun-shield. We'll need all the daylight there is left to do it proper."



They set to work without wasting a moment. Luckily they had their axes in the boat, and it did not take long to rip out some stout planking from the partitions below. They found hammer and nails aboard, and soon had a shield several inches thick, and quite enough to stop an ordinary Winchester bullet.

All the time they were keeping a smart look-out, for there was always the offchance that Cripps might send a boat off to see what had become of them. But as the probabilities were strong that he did not know of the existence of the Brant, he would most likely take it for granted that they were ashore.

Anyhow, as Dick said, he and Crane would be turning the Rainbow inside out to look for the pearls. That would keep them busy for the rest of the day.

No boat appeared, and by sunset they had not only finished the shield, but also got the mainsail ready to hoist. Then Barry got into the boat again, and, taking Sam to row, started to hunt out the channel. He used the lead freely, and after a while came back quite cheerful.

"Plenty of water round the end of the bank," he said. "I've got the channel clear in my head, and if the breeze lasts I'll get her round without trouble."

"Are you going to try it to-night?" asked Dick.

"You bet. What's the use of waiting? We'll start as soon as we've had some supper, and got those dummies fixed."

"Chang's fixing some grub," said Dick. "And I've dug out some stuff from the slop chest for the dummies. We'll stuff 'em with blankets and pillows."

Chang was a wonderful cook, and out of odds and ends he had found in the pantry and store-room he had succeeded in preparing a really first-rate meal.

Hungry with their long day's work, Barry and Dick did full justice to it, and no thought of the desperate venture they were going to engage in was allowed to spoil their appetite.

The one thing they were anxious about was the breeze. If it failed they were done. Even if it changed it would be impossible to get out, for the channel was too narrow to tack.

At sunset it had shown signs of dying away, but when they came up from supper, to their great relief it had strengthened again.

"Plenty to take us out," said Barry, with quiet satisfaction. "Now about those dummies, Dick—are they ready?"

As he spoke Chang appeared with one under each arm. They were really works of art, and when stiffened with pieces of board and topped off, each with a straw hat, they had an absurdly life-like appearance.

They arranged them on different parts of the deck, but none anywhere near the gun.

The next job was to load the gun. Dick had found the rammer and the shells, or, rather, projectiles. But of the latter there were only three left.

"It's plenty," said Barry. "If we don't fix 'em with three we certainly won't get the chance to use any more. Let me see. The powder goes in a bag, don't it?"

"I don't know anything about that," Dick admitted. "That's your job, not mine."

"Glad there's something I know that you don't," answered Barry. "Yes, I've got the hang of the thing. But it's precious old-fashioned. I guess Burke bought it out of a junk shop."

Bare-armed, he rammed the projectile home on top of the powder, and put a length of match ready. Then he primed the touch-hole.

"Now, then, up with the mainsail," he said. And presently the blocks were creaking, and the big sail rose slowly into position.

Getting up the anchor was no easy job, for the cable was foul of something at the bottom. At last, however, they managed to heave clear, and Barry sprang to the wheel. The big sail filled, and the Brant began to move slowly through the water.

"Gosh, it's a sound I began to think I'd never hear again!" said Barry, listening to the tinkle of the ripples under the schooner's forefoot. "Tell you what, Dick, if we had that foresail set she'd be handier. She steers like a mud barge with only the main."

"All right. We'll get her up," answered Dick; and, calling to Chang and Sam, went forward.

Barry was right. The foresail helped her wonderfully, and she came through the channel without touching anywhere. Barry threw her up towards the end of the mangrove spit.

"Watch out now!" he said warningly to Dick. "They'll begin to let fly as soon as they spot her."

"If you run up the middle of the bay, they're bound to spot us at once," replied Dick. "Why not keep her close under the south shore? There's plenty of water, and she won't show up so much against the cliffs."

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"H'm! I'll try it, anyhow," Barry answered, giving the wheel a spin. "It may work all right."

It did work all right. The Brant's sails were of dark-coloured canvas, and with the tall cliff as a background, they must have been practically invisible in the starlight. Minute after minute they crept quietly on until they could plainly see the Rainbow and the dark, squat, ugly shape of the steamer lying just to the northward of her.

"We're in range already," whispered Dick, "and the beggars haven't spotted us yet. I'll bet it isn't Cripps's watch on deck, anyhow."

"So much the worse for him," muttered Barry. "Now, see here, Dick. I'm going bang up to her. The Rainbow is still on the shoal, but there's water this side, and we can slip up, keeping the Rainbow between us and the steamer."

"I see," said Dick eagerly. "Then they won't be able to shoot at us until we're past her."

"Just so; or if they do, they won't be so apt to hit us. Now I'm going to carry on until they begin shooting, or until they hail us. Then you must take the wheel—I can't trust it to Chang—and I'll go straight to the gun. Keep her head straight for the steamer, and I shall try and bang the first shot into her engines."

Dick nodded.

"Right you are! Make Chang and Sam keep alongside you behind the shield."

"I'll do that," Barry paused a moment. "It's you who are getting the worst of it, Dick," he said. "You stand the chance of being hit."

"Don't worry about me. I shall duck down as close as I can to the deck. The light's bad, and they're no great shots. I shall be all right."

