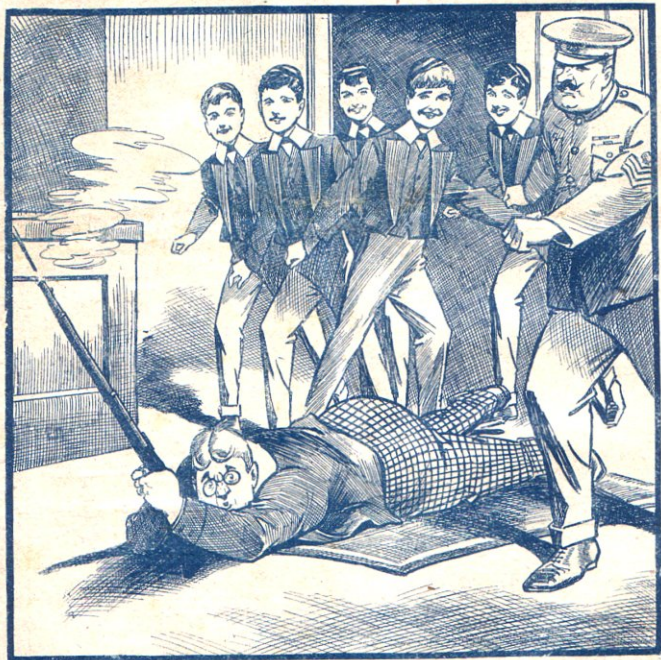


THE MAILED FIST AT GREYFRIARS!

A Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.



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THE MAILED FIST AT GREYFRIARS!

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Sergeant Burrell's big mouth opened like a trap-door, and he took the yellowish mass at one gulp. Then he staggered back with a yell that rang from one end of the Hall to the other. "Ow—ow—ow! It's 'ot—'ot as a lighted squib! Yoooop!" (See Chapter 7.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Things Begin to Move!

"**H** ALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry, the sunny, good-natured member of the Famous Five at Greyfriars, uttered that sudden exclamation as he stood with his chums on the School House steps, with the fresh spring breeze fanning his curly mop of hair.

"What's up?" asked Harry Wharton, rather drowsily. "I was wondering who that old jossie coming in at the gates happens to be!" said Bob. "Seem to have seen him before somewhere!"

The rest of the Famous Five, who were lounging about nonchalantly, with their hands deep in their pockets, followed Bob's gaze.

"That's Colonel Rantoe!" said Nugent. "He's on the

Board of Governors—took Sir Hilton Popper's place, I believe."

"Great Scott, if I had a chivvy like that I'd take it to the nearest pawnshop!" said Johnny Bull.

A bronzed old veteran, with a fierce moustache and a short, snappy stride, advanced towards the Removites.

"Nice sort of day, ain't it, sir?" murmured Bob Cherry, politely. "The atmosphere's pleasant, though a trifle fiery."

Colonel Ranter halted, and glared at the humorous Bob as if he would eat him.

"Huh!" he exclaimed. "You—boy—don't you know who I am?"

"Couldn't tell you from Adam!" said Bob Cherry. "Half a jiffy, though! You're Colonel Decanter—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The peppery old warrior pranced about on the flagstones, breathing out threatenings and slaughter.

"How dare you?" he stormed. "I'd have you know, you impertinent cub, that I am a governor of this depraved and benighted institution!"

"Greyfriars is as good a school as any other!" put in Wharton, stoutly.

"Don't bandy words with me, boy! I won't have it—I won't tolerate it at any price! This school, I repeat, is an eyesore to the nation! Now that I have been elected as one of its rulers, I intend to make changes—drastic and sweeping changes—and to completely reform this—this hotbed of iniquity!"

"Rats!" growled Johnny Bull.

"What, what?"

"If you think Greyfriars is going to the dogs," said Johnny stubbornly, "I may as well tell you that you're quite off-side!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific!" purred Hurrece Jamset Ram Singh, in his weird and wonderful English.

"I am insulted!" raved Colonel Ranter, tugging at his moustache. "This is monstrous—unheard-of! Cheeked and slanged by a pack of unlicked cubs, begad! Come with me to your headmaster!"

"Bow-wow!"

The irate colonel took a tight grip of his malacca cane and strode forward, a dangerous light glinting in his eyes.

"For your infernal cheek," he roared, "I am about to thrash you!"

The Famous Five lined up at once, shoulder to shoulder. They scented a scrap, and were quite ready to deal with the obnoxious Colonel Ranter, who was proving himself a worthy disciple of his predecessor, Sir Hilton Popper.

"Keep your distance!" said Wharton between his set teeth. "Because by an unfortunate chance you happen to be a governor of Greyfriars, it doesn't follow that you can bully us at your pleasure."

Colonel Ranter's face went a rich purple, and he choked and spluttered intermittently, as if on the verge of an apopleptic fit. Then, brandishing the cane aloft, he fairly hurled himself at the juniors.

Swish!

The weapon whirled through the air, and struck Bob Cherry on the shoulder. The victim reeled back with a gasp of pain.

Maddened at the sight of the cruel blow, Bob's chums surged forward and closed in upon Colonel Ranter. The latter, impressed by the look of determination on their faces, quailed before the incensed juniors.

"Don't dare to strike me!" he muttered hoarsely. "If you do every one of you will be expelled from the school instantly! Keep off! I've heard?"

The Famous Five heard, but they did not heed. In a flash Harry Wharton wrenched the cane from the colonel's hand, and raised it ready to strike.

Then the stormy scene was rudely interrupted by a window being thrown hastily open. The Head's voice, clear and penetrating, rang out into the Close.

"Boys, what is the meaning of this?"

Colonel Ranter, his face working convulsively, glared at Dr. Locke as if the latter were a particularly vile species of Hun.

"I cannot congratulate you, Locke," he shouted, "upon the manner in which these young hooligans have been trained. They were about to inflict personal injury upon me—ME, a governor of the school!"

Dr. Locke compressed his lips.

"I feel quite sure that no boys of mine would dream of assaulting you without good and sufficient reason, Colonel Ranter," he said. "I myself heard you make use of opprobrious epithets which are in no way applicable to my pupils. You cannot wonder at their resentment of such remarks."

"So you choose to side with these young scoundrels—"

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"That?" roared the colonel. "Very well, I will expose such criminal favouritism at the next meeting of governors."

"This is neither the time nor place for such unseemly threats," responded the Head. "Neither do I wish to hold a conversation with you, Colonel Ranter, by having to bawl through a window. If you will be good enough to step into my study, bringing those boys with you, I will undertake to see that justice is done."

And the Head closed the window with a bang, and returned to his writing-table.

"My only aunt!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is where we get it in the neck, my sons!"

"Better go and face the music, I suppose!" growled Johnny Bull. "Ranter's a Tartar and a tyrant, and the Head won't listen to too many of his lies!"

"Follow me!" bade the colonel sternly. "Add thank your lucky stars you didn't actually strike me, or your respective careers at Greyfriars would have been brought to an untimely end. As it is, you will be heavily and severely punished for this unwarrantable outrage!"

"That's for the Head to decide," said Harry Wharton.

The colonel snorted, and led the way into Dr. Locke's study.

"Now, colonel," said the Head, patiently, "I shall be pleased to hear your complaint."

"Sir," bellowed the angry old warrior, kicking up the carpet in his excitement, "I have innumerable faults to find in connection with the conducting of this school."

"Name them."

The colonel sniffed.

"Were I to enumerate them in full," he said, wrenching a cigar from his case, "I should be here until Doomsday. Suffice it to say that the boys, as a whole, are sadly deteriorating. British grit and British pluck, sir, are conspicuous by their absence. When I was a boy here, thirty years ago, the fellows were strong and strapping, and straight as pines. None of the milkop touch about 'em then, begad. And now, on coming to this—this nursery of effeminates, what do I find? Why, that these young rascals who stand before you were lounging and sprawling on the steps of the School House, their features sunken by the constant inhalation of cigarette-smoke, their muscles flabby, and their constitutions undermined."

"Lies!" exclaimed Johnny Bull fiercely.

"Silence, Bull!" rapped out the Head, though his tone had a kindly touch which the juniors could not fail to detect.

"Colonel Ranter is labouring under an obvious misapprehension."

"I am not," frowned the colonel. "Things are in a very shocking state, and I mean to take instant measures towards reform. Discipline must assert itself in no half-hearted manner. Slacking I abhor, sir!"

"But there can be no suggestion of slacking, my dear sir," said the Head, who was beginning to fear that Colonel Ranter had been looking upon the wine when it was red. "The boys are, in the main, expert footballers and good oarsmen."

"Football! Rowing!" snorted the colonel. "Of what use are these childish, kindergarten games in this time of war? Drilling and rifle-shooting are the only forms of recreation which should be permitted nowadays. We want no flannelled fools or muddled oafs, as Kipling very justly designates those who wallow on miry playing-fields. This school badly wants waking up; and I, Rufus Ranter, late of his Majesty's Army, am going to do it! Let no one dare cross my path, or things will go hard with him!"

"I think it would be wiser not to interfere with the present order of things," said the Head mildly.

"Fiddlesticks! As one of the board of governors, I think I am entitled to take a free hand in the matter, and to work for the welfare and well-being of this school. At present the boys are undrilled and undisciplined, and know no more about handling a rifle than the man in the moon."

"Excuse me, sir," said Harry Wharton. "The chaps are nearly all skilled shots—in the Remove, at any rate. And gymnastics are indulged in at least once a week."

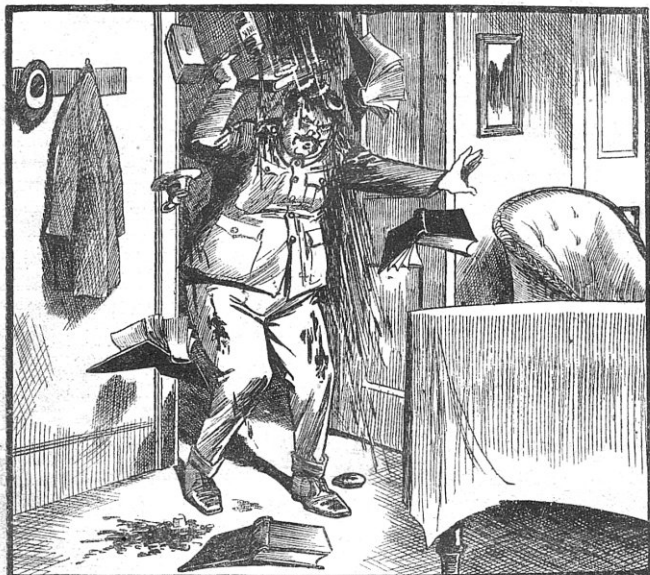
"Once a week!" gasped the colonel. "Good heavens! I am becoming more and more disgusted. You shall drill daily in future, under the direction of a competent instructor."

The Head looked grave.

"I should advise you to do nothing rash, colonel," he said. "A few months back, when Sergeant Sharp was here, the school was in a state of seething discontent. We cannot force a system of Prussian militarism down the boys' throats."

"Can't we, by thunder! I'll soon see about that. I know an excellent fellow for the job—Sergeant Burrell, late of the King's Royal Rifles. He shall take up the joint duties of drill and musketry instructor at once. I have no doubt whatever that he will be the right man in the right place. And

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A perfect deluge of black ink shot downwards, succeeded instantly by a cascade of books and jam-tarts. Then a lion-like roar burst forth, fairly awakening the echoes. "M-m-my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It's not Loder, after all!" (See Chapter 2.)

now I insist upon your meting out a terrific thrashing to these young scoundrels!"

"Indeed! I fail to see in what way they have given offence," said Dr. Locke.

"What! What! They have insulted me, sir, to my very face, besides wrenching my cane away, and threatening me with grievous bodily harm. It is scandalous, and I refuse to quit this study until I have witnessed their punishment! I am not a man to be trifled with, sir!"

The Head turned to the Famous Five with a worried frown.

"What have you to say, Wharton, to Colonel Ranter's charge?"

"He addressed us as if we were dogs, sir," said Harry, "and threatened to lam us all with his cane. He actually did whack Bob Cherry across the shoulders, and we weren't standing that, sir."

"No fear!" murmured Nugent.

"I am glad to see such a display of spirit," said Dr. Locke. "But you did wrong in setting a governor of the school at defiance. I shall, therefore, be compelled to cane you!"

"Very well, sir."

The Head took a cane from his desk, and motioned Harry Wharton to hold out his hand. The whole business was distasteful to the kindly old gentleman, and he resolved to let the offenders down lightly.

Swish-swish!

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"MICKY DESMOND'S LUCK!"

A couple of light cuts, with not enough sting in them to hurt a mouse, and Wharton's punishment was completed. He stepped back with a grin, and Bob Cherry took his place.

Colonel Ranter, almost foaming at the mouth, strode forward.

"Do you call that a castigation, sir?" he rumbled. "Such puny blows pass like water off a duck's back!"

Dr. Locke faced the colonel fearlessly.

"I am dealing out what I consider to be an adequate punishment, under the circumstances," he said. "I refuse to be forced into playing a tyrant's part!"

"Bravo!" burst out Bob Cherry, unable to repress his excitement.

"Very well," said the colonel, restraining himself with a great effort. "This affair shall be brought to the notice of my colleagues at the next board meeting."

"As you wish," said the Head quietly.

Dr. Locke then dealt with the rest of the delinquents, giving them a couple of harmless strokes each. The blows would scarcely have ruffled the fur of a kitten.

"You may go, my boys," said the Head.

"Thank you, sir!"

Once out in the corridor the juniors hugged each other in frenzied delight.

"The Head's a brick!" said Nugent heartily.

"The brickfulness is terrific. The wrath of the esteemed and ludicrous Ranter is also terrific!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five passed out into the sunny Close, laughing and chuckling. A few minutes later Colonel Ranter appeared, looking positively vicious.

"Huh!" he growled. "Young rascals! I haven't finished with you yet, by a long way. When Sergeant Burrell comes to put you through your paces, you'll be made to sit up. I will not be insulted with impunity!"

Harry Wharton & Co. made a mocking bow, and smiled their sweetest smiles. The colonel looked for the moment as if he would wade in and slaughter them; but apparently he thought better of it, for he turned on his heel and strode down to the gates, muttering imprecations which were quite out of keeping with his high-and-mighty position as a governor of Greyfriars School.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not According to Programme!

"**L**ODER'S a beast!" said Harry Wharton. "The heaviest beast that ever breathed!" agreed Bob Cherry, with emphasis.

The Famous Five were at tea in No. 1 Study in the Remove passage. A cheerful fire was crackling in the grate, and Hurree Singh, second to none in culinary prowess, had been frying appetising sausages.

Loder, the prefect, who was unpopular enough at the best of times, had been making himself particularly objectionable of late. Lines and lickings had been the order of the day, and the Famous Five had been specially selected for punishment. They were always at loggerheads with the unpopular prefect, and this time they were feeling unusually fed-up.

"What Loder wants," said Nugent thoughtfully, "is something that'll make him sit up, and be sorry for his sins."

"A booby-trap!" suggested Johnny Bull, looking up from his plate.

"That's the idea."

"We'll rig one up at once," said Wharton, with a gleam in his eyes. "Nothing like striking with the iron's hot."

"The brute's bound to come along soon," said Bob Cherry. "He'll look in to see if we've whacked off the lines."

"The ludicrous notion will be caught in a trap-sawful!" grinned Hurree Singh.