The breeze was very light, and silent as a phantom ship the Brant crept up along the edge of the shoal. Dick, with his eyes fixed on the dim hulk of the steamer, hardly breathed.

Nearer and nearer they came, until barely three hundred yards separated them from the big ugly hulk.

"Schooner, ahoy! Who are you?" came a startled shout from the steamer.

"Spotted us at last!" muttered Barry. "Take the wheel, Dick!"

Dick's hands instantly gripped the spokes, and Barry glided forward to the gun.

"Schooner, ahoy!" cried the same voice from the steamer. "Where are you coming to? Sheer off! D'ye hear?"

In spite of his anxiety, Dick smiled to himself. By the sound of the voice, the man who had hailed him was evidently badly rattled.

There came the faint thud of bare feet on the steamer's deck, and a sound of confused shoutings. By this time the Brant was barely two hundred yards from the steamer's side.

"Sheer off, you!" came a great, bellowing roar. It was Cripps's voice. "Sheer off, or I'll shoot the stuffing out of you!"

"Two can play at that game!" muttered Dick, but at the same moment he dropped down on his knees, keeping hold of the lower spokes.

It was as well, for next instant sharp flashes sprang from the steamer's side, and the sound of shots woke the echoes from the cliffs on either side.

Dick heard the vicious ping of bullets overhead, and then thud and smack as they struck the deck around him. One actually hit the wheel, cutting splinters from it. But he himself remained untouched, and still the schooner crept steadily forward, with her bow pointed straight for the side of the anchored ship.

The firing redoubled, but it was shockingly wild. It was quite clear to Dick that panic reigned aboard Cripps's vessel. Small wonder either, for the soundless, steady approach of the schooner was enough to try anyone's nerves.

Dick wondered how his dummies were faring. He fancied they must have collected a good deal of lead already.

Nearer came the Brant—nearer still. It looked as if she were bent on ramming the steamer. Dick began to wonder whether something had gone wrong with the gun.

They were so near that he could distinctly see a dozen or more figures lining the side of the steamer. The firing was very heavy. All around him the white splashes showed where the deck planks had been splintered by bullets. But barring a slight cut on the arm from a flying splinter, he himself was unhurt.

Suddenly he saw the flash of a match behind the shield forward, and next moment came a crash which utterly eclipsed the crackling of the rifles. He felt the schooner jerk back slightly with the force of the recoil.

With the crash, or just after it, came a clang like an earthquake in an armourer's shop. The twelve-pound shot had torn through the side of the steamer as easily as a rifle bullet through a tin kettle, and smacked clean into the middle of the engines.



With one mighty effort, Barry lifted Burke bodily and swung him clean over his shoulder, and he came down with a shock that made the whole fabric of the schooner quiver.

What damage it had done it was impossible to say, but by the noise it was evidently considerable. The crew of the steamer were panic-stricken. With wild yells and shouts they ran in all directions.

"Hurrah for you, Barry!" shouted Dick, in huge delight; and next moment his shout changed to a cry of pain, for a bullet, just grazing his elbow, sent a tingle of agony through the whole arm.

"Hard aport!" came Barry's voice, loud and sharp. "Hard aport, or you'll be aboard her!"

The order pulled Dick together, and, in spite of his pain, he managed to pull the wheel over. The tide, which was still making, helped the schooner round, and she fell off just in time to escape wrecking herself on the steamer's iron side.

But she was so close that, had Cripps's people kept their heads, they could have absolutely raked her with rifle-fire, and probably killed every soul aboard her.

Luckily for Barry and Dick, they were too flabbergasted by the utterly unexpected cannon-shot to do anything of the sort. Only a few scattering shots were fired, then the Brant, catching a puff, was running sharply out into the centre of the bay.

"Keep her out till we've loaded again!" came Barry's order.

"All right," Dick answered weakly. His elbow was giving him such agony that he felt quite faint and sick.

Barry came dashing back towards the wheel.

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Next Monday's Number of The "MAGNET" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a Splendid, Long, Complete Story, entitled:

"What's the matter, Dick? Are you hit?" he asked with real anxiety in his voice.

"It's only a touch," replied Dick. "A graze on the elbow. Hurts like sin, but nothing worth worrying about."

"Sure you can hang on?" asked Barry anxiously.

"Quite sure! Don't worry. Go and load up. And, Barry, put the next one between wind and water. It's no use disabling her. You've got to sink her."

"That's what I mean to do," Barry answered grimly. "They've brought it on themselves. They attacked us first."

"Bah! You don't need any excuse for wiping out Cripps and Crane," said Dick.

But Barry had already run back to the gun, and was sponging it out in the smartest style.

Dick kept the schooner close to the wind. The first agony of pain had worn off a little, and he was watching the steamer, which buzzed like a stirred wasps' nest.

Someone was still taking long shots at them, but the light was not good enough to give the marksman a chance.

A minute later came Barry's voice again:

"Round with her, Dick! We're ready!"

The Brant Is Boarded.

It was all Dick could do to spin the spokes, but, luckily, the Brant was handy in stays, and she came round easily. There were wild yells from the steamer as they saw their

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!" By Frank Richards.



In the recent fighting around Argonne a hand-grenade was hurled by one of the Germans into a British trench. The incident would certainly have been attended by loss of life, had not a brave sergeant seized the shell before it could explode and hurled it back towards the enemy.

enemy coming back, and a series of heavy volleys crashed out from her deck.