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors set to work with a will. A huge bag of sticky jam-tarts was poised on the top of the door, which was placed slightly ajar, and Johnny Bull contributed a few bulky volumes by way of overweight.

"Might as well bring some ink into the picture," observed Wharton. "Hand over the bottle, Franky."

"What-ho!"

Booby-traps were not infrequent at Greyfriars, but this, as Bob Cherry truly remarked, was an extra-special, eighteen-carat, gilt-edged booby-trap, calculated to give the hapless victim such a shock that he would imagine the world was coming to an end.

The juniors retired to the table chuckling. Loder would probably be in a towering rage when that inky, jammy mass descended upon his devoted head. He would take summary vengeance on the practical jokers, without a doubt; but those cheerful youths were quite prepared to face the music so long as they scored over their time-honoured adversary.

Dead silence prevailed for some moments, and then—tramp, tramp! A heavy step sounded in the passage without.

"Don't seem like Loder's hoofs, somehow," said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, yes, it's Loder, right enough!" said Harry Wharton. "He's been playing footer, I expect, and he is wearing his heavy clogs."

The footstep stopped suddenly, and the door was pushed open.

Swish! Bang! Biff! A perfect deluge of black ink shot downwards, succeeded instantly by a cascade of hooks and jam-tarts. Then a lion-like roar burst forth, fairly awakening the echoes.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It's not Loder, after all!"

"But who—" gasped Wharton.

Nugent clutched the speaker frantically by the arm, and pointed to the drenched and dripping figure in the doorway.

"The new sergeant!" he muttered.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Now we've been and gone and done it!" groaned Johnny Bull.

Sergeant Burrell—for such it was—shook himself like a soaked terrier. He was a burly man, with an abnormal frontage, but that was all the juniors could gather for the moment, the sergeant's face being literally smothered with mud and apricot jam.

"Ow-ow-ow!" he roared, gouging furiously at his eyes and mouth. "Wot's all this? Me, Sergeant Burrell, wot fought at Inkerman's 'Bakerloo—subjected to all this 'ere! You—you humcock raskils!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't you dare to lark at me, you young rips! My heye! I ain't agoin' to stand none o' this 'ere confoundery—me, wot come by me three stripes fair an' onest!"

Harry Wharton laughed, and so did the others. They simply couldn't help it, for Sergeant Burrell was in a terrible mess. He gave the impression that he had just emerged from a mangle. Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh were almost doubled up with merriment; and two large tears disappeared themselves on Bob Cherry's ruddy cheeks.

"We—we—um," panted Wharton. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Sergeant Burrell rushed for the poker, and the Famous Five promptly intervened the table, so that they were unassailable. Cheking with fury, the irate warrior gave them a fierce glare.

"Come hout o' that there!" he roared. "Come hout an' take yer grood!"

"Keep your hair on, sergeant!" gasped Wharton. "I assure you—ha, ha!—it was quite a mistake—ha, ha, ha!—and we didn't know you would walk into such a giddy hornet's nest—ha, ha, ha, ha!"

A blind with ungenerous fur, Sergeant Burrell lunged out fiercely with the poker. The weapon was red-hot, for it had been placed between the bars of the grate; and Bob Cherry would most certainly have suffered martyrdom had he not ducked in time.

Then the door was thrown open again, and Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master, rustled into the study. He almost tripped up on a volume of his beloved Virgil, but just managed to steady himself in time.

"What is all this?" he exclaimed, in a voice which resembled the roar of thunder. "Bless my soul! Wharton! Who—what is that disgusting-looking object!"

"The new drill-sergeant, sir!" murmured Harry, nearly choking.

"Good heavens! How dare you appear in this revolting state, man? You are evidently under the influence of intoxicating liquor. Give me an explanation at once, you bestial wretch!"

Sergeant Burrell spun round savagely, and it looked for the moment as if he was about to brand Mr. Quelch with the scolding poker. However, he recovered himself in time, and hurried the implement into the fireplace.

"Ain't you got no heyes, you skinny scarecrow?" he roared. "You don't think I got meself hup like a bloomin' bat, look hon the floor, an' see the evidence agen these 'ere 'odgians!"

"Upon my word!"

Mr. Quelch almost fell down as he beheld the frightful connection on the carpet. He was not new to booby-traps, and speedily surmised what had happened.

"Boys! Am I right in assuming that you have had the brazen effrontery to set a trap for Sergeant Burrell?"

Harry Wharton hastened to explain.

"It was all a mistake, sir," he said. "We hadn't the remotest idea that the sergeant would be coming to Greyfriars this evening, let alone to our study."

"Then for whom was the hoax intended?"

"For Loder, sir. He's been coming down on us like a thousand of bricks for nothing at all, and we wanted to get a bit of our own back."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"I strongly disapprove of such harebrained actions!" he said. "Each of you will write me out five hundred lines."

"Lines!" snorted Sergeant Burrell. "Wot's the good o' them things, Quelch, or wotever yer name is? Give 'em a dose o' the cater-nine-tails! That's wot they wants!"

"I need no advice from so vulgar a person as yourself," said Mr. Quelch stiffly. "You would do well to get a bath at the first opportunity."

"Conduck me to the barf-room, then, you long-legged himage!"

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips, and shook his head emphatically. He was not likely to do the fiery sergeant a favour after having such disrespectful remarks levelled at his head; neither would he care to be seen in the company of such a disreputable-looking object as Sergeant Burrell was just then.

"I am not employed here as a manservant," he said dryly. "I cannot say that I feel sorry for you in your present state, either. You had better go and cleanse yourself as quickly as possible, or some of the boys may consider you are an enemy alien!"

Grunting and growling under his breath, the luckless sergeant of Colonel Ranter's appointment stamped furiously away. His heavy footsteps resounded along the passage,

intermingled with the hysterical roars of laughter of the Remove fellows, who happened to see the strange apparition. Mr. Quelch swept out of the study a moment later, and the Famous Five chuckled breathlessly.

"What a giddy lark!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I—I say! Surely we're not going to be under the thumb of that beast, Burrell? Life won't be worth living!"

"That rests with us," said Wharton. "If we're fools enough to take it lying down, we must expect to see a thin time ahead. If, on the other hand, we stand shoulder to shoulder against the beast, and make him toe the line, everything in the garden will be lovely."

"That's so," said Nugent. "Drill and musketry every day, by Jove! Won't there be some sport!"

"And Burrell's going to supervise in Hall at meal times," said Johnny Bull. "I've got it from Coker of the Fifth, who heard the Head telling old Prout. There's stirring times ahead, my sons!"

And the rest of the Famous Five could not help thinking that Johnny's prediction was well-founded.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. The First Round!

"FALL in!"
"Eh?"
"What?"
"Fall in!"

Loder of the Sixth was responsible for that peremptory command later on in the evening. Harry Wharton & Co., who were roasting chestnuts in the Rag, stared at the prefect in amazement.

"What's the little game, Loder?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"The whole of the Remove is to go through a course of drill immediately, under Sergeant Burrell," said Loder, licking his lips with unholly relish. The rascally prefect was never happier than when he foresaw a chance of the Famous Five getting into hot water.

"I suppose we've got to go," said Wharton. "It's a rummy bizney, to drill chaps in their spare time, like this." "Rotten!" said Sampson Quincey Illey Field, who had strolled up. "We're going to be tyrannised again, like we were when that rotter Sharr was here."

"I say, you fellows," piped Billy Bunter, the fat, ungainly Owl of the Remove. "I vote we mob that beast Burrell, and loot any spare cash he's got about him. Then we can have a free feed in the dorm to-night!"

"Dry up, porpoise!" growled Johnny Bull. "You're ten times worse than the Crown Prince!"

The juniors, annoyed and exasperated, wended their way to the gym. Here, for the first time, they had an opportunity of seeing Sergeant Burrell as he really was. He was a portly man of middle age, with a bulldog jaw, which always seemed to take one pace forward, as it were, when he spoke.

"Nah, then," he roared, in his best bullying manner, "line him up at once—tallest on the right, shortest on the left!"

Peter Todd happened to be the tallest fellow, and little Wun Lung the shortest. Both were grinning as if anticipating great fun.

"Tention!" bellowed the sergeant. "Stop shufflin' them 'ands about, you skinny raskil on the right. And you—you fat bloke—what's yer name?"

"Bunter, sir," mumbled the Owl of the Remove.

"Wot yer got in yer mouth?"

"Nun-nun-nothing, sergeant!"

"Don't you go for to tell me none o' them there whoppers. I seed yer rammin' bulleyses down yer throat with me own heyes!"

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Bunter.

"Go 'outside an' get rid of it!" commanded the sergeant. "This 'ere ain't an eatin'-house, let me tell yer!"

Billy Bunter reluctantly did as he was bid, and came back to his place.

"Nah, look 'ere, you young rascals, on," began Sergeant Burrell, scanning the faces of the Removites. "I 'ope as 'ow you understand that I ain't standin' no nonsense! You're a set of slovenly little skunks—"

"Here, steady on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "That's coming it a bit too thick!"

"Wot!"

"We're not going to stand libellous statements of that sort!" said Harry warmly. "We don't wish to be disrespectful to you, sir, but that's the limit!"

The drill-sergeant gave Wharton an ugly look.

"So that's yer tune, is it?" he roared. "Werry well! As you was the leader o' that there booby-trap affair, I'll put yer in the awkward squad!"

"What the merry dickens is that?" gasped Harry.

"You'll jolly soon see! An' you Grunter—or wotever yer name is—I'll 'ave you in the awkward squad as well for suckin' sweets when you order be hon parade! Got that?"

"Yes, sir!" said Bunter meekly.

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"As for the rest of you," went on Sergeant Burrell, "I'm goin' ter give yer a good course o' drill an' jimjimmies! You're hunder a good man, let me tell yer! There ain't no soldier in this little tinpot war wot fought so well an' done 'is duty inter the bargain like wot I've done—me, Sergeant Burrell, with me chest weighed down with medals, an' letters from Royal Families an' all the crowned heads in America!"

"Blessed is he that bloweth his own trumpet!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! I ain't a-goin' to 'ave this perpetual chatter! Nah, when I says 'Heya right!' I wants ter see all the heyes turn to the right with a sharp click!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop it! Stop that there larin', will yer?"

With a mighty effort the Removites mastered their mirth. "Heya right!"

The juniors obeyed. "Has you were!"

The eyes came to the front again—omitting, of course, the smart click.

"Number 1!" roared the sergeant.

Simultaneously two voices rang out as one. Peter Todd and Wun Lung started off together, with the result that a perfect pandemonium ensued, such as put the celebrated Tower of Babel entirely in the shade.

Amid the confused clamour of voices Sergeant Burrell raved and stormed and shouted like a madman.

The numbering came to an end at last, and the juniors were almost splitting their sides with laughter.

"Has you were!" roared the irate warrior. "You—you skinny, scraggy hunk of linnquity, wot d'yer mean by it?"

Peter Todd, to whom the remark was addressed, looked pained.

"You told us to number off, sir," he said, "and I naturally thought you meant from the right."

"Well, you shouldn't think! Wot about you, you Chinese munnikin!"

"Me 'unkee you mean number from leftee!" said Wun Lung demurely.

Sergeant Burrell grunted.

"From the right, number 1!" he barked out.

This time the juniors carried out the operation successfully.

"Nah, when I gives the hofter 'Form four's! I want ter see the heven numbers take one step back with the left foot."

"An' one pace to the right with 'other hoof! The last file hon the left, whether a hold or 'heven number, halways moves! Got that? A confused shuffling of feet, and when the air

had cleared it was seen that little Wun Lung, on the extreme left, had not budged an inch.

The sergeant strode forward.

"You yappin', yellor-skinned 'umbug!" he bellowed.

"Didn't you 'ear me say as 'ow you 'ad ter move?"

"Me no savvy!" murmured Wun Lung.

"Wot!"

"Me never done drillee in life!"

"Ho, ain't yer? I'll jolly soon learn yer, then!"

And the sergeant, his brutal jaw stuck out prominently, gave Wun Lung a shove that sent him spinning.

"Take that, you pig-tailed noosance!"

Bob Cherry, the usually sunny smile gone from his face, sprang out of the ranks.

"You brute!" he exclaimed deliberately.

An excited murmur ran round the assembled Removites. Bob Cherry had a genuine liking for the little Oriental, and resolutely refused to see him bullied by anybody.

"Wot's that?" roared Sergeant Burrell. "Brute, ham I? Jest you wait, you curly-headed chimpanzee! Join the awkward squad, an' then p'raps you'll 'ave good grounds fer sayin' such a thing!"

Bob Cherry looked the man squarely in the face.

"I'm not afraid of you!" he said scornfully. "And you dare not carry your bullying too far! If the Head gets to know you'll be fired out of Greyfriars!"

"On your neck!" supplemented Nugent.

"You—you cheeky young sweeps! Fall in, there!"

Bob Cherry went back to his place, feeling red-hot for a rebellion. He loathed the brutal Burrell with all his heart, and sincerely hoped the sergeant would come a cropper sooner or later.

"Right turn! Quick march! Pick them feet up there, can't yer?"

The Removites shuffled along in wild disorder, with malice and all uncharitableness in their breasts. It was no joke to have their evenings of leisure taken away in this flagrant fashion.

A whisper ran along the lines, and when they came to the

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tall they stayed there, marking time in a most ridiculous manner. Those in the rear rank deliberately toppled over on the fellows in front, and the scene was an animated one.

"About turn!" thundered the sergeant.

Nobody attempted to obey the belated order. It was as much as the Removites could do to sort themselves out.

Exasperated beyond measure, the sergeant snatched up a cane and waded in upon the struggling, heaving, grinning group of juniors.

"Swish! Swish!!! Swish!!!

"Ow-ow-ow! Chuk it, you beast! Yarooop!"

Sergeant Burrell desisted at last, but not until every single junior had had a taste of the singing cane.

"Line up and rush the rotter!" roared Harry Wharton, his fists clenched in a most warlike manner.

The fellows responded nobly, throwing pudence to the winds. Just as they were about to hurl themselves upon the insufferable tyrant, and smite him hip and thigh, the door of the gymnasium was thrown open, and Dr. Locke rustled in.

"Boys," he exclaimed sternly, "how dare you run amok like this? I am surprised, Sergeant Burrell, that your notions of law and order are so vague as to admit of a scene of this kind!"

The drill-instructor swung round furiously.

"They keeps gettin' bout of 'and, an' treatin' my horders with defiance!" he shouted. "Me, wot fought an' bled for aye country, bein' made a subject o' ridicule! The young lemons was about to hatack me even at this werry minnit!"

The Head looked grave.

"I cannot have these repeated disturbances in the school, my boys," he said. "I realise how distasteful evening drill is to you, but it is the wish of the governors that you fit yourselves to defend the country in the remote event of boys being needed to make good the casualties. I am sure that if you show Sergeant Burrell the respect and obedience which are his due, he will make things as smooth for you as possible."

"I'll be kindness itself!" said the sergeant, though the nasty gleam of spite in his eyes belied the assertion.

"I shall be compelled to punish you all for this wanton breach of discipline," the Head went on. "What do you suggest, sergeant?"

"I shouldn't, Beg'm, sir, if I was you."

"Oh, good!" muttered Peter Todd. "He's not such a bad bit stick, after all!"

But the sergeant's next words soon dispersed the juniors from their fool's paradise.

"I'll put 'em all in the awkward squad an' keep 'em drillin' till bed-time," said the amiable warrior. "I was to have took the Third Form to-night, but they can 'ang fire for a bit. These young rips don't know the rudiments o' the business, an' a 'ard night's drill erter knock 'em inter shape."

"Very well," said the Head. "You boys will consider yourselves as members of the awkward squad, and will bow to Sergeant Burrell's wishes in every way. If I receive any complaints I shall subject the offenders to a severe flogging."

"Oh!"

The juniors looked decidedly glum as the Head rustled out of the gym. Sergeant Burrell had already sunk to the level of a common or garden Prussian; and the prospect of a whole evening in his company was anything but enticing to the luckless members of the awkward squad.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Iron Hand!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. went through the mill that evening with a vengeance. While the seniors were lounging in their comfortable studies, and the fags were improving their shining hair by cooking, the juniors were confined to the gymnasium at the tender mercy of a man who was not far removed from a wild beast.

Heavy carbines of great antiquity had been served out, and the various rifle exercises were performed. Then Sergeant Burrell formed the fellows up in two rows in order to instruct them how to shoot.

"When I says 'One,'" he roared, "I wants to see them in the front rank drop inter position on their right knees. The rear rank will remain standin'.

"One!"

The juniors in the front rank obeyed the order, and there was a wild wail from Alonzo Todd, who was seen to suddenly pitch forward on his face.

"Yaroooh!"

Sergeant Burrell, his face crimson with passion, prodded the prostrate Alonzo in the ribs with his boot.

"Get lup!" he raved. "Wot d'yer mean by grovellin' on the floor like a confounded snake!"

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"I—I— Somebody propelled me from behind!" stammered the luckless Alonzo. "My dear Skinner, I entreat you to be more careful!"

"So it was Skinner, was it?"

"No, sir!" said Skinner promptly. "Todd imagines these things, sir. I wouldn't dream of committing an action of that sort. My pater always taught me to honour and respect my superiors, even if they had whacking great corporations and bulldog jaws."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared Sergeant Burrell. "I'll deal with you later, young-feller-me-lad. Now we'll get hon with the washin'. Load yer rifles! Present arms! Fire!"

Of course, the rifles were devoid of ammunition; at the same time, the triggers should all have been pressed at the same moment. Instead of that, however, there was an irregular succession of clicks lasting at least two minutes.

"Has you were!" snorted the sergeant angrily.

"A fat lot o' good you'd be agen the Huns if yer took things heavy like that! When I was fightin' at Wipers an' Nove Shapell I carried me life in me 'ands, an' if I adn't a bin slick with me rifle I shouldn't be 'ere to tell the tale! I managed to dodge fifteen bay'nets at once."

"Worse luck!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wot, larlin' agen? I'll soon cure yer o' that! Present arms!"

The juniors obeyed, and those in the rear rank eagerly awaited the command to fire. They had a little surprise in store for their objectionable instructor, who had been talking of his alleged experiences in France without taking any particular heed of what was going on.

No sooner was the word "Fire!" out of the sergeant's mouth than the rear-rankers dropped their rifles with a deafening crash. Then, before Sergeant Burrell could recover from his astonishment, they whipped out their pea-shooters and fired all together.

The result was appalling. A score of peas smote the sergeant in all parts of his person. Scarcely one was wide of the mark, for Sergeant Burrell, owing to his rotundity, was not a target anyone could possibly miss at such close range.

"Hellup!" roared the victim, leaping a foot from the floor.

"Oh, my heve! Wot a game! Yow-ow-ow!"

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

"I—I—I'll have a murder on me 'ands afore the day's out!" spluttered the furious sergeant.

"Ow dare yer, I say!"

"Give him another dose, you chaps!" exclaimed Wharton, in ringing tones.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Once again the pea-shooters came into play with deadly effect. A hail of ammunition came rattling into Sergeant Burrell's frowning face, and he hopped back quickly—so quickly that he had the misfortune to trip up on the mat, with the result that he went sprawling to the floor in an ungainly heap.

"Oh, my aunt!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "Hold me up, someone!"

The sergeant struggled to his feet with difficulty.

"I'll report yer!" he howled. "I'll ask the 'admaster to keep yer in hon Saturday afternoon!"

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Bob Cherry. "That's done it! We're playing Highlife on Saturday!"

The juniors looked and felt—greatly alarmed. They were desperately keen on wiping up the ground with Frank Courtenay & Co., and if Sergeant Burrell put his threat into effect the whole thing would come tumbling down like a house of cards.

"We must apologise to the beast!" muttered Wharton. "It goes against the grain to have to do it, but it's the only way."

And the captain of the Remove stepped forward.

"We're awfully sorry, sir!" he said penitently.

"Awfully, fearfully sorry, sir!"

"The sorrowfulness, honoured sergeant sahib, is terrific!"

"Well, I'm blowed!" gasped Sergeant Burrell, caressing his injured parts. "You expect me to let yer off, arter that?"

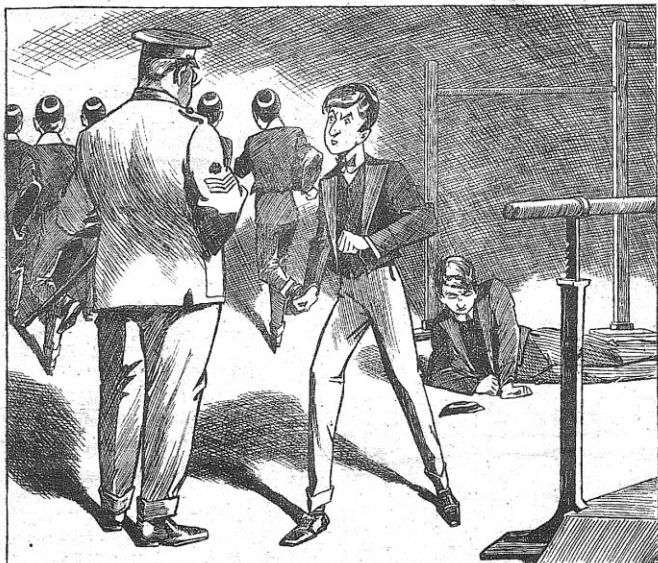
"We'd rather you didn't report us to Dr. Locke, sir," said Wharton. "If it's all the same to you, we'd prefer that you punished us off your own bat by putting us through it to-night."

The sergeant licked his lips with keen relish.

"Werry good, you young warmints!" he said. "We'll 'ave 'arf an hour's jimjimmies, follered by a dose o' stiff drill. Ground arms!"

The juniors respectfully laid down their rifles.

"Wharton an' Cherry, get that there jumpin'-stand an' put it inter position."



Peter Todd gave one short, swift glance at the pallid face of his cousin, and then, without stopping to weigh the possible consequences of his action, he rushed pell-mell at Sergeant Burrell. (See Chapter 5.)

"Certainly, sir!"

"This is ripping!" murmured Nugent. "I like jumping."

"I guess I'm on in this act, some!" grinned Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior. "We Amurricans could jump you off your feet, just a few!"

"Rats!" growled Johnny Bull. "Pride goes before a giddy fall, and I bet you won't clear three feet."

"Shucks! I guess—"

The sergeant's gruff voice intervened, and Fishy's swanky statements were wasted on the desert air.

"Hover you go!"

Harry Wharton led off with a short, swift run, and easily cleared the jump. The rest of the Famous Five followed, with similar results.

"Now, Fishy," grinned Squiff, "show us how it's done over there!"

The Yankee junior measured the distance carefully with his eye and shamled forward. He assumed an air of lofty superiority, as if the jump were mere child's play. Then the tragedy happened.

So far from clearing the tape, Fish blundered right into it, and fell heavily, pulling the stands down after him. One of them landed with a sickening thud on Sergeant Burrell's boot, and he howled and danced like a dervish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow—ow—ow—ow!" roared the sergeant.

Fisher T. Fish staggered to his feet, dismayed by what he had done.

"I guess—" he began feebly.

Sergeant Burrell wasted no more time in words.

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Brandishing his cane aloft, he hurled himself full pelt upon the Yankee junior.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yaroooooooh!"

Biff! Bang! Thud!

The sergeant was going strong with the instrument of torture. The cane lashed across Fishy's long, thin legs, and bit into the flesh of his back, causing him to scream with wild anguish. At last, unable to stand the terrific castigation any longer, he threw himself flat upon the ground, writhing like a wounded snake.

"Ow! Lemme off, sir! I guess it was a pure accident! Groo!"

"Haccident—hey? I'll haccident yer! Go an' fall in, an' don't you dare do it agen! Nah, then, Grunter!"

Billy Bunter eyed the jumping-stand with evident apprehension. He knew he was incapable of jumping a foot, let alone three.

"I—I say, you fellows," he murmured, "I kik-kik-can't do it! Oh, dear, what shall I do?"

"Better try your best, Billy," said Harry Wharton kindly.

"Urgh, there!" came the sergeant's raucous voice.

"Pip-pip-please, sir, my gym slipper's come undone!"

stammered the Owl of the Remove.

"Never mind about that! Look sharp, you inflated young pig! I—am—going to wait 'ere all night!"

"I—I feel bad!" groaned Bunter, passing a fat hand over his forehead.

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"You'll feel a jolly sight wuss if yer don't obey horders! Kim on!" At the run!

With a desperate, hunted look, Billy Bunter nerved himself for the ordeal. He waddled towards the stand, and barged right into the tape with his portly person. Once again there was a heavy collapse, but this time Sergeant Burrell just managed to skip clear.

"You himperent young villain!" he roared. "I'll jolly well lay yer fat 'ide for yer!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Bunter lay groaning on the floor of the gym as if his last hour had come.

"My backbone's broken!" he gasped feebly. "I heard a lot of ribs crack, too, and my knees are both out of joint! Good-bye, you fellows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dyin', har yer?" said Sergeant Burrell, with crushing sarcasm. "We'll see if a touch o' cane won't revive yer!"

"Yaroooh! Keep him off, you fellows! He's potty!"

"Lash, lash, lash!"

Long before the third stroke descended, Bunter had risen to his feet. He jumped up like a jack-in-the-box, and no one could possibly have been more completely alive than he was at that moment.

The sergeant laid on a few more strokes, and Bunter went squirming back to the ranks.

"Ow-ow-ow!" he groaned. "I'll make the beast sit up for this later on! I'm black and blue, and aching all over! Yow!"

"Poor old chap!" murmured Bob Cherry sympathetically.

Billy Bunter said nothing more, but there was a dangerous gleam in his little round eyes which betokened that a hot time was in store for that staunch advocate of Prussian militarism, Sergeant Burrell.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Last Strain

FOR the next half-hour the Removites exercised themselves on the box-horse and parallel-bars, and everybody agreed that it might have been worse. But little did the juniors dream what was to follow.

"Fall in!" rapped out Sergeant Burrell suddenly.

"It's now one hour from bedtime, an' I'm a-goin' ter give it yer 'ot, in accordance with the 'Ead's instructions. Pick up yer rifles!"

Suddenly the juniors obeyed.

"Slope arms! Right turn! Double march! 'Old yer 'ead up, Grunter! Keep that there rifle steady, Noogoot, or I'll slump yer confounded napper! Fifty up, there!"

"What the merry dickens is he talking about?" gasped Vernon-Smith.

"He means 'Pick yer feet up,'" grinned Wharton. "Sounds rather funny, I admit, but it's a way they luge in the Army."

The juniors doubled round and round the gym, and for a few moments it wasn't bad sport. After a time, however, the weight of the heavy carbines began to make itself felt, and progress became very difficult. The perspiration was pouring off Billy Bunter's plump face, and Alonzo Todd seemed in the last stages of exhaustion. Even the fittest of the fellows, such as Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry, were beginning to feel the effects of the long-continued exertion.

"This is the thirtieth time we've been round!" gasped Bolsover major. "I've kept count. Ain't he never going to stop us?"

"Silence! Keep the pace up, you raskils in the rear, or I'll come behind you with this 'ere stick!"

Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle!

Round and round, without abatement, went the wretched Removites. They would most certainly have rebelled against such tyrannical treatment, but for the fact that the long-looked-for footer match against Highcliffe might be cancelled.

"Left, right! Left, right! Left!" came the sergeant's harsh, relentless voice. "No slackin' there, or I'll warn you hun! You, Todd, keep going, or I'll cut yer in three halves!"

The juniors were too fatigued to laugh at such a ridiculous threat. As for Alonzo, the fellow addressed, he was limping painfully now, and felt that he could not hold out much longer.

"Alt!" came the welcome command at last.

Everybody gladly obeyed, save Tom Dutton, who was afflicted with the exasperating malady of deafness. Up till now he had judged his movements by those of his school-fellows; but on this occasion his eyes were blinded with dust, and he stumbled on mechanically, his breath coming and going in great gasps.

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Sergeant Burrell stood spellbound for a moment. Then he bawled, in a stentorian voice:

"Hi, you, Mutton, or wotever yer name is, wot's the little gas?"

Dutton spun round sharply.

"Shame!" he said. "I should think it was a shame, to let me ramble on like this! Why couldn't you tell me when to stop?"

"Fall in!" roared Sergeant Burrell.

"Bawling? Yes, a chap is obliged to bawl to a block-headed dummy like you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sergeant leaped upon Dutton, and hauled him back to the ranks by the scruff of his neck.

"Nah, then," growled the amiable persecutor. "I'm a-goin' to put yer through it proper! That little sprit just now was only a foretaste of what was to come. When I gives the horder, I wants to see all the rites raised smartly above the 'ead. Got that? Werry well. Raise arms!"

Tired and weary and perspiring though they were, the Removites complied with the heartless command.

"Now 'op it!" said the sergeant.

With one accord, and with minds greatly relieved, the juniors stampeded for the door.

"Come back!" roared Sergeant Burrell. "Come back, I say! Wot d'yer mean by it?"

"You told us to hop it, sir," said Harry Wharton, in amazement.

"You know werry well wot I meant! You've got to 'op on yer right feet. Fall in agen—sharp!"

"Talk about tortures!" groaned Bob Cherry. "This is a giddy reign of terror, and like mobbing the brute, and risking the footing match."

"Nothing like it has ever been known at Greyfriars before!"

"And never will be again, I hope!" panted Nugent. "My legs are like leaden weights."

"Stop that gassin', can't yer?" broke in Sergeant Burrell.

"By the right, 'op!"

The Removites had never tried hopping on one foot with a heavy carbine raised above their heads, and the experience, though novel, was anything but pleasant.

For minute after minute the victims kept on, the sergeant occasionally barking out an "about turn!" There was no pause or respite of any kind, and Snoop and Stott, and some of the weaker spirits, soon began to blub openly.

"This—this is awful!" groaned Johnny Bull. "How much longer?"

"Hop, hop, hop!"

Still on the right foot, the Removites kept on, grunting and groaning and gasping. Then suddenly there came a crash—a strange, sickening crash—which caused everybody to come to an instinctive halt.

"What's up?" asked Nugent, white to the lips.

"It's Alonzo," said Wharton, in a quiet, strained voice.

"He's fainted, poor chap!"

"Shame!"

The cry rang out from a score of throats.

"Wot—wot—?" gasped the brutal sergeant, his jaw dropping.

Peter Todd gave one short, swift glance at the pallid face of his cousin, and then, without stopping to weigh the possible sequences of his action, he rushed pell-mell at Sergeant Burrell.

"Oh, you brute!" he exclaimed fiercely. "You—you've hurt poor old Lonzy—praps killed him!"