But Dick lay flat, and the others were well protected by the timber shield. Relentless as Fate, the Brant bore down and came up to within the same short range as before.

"Now!" roared Barry, and Dick threw her up so that her bow pointed straight for the steamer.

Again the gun roared, and as the smoke cleared, Dick heard Barry give an exciting yell:

"We've done it this time! We've settled their hash, Dick!"

There was no doubt whatever about that. The last shot had struck the steamer exactly on the water-line, and only a few feet from the spot where the first had entered.

It had knocked a great, ragged hole through the plating, big enough for a man to get his body through, and through this the water was simply sluicing into the ugly old black tank.

Dick did not wait to see any more. As quickly as possible he came round again and ran out, until there was no longer risk from rifle-shots.

"We've done the trick this time," said Barry, coming up to Dick. "They'll never plug that hole. She's bound to sink."

"Unless they run her ashore," said Dick.

"Run her ashore! How will they do it? That first chunk of iron made hay of her engines. No; she'll just lie where

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she is till she goes flop to the bottom. Now, while we're waiting, let's see to that arm of yours.

"Ay, it's only a graze, as you say," he continued; "but it touched your funny-bone, so no wonder it hurt!"

As he spoke, he bound it up rapidly.

"They're getting out a boat, Barry," said Dick.

"Small blame to 'em! They'll need it."

"Yes, but they'll board the Rainbow."

"Can't help it if they do; and it won't help them much. The Rainbow is hard and fast for the next three days, so she's absolutely at our mercy. We can make any terms we like."

"The tide's shifting us," said Dick. "We'll drift right down the bay, if we don't look out. Hadn't we better anchor?"

"Not good enough. Leaves us at their mercy, if they tackle us with boats. We must keep cruising until we see what's going to happen."

"The steamer's going to sink. That's one thing that'll happen," remarked Dick drily. "Look at her. She's got a regular list already."

"And they're all tumbling into their boats at the double-quick," said Barry. "Yes, they're going to the Rainbow. Wonder how Kempster and Barstow are making it?"

"Tell you what, Dick," he added. "The best thing we can do is to sink the boat, and get rid of the whole outfit. What with Burke and his crowd, as well as Cripps & Co., there'll be too heavy a contract for us to handle aboard the Rainbow."

"You forget," returned Dick. "We've only one shot left. Anyhow, it would be a bit too much like murder to pile it into an open boat. It was a different thing sinking the steamer."

"Then we'd best shove aboard the Rainbow before they get there," said Barry. "You'd better remember they'll have their guns with 'em, and we don't want to have to plunk our last shot into the Rainbow."

Dick grunted.

"I doubt if we can do it, but we'll have a shy, if you like. Take the wheel, will you? My arm's so stiff I can hardly use it."

Barry took the wheel, and Dick walked forward to get a better view of the steamer. She was sinking all right; there was no doubt about that. One boat had pushed off, and another was alongside. So far as Dick could make out in the dim starlight, there were still several men on the deck who were flinging their kit into this second boat.

The Brant, carried by the tide, had drifted past the steamer's stern, and was floating out into the bay. Barry brought her round and put her up into the wind; but, between the lightness of the breeze and the contrary set of the tide, she was very sluggish in getting under way.

As Dick stood peering forward, and wondering what the chances were of reaching the Rainbow before the steamer's boats, a slight sound from somewhere aft attracted his attention. He turned sharply, and the movement undoubtedly saved his life, for at that moment a pistol cracked, and a bullet whizzed past so closely that he felt the wind of it on his cheek.

As he turned he caught sight of a boat which had slipped up, unnoticed, under the Brant's counter. There were four men in it, and one had just caught hold of the rail, and was pulling the boat up so as to jump aboard.

"Look out, Barry!" yelled Dick, and started running as hard as he could go towards the stern.

But he had hardly started, before he remembered that he

had no weapon of any sort. The men in the boat had firearms.

He glanced round, and his eyes fell upon the third and last of their cannon-shot, which lay upon the deck beside the gun. On the impulse of the moment he snatched it up, and raced on.

Two more shots snapped viciously from the boat. He hardly noticed them, and he and Barry arrived at the stern almost at the same moment.

"Out of the way, Barry!" he shouted, and, without an instant's hesitation, raised the big twelve-pound shot in both hands and flung it straight down into the boat.

There was a crash and a yell. The man who had been standing up made a wild spring aboard, but the boat, with the bottom knocked out of her, drifted away, settling rapidly.

"Look out Barry!" shrieked Dick again. "It's Burke!"

There was no mistaking that great, squat, toad-like form, but before Burke could regain his balance or raise his hand to use his pistol Barry was on him.

With one sweep of his arm Barry knocked the pistol flying into the sea. Burke, with a quickness amazing in a man of his great bulk, sprang at Barry, and threw both arms round his waist. He flung his weight forward, and tried to bear Barry to the deck.

With Dick—with any person of ordinary strength—Burke's manoeuvre would have succeeded. But Barry's muscular power was enormous—greater even than that of Burke.

He did not yield an inch, but, stooping swiftly, got his arms round Burke's body. Then, with one mighty effort, he lifted him bodily and swung him clean over his shoulder.

Burke's hold broke in the swing, and the huge bulk of him sailed through the air, and came down upon the planking of the deck with a shock that made the whole fabric of the schooner quiver.

There he lay motionless as a sack of coals.

"You—you've killed him!" muttered Dick.

"Hope so, anyhow," panted Barry. "If I have, I've saved the hangman a job. What about the others?"

A fearful scream ringing out through the night was his answer. There was a rush and a swirl of water a few yards astern, but when they turned there was nothing to be seen.

Dick shivered.

"The sharks have got them," he muttered.

He felt absolutely sick with the sudden reaction; but Barry seemed unmoved.

"Three of them, weren't there?" he said.

"Yes; four in all, including Burke."

"Redstall, Dent, and Pyke," said Barry. "Well, that's settled Burke's outfit, anyhow. Wonder how they got loose?"

Dick did not answer. He was bending over Burke.

"He's not dead," he said. "Give me a hand, and let's carry him below."

But Barry had already sprung back to the wheel. A puff of wind had come up suddenly, and he was only just in time to save the schooner from gybing.

"He'll have to stay where he is for the present, Dick. We've lost too much time already. Cripps is aboard the Rainbow, and he and his crowd will take some shifting."

Dick glanced across to the Rainbow. Barry was right. The two boats from the steamer were already alongside the schooner, and their crews had climbed aboard.

He shook his head.

"We've lost our chance," he said despondently. "They've got her, and they've got their rifles. And we—we have fired our last shot."

"Our last shot?" repeated Barry. "We've only fired two."

"Yes," said Dick; "but I used the last to sink Burke's boat."

A thick laugh startled them both.

"Ho, ho, my lads! So you have done yourselves down this time!" came Burke's jeering voice.

(Another fine, long instalment of this thrilling serial story next week. Order your copy early.)

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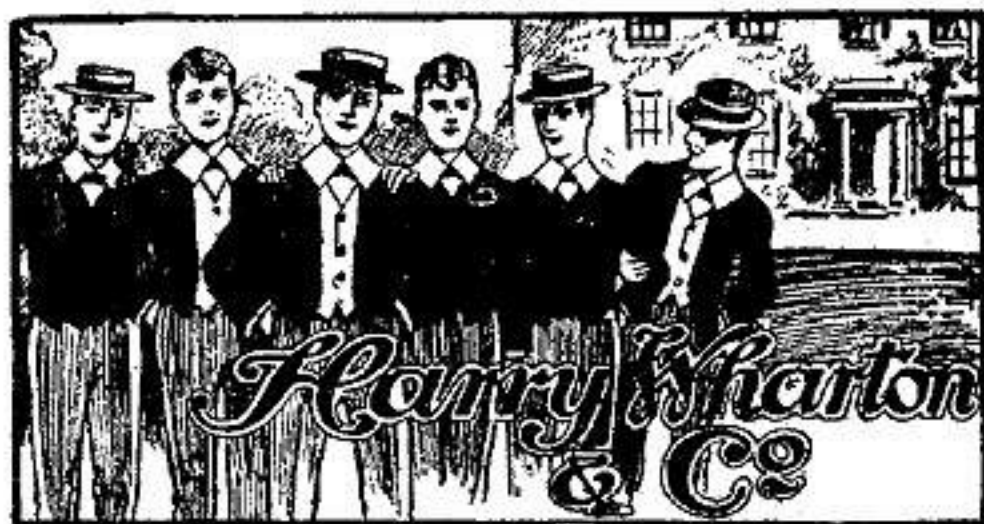
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FAVOURITE FRIENDS IN FICTION.

No 1.



We love the gallant Greyfriars chums,
Who always stand together
Through thick and thin, whatever comes,
In fair or stormy weather.
To play the game they always strive
In sport and classic knowledge;
A noble band, the Famous Five—
The idols of their college!

The first and foremost of them all
Is worthy Harry Wharton,
Who's always keen and "on the ball"
When'er there's any sport on.
Who plays the great and noble part
Of an industrious leader
With courage which delights the heart
Of every "Magnet" reader.

A hero, firm to do and dare,
Is free and faithful Franky,
Who, as his rivals are aware,
Will stand no hanky-panky.
He bucks his youthful leader up
In manner meritorious,
And struggles hard for shield or cup
And all that's great and glorious.

The very essence of all mirth
Is genial Robert Cherry,
Whose laughter echoes round the earth,
And makes ten thousand merry.
A long-limbed, curly-headed lad,
He wins our admiration,
And keeps our spirits gay and glad
And full of jubilation.

May every fine and ripping thing
Be yours for many a day, Bob!
The same applies to Hurree Singh,
The daring, dusky Nabob—
Whose weird and wondrous mode of speech
Is scarcely scientific,
And makes hilarious juniors screech
Because it's so "terrific!"

Brave Johnny Bull completes the Five—
A sturdy son of Britain!
In "scraps" he's very much alive
And foes are sorely smitten.
Then here's to Wharton's gallant crew,
Ne'er may their record perish!
And may we, all the ages through,
Their splendid actions cherish!

Next Monday

TOM MERRY & CO.

No. 2 of this grand new series.


"PONSONBY'S PLOT!"

By Frank Richards.

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MY READERS' PAGE

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.



For Next Monday.