"He's 'ole shammin'!" muttered the sergeant hoarsely.

Smack!

Peter Todd's open palm smote the tyrant upon the cheek, causing him to stagger back with a roar of mingled surprise and pain. He had never dreamed that a junior would go to such lengths.

"I'll have yer expolition from the school for this!" he said thickly.

Peter Todd pulled up, panting.

"The best's on the other foot, I'm thinking," he said. "If I acquaint the Head with what's happened to-night, he won't think twice about giving you the sack."

Sergeant Burrell quailed at Peter's words, well realising the truth of them. If Dr. Locke discovered the treatment meted out to the Remove that evening, the sergeant would receive but short shrift.

"I—I—it wasn't my fault!" he said awkwardly. "Why couldn't the kid stand out an' say he was bad?"

"Lonzy's not that sort," replied Peter Todd. "He'd let anyone bully him to death without a murmur. I expect. Come on, you chaps. Help me get him up to the san'y!"

The sergeant grew seriously alarmed. If the school matron made inquiries, it might lead to unpleasant results.

"There's no need to take 'im away," he said hastily. "Sling some cold water over 'im, an' he'll come round quick enough."

"We'll take him to the matron," said Harry Wharton. "And you needn't think we shall split on you, because we shan't. We shall have to fake up some story or other, I suppose!"

The sergeant said nothing as a party of juniors carried the unconscious Alonzo from the gym. Although this was his first day at Greyfriars, he had seen sufficient of Harry Wharton to know that he was a fellow of his word.

There was no more drill for the Remove that evening. Even Sergeant Burrell knew it was time to draw the line, and he curtly dismissed the juniors.

There were many aching limbs in the Remove dormitory that night, and many dire vows of vengeance were levelled against Sergeant Burrell, whose sudden advent to Greyfriars had proved one of the biggest sensations for whole terms.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Bunter's Revenge!

BILLY BUNTER rolled along the Remove passage next morning, his fat face beaming with the radiance of a full moon.

"Wherefore that seraphic smile, porpoise?" inquired Bob Cherry, who had been punting a footer about in the Close with Wharton and Nugent.

Bunter smirked knowingly.

"I'm going to get even with that brute Burrell," he explained. "I said I would last night, and I'm not a fellow to go back on my word."

"Rats!" said Nugent. "How can you hope to score off a hefty, beefy merchant like that? If you try it on, you'll only go getting it in the neck."

"You leave it to me!" said Bunter. "I'm not a chap to be trifled with. If you want to see the fun, come along with me to Prout's study."

"Might as well see if there's anything in it," said Wharton. "But why Prout's study, Bunt?"

"Ask no questions, and you'll be told no whoppers! Come on!"

Followed by Wharton, Nugent, and Bob Cherry, the Owl of the Remove made tracks for the *several* apartment belonging to Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth. Arrived outside, he drew a length of cord from his pocket.

"What the merry dickens—?" began Bob Cherry, in wonderment.

"Shush!" Bunter raised his hand warningly.

"Prout's inside," he whispered. "I don't want him to come out and spot me. Here goes!"

And the fat junior tied one end of the cord to the handle of Mr. Prout's study door, affixing the other end to the door opposite, and thus making it impossible for the Fifth Form-master to leave his study.

"What's the little game?" asked Wharton.

"Just a little mimicking dodge," explained Bunter.

Then he cleared his throat and proceeded to speak through the keyhole in the uncouth tones of Sergeant Burrell.

"You there, Prout?"

"Yes," came the reply from within the study. "Is that Sergeant Burrell?"

"Yes! I come to tell yer that yer a bald-headed old 'umbug!"

"What!"

"You're a silly old fogey!" continued Bunter, in so exact a representation of the sergeant's voice that Harry Wharton & Co. fairly marvelled. "I don't believe all them tales you was a-tellin' me about shootin' buffaloes an' things in the Rocky Mountains. Matter o' fact, I shouldn't be surprised if you 'adn't never bin there in yer life!"

"Fellow!" roared Mr. Prout, thoroughly exasperated. "Are you intoxicated that you dare address me in so vulgar a manner? Come inside, that we may speak to each other face to face."

"Rats!"

"Dear me!" gasped Mr. Prout. "It is as I thought. The man has been imbibing strong drink on the premises. I suppose I must deal with the bestial wretch, and persuade him to retire to his own quarters."

And the Fifth Form-master strode to the door and rattled the handle.

"Sergeant Burrell!" he shouted. "I am surprised that you should seek to confine me to my room in this unwarranted manner. Pray open the door at once!"

"Ho, ho, ho! Jest 'ark at 'im!" roared the bogus sergeant from the other side of the door. "Keep yer air on, Prouty, my pippin! 'Arf a mo', though. That's himposible, 'cos you ain't got none."

By this time Mr. Prout was thoroughly beside himself with passion. He bawled through the keyhole like a man demented. "You are a worm, sir, and I would readily crush you under-

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foot but for the fact that you choose to conduct your slanderous outbursts behind closed doors."

"Pore old fellow! Why don't yer join the Army?"

Mr. Prout almost went into convulsions.

"I am considerably above military age, and you know it!" he belched. "I am a member of the Friarale Special Constabulary, and if the Germans ever landed on our shores I should render a good account of myself with my Winchester repeater."

"Go hon!"

"Just you wait until I have an opportunity of meeting you!" snarled Mr. Prout. "I will show you that I am not a man to be insulted with impunity."

"Why, you barmy old jossler, I could knock yer out o' time with one 'and, an' blindfolded at that! Garn! Yer afraid to come!"

Mr. Prout gave another savage wrench at the door-handle, but it refused to budge.

"Very well, Sergeant Burrell," he hissed. "I will deal with you later, and will not be held responsible for any bloodshed which may occur at our next meeting."

And Mr. Prout was heard to stamp furiously round the study.

"That's stunning!" muttered Bob Cherry, giving Billy Bunter a sounding slap on the back. "My hat! Won't there be a giddy rumpus soon?"

Bunter untied the cord which was attached to Mr. Prout's door-handle, and then the juniors promptly scuttled away down the passage.

A moment later Mr. Prout came rushing along, fairly bubbling over with wrath.

"Aha!" he exclaimed. "The insulting wretch has taken flight! I will root him out, if it takes me the whole day!"

Harry Wharton & Co., safely ensconced in a doorway, were almost suffocated with laughter. Mr. Prout had his Winchester repeater tucked under his arm, and he looked positively murderous.

Then, of a sudden, who should come striding along from the opposite direction but Sergeant Burrell!

"Morin', Prout!" he said affably.

"Base deceiver!" snarled Mr. Prout. "But for the stupid laws of this country, I should challenge you to mortal combat!"

"Oh, my hat!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "This fairly beats the band!"

Sergeant Burrell surveyed the warlike master of the Fifth in undisguised amazement.

"Surely you ain't gorn off yer rocker!" he exclaimed.

"An' wot are yer doin' with that there tin pistol?"

"This is adding insult to injury!" thundered Mr. Prout.

"How dare you, sir, a more menial, address me in such an impudent and familiar manner?"

It was Sergeant Burrell's turn to be angry.

"Shut yer rat-trap hup, yer bald-headed himbecile!" he growled.

That was the last straw. Mr. Prout closed in upon his tormentor, and there was a fierce and furious struggle.

"Ye gods!" gasped Frank Nugent. "This is better than a pantomime, any day of the week! Bunt, old boy, you're worth your weight in gold!"

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"I told you I'd make it warm for the beast!" he said.

"Look at 'em!" murmured Harry Wharton excitedly.

"Hammer-and-tongs, by Jove!"

"Burrell seems to be getting the best of it, worse luck!"

said Billy Cherry.

There was a fierce burst of in-fighting, and then—crack! A deafening report vibrated down the corridor, succeeded by the shattering of glass.

"Good-bye, Virginia!" gasped Bob Cherry. "There's something gone wrong with the works!"

"Th. ha. ha!"

Nobody could quite make out how it happened, but it did happen with a vengeance. Mr. Prout's gun—always kept loaded in case of emergency—had been suddenly discharged.

Luckily, there were no casualties. "The bullet, travelling fast and high, had crashed into the globe which was suspended from the ceiling, and the subsequent crashing of glass was, as Hurree Singh would undoubtedly have remarked, terrific."

"Now you've done it, you—you rat-faced maniac!" roared Sergeant Burrell. "Wot you wants is a padded-room! Oh, Jimmy!"

Mr. Prout had suddenly snatched up the smoking gun, and raised it by the barrel, with the object, apparently, of bringing the heavy butt down on the sergeant's head.

"Now for the fireworks!" muttered Nugent.

But in this instance Sergeant Burrell deemed discretion the better part of valour. With a howl of terror, he turned

NEXT
MONDAY—

"MICKY DESMOND'S LUCK!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. BY FRANK RICHARDS.

on his heels and fled, Mr. Prout giving hot chase. A moment later the bell rang for breakfast.

Harry Wharton & Co. were almost weeping with merriment as they trooped into Hall. The crusade against Sergeant Burrell and all his works was by no means finished, and, after a thrilling first round, honours were easy.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Rank Rebellion!

SERGEANT BURRELL, late of the King's Royal Rifles, hid his diminished head until dinner-time, when he made his presence felt more than ever.

Under a new system recently drawn up by the grave and reverend seignours who formed the governing body of Greyfriars, the masters were to have their meals within the privacy of their own rooms, whilst the school sergeant took charge of the hall.

With his usual spite, Sergeant Burrell had formed a plan whereby he could make it warm for the school in general. He was one of those men who didn't care a twopenny rap about being unpopular—in fact, the more the fellows resented him, the more tyrannical he meant to become.

"Look at his eye!" muttered Bob Cherry excitedly. "It's an art shade in grey already, thanks to old Prout!"

"And to me!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, where's the grub?"

The Removites glanced at their plates in astonishment. All were empty. The usual portions of steaming roast beef were conspicuous by their absence.

The same state of affairs prevailed at the other tables. The high-and-mighty men of the Sixth feigned indifference to the fact, but the rest of the fellows began grumbling and growling in no uncertain terms.

"Look here," growled Coker of the Fifth, "ain't they going to give us any dinner?"

"Woe economy, I suppose," said Potter.

"Economy be blowed! I'm jolly hungry!"

"Silence!" shouted Sergeant Burrell, scanning the sea of faces in front of him. "Wingate! Walker, stand out!"

Greatly wondering, the two Sixth-Formers obeyed.

"Go to the kitchen an' ask Mrs. Kebble to let you 'ave the dinner!"

Wingate almost fell down.

"But—but that's not our job!" he exclaimed. "Where are the servants?"

"Don't bandy words with me! Go an' do as I tella yer!"

There was a murmur of excitement as Wingate and Walker quitted the Hall. They returned in a few moments, bearing between them a huge tureen, from which a pungent cloud of steam issued.

"Jove, what a whiff!" muttered Johnny Bull. "It's enough to bowl you over at a ten-mile range. Get your handkerchiefs out, you chaps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two seniors dumped down the tureen, and beat a hasty retreat. There was something distinctly nauseous about the smell of that dinner.

"Nah, then, boys," said the sergeant, "I don't want to blow me own trumpet, but through my generosity the 'Bads' agreed to let you 'ave curry for dinner!"

A chorus of groans went up from the fellows in Hall. They were not averse to curry, when properly made, but the thought of sampling the odorous contents of the tureen made them shudder.

"Stop that there row!" bade Sergeant Burrell harshly. "Bring yer plates hup ter me one at a time, an' I'll serve yer!"

The Sixth-Formers went up first, and the sergeant doled out a ladleful of the horrid concoction to each of them. They returned to their table with their faces as far away from their plates as possible.

Coker & Co. then went up to take their gruel, as Bob Cherry expressed it, and Temple & Co. of the Fourth followed.

The smell grew stronger every minute, until it thoroughly poisoned the atmosphere. The Sixth-Formers, fired by the same impulse, pushed their plates away from them, and clasped their handkerchiefs to their noses.

"Come along, the Remove!" sang out Sergeant Burrell.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Squiff. "The stuff'll bowl us over if we get too close!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

One by one the fellows were served, until the tureen was practically empty.

"Old yer plate hup, Grunter!" commanded the sergeant.

Then he seized the tureen in both hands, tilted it up, and filled Billy Bunter's plate with the most vile-looking stuff imaginable.

"Wharton! Noogent! Go an' ask Mrs. Kebble for another lot!"

"My hat! We shall never survive the first!" gasped Nugent.

Smack!

The sergeant gave the junior a cuff that sent him spinning.

"None of your cheek!" he roared.

Nugent faced round savagely, with clenched fists.

"I—I'll jolly well—" he began.

"Better not," whispered Wharton in his ear. "Think of the Highcliffe match!"

With a great effort Frank gained control of his temper, and left the Hall with his leader. The two chums came upon Mrs. Kebble in the domestic regions, looking considerably distressed.

"What's the matter, ma'am?" asked Harry Wharton.

The kindly house-dame raised her hands in the air.

"Which I don't know what the school's coming to, Master Wharton," she declared. "I never seed me going on afore. Sergeant Burrell seems to have more power in the place than all the rest of the staff put together. He came down 'ere this morning when I was cooking the joints, and said I could go to my room and rest, while he made all the arrangements a special dinner. This"—she stirred the curry viciously with the ladle—"this is his special dinner."

"Cheer up, ma'am!" said Wharton consolingly. "We know it's not your fault. You've always fed us well, and we're grateful. Come on, Frank!"

And the two chums carried the heavy tureen into the Hall.

Sergeant Burrell finished serving the Remove, and then dealt with the fags.

Every plate in that vast assembly was untouched, save one. That was Billy Bunter's. The Owl of the Remove had a boundless, all-absorbing appetite for anything and everything, and he made short work of the evil-smelling curry.

"That's ripping!" he said, snacking his fat chops with hearty relish. "I suppose there's no more curry going beggins? Why—My hat! Ain't you fellows eating anything?"

"We wouldn't touch the confounded stuff with a barge-pole!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Can I have your whack, then, Bull, old fellow?"

"Certainly, you burbling great bladder of lard!"

Bunter snatched eagerly at Johnny Bull's plate, and recommenced his amazing orgy.

"Take mine, Bunter, for mercy's sake!" groaned Bolsover major. "The stench is slowly suffocating me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mine, too!" implored Squiff.

"And mine!"

"Same here!"

"Pile in, Bunter!"

Plates were pushed towards the fat junior from all sides. It seemed a human impossibility that even Bunter could demolish such a deluge of curry. But he smiled a beatific smile, and piled in for all he was worth.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Burrell, to the unbounded astonishment and disgust of the fellows, pulled out a dirty-looking clay-pipe from his pocket, loaded it with slag, and lit up. He perched himself on one of the serving-tables, and sent up tremendous wreaths of hazy smoke, causing those seated in the vicinity to choke and splutter spasmodically.

"What a beast!" exclaimed Wharton. "The fellow ought to be the proprietor of a pigstye. It's the giddy limit!"

Feeling ran high at the Sixth-Form table also.

"The chap must be either drunk or demented!" said Courtney. "The sooner he goes out of Greyfriars on his neck, the better."

Sergeant Burrell ceased puffing at his pipe for a moment, and glared round the Hall. Then for the first time he noted that not a single fellow, with the exception of Billy Bunter, had attempted to sample his curry.

"What's all this?" he roared, shuffling down from the table.

"Why ain't yer eatin' yer dinner, you raskils?"

Wingate sprang to his feet.

"I'm not fastidious, sir," he said, "but I wouldn't touch that muck—not for all the wealth of the Indies!"

"You hungry-looking young sweep! Why, when I was a-fightin' out in the Congo we 'ad to heat bootlaces—an' glad to get 'em, too!"

"Git on wiv yer dinner at once, all of yer!" bellowed the sergeant. "I wants to see hevery plate-hempty in ten minutes!"

"Great Scott!" gasped Harry Wharton. "I forgot all about my dose. Take it, Bunter, for goodness' sake!"

But Billy Bunter was "whacked." He couldn't have negotiated another spoonful of curry to save his life.

"Nun-nun-no, thanks!" he stammered. "I—I'm beginning to feel a bit queer inside."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But there was one way of escape open to Wharton, which he had not noticed before. Each table was supplied with a refuse-bowl, and the captain of the Remove at once proceeded to deposit the hateful curry into the friendly vessel. Then, to show his supreme disgust for one of the worst dinners ever served up in the history of Greyfriars, he took the pepper-pot and emptied the entire contents into the curry.

Sergeant Burrell came striding up the gangway, biting savagely at his clay-pipe.

"Wharton!" he thundered. "Stand hup!"

Harry rose in his place.

"Ow come that wholesome curry to be in that there bowl?"

"I put it there, sir!"

"Why?"

"Because it's quite unatatable," said Harry.

"Ho! So you're a grumbler!" at the school fare-wot? The rest of the boys on this table 'ave eaten theirs. Why can't you?"

"Poisoning's a dreadful death to die, sir."

"Ow cheeky young swab! There's fellows in Flanders as would jump for joy at the werry mention of 'ot curry. Lend me your spoon!"

Harry Wharton obeyed, and the rest of the fellows looked on, wondering.

The sergeant removed his pipe, and taking the proffered spoon, plunged it into the refuse-bowl. He had not seen Wharton empty about an ounce of strong pepper into the curry, and raised a generous spoonful to his lips without the ghost of a suspicion.

"Watch me try it!" he said. "If it's good enough for a man in my 'igh position, it's good enough for anybody."

Sergeant Burrell's big mouth opened like a trapdoor, and he took the yellowish mass at one gulp. Then he staggered back with a yell which rang from one end of the Hall to the other.

"Ow-ow-ow-ow! It's 'ot-'ot as a lighted snib! Yoooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows roared with unrestrained laughter at the sergeant's terrible plight. Huge tears rushed to his eyes, and trickled down his unshaven cheeks.

"Atiahoo! Atishum-yum-yum!"

Sergeant Burrell sneezed for a full five minutes. He had swallowed considerably more pepper than curry, and danced up and down the Hall like a cat on hot bricks.

"Carry me home to die, somebody!" entreated Bob Cherry. "It's too funny for words!"

But the sergeant didn't seem to regard it as funny. He raved and fumed like a maniac, and rushed blindly at Harry Wharton. Before he could reach his objective, however, a hard crust of bread, deftly hurled by Skinner, smote him full in the face, causing him to yell afresh.

Skinner's action was the signal for a general attack. Fellows rose from their seats in every part of the Hall, and armed themselves with suitable missiles. These they despatched with all speed, and the unpopular sergeant found himself literally bombarded.

"Stop it!" he roared, making furious passes in the air with his clenched fists. "Ow dare yer? 'Ow dare yer, I say? 'Ow!"

The air was thick with flying breadcrusts. Wingate and the rest of the prefects were too hopelessly overcome with laughter to interfere; and, in any case, they had no superfluous affection to waste on such an outsider as Sergeant Burrell.

Bump!

Half-a-pound of butter smote the sergeant full in the stomach, bowing him over like a skittle. He alighted with a terrific concussion on the floor of the Hall.

"My only Aunt Sempronius!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "We've done it now, with a vengeance! Listen!"

As Sergeant Burrell staggered to his feet, his garments streaming with the liquid curry, scores of voices bawled to him in a low uncertain fashion.

"Yah!"

"Get out!"

"Beast!"

"Tyrant!"

"Prussian pig!"

The sergeant stood spellbound.

"You-you—" he gasped incoherently. "I'll report yer!"

"Bow-wow!"

The din was simply appalling, and although George Wingate tried several times to turn discord into harmony, he might just as well have bellowed at a brick wall, for all the success he attained.

His face distorted with furious rage, Sergeant Burrell stamped out of the Hall, slamming the door fiercely behind him.

"That's done it!" said Bob Cherry, with a whistle. "We've got our own back on the beast, but, by my halidom, there'll be the dickens to pay later on!"

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EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

And the rest of the Famous Five were forced to agree that in attacking the obnoxious sergeant they were simply heaping coals of fire on their own heads.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Ructions on the Range!

"BOYS!"

Dr. Locke swept into the Hall, his keen eyes roving over the crowded tables. Behind him came Sergeant Burrell, grinning with malicious triumph. "Am I to understand," went on the Head, "that you have grossly assaulted the school sergeant during the discharge of his duties?"

Wingate took upon himself the task of spokesman.

"The fellows are not to be blamed for getting out of hand, sir," he said stoutly. "The food served up to us wasn't fit for a dog to eat, and we naturally resented it."

"There s'are, sir!" exclaimed the sergeant. "Nice 'ot curry, made with me own 'ands, and they grumbles at it like that!"

"Them! I fear there must have been something radically wrong with the ingredients," murmured the Head. "I will question one of the boys, to ascertain if my fears are founded on fact. Bunter!"

"Sir?"

The Owl of the Remove stood up in his place.

"What did you think of the curry which was allotted to you by Sergeant Burrell?"

"It was topping, sir!" said Bunter promptly. "Simply divine! I—I—could almost bathe in it, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" rapped out the Head. "So you assert that the food was all right, Bunter?"

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"Told yer so!" said Sergeant Burrell dramatically. "Master Grunter, he knows how to speak the truth, but the rest of 'em, sir, 'ave formed a conspiracy agin me."

The Head frowned.

"And do I understand that you were pelted in the public hall, sergeant?"

"Yus, sir. Jest look at me! They chucked everything they could lay their thievin' 'ands on—delicious curry, rolls o' bread, lumps o' butter, an' even knives an' forks. Enough to kill a ordinary man!"

"Lies!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in ringing tones. "Silence, Cherry! Take five hundred lines for causing such an unseemly disturbance!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"As for the rest of you," said the Head austerely, "you will be forbidden to leave the school premises, on any pretext whatever, for a week."

"Oh!"

"And all football fixtures affecting that period will be considered cancelled."

The eyes of the Removeites met in mutual disappointment. Gone were their rose dreams of conquering Highcliffe. Thanks to Sergeant Burrell, they would not be able to chase the bounding leather for a whole week.

"I trust that will be a full and sufficient punishment for this unparalleled outrage," said Dr. Locke. "The boys in the Remove Form will now proceed to the rifle-range, to take their first lesson in musketry at the hands of Sergeant Burrell."

Feeling desperately fed up at the turn events had taken, Harry Wharton & Co. followed the sergeant out of the Hall.

Greyfriars boasted a rifle-range, but it was seldom used, except by fanatics like Mr. Brout. It was old and dilapidated, and of only twenty-five yards' range, and most of the fellows, when they practised shooting at all, preferred the larger and more up-to-date rifle-range in Courtfield.

"Nah then, Wharton," said Sergeant Burrell when the juniors were inside, "git down on the mat an' let's see wot sort o' stuff you're made of!"

Harry Wharton obeyed. He was a splendid marksman, and little doubted his ability to score a good percentage of bullseyes.

Crack!

The report rang out, and the sergeant, surveying the target through his glasses, saw that Wharton had started off with a bull.

"Fluke!" he growled. "You won't do agen!"

"I'll have a jolly good try, anyhow," said Harry.

And he brought his rifle into position once more.

Sergeant Burrell bent down by his side, doubtless with the view of giving instructions.

"Old yer breff!" he bellowed. "Git the tip o' the foresight inter the backsight! Fire!"



With a wild howl, the wretched tyrant turned to flee. Crowds of fellows gave chase, snatching up any weapons that came to hand. (See Chapter 13.)

"Rats! I refuse to be a blessed conscript! If Burrell's in earnest, he can come along and fetch us," said Vernon-Smith. "The fellow's a real Tartar, and he won't take any excuse."

Coker scowled, and went on sipping his tea. Potter and Greene, loyal to their leader, remained with him.

The bearer of ill-tidings departed along the passage, whistling. Meanwhile, Blundell and Lefevre and the rest of the Fifth-Formers had gone off to the gym, abusing Sergeant Burrell in good round terms. There was a chess tournament in progress when the summons came, and the fellows naturally felt exasperated. "Fall in!" roared the sergeant. "Tallest on the right, and shortest on the left!"

The Fifth-Formers sullenly obeyed. "Nah, then, I'm about to call the roll," said Sergeant Burrell, clearing his throat, "an' woo betide any hab-beentees! Handrewns!"

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"Sir!"

"Blundell!"

"Sir!"

"Bland!"

"Sir!"

"Coker!"

There was no reply. The Fifth-Formers exchanged significant glances.

"Coker's not coming," muttered Bland.

"Just like him!"

The sergeant frowned portentously, and made a mark against the absentee's name. He did likewise in the case of Potter and Greene.

When the roll was finished, Sergeant Burrell glanced round at the assembly.

"Where's them there three fellers wot ain't 'ere?" he demanded.

"Oh, my hat! What a superb mastery of the English language!" murmured Lefevre.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They're in Coker's study, I think, sir," said Blundell.
"Wot! Arter I give 'em strict injunctions to come on parade?"

"I suppose so, sir."
"Me hege! Go an' tell 'em at once that if they don't hobey borders I'll wallop 'em till they're black and blue!"

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Blundell.
The fellows waited breathlessly for Coker & Co. to appear. Footsteps were heard at last, but it was only Blundell. He had returned empty-handed from Coker's study.

"Well?" demanded the irate sergeant. "Wot's 'appened to them three raskils?"

"They're in Coker's study, having tea, sir," said Blundell calmly.

"Did yer give 'em my message?"

"Yes, sir."

"An' wot did they say?"

"That you were to go and eat coke, sir."

Sergeant Burrell almost fell down.

"They said that?" he gasped.

"Yes, sir, together with a few more uncomplimentary things. Coker advises you to get your hair cut, and to wash your neck monthly instead of yearly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" spluttered Sergeant Burrell.

He picked up a formidable-looking Indian club, and rushed from the gym.

Coker and his satellites were still at tea when the angry warrior burst into the study.

"Mind your eye!" sang out Greene.

"You saucy sweeps!" thundered the sergeant. "I'll brain 'er."

"Oh, crumbe!"

The three Fifth-Formers, thoroughly alarmed by this time, fled before the wrath of Sergeant Burrell like chaff before a cyclone. Round and round the table they stampeded, the sergeant giving chase with fierce frenzy.

Whack!

Coker roared as the business-end of the club crashed against his shin.

"Yaroop! The man's mad!" he yelled.

"Mad, am I? Take that one!"

Coker took it—across the shoulders this time. His yell of pain awakened the echoes.

"Mercy!" roared Potter, as he came within hitting distance. "We're quite willing to come and drill, sir!"

"Oh, absolutely!" whined Greene.

Sergeant Burrell pulled up, panting.

"You mean that?" he growled.

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"We'll be as good as gold, sir!" muttered Coker, caressing his injured parts.

"Werry well, then. Don't you dare to defy yer sooperiors agen. I ain't a-goin' to 'ave it! Kim on!"

And the disgruntled trio of Fifth-Formers wended their way to the gym like lambs to the slaughter.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Loder Gets His Deserts!

"LEFT! Right! Left!"

Sergeant Burrell's stentorian tones accompanied the monotonous tramping of many feet as the Fifth-Formers went through their first drill. The sergeant was no respecter of persons, and the

Fifth were treated with the same harsh, relentless brutality that had been meted out to the members of the Remove.

"How much longer are we going to put up with this?" growled Coker, taking a fresh grip of his rifle. "It's awful! Makes a chap feel red-hot fer mutiny."

"Shush, you fatted-d!" muttered Potter. "The beast is looking this w-e!"

"I don't care!" replied Coker recklessly. "Burrell's the rottenest rotter who ever rotted. I'd almost prefer the Kaiser."

"Coker, come out 'ere!"

"Oh, Jehoshaphat!"

"Told you so!" said Potter.

Coker trotted out and faced the sergeant, determined to deny every charge made against him.

"You was torokin'!" thundered Sergeant Burrell.

"No, sir!"

"You was larfin'!"

"No, sir!"

"You was playin' about, then!"

"No, sir!"

The sergeant breathed hard through his nose.

"Ver 'air's untidy!" he roared.

Coker gave a jump.

"How the dickens can I help that?" he exclaimed. "We've been doubling round the gym for half an hour, and if you expect our partings to be unruffled after that, you must be potty!"

"Potty, am I? I'll jolly soon show yer!"

And Sergeant Burrell gripped the great Horace Coker by the scruff of his neck.

"Elp me 'eave 'im up on ter the box-horse!" he commanded.

Half a dozen fellows who were at loggerheads with Coker and all his works rushed out to obey.

"Leggo!" roared Coker, writhing and wriggling in the grip of his captors.

But the victim's cries were wasted on the desert air. He was hurried across the box-horse and securely held down, and then Sergeant Burrell brought his cane into play.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Ease off, sergeant! I'll give you all the money I've got in the bank if you'll let me off!"

Bribery and corruption!" said the sergeant sternly. "I'll give yer an extra dose fer that!"

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Ow-ow-ow-ow!"

The sergeant laid about him lustily. Coker kicked out with tremendous violence. One of his hefty boots caught Blundell full in the chest, and the captain of the Fifth yelled with wild anguish. But Blundell's injury was not a patch on Coker's. That youth was suffering tortures beside which the Spanish Inquisition paled into insignificance. He was as limp as a rag when Sergeant Burrell finally desisted. Never in all his school career had he experienced such a terrific castigation.

"Hard cheese, old man!" murmured Potter, as Coker rejoined the ranks.

"Ow-ow-ow! I'll get my own back on the beast!" groaned the unhappy Horace.

At last the ordeal of drill was over, and Coker, giving Sergeant Burrell a fierce glare, which that worthy happily failed to notice, limped painfully away to his study.

"Buck up, old chap!" said Greene boisterously. "Can't we pour oil on the troubled waters?"

"Leave me alone!" snarled Coker. "All I want is a sheet of paper and a pencil."

Greene started.

"You-you're not surely not going to write some more of your drivelling doggerel?" he gasped.

"Don't you dare speak of my stuff as doggerel!" barked Coker. "It ranks with the finest gems in Shakespeare."

"What?"

"Blow your buts! I'm going to write."

And Coker, occasionally glancing up at the ceiling for inspiration, started scrawling away at a most terrific rate.

From time to time he emitted a low chuckle, in spite of the fact that he had sustained severe casualties.

Potter and Greene, sitting opposite, glanced at their chief more in sorrow than in anger.

Then Coker suddenly leapt to his feet, his eyes aglow with exultant delight.

"Done!" he exclaimed. "Now I'll go and stick it up on the notice-board, and Burrell can go hang!"

"You chump!" said Potter.

"You raving maniac!" shouted Greene.

But Coker was rock-like in his determination to display his composition to the public eye. He swung out of the study, leaving Potter and Greene shaking their heads in sorrow, predicting for the great Horace a miserable end.