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!"

By Frank Richards.

The grand long complete story of Greyfriars School, entitled as above, which will appear on Monday next, describes how the cricketing fixture with Highcliffe, which has been "dropped" for some time on account of Ponsonby's caddishness, undergoes a revival. But the rival school has a vastly different eleven on this occasion, with Courtenay and the Caterpillar in command. This, of course, enrages the elegant Pon, who is not slow to make mischief between the two schools. His plan failing, he hits upon a desperate device at the eleventh hour, and succeeds in kidnapping Frank Courtenay and his chum, hoping that in so doing he may get a place in the team. The full results of

"PONSONBY'S PLOT!"

are graphically described in Frank Richards' own masterly manner.

NOW IS THE TIME!

Those splendid, unselfish fellows who are making it their duty to spread the fame of the companion papers wherever they go—in the Army, the Navy, and the many spheres of civilian life—have a golden opportunity this week of adding to their good work.

I generally do what is vulgarly known as "make a song" about Double Numbers; and I consider that I am justified in boasting a little, for our Double Numbers are not ordinary, fifth-rate things, without any life in them. They are the result of weeks of patient industry, and the present issue, which has overshadowed the great numbers of the past, is no exception.

Nearly four hundred stories have appeared since a certain Tuesday in April, when the "Magnet" Library was launched on its prosperous career; but I cannot help thinking that "Schoolboys Never Shall be Slaves!" eclipses them all. What boy can read it without being thrilled and intensely interested? Precious few, I warrant. And the other features, too—"The Greyfriars Herald," the magnificent serial, and so on—all go to make up a truly admirable number.

Let me urge all my chums, as I have urged them many times before, not to let this gilt-edged opportunity slip by of doing the "Magnet" Library and its Editor a good turn by handing this Double Number, when finished with, to a non-reading chum. The circulation of our grand little journal is at present very high; but I make no secret of the fact that I want to make it higher still. In fact, I want it to be said that the "Magnet" Library is the most widely-circulated book for boys in the world!

Shoulder to shoulder, then, my chums, and make a supreme effort this week to bring about the desired end.

THE CRUSHING OF A CAD!

An evilly-disposed person, signing himself J. S. S. K., wrote to me a few weeks ago expressing condemnation of the "Magnet" Library, and saying that he would do his best to stop other boys from reading it. As it is always my policy to be impartial with my correspondents, I published the offensive letter sent me by this precious youth, with the result that hundreds of loyal readers have sent me their views on the subject, generally adding that they would be pleased to have three things—a cricket-stump, a quiet five minutes, and J. S. S. K.—This is what a reader from Nottingham says:

"128, St. Ann's Well Road,
Nottingham."

"Dear Editor,—I'm awfully sorry that you were troubled by receiving such a peevish letter from J. S. S. K."

"I have been a reader of your fine paper, the 'Magnet,' since it started, and have never had to grumble at it."

J. S. S. K. must be a rotter to say that he will stop everybody else from reading your papers. One thing is certain; he won't stop me! Not likely! From your 'Replies in Brief' one can tell that you are a proper sport, and will always do your best to advise any of your readers.

"I am glad you gave J. S. S. K. an answer so strongly, but, in my opinion, it was not strong enough. He should learn patience. I myself do not think it would be possible for me to give up reading the bright, clean, and humorous stories contained in the 'Magnet' and 'Gem' Libraries. Rather than have J. S. S. K. as a reader of your papers, I would buy extra copies myself each week, sending the surplus to some of our soldiers who read the papers before the war started, and who say they miss them very much."

"Cheer up, and for goodness' sake don't let a cad like J. S. S. K. worry you! Though my first and last initials are the same as his, I am certain I have no relation whatever with him."

"Yours very sincerely,

"J. C. H. K."

Thank you, my Nottingham friend! Yours is just the sort of loyal letter I like; and so long as I continue to receive such cheery expressions of goodwill I shall be able to ignore the heartless utterances of fellows of the J. S. S. K. type. One of my chums suggests that J. S. S. K. means "Just Some Swanking K-nut." Perhaps he is not far from the truth.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"The Terrible Three" (Annicland).—It was very patriotic of you to send your spare copies of the "Magnet" to our sailors. In stating your favourite characters, you have made a very good selection.

George Barker (Lowestoft).—Bunter and Fish are fools rather than rogues. Your storyette was sent to the wrong quarter.

"Ginger" (West Hartlepool).—Bulstrode has saved a good many penalties in the course of his career as the Remove goalie. I cannot say if Mrs. Mimble's boy will appear in any future story.

"A Faithful Follower" (Finchley).—Glad to hear that, although once antagonistic to the "Magnet" and the "Gem," you have now come to appreciate their sterling worth. With regard to your question, you should visit the local gymnasium.

H. E. Gowers (Haverhill).—Hurree Singh receives a substantial supply of pocket-money each week, but I am unable to state the exact sum.

H. Hodgson (Maidenhead).—You may take my word for it that the amalgamation of "The Dreadnought" with "The Boys' Friend" was a carefully considered action, and not a rash one, as you state in your letter. As to your observation that the Jimmy Silver stories are not up to the mark, I expect my huge "Boys' Friend" public will have something to say about that!

"Contented" (Yorkshire).—The place you mention does not exist, to my knowledge. I am afraid that if I were to fill up the "Magnet" with the Greyfriars story I should incur the wrath of all my serial-loving readers.

A. N. (Leeds).—Twenty-six numbers of the "Magnet" Library constitute a volume.

"Nelsonian" (Bootle).—I thank you most heartily for your loyalty and staunch support. More will be heard of the Cliff House girls shortly.

The Editor

A CHAT WITH MY CORRESPONDENTS.

Never before in the history of the "Magnet" Library have I been the recipient of such a vast number of letters and post-cards from readers all the world over. Indeed, if I attempted to reply to them all, I should be compelled to bring out another copy of the paper for the purpose.

Many of the communications contained valuable suggestions, and many more set forth questions concerning the boys of Greyfriars. In the case of the latter, I am very sorry indeed

that lack of space precludes me from replying, and I must claim the indulgence of my reader-chums, and ask them to accept the brief mention of their names as an acknowledgment.

By studying the stories carefully week by week they will doubtless gain whatever information they desire.

The following chums are to be warmly commended for their thoughtful letters:

"A Canadian Jewish Reader" (Montreal).
 "A Collector" (Middlesbrough).
 "A Constant Reader" (Macclesfield).
 "A Constant Reader of the Trio" (Cardiff).
 "A Cornish Reader" (Near Newquay).
 Adams, William (Stranraer).
 "A Faithful Reader" (Birmingham).
 A. G.
 "A Harry Wharton Admirer" (New South Wales).
 "A Loyal and Constant Reader" (Surrey).
 "A Loyal Chum" (High Wycombe).
 "A Loyal Magnet Reader" (Kettering).
 "A Loyal Reader" (Camborne).
 "A Loyal Reader in the Herts R.F.A." (Hertford).
 "A Loyal Reader in Truth" (Leeds).
 "A Magnetite" (Luton).
 "A Magnetite" (Swindon).
 "A Melbourne Magnetite" (Australia).
 "American" (Bristol).
 "An Atherton Reader" (Near Manchester).
 "A New Reader" (Burton-on-Trent).
 "An Old Boy" (Melbourne).
 "Anti-S.P.S."
 "Anxious" (Near St. Helen's).
 "Artist" (Glasgow).
 "A South Wales Reader."
 "A Staunch Magnetite" (Cardiff).
 "A True Reader" (Blackheath).
 Austin, H. (Manchester).
 "Australian Reader."
 A. V. C. (Tunbridge Wells).

Bartow, Frederick (Oldham).
 Barnasconi, L. (Batham).
 "Bewanco" (Birmingham).
 Bill, A. (Liverpool).
 Binderman, E. (Shoreditch).
 Blease, A. (Bolton).
 "Bluebell in Fairyland."
 "Bookworm" (Manchester).
 Bottone, Frank (Blackfriars).
 "Brownie" (Basingstoke).
 Barley, William (Liverpool).
 Buxton, B. (Earlsfield).

"Cadet" (Walthamstow).
 Callaghan, J. (Workington).
 Carew, Charles (Bristol).
 Carrey, Private (Ireland).
 Carlton, Mrs. Lilian (Dublin).
 Casson, Alfred (Birkenhead).
 Castle, Alfred (Shoreditch).
 "C. & R." (Brixton Hill).
 Clark, Victor (Dublin).
 Clifford, G. (Southwark).
 "Constant Reader."
 Cooper, Walter (Essex).
 Courtenay, Frank (Bridgwater).
 Crompton, Norman (Salford).
 "Curley" (Bromley).
 C. W. C. F. (Enfield Highway).

"Dolly R." (Manchester).
 Doyle, Harry (Liverpool).
 Duggan, D'Arcy (Ontario).

Edge, C. T. (Sheffield).
 E. E. R. S. (North Shields).
 E. G. S. ("A Loyal Reader").
 Elliott, C. (Margate).
 English, C. (West Ham).
 "Ever Faithful" (Sydney).
 "Ewart" (Montreal).

F. B. 79. (Bridgwater).
 F. E. (Lancashire).
 "Fighting Magpie" (Melbourne).
 Fildes, Madge (Crewe).
 Forbes, S. (London).
 Ford, Harold (Birmingham).
 F. P. (Devonport).
 Franks, P. (Oxford Street).
 Frisky, Clifford (Leeds).

G. A.
 Gardener, Spencer (Rhyl, N. Wales).
 Gardner, Robert (Stirling, Scotland).
 Gaywood, E. (Deal).
 G. C. R. (Croydon).
 George, Kathleen.
 G. E. J. (Bristol).
 Gibson J. E. (Derby).
 Gillard, R. P. (Portsmouth).
 G. M. S. (Clapham).
 Graham, John (Bradford).
 G. W. (Everton).

"Happy and Content" (Regent's Park).
 H. C. O. (Hastings).
 Higgins, J. J. (Manchester).
 Hillmann, E. A.
 Harrison, F. (Manchester).
 H. I. F. (Sunderland).
 Howley, R. (Melbourne).
 H. S. (Accrington).
 H. W. H. (Darlington).
 H. W. W. (Hull).
 H. W. (Liverpool).
 Hart, J. (Suffolk).

"Inquisitive" (Bradford).
 Irving, Lorna (Hornsey).