A group of Removites stood chatting close to the notice-board, waiting for the summons to drill. They watched the movements of Horace Coker with considerable interest.

"What's Coker's latest?" said Frank Nugent.

"Another comic-challenge, I suppose," said Wharton, "or one of his love-letters to Miss Phyllis Howell."

Coker pinned up the poem, beamed upon the juniors who stood near, and beat a somewhat hasty retreat.

Harry Wharton & Co. surveyed the verses on the board in great astonishment. They were fairly accustomed to this time to Coker's outbursts, and to his strikingly original orthography, but that he would possess the unparalleled nerve to libel Sergeant Burrell in such a bold, defiant manner none of them had dreamed.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Johnny Bull. "This prances off with the whole giddy biscuit factory. Spout it out, Harry."

ANSWERS

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 424.

MAGNIFICENT TUCK-HAMPERS FREE TO READERS OF THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 1st OUT TO-DAY.

And the captain of the Remove declaimed the lines to a rapidly-increasing audience:

BEASTLY BULLY BURRELL!

"Three groans for brutal Burrell,
The tyrant and the Tartar;
Three cheers for Horace Coker,
The meek and modest martyr;
Who when the cane went whack, whack, whack,
Remained as silent as a sack."

"What a whopper!" said Bob Cherry. "We could hear his yells in the Rag, and thought they were killing pigs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"On the ball, Harry!"

"In Hall this rotter gave us
An awful dose of curry;
The prefects cried, 'Oh, save us!'
And rushed out in a hurry.
But Billy Bunter calmly ate
Plate after plate, and plate, plate, plate."

"Seems to be a bit of padding out in the last line, somehow," said Squiff. "I say, won't there be the dickens to pay if Burrell spots this?"

"Listen to this verse," said Wharton. "It's enough to bring down a chap's hairs in sorrow to the grave!"

"Oh, Burrell, Burrell, Burrell,
Beware, beware, beware!
The inkiest fag at Greyfriars
Shall smile on your despair.
Get out, get out, get out, get out,
Proud Prussian pig, your sun is set!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors simply shrieked, and Bob Cherry was mopping up genuine tears with his pocket-handkerchief, having laughed till he cried.

The uproar was so immense that no one saw Sergeant Burrell himself come striding on the scene until Squiff suddenly shouted:

"Cave! Tear the thing down! Quick!"

But the warning was given too late. The school sergeant was already poring the extraordinary document penned against himself.

The Removites stood spellbound for a moment. There was a tenseness in the atmosphere which seemed to herald the bursting of a most terrific storm.

Suddenly Sergeant Burrell swung round, his prominent jaw more prominent than ever.

"Who wrote this 'ere?" he howled.

No one made reply. The Removites were not sneaks, and, besides, Horace Coker had already had enough to go on with in the way of punishment.

"Come on! Hunt with 'is name!" roared the sergeant.

"I'll paste 'im so as 'is own grandmother won't know 'im!" Harold Skinner stepped forward, struck with a sudden idea.

"To night, have been Loder, sir," he said respectfully.

"Ha! That there lanky cove in the Sixth Form?"

"Yes, sir. Of course, I can't say for certain," said Skinner hastily.

Sergeant Burrell did not stop to hear further, neither did he attempt to reason things out in his own mind. Had he given the matter serious thought, he would have realised that no Sixth-Former—least of all a prefect—would have perpetrated such atrocious spelling.

But the sergeant was naturally a fiery, hot-headed man, who seldom weighed the pros and cons of anything. On this occasion he hastened to the senior common-room, his cane clenched tightly in his big, horny palm. Any fellows who happened to be loitering in the passages hurriedly fled at his approach, for the expression on his brutal face was something to fight shy of.

Gerald Loder was in the common-room, holding a consultation with Valence, Carne, and Walker, his three cronies. The unpopular prefect looked up with a frown as the sergeant entered.

"You've no right in this room, sir!" he said heatedly.

"No right, ain't I? I'll soon show yer, you libellin', lyin' worm! Take that—and that—and that!"

And before Loder could master his astonishment the long, cruel-looking cane lashed upon him again and again, causing him to leap into the air yelling with wild anguish.

Valence and Carne and Walker, suspecting that the sergeant was under the influence of drink, rushed pell-mell from the room.

"Lash, lash, lash!"

"Clunkit!" screamed Loder. "What have I done? I only said 'Yow-ow-ow!'"

"You wrote hinsultin' hepithets about me!" said the sergeant grimly. "I ain't a-goin' ter stand that! I 'ope as 'ow this 'ere thrashin' will be a lesson to yer!"

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EVERY
MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

"I wasn't! I didn't!" wailed the terrified prefect. And, paying to the door, he bolted with all speed, while the furious sergeant gave chase.

It was a most undignified proceeding to have to scamper throughout the length and breadth of the school buildings like a frightened hare; but Loder had to go through with it. The perspiration was pouring down his cheeks by the time Sergeant Burrell abandoned the chase.

The rascally prefect was beginning to realise to the full the time-honoured but none the less correct saying that there is no rest for the wicked.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Wibley's Wonderful Wheeze!

TING-A-LING-A-LING!

The genial clanging of a cycle-bell sounded outside the old gateway of Greyfriars after morning school next day, and the Famous Five, who had been strolling about aimlessly in the Close, went down to welcome the stranger in.

The cyclist proved to be Frank Courtenay, the popular, light-hearted leader of junior Highcliffe.

Harry Wharton groaned.

"We've got to tell him the match is off!" he said.

"Rotten!"

"Putrid!" agreed Bob Cherry. "Best to grin and bear it, though it's hard to grin! It's one of those things Burrell will have to face at his day of reckoning."

"Which won't be long now!" said Johnny Bull. "The Head'll have to fire the beast out of Greyfriars sooner or later! He's an eyesore to the giddy school!"

Frank Nugent opened the gates for the Highcliffe fellow, and Wharton explained the position.

"All footer matches are cancelled for a week, by order of the Head," he said. "It's all through a bit of a dirty-sergent named Burrell, who's been leading us a dog's life ever since he came. We shall have to postpone the match, that's all."

Frank Courtenay whistled.

"What rotten luck!" he exclaimed. "My hat! This seems to be a weird sort of school, I must say! You chaps are always running a halter round your necks! Never mind! We shall be delighted to wipe up the ground with you next week!"

"P'raps!" said Wharton. "Anyway, we're awfully, fearfully sorry! So-long, old chap!"

"So-long!"

And Frank Courtenay mounted his machine and sped away down the hard, white road.

"I wish we could get even with that blessed tyrant!" said Nugent thoughtfully. "He's worse than Nero and the Kaiser rolled into one!"

"Can't anyone think out a wheeze?" asked Wharton.

"Wibley's the chap for wheezes!" said Bob Cherry. "He's always got something new in his noodle. Ask him."

"Good egg!"

Wibley sprang up at a signal from Bob Cherry.

"What's wanted?" he asked.

"A rattling good wheeze for bringing Burrell to book!" said Wharton. "Can you oblige?"

Wibley reflected for a moment.

"Yes; I think I can," he said slowly.

"Hurrah!"

The juniors were delighted. They had great faith in Wibley, who was an impersonator of no small measure of skill.

"What's the dodge?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Wibley lowered his voice.

"Supposing," he began, "that an old boy of Greyfriars came into Hall while we were at dinner, and caused the dickens of a commotion? He could shy all manner of things at Burrell, and bring him howling to his knees."

"But who—?" began Wharton.

"Who would be the old boy? Why, myself, of course! If I can't make up for a simple part like that, I'll chuck up impersonating and start keeping rabbits!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got the togs all right," said Wibley. "Everything ought to go without a hitch. Hallo! There goes the dinner-bell!"

"Good luck!" said Wharton.

Wibley grinned, and sped off to his study, and Harry Wharton and Co., their hearts beating high with excitement, streamed into the Hall.

"What's for dinner?" murmured Bob Cherry. "Oh, my hat! Corned beef and spuds! Make a start on mine, Bunter!"

NEXT
MONDAY—

"MICKY DESMOND'S LUCK!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars fellows were not conscientious objectors to corned beef, as a rule, but Sergeant Burrell had made sweeping changes in the school kitchen. The corned-beef supply to longer came from New Zealand, but from Chicago, and the rumours that men and dogs sometimes got into the machines by mistake, and came out in parcels at the other end, put the fellows off their feed.

Sergeant Burrell surveyed the vast assembly of boys with linting eyes.

"Every boy is to eat 'is biff!" he called out.

"Oh, crumbs! He won't be happy till we're all suffering from ptomaine poisoning!" said Nugent. "What a life!"

Hurree Singh took a sheet of newspaper from his pocket, and wrapped his hunk of corned beef in it.

"I cannot eatfully devour such beastly muck," he observed. "I shall expirately pög out!"

For some days—ever since Sergeant Burrell's arrival, in fact—most of the fellows had been living on the school tuck-shop. The food in Hall was simply abominable, and Bunter alone did justice to the unappetising meals provided by the Hunnish tyrant. To make matters worse, the fellows were not allowed to talk at table. Conversation, therefore, had to be carried on in hushed whispers—a most unsatisfactory state of affairs.

When the meal was in full progress, the door of the Hall was thrown open, and a short, brisk man of middle age stroled in.

"Git houtside!" said Sergeant Burrell tersely. "You ain't got no right 'ere!"

"Tut, tut!" said the little gentleman, with a smile. "I have every bit as much right as you, sergeant!"

"Who are yer?"

"My name is U. R. Dunn, and I am an old boy of this institution."

Sergeant Burrell at once shed his ill-humoured manner. He foresaw a possible chance of getting a tip out of the old Grey Friar.

"Would you be so kind as to allow me to address the boys?" asked Mr. Dunn.

"Certingly, sir."

The old boy sprang up on to the serving-table with remarkable agility for a gentleman of his years.

"Boys," he exclaimed, "I must congratulate you upon having at your head such an able disciplinarian as Sergeant Burrell."

The sergeant's chest swelled almost to bursting-point. As for the fellows, they groaned volubly.

"Such a meek, gentle, and kindly man," said Mr. Dunn, looking as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. "Such a superb genius for teaching the young idea."

"Rats!"

"Dry up!"

With the exception of Harry Wharton & Co., who were aware of the masquerade, the fellows boomed and hooted the old boy who had presumed to expound such unpopular statements.

"Sergeant Burrell," went on Mr. Dunn, "has so nobly fulfilled the office of guide, philosopher and friend to all you boys that I am about to make him a suitable reward."

"Shame!"

Scores of fellows sprang to their feet, shouting and gesticulating furiously.

"Let Mr. Dunn stop, d'yeat?" said Sergeant Burrell.

"It's werry kind of 'im to think of me like this 'ere!"

"Don't mention it!" said Mr. Dunn affably. "Will you accept this little present now?"

"Yus, sir!"

"Right. Then here goes!"

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And before Sergeant Burrell could say another word, Mr. Dunn had plunged his hand into an egg-box that stood on the serving-table, and commenced pelting the objectionable sergeant right and left.

Egg after egg smashed upon Sergeant Burrell's face and clothes, and the fellows roared in their seats with hysterical laughter.

"Ow—ow—ow! Wat yer doin' of!" roared the sergeant, goggling furiously at the sticky mass of yolk with which he was enveloped.

"Making you a present, of course," said Mr. Dunn, in pained tones. "You can't say you didn't ask for it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Some of the bolder spirits in the school nobly went to assist Mr. Dunn in his great offensive movement. Almost doubled up with merriment, Wingate and Courtney made a feeble effort to check them, but it was quite unavailing.

By this time Sergeant Burrell was literally plastered with a yellow, nauseous substance. So far from being new laid, those eggs resembled Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome." Their odour was, to put it mildly, a trifle unpleasant, and the sergeant's yells awakened the echoes as he faced that hail of missiles.

"Pile in!" roared Mr. Dunn genially. "Show your gratitude, boys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Unable to withstand the terrific bombardment any longer, Sergeant Burrell turned and fled. He dashed through the doorway of the Hall, and streaked across the Close like a champion of the cinder-path.

"Dear me!"

A begowned figure skipped hastily aside, just in time to avert what would have been a most terrific collision.

Sergeant Burrell pulled up, panting.

"Dr. Locke, sir!" he shouted. "Look! Look what they've bin 'n' gorn 'n' done now!"

"Mr. dear man!" gasped the Head feebly.

"It's hegg, sir—hegg!" roared the frenzied sergeant; and he kicked a lot of the yellow, yolkly substance on to the Head's gown.

"How dare you!" exclaimed Dr. Locke wrathfully.

"How dare you seek to contaminate me with eggs, apparently of great antiquity? And if you were pelted with such missiles, pray tell me where I shall find the peltor?"

"It was an old-boy wet done it!" said Sergeant Burrell thickly. "A cove wet calls himself U. R. Dunn."

"I have no recollection of the name," said the Head.

"Where is the person now?"

"In the 'all, sir."

"Then we will proceed thither at once."

But when the Head and Sergeant Burrell reached the Hall, they found it as barren as Mother Hubbard's celebrated cupboard. Mr. U. R. Dunn had discreetly made himself scarce, and all the fellows had taken French leave and dismissed themselves; and although the authorities made exhaustive inquiries for the rest of that eventful day, they failed to discover the identity of that amazing practical joker, Mr. U. R. Dunn!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Way of the Transgressor!

DURING the days that followed, the Famous Five and their immediate chums took to rifle-shooting in real earnest.

Not that they feared the wrath of Sergeant Burrell, or anything of that sort. They would willingly have defied the hostile tyrant until further orders if they felt like it. But the cause of their present apathy was that on Saturday a great contest was to be held for the Boys of Kent Shooting Shield.

Greyfriars had never entered the lists before, but they were aware that Highlife, their near rivals, had bagged the honours two years in succession, and were determined to wrest the coveted trophy from them this year.

By the time Saturday came, Harry Wharton & Co. were trained to their very finger-tips. Besides the Famous Five, the team was to include Peter Todd, Mark Linley, and Vernon-Smith.

It was arranged that Sergeant Burrell should accompany the Greyfriars team to Canterbury, where the contest was to be waged; and the pompous sergeant, noting the tremendous improvement in the fellows' marksmanship, didn't forget to take a bit of the credit on his own shoulders.

A cheering crowd saw the team off to the station, and wished them good luck. Sergeant Burrell, who had donned his khaki uniform for the occasion, tramped along as if he owned the earth and all that was therein.

"The worst of it is," muttered Harry Wharton, "that if



"You've no right in this room, sir!" said Loder heatedly. "No right, ain't I? I'll soon show yer, you libellin', lyin' worm! Take that—and that—and that!" Before Loder could master his astonishment, the long, cruel-looking cane lashed upon him again and again. (See Chapter 10.)

we collar the giddy shield, Burrell will bear his blushing honours thick upon him, and make out our success was entirely due to his coaching. It's rotten!"

"Never mind!" said Bob Cherry. "The fellows will understand the real facts of the case, and won't put up with any of Burrell's bombast. Shake a leg, ye cipples! Train's in!"

The journey to Canterbury was rather tedious, owing to the fact that the party had to wait half an hour for a connection at Courtfield Junction; but the fellows improved the shining hour by pulling Sergeant Burrell's leg as often as possible, and at midday they reached the spacious rifle-range. Over a dozen teams were competing, most of them hailing from public schools; and Frank Courtenay & Co. were already on the scene smiling confidently. They had been notified of the coming of the Greyfriars juniors, and extended to them a cheery welcome.