Jaques, Dora (Natal).
 J. A. J. (Adelaide).
 J. A. & J. H. (Manchester).
 J. C. (Calgary).
 J. C. Q. (Belfast).
 J. E. W. (Liverpool).
 J. O. M. (Custom House).
 "John Bull" (Glasgow).
 Jones, Sam (Hobart).
 J. T. N. (Sussex).

Kelly, Tim (Royal Irish Rifles).
 Knight, Eric (Seacombe).

L. W. and Chums (Plaistow).
 Lavigne, Louis (Exeter).
 L. B. (Ventnor).
 "Little Tich."
 "Locomotive" (Portsmouth).
 "Liskerret" (Cornwall).
 Logan, James (Lancashire).
 L. T. (Sheffield).
 Lloyd, Kitty (Pontypridd).

"Matchbox" (Dulwich).
 Manzie, Frank (Australia).
 Mac " (Johnstone).
 "Manchester Admirer."
 Mason, C. (Sheffield).
 Miles, F. (Cardiff).
 Miles, G. (Gateshead).
 Misdorp, P. (Cape Town).
 M. P. (Woolwich).
 M. J. B. (Bournemouth).
 Morris, S. (London, E.).

"Nap" (Alboa).
 N. Y. (Newcastle).

O. B. O. (Birkenhead).
 "Old Reader" (Aberdeen).
 "Old Carthusian" (London).
 Oliver, Ernest (British Expeditionary Force).

Paton, G. (Dumbarton).
 Patterson, W. (Hull).
 P. G. (Aberdeen).
 "Pro-Magnetite."
 Pye, R. (London).
 Pratt, Gordon.

"Regular Reader" (Hull).
 Roberts, W. (Southsea).

Sanshaw, J. (Buxton).
 "Staunch Magnetite."
 Salter, R. (Winchmore Hill).
 Scott, W. (Fulham).
 Sheppard, W. (Fairlie).
 Simon, J. (Broughton).
 "Saxon" (Battersea).
 Smith, G. D. (Scarborough).
 Sutton, C. T. (Southsea).
 Savage, G. (Cumberland).
 S. G. F.
 Standeven, E. (King's Cross).
 Smith, Reggie (Chelmsford).

"Two Loyal Readers."
 "Tommy" (Somerset).
 "The Terrible Four" (Wimbledon).
 Taylor, R. (Eastbourne).
 "Two Country Chums" (Kent).
 Thomas, R. A. (Ardrossan).
 Turner, W. (Bolton).
 "Two School Girls" (Surrey).
 "Two Italian Chums."
 "Two Bristol Boys."
 Thompson, M. (Hull).

Watson, J. (Scarborough).
 Wyatt, C. (Fulham).
 W. T. (Gateshead).
 Webber, Private (Newhaven).
 "Well-Wisher" (Mantoch).
 Wilson, John (Glasgow).
 Willis, J. C. (Perth).
 W. E. F. (Bermondsey).
 W. H. D. (Hull).
 Williams, Idris (Cardiff).
 Welford, E. (Ashton-on-Tyne).
 Weaver, F. (London).
 Walton, A. (Glasgow).
 Wright, D. (Surrey).

"York Lad" (Salisbury Plain).

The Rival Raiders!

(Continued from page 37.)

with the party, if they don't like it, they can lump it." Fish chuckled at the idea. "They can't make a row in the Close after lights out, that's a dead cert. It would mean a row for them if they were caught out of the dorm. I guess I'm going to be a member of this little excursion—some!"

CHAPTER 4.

"HERE it is!"

Bob Cherry whispered the words as he drew the biscuit-tin from its concealment behind the woodshed.

The Famous Five were very quiet and cautious. There was no harm in their escapade—it was simply a joke—but they knew that if they were discovered out of their dormitory at that hour the powers that were would not look upon it as a joke. Greyfriars fellows had been known to steal out of bounds after dark for worse purposes, such as "pub-haunting," and the rules on the subject were very strict. If Gasling, the porter, or a prefect or a master spotted the adventurous five they would be hauled before the Head at once, and a tremendous licking would be the reward of their enterprise, as well as "gating" for one or more half-holidays.

That reflection was enough to make the juniors very cautious. Once outside the walls of the school they would be safer; but within the walls the greatest care was needed. For masters and prefects were still up, many lighted windows gleamed out into the dusk of the old Close, and it was quite possible that some obnoxious person in authority might take a turn in the Close before going to bed.

"Quiet!" whispered Wharton. "And keep in cover! And if you see so much as a shadow, lie low."

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors crept away from the woodshed, Bob Cherry carrying the tarry biscuit-tin very carefully.

Avoiding the part of the Close where the light from the windows fell, and keeping as much in cover as possible, the juniors crept towards the school wall.

In the corner of the wall, where a tree grew close to the old stonework, was the spot where climbing was easy, and most of the juniors had been over the wall in that place before. Anywhere else the climb would have been exceedingly difficult.

With silent steps, Harry Wharton & Co. came through the old elms and approached the shadowy corner.

Suddenly Wharton, who was leading, halted and darted back into the shadow of a tree.

"Stop!" he whispered.

The juniors backed under the elms.

"What is it?" muttered Johnny Bull.

"Somebody on the watch."

"Oh, my hat!"

"What rotten luck!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific!"

"Shush!"

"Are you sure—" began Bob.

"Shush! Look!"

Keeping carefully concealed in the dense shadow of the elm-trees, the juniors peered out towards the corner of the wall. There another shadow fell darkly—that of the tree growing close to the wall. But in the dark shadow of the tree was a darker shadow still—darker, more opaque—and it was evidently a form standing motionless there—on the watch.

The slightest noise would have been enough to betray them, and the wall was difficult to clamber over in any other spot. Unless the shadowy watcher departed they had no chance of carrying out their scheme.

Would he go?

Evidently he had not seen them, and surely the most patient prefect would not wait there very, very long on the chance of catching truant juniors? He could only be acting on suspicion, for if he knew they were out of their dormitory, he would go there, and the empty beds would prove their identity. And a prefect acting on mere suspicion would surely not wait a long time on the watch!

But the time was passing minute after minute, till half-past ten sounded from the clock-tower. Still the figure did not move away. Several times it had stirred, as if in impatience, but it remained in the same spot.

A few minutes later there was a sound on the high-road outside the walls. A jingling sound of bicycles as they swept by, and a voice raised in cheery song—the voice of Dick Trumper of Courtfield.

The juniors simply wriggled with rage.

Trumper & Co.—the three fellows they had intended to capture and tar, in order to provide them with adequate cause

for sniggering—were passing the school wall, and now it was too late!

Unconscious of the ambush they had escaped, oblivious to the danger that had threatened—or, rather, had been intended to threaten—the three Courtfield fellows cycled on, and the jingling of the bicycles died away down the road.

They were gone.

Bob Cherry drew a deep, deep breath in utter disgust.

"Dished!" he muttered. "May as well get back to the dorm. It's all up for to-night."

"Hark!" muttered Wharton. "My only hat!"

For the dark figure by the wall had moved at last, and it had spoken; and this is what it said:

"By gum! I guess those galoots have mucked it up, just as I calculated they would! Where the thunder have they got to?"

The Famous Five gasped.

They knew that voice—the voice of Fisher T. Fish, of the Remove.

The dark figure standing sentry by the wall was not a prefect—it was not a senior watching for truant juniors—it was Fisher T. Fish!

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Fish!"

"Fishy! Oh, the idiot!"

"The villain!"

There was no need for concealment now. The Famous Five rushed out of their cover and rushed at Fisher T. Fish. The latter blinked at them from the gloom and uttered an exclamation:

"I guess you're late, you galoots! They've gone by. Didn't you hear them? I reckon I told you you'd muck this up!"

"You—you—you—" stuttered Wharton. "What are you doing here? I thought you were in bed in the dormitory."

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"I guess I wasn't going to be left," he remarked. "I scooted out just after you and came here. I got here first, as you went to fetch the tar, you see, and I've been waiting for you hyer. Waiting a blessed long time, too—more than half an hour, I guess. What on yairth have you been doing all the time?"

"You—you—you—" We've been within a dozen yards watching you, you—your silly villain! We took you for a prefect on the watch," panted Wharton.

"Oh, gee-whiz! You must have been an ass!" said Fisher T. Fish. "If you'd had the sense to show yourselves, I guess I'd have called out."

"You idiot! How could we show ourselves when we thought it was a prefect on the watch?" growled Bob Cherry. "How were we to guess that a silly meddling idiot had come out and got here ahead of us?"

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"Well, I guess you are a set of jays!" he remarked. "This all comes from your thinking of leaving me out. I guess next time you'll know better—just a few! I kinder reckon that tar's wasted. Trumper & Co. are a mile away by this time."

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Wasted, is it?" he ejaculated. "Well, it's jolly well not going to be wasted! As you've mucked up the whole bizney—"

"I guess—"

"And Trumper won't get the tar, it's jolly well not going to be wasted! Who do you think ought to have the tar, you fellows?"

And the fellows replied with one voice:

"That idiot, Fishy!"

"Hyar, I say! I guess! Yow-ow! Yarooogh! Groogh! Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

Fisher T. Fish gug-gug-gugged almost hysterically as the juniors seized him, and Bob Cherry dabbed the biscuit-tin upon his face, and the tar rolled out, completely obliterating the thin features of the Yankee junior.

"Groo-hooh! Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gerrooogghh!"

Fisher T. Fish clawed wildly at the tar. The Famous Five, chuckling, beat a retreat in the darkness, and in a few minutes they were in bed again in the Remove dormitory.

Fisher T. Fish came into the dormitory in a few minutes more, gurgling. But Fisher T. Fish did not turn in. He could not go to bed in that state. He went to his washstand, and for the next hour he was rubbing and scrubbing, and scrubbing and rubbing, and gurgling and grunting spasmodically. He varied his gurgles and grunts with uncomplimentary remarks to the Famous Five. But his remarks were not heeded; those cheerful juniors were sleeping the sleep of the just.

When Fisher T. Fish rose the next morning there were many, many traces of tar about his ears and his hair, and he had more rubbing and scrubbing to do, and his temper was in the worst possible state. And Fisher T. Fish emphatically guessed that he would never, never lend his valuable aid to the Famous Five again, however much they needed it; and Bob Cherry remarked that, for his own sake, it was to be hoped that he guessed correctly.

THE END.