"What amazin' energy, begad!" drawled the elegant Caterpillar. "Fancy faggin' right over here for nothin'!"

"For nothin'?" exclaimed Wharton. "Yas, by Jove! You know jolly well you haven't the ghost of a chance of stickin' that shield up in No. 1 Study."

Harry Wharton laughed. "We mean to move heaven and earth to lower your colours, an'—"

"Nah, then," broke in Sergeant Burrell gruffly, "none o' THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 424.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"MICKY DESMOND'S LUCK!"

that there plottin' an' plannin' in secret! Git hon with the washin'!"

The Boys of Kent Shooting Shield was not a trophy to be lightly won. The competitors each had to fire ten shots at the respective ranges of twenty-five, fifty, and a hundred yards, and the team with the highest aggregate secured the honour.

Highcliffe and Greyfriars set the ball rolling, Harry Wharton and Frank Courtenay getting down together. Both were superb marksmen, and the twenty-five yards' range was child's play to them. The Greyfriars fellow compiled 48 out of a possible 50, and Courtenay managed 47.

The juniors who followed on did remarkably well, and the two teams eventually tied, with 360 points each. But that, as Bob Cherry remarked, was merely the first round. The longer distances would test the skill and endurance of the contestants to the utmost.

The rest of the teams fared badly. Like the curate's egg, they were good in parts, and much too erratic to come up to the standard of Greyfriars and Highcliffe. The whole thing, therefore, was between the two latter schools.

"Come hon, Wharton!" admonished Sergeant Burrell. "Let's see wat sort o' stuff yer's made of! After the thorough trainin' I was good enough to give yer, yer orter simply romp 'ome!"

"I'll do my best, sir," said Wharton quietly. "No one can do more."

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

And Harry's best was something very good indeed. Making due allowance for the wind, he discharged shot after shot, winding up with the brilliant score of 44. Frank Nugent and Vernon-Smith each compiled 42; and then Bob Cherry, shooting with consummate coolness and resource, topped even Wharton's effort. His 45 at such a long range was adjudged to be the best score of the day.

Highlife's blazed away gallantly; but the recent practice of the Removites stood them in good stead, and they held a lead of 6 points when it came to the final shoot.

"Pile 'em on, my sons!" said Bob Cherry joyously.

"Victory's within our giddy grasp!"

And so it was. Shooting with delightful precision, Greyfriars accumulated 355 points on the hundred yards range; and Highlife, falling away rather badly at the finish, only just exceeded the 300. The Greyfriars Remove had thus won the Boys of Keat Shooting Shield hands down.

Sergeant Burrell was positively beaming with delight. He strutted about among the spectators, chanting his own praises ad lib, and pointing out that he, and he alone, was responsible for such a splendid achievement on the part of Harry Wharton & Co.

Then the Greyfriars fellows, in high good-humour, walked busily to the railway station to board their train.

Harry Wharton had wired the result of the shooting contest to Mr. Quolch, who had made the news public; and a cheering, clamorous crowd greeted the Removites on their return. Masters and boys alike were hugely delighted by the additional lustre brought upon the school.

A movement was made to Big Hall, where Dr. Locke had put in an appearance. The kindly old Head beamed upon the noisy throng.

"This is indeed a great day for us at Greyfriars, my boys!" he exclaimed. "I rejoice to know that we have such capable marksmen in our midst."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Wharton!"

"I also realise," went on the Head guilelessly, "that Sergeant Burrell's personal influence has been the greatest factor in the team's striking success. I therefore call for three cheers for our worthy sergeant!"

The noise which followed was almost sufficient in volume to bring the roof down, but neither the Head nor Sergeant Burrell realised that the cheers were solely ironical.

"Speech!" shouted Speckiff suddenly. "Make Sergeant Burrell give us speech!"

"Hear, hear!"

The sergeant flushed crimson and turned appealingly to Dr. Locke.

"Which I ain't no orator, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Rate! Speech! Spee-o-eh!"

The cry was taken up on every side, and gained emphasis at every second.

"You had better humour them, sergeant," murmured the Head.

Still very red in the face, the musketry instructor mounted a form and gave a preliminary cough.

"Wot I got to say," he announced, "is werry brief. I wants yer 'cadmaster to give yer a whole day's 'oliday hon Monday."

The whole school seemed to suddenly go mad. Scores of fellows surged in towards Sergeant Burrell, who, despite his lofty weight, was swept into the air and borne in triumph through a frenzied, cheering mob.

"This is the man who won the shooting match for us!" howled Peter Todd, with heavy sarcasm. "We didn't do a thing ourselves. On dear, no! Every ounce of credit goes to Sergeant Burrell, and now we're going to show him what we think of him!"

"Hear, hear!"

The escort—mostly Removites—rushed their burden out into the dusky Clove, and set him down on the ground. Then, at a signal from Peter Todd, they fairly leapt at Sergeant Burrell, pounding him for all they were worth.

"Ere, I say, wot's all this? Ow-ow-ow! Gerraway, you young rips! Yooop!"

"It's all right, sir!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully, giving the sergeant a terrific clump on the back that sent him sprawling. "We're congratulating you, sir!"

"Yes, rather!"

Diff! Thud! Diff! Thud!

Never had Sergeant Burrell received such a rough handling in his life. In vain he struggled and roared and pleaded and entreated. The blood of the Removites boiled at the thought of former injustices, and they smote the sergeant hip and thigh. His tunic was torn open, and the buttons went whirling in all directions; his hat was used as a football, and his chest as a doormat. By the time the avengers had finished with him Sergeant Burrell felt considerably nearer to being dead than alive.

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THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Boot for Burrell!

GREYFRIARS was seething with excitement later on that evening, for it had been announced that General Martyn, temporarily home from the Front, was to visit the school with Colonel Ranter, in order to present the shooting shield.

The Hall was packed to overflowing, and Sergeant Burrell, who had treated himself to a much-needed wash and brush up, was making his presence felt.

"Silence in the Hall! Take them sweets hout o' yer mouth, Grunter! Stop shufflin' them there 'ands, Cherry!"

A moment later the door was thrown open, and the Head rustled in, followed by the fiery Colonel Ranter and General Martyn. Gossiping, the porter, staggered along in their wake, bearing the huge shield.

Locke courteously assisted the general on to the raised dais, and beckoned for silence.

"Boys!" he exclaimed. "General Martyn, a prominent old boy of Greyfriars, who has seen extensive service in all parts of our Empire, has been able to spare an hour this evening in order to present to Harry Wharton the Boys of Keat Shooting Shield."

"Hurrah!"

"Under the circumstances, therefore," went on the Head, "the ceremony will be dispensed with as speedily as possible. Wharton, pray come forward and accept the well-merited trophy on behalf of the Remove Shooting Team."

Cheer upon cheer rang out as the captain of the Remove stepped up the gangway. Before he could reach the dais, however, Sergeant Burrell thrust his way to the fore.

"Of course, it was me wot done it," he said to the general. "They wouldn't never 'ave done nothin' but for my valyble tootion."

General Martyn frowned portentously, and his keen, piercing eyes were riveted upon the uncouth figure in front of him.

"Who are you?" he demanded sharply.

"That is Sergeant Burrell, sir," interrupted Colonel Ranter. "He has been appointed to the post of drill-sergeant here, and I can well understand the feeling of pride which possesses him at this moment."

The general glared intently at the school sergeant for some time, and then he gave a violent start.

"Burrell!" he exclaimed. "This man's name is Burrell, you say?"

"Certainly, sir!" said Colonel Ranter. "Why, what—"

"Then the fellow is an impostor," roared General Martyn.

"A low-down, disolute, criminal impostor!"

"By gad!" gasped the colonel. "That cannot be so, sir!"

Sergeant Burrell came with excellent credentials. "He is no more a sergeant in his Majesty's Army than—a bull-pup! Five years ago, Ranter, that wretch was convicted of embezzlement and dismissed the service!"

A murmur of amazement ran round the Hall. As for the bogus sergeant, he stood rooted to the floor, his knees fairly knocking together.

"I—I," he stammered—"I never meant no 'arm, sir!"

"You admit your vile deception!" rumbled General Martyn.

"Yus, sir. 'Ave divy on a pore cove wot's down, sir!"

"Shame!"

A loud and prolonged roar burst from the assembled throng of fellows.

The Head stepped forward to interfere, but General Martyn drew him aside.

"Let the boys deal with him," he said grimly. "The police are too busy to be bothered just now."

With a wild howl, the wretched tyrant turned to flee. Crowds of fellows gave chase, snatching up any weapons that came to hand. Half-a-dozen boots met together on Burrell's portly person, and he descended the School House steps with a fearful bump. Then, picking himself up, he flew for dear life to the gates, and finished up in the roadway, making night hideous with his groans and grunts of anguish.

Burrell's reign of terror was over. By a lucky chance, he had been bowled out, and Greyfriars would know him no more.

Harry Wharton & Co. returned to the Hall, and joyfully received the Shooting Shield into their possession. And that selfsame shield, which was allotted a prominent place in Simly No. 1, served as a lasting memento of the Mailed Fist at Greyfriars.

THE END.

(Do not miss "MICKY DESMOND'S LUCK!" next Monday's Grand Story of the Chums of Greyfriars, by FRANK RICHARDS.)

THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF OUR GREAT NEW
ADVENTURE SERIAL STORY. START TO-DAY!

The First Instalments Told How:

DICK DAUNT and DUDLEY DREW, two chums, discover a letter in a bottle which they have extracted from the body of a shark.

They are informed by its contents that a certain MATTHEW SNELL is marooned on an unnamed island in the Keys, and he offers a substantial reward to any persons effecting his rescue.

On going to the island, however, they are unable to find Mr. Snell.

EZRA CRAY, a moonshiner, and his scoundrelly colleagues then visit the island, and, finding that it contains gold, attempt to kill the two chums.

Having previously hidden their boat, Dick and Dudley seek refuge in a cave. They discover a supply of water in another cave close by, and as the cavern continues beyond the well, decide to explore further.

In the darkness they accidentally fall into a steep-sided pit. Dick then tries, with the aid of his clasp-knife, to make a foothold to enable them to climb out.

"Can't touch it!" he exclaims at last. "It's harder than cement."

(Now go on with the story.)

In the Dark.

Dudley kept his head.

"See here, Jim, I'll give you a shoulder up. Then maybe you can reach some sort of hold. Take your boots off first."

"Are you fit for it?"

"Guess I've got to be," Dudley replied curtly.

They tried the plan suggested, but there was no hold of any sort, either on the slope or on the walls. It was just like trying to climb one of those steep slides of blue ice which you may find in an Alpine cravasse.

Time and again Dick struggled to reach the top, but never got within six feet of it. He did not give up until he was dripping with perspiration and almost dropping with the strain. The knees of his breeches were in rags, and his knees themselves bruised and bleeding.

"It's no use, Dudley!" he said. And the very quietness of his voice and manner impressed Dudley far more than if he had shown impatience or anger.

"And it's all my fool fault!" said Dudley bitterly.

"Just as much mine as yours!" replied Dick. "I ought

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"MICKY DESMOND'S LUCK!"

to have put my foot down. I felt all the time there was something going to happen. But don't let's slang one another, for any sake. The candle won't last more than another fifteen minutes. Let's make up our mind what to do."

"I guess, as we can't get back, we'd best go on," said Dudley. "See here, Dick! We've been coming uphill all the way. I don't reckon we're thirty feet under the top of the cliff this minute. And the air's good. I'm gambling on this cave opening up top side. What do you say? Shall we try it?"

"We don't seem to have any choice. Come on!"

Dick picked up the candle as he spoke, and they started. As Dudley had said, the air was good. That and the upward slope were all they had to go on. Both were perfectly well aware that the journey they were engaged upon was a gamble—a gamble in which the stake was their lives. If they failed to find an opening above, they were done for. There would be nothing for it but to sit there in the pitchy, ink-black darkness, and wait for the inevitable end.

Reflections of this kind do not make for cheerfulness, and neither spoke as they hurried on through the seemingly endless passage. The slope became more gradual. In fact, the floor was almost flat, yet the cave still had the same curious appearance of a single rift running through the heart of the solid rock. It was never more than a dozen feet wide. Sometimes it shrank to three.

They came to a very narrow place—so narrow, in fact, that they could only just squeeze through. Beyond, the cave widened again, and split into no fewer than three separate and distinct passages.

Both pulled up short, and stood staring at the openings. All were about the same size.

"What shall we do, Dick," said Dudley, with a reckless laugh—"toss for it?"

Dick did not answer. He glanced at the candle. There was not half an inch left. Four, or possibly five, minutes, then darkness!

"Shall we toss for it?" repeated Dudley. Then, struck by a fresh idea: "No; let's see which one the air is coming down. Hold the candle up, Dick. There'll be a draught down one or the other of the passages."

Dick tried the left-hand passage. The candle flickered ever so slightly.

"That's it," said Dudley. "There's a breeze down that one. Come on!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Wait!" said Dick. "We must try the others."
He did. From the middle and the right-hand passage, there was also draught enough to flutter the little flame.
"Gee, but that's tough!" exclaimed Dudley, bewildered.
"I wonder if they all open out on top?"
Dick shook his head. He did not know what to do. And every second brought the small remaining bit of candle nearer to its end.

In desperation he blew it out.
"We can talk in the dark," he said sharply. "Now, what's it to be?"

"I vote for the middle," said Dudley.
At that moment Dick gave a quick cry.
"Look! Look!"

"Look! What d'ye mean?" How in sense can one look at anything in this? Geo, it's as black as a cellar at midnight."

"Look—to the right!" said Dick. "The blue arrow—the same as at the bottom—the same that showed me the way to the spring in the lower cave!"

Dudley gasped.
"I see. I see now. The arrow in luminous paint. Say, Dick, but I told you someone had been here before us. That settles it. Light up again, and let's shift. I guess we're all right at last!"

Dick wasted no time in doing so, and the pair turned into the tunnel farthest to the right, and pushed on as rapidly as they dared.

"We're still on the upward slope, Dick," declared Dudley. "I have a feeling we'll be all right now. We can't be a great way under the top of the cliff."

Dick did not answer. Certainly, he felt far more hopeful now that the luminous arrow had definitely proved that someone had been before them in this strange rock tunnel. Still he could not be certain yet that there was any opening above. The first explorer might have had some other reason for travelling up this particular passage. If he had had enough candles and some means of climbing the slope, he might have gone back by the same way that he had come.

Still he did not confide those misgivings to Dudley. Dudley was weak from his fall. It was everything to keep up his spirits until they got out of this horrible mess.

On and on they went, Dick with his eye on the candle. To his surprise, they would be left in the black darkness, which would make every movement fraught with the most extreme peril.

He kept a sharp look-out on the floor and walls, but saw no further sign of the original explorer. More than once the tunnel threatened to pinch out altogether, but always they just managed to squeeze through.

The flame of the candle gave a sudden jump. The wick was falling over to a little pool of melted wax.

"Quick!" said Dick. "Quick as you can, Dudley. She's just going!"

Dudley responded nobly, but just here the floor was desperately rough, and it was all that either of them could do to keep their footing. Dick caught his toe, stumbled badly, the last atom of wick toppled over, there was one final jet of flame, then it was over, and darkness settled like a pall.

For a moment neither spoke. It was Dudley who broke the silence.

"Guess you've got a few matches still, Dick?" he asked, in a voice which by an effort he made sound casual and cheery.

"A few," Dick answered. "But we'd better keep them till we actually need them. I'm going ahead, Dudley. I can feel my way with my rifle at each step. You follow as close as you can."

It was had enough to walk across a room in the dark, even when one knows where all the furniture stands.

It is a horrible task to find one's way by night over a piece of rough moorland. Imagine, then, what it means to grope along a tunnel deep under the earth in darkness far more intense than that of the darkest night above ground—a tunnel which winds this way and that, but is never straight for ten paces together, with a floor ridged with rock and littered with boulders, and a roof sometimes well overhead, but more often so low that one has to bend double to avoid beating out one's brains against it.

It was about as ghastly an ordeal as either Dudley or Dick could have imagined in their very worst nightmares. Each step was a matter of several seconds, and even after probing the ground in front with their rifles, they constantly stumbled or even fell, while once Dick nearly knocked himself silly against a great spar of rock which jutted out from the wall.

It seemed to Dick that they had been hours groping through the horrible gloom, and he was just going to propose that he should stop and strike a match, when his rifle-butt struck a solid wall of rock.

"Steady!" he called to Dudley, and began groping for the curve in the passage which he fancied that they had come upon.

He had struck more than one similar place already, where the tunnel turned at almost a right-angle.

But no opening met his touch. Everywhere was solid rock, and a spasm of fear gripped him. At last they had struck the blind alley which had been his nightmare all along.

"I can't find the way," he said, and in spite of himself, his voice shook a little.

"Light a match!" said Dudley.

"I'm just going to."

Even the tiny flicker seemed blinding as an electric lamp.

A groan, which he could not repress, came from Dick's lips. He was right. The passage ended. They were in a blind alley.

"Steady, old chap!" said Dudley quickly. "Keep the match going. We may only just have turned out of the right road. Come on back!"

Dick obeyed. But he moved quite mechanically. He had lost hope at last. He believed that they were finally lost.

Dudley was not so sure. It was all Dick could do to keep up. Then the match went out, and he had to light another. Only seven left!

"Hurrah!" came from Dudley. "I told you so!" As he spoke Dick saw him turn into a broader passage to the left.

"Come on, Dick; this is the right way, I'll bet!"

Dick followed. This other passage ran quite steeply up for about twenty paces, then made a sharp bend again to the left. Just before he reached the bend, the second match went out.

Dudley had already turned the corner. Dick had stopped a moment wondering whether to risk another match or not, when a yell—a regular howl of triumph—pealed from above.

"I told you so! I told you so, Dick! Here's daylight—daylight! I tell you!"

Dick made a rush, stumbled, fell, picked himself up, then swung round the corner, and, before his dazzled eyes, saw a blaze of sunshine through a long, narrow rift.

Both bolted together. They ran like two travellers who, dying of thirst in a desert, suddenly see a pool before them. Another minute, and they were both outside, and had flung themselves down on the hot, rocky ground, in the full blaze of the afternoon sun.

Dudley spoke first.
"Dick," he said slowly and impressively, "if you ever catch me monkeying in a pit like that again, I'll ask you, as a personal favour, to bat me over the head, and leave me for the buzzards. You hear?"

Dick nodded.

"Me, too, Dudley! I've had enough of caves to last me for the rest of my life!"

He glanced at the sun, and then at his watch.

"D'ye know we've been in that place a matter of six hours?" he said gravely. "Strikes me the sooner we make tracks for our own little hole in the cliff, the better!"

Dudley nodded.

"I guess you're right. Just let's have a drink of water, and I'm your man."

They finished the contents of the water-bottle, and Dick tightened the bandage on Dudley's head. It was not until then that it suddenly occurred to them that they were actually on top of the cliff, and that they had to get back again.

The place they were in was a small opening in the thick palmets, one of those spots so rocky that nothing would grow there. Dick crept up to the edge, and peered over. All around was a wilderness of the grey-green palmets. There was no sign of the enemy.

They were quite two hundred yards inland from the sea, and considerably more than a hundred feet above it.

He went back to Dudley.

"We're up a tree, old man! It's a question of the beach or the gully, and I don't know which is the worse. Either way, we are liable to run into Cray's sentries. It strikes me that the best thing we can do is to creep along to the high ground above Rocky Bay, and wait until dusk. You see, they won't dream of our coming from this side, and if anyone is on guard there, why, we ought to be able to slip up behind, and lay him out before he knows what's up!"

"I guess you're right, Dick," replied Dudley. "But, see here. We've got all of three hours before dark. What do you say to doing a little of the scouting that you talked about this morning?"

"Nothing I'd like better," declared Dick. "But what about you? Are you fit after that crack on the head?"

"There's nothing the matter with me," declared Dudley. "Honestly, I'm feeling first-rate."

"But it'll mean work," objected Dick. "It's no joke crawling through this stuff, and that you know as well as I do. Then suppose we are spotted, and have to run for it?"

"Guess I can do my share all right," said Dudley quietly.

Dick glanced at him sharply. But he had to acknowledge that Dudley looked wonderfully little the worse for his tumble. He was tough as shoe-leather, was the young American. The way he had shaken off the dose of fever was proof enough of that.

"Right you are, then," he said. "I don't see why we should not get bang up against their camp without being spotted."

"That's what I'm reckoning on," agreed Dudley. "They won't be dreaming that we're on top of the cliffs, let alone anywhere near their outfit."

Knowing the ground as well as they did, the pair had no difficulty in keeping under cover all the way across, and it was not long before they sighted the roof of Matt Snell's shack. At the same time, they became conscious of a low, roaring noise, which seemed to come from the creek beyond.

"What the blazes is that row?" asked Dick, frowning.

"Cradle, if I'm not mighty well mistook," answered Dudley.

"But they must have the deuce of a lot to make that noise."

"A right good few, I reckon," replied Dudley drily. "Let's go a piece nearer."

They crept up, bending double and dodging from tree to tree. By this time they had become experts at the scouting game, and they worked coolly in until they were on the very edge of the belt of trees surrounding the clearing.

Dick poked his head out cautiously. He gave a gasp of surprise.

"You're right, Dudley. They're got a young army at work. And just look what they've done!"

The change since the boys had last set eyes on the place was certainly startling. A number of trees had been felled, making the clearing much wider, and the timber had been cut up and built into a long, shed-like barrack.

The creek had been dammed higher up, and evidently by someone who knew something of engineering, for there was plenty of water-power available.

But what struck Dick and Dudley as the most startling part of the business was the number of men who were at work. There were fully a score, all niggers, and these were toiling desperately in the waste of gravel which had been the creek bed, yielding pick and shovel and cradle with amazing energy.

The cause of this energy was not far to seek. On either side of the clearing stood a man with a rifle in his hands. The latter were both mulattoes, and as evil-faced a pair as Dick or Dudley had ever set eyes on.

Raided!

As for the negroes themselves, they were a sorry lot. Most of them looked half-starved. Their ragged shirts and jean trousers were almost dropping off their bony frames. Many had scars old or new, and all, without exception, had a scared, sullen look.

"Where did Cray get them?" Dick demanded of Dudley.

"Where did he get them?" repeated Dudley. "It's sure plain enough. They're out of a convict-camp, every man of 'em."

Dick turned a startled face to the other.

"How in the mischief could he do a thing like that? They guard the camps, surely?"

"Guard them! Yes—against the niggers. But I don't reckon the average camp has more than eight or ten guards. Suppose Cray slipped some rifles to the niggers by night, the guards wouldn't get much of a show."

"And you think that's what he's done?"

"There's no sort of doubt about it, old son. These are convicts if ever I saw them. Only I reckon," he added grimly, "they're a darn sight worse off now than they ever were at any camp on the mainland."

"Cray might have got 'em loose, as you say," Dudley said Dick, after a pause. "But how'd he ever ship 'em out here?"

"That's simple enough. They'd know well enough that if they stayed around in Florida there'd be a sheriff's posse at work running them down in no time. Most likely Cray had a schooner or launch handy in the nearest creek, and filled them up with some lying yarn about running them over to Cuba. Once they were aboard, he wouldn't have any further trouble."

"Jove, I believe you must be right! The boggar is a bigger blackguard than ever I took him for. Seems to me, Dudley, we're up against something pretty big."

"That's what I've reckoned all along," replied Dudley, in his quietest drawl. "But, say, Dick, they must be getting out a whole heap of dust!"

Dick nodded.

"They must," he said. "And what we've got to do is to make sure they don't have a chance of getting away with it, that's all."

"We'll make a mighty good effort, anyhow," smiled Dudley.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 424.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"MICKY DESMOND'S LUCK!"

EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

For some minutes they lay quiet in their cover, watching the busy scene before them. The niggers were kept going the whole time. If one of the wretched men paused even to wipe the perspiration from his streaming forehead, the nearest guard would be on him with a storm of oaths. Once, when one of the miserable, half-starved creatures slipped and fell, the ugly mulatto dashed at him, and beat him savagely with a dog-whip which hung at his waist.

Dick growled deep in his throat, and shifted his rifle so that the muzzle bore full on the brutal guard. But Dudley touched his arm.

"Not yet," he whispered significantly.

They saw nothing of Cray or Kent, but there were two white men lounging in the shade in front of Snell's shack. It was significant that each had his rifle by his side. Evidently they were ready at a moment's notice to help the mulattoes in checking any attempt at a rising on the part of the negroes.

The shadows were lengthening, the sun was getting very low, and presently Dudley spoke in Dick's ear.

"I don't reckon we can do anything more to-night. What d'ye say to getting back? We've been away from home a mighty long time."

"Right you are," Dick answered. "It's the beach, then—not the ravine."

"The beach, I guess," said Dudley, as he followed Dick back into the wood.

They did not hurry, for the sun was not yet below the horizon, and they did not wish to venture across the beach until it was down. On the other hand, they did not mean to wait until dark. They wanted light enough to see the sentry, if there was one, but not enough to betray themselves.

All the way across they did not see a soul, and when they at last came out on the fringe of the palmetto scrub above Rocky Bay, the beach was as bare as on the day they had landed. It seemed so, at least, although it was quite possible that one or more of their enemies might be hiding among the rocks which lay so thickly below.

"Shall we risk it?" Dick asked quietly.

"Guess so," was the brief reply.

"Better spread a bit," suggested Dick. "More chance of spotting 'em if they're lurking among the rocks."

"And keep down as much as you can, Dudley," he added.

They did not say anything more, but both were breathing rather more quietly than usual as they left the friendly shelter of the palmettos, and crept out into the open. There was precious little cover on the slope leading down to the beach, and for the first forty or fifty yards they were exposed to bullets from below.

But none came, and when, after a quick dash, they met again under the protection of a jutting ledge of rock, both were surprised, as well as relieved.

"Don't reckon they set any sentry, after all," said Dudley.

"I expect the real reason is that they don't expect us to go messing about in broad daylight," replied Dick.

Dudley grunted. He was clearly not quite satisfied.

They pushed on again. Still no sign of life, and they reached the big landslip without any interference, and within a very few moments were clambering safely among the wilderness of boulders which had fallen from the cliff above. They were hot and thirsty by this time, and stopped at the water cave for a drink. Dudley shivered slightly as he glanced up the arrow, twisted passage beyond the spring.

"Gee, I hope I'll never have to go up there again!" he remarked.

"I'm not keen to myself," replied Dick. "All the same, there'd be nothing in it if we had a good rope and plenty of candles. And some day," he added significantly, "it may come in mighty handy—if we were chased, for instance."

"Oh, I guess I'll go up fast enough if I have to," Dudley answered, with a shrug. "But it won't be any sort of a pleasure excursion that'll take me there."

The sun was long down, but the clear tropic twilight still lingered in the sky as the two climbed the steep path to their cave in Crooked Cliff.

"Seems as if we'd been away about a month," said Dick, as he groped through the little opening in the barricade.

"I'll be mighty glad of some supper, that's one sure thing," remarked Dudley.

"Me, too!" agreed Dick, as he turned in at the mouth of the cave.

Next moment he came staggering back almost on top of Dudley.

"W—what the thunder—" began the latter.

Dick's answer was a groan.

"Look at that!" he muttered hoarsely.

Dudley stepped forward, then stopped like Dick, and stared in speechless, horrified amazement at the scene before him. The cave was a wreck—or, rather, its contents were.

The stores were gone, the water-keg was smashed; so was the little oil stove, while the can holding their small stock of paraffin had become stunted flat.

Their blankets had disappeared, the beds of carefully-piled palm-leaf leaves had been burnt. Dick's gun, which he had left behind in favour of the late Wilding's rifle, had shared the fate of everything else. Barring ashes, and a few broken fragments, the cave was in fact as bare as the day when they had just found it.

Small wonder that the two stood, shaken and speechless. This was the worst blow that could possibly have befallen them.

"The brutes!" ground out Dick suddenly—"the infernal brutes!"

His fists were clenched; a small red patch glowed over each cheekbone. Never had he looked so dangerous.

"No use cussing, old son," replied Dudley: "The fault's our own. We've no sort of business to go off and leave the place all day."

"Some of 'em must have been watching us, I reckon," he added. "Spotted us out of sight, and then ripped in and made hay."

Dick had very quickly recovered his self-control. He was already poking about among the ashes and rubbish.

"Trying to find if there's anything left," he explained. "We shall want a meal of some sort before we start on the return campaign."

"But there's nothing here," he added—"not so much as a bone or a bit of biscuit."

"Wait," said Dudley suddenly; and, passing Dick, went to the far end of the cave and reached up as high as he could stretch. In a minute he was back with half a tin of bully beef and a handful of biscuits.

Dick stared.

"Where on earth did you get those from?" he demanded. "If you'd said 'in earth' you'd have been mighty near right," replied Dudley, in his best drawl. "It's real simple, Dick; after all. The last two days I've been bothered with rats—the little black cave-rats, you know. They must have come down from the top, though how they found their way beats me. Anyway, they ate up all the rest of that last lot of cooked fish, so I fixed up a hole in the rock, with a slope in front for a door, and anything that I couldn't put back in a tin I stuck up there."

"So," he added, with a smile. "I guess it's the rats you've got to thank for this."

"Rats or you, this may make all the difference," replied Dick gravely. "It would have been a precious poor show for us if we had had to start out starving, and that's just about what it would have amounted to."

"How much are you going to save for breakfast?" asked Dudley, as he looked at the small amount of food lying on the stone between them.

"Not a mouthful," replied Dick grimly as he took out his knife and divided the meat into two equal portions—"not a mouthful. It's Cray who's going to provide our breakfast-to-morrow morning."

For once Dick looked slightly startled. He glanced inquiringly at the other.

"I mean it," said Dick doggedly. "Cray has robbed us. Now it's up to us to rob him."

The Warning.

Dudley munched thoughtfully at his dry biscuit.

"It's some contract, Dick," he said slowly.

"I quite admit that. But what else is there to do?"

"I was sort of thinking we might take the boat and get back to Lemon Bay for reinforcements. If Cray and Bent have raided a convict camp, why, I guess Sheriff Anderson will be real pleased to hear just where they are."

Dick shook his head.

"That's no use, Dudley. We've got no grub, we've got no water-keg, and we've got no sail."

Dudley gave a low whistle.

"Gee, but I'd clean forgot the sail! We had it in here for a bed. I guess you're right, Dick. We've got to buck against Cray for what we need."

"Of course we have! And we'll do it, too!"

"Just when do you reckon to set about it, old son?"

"An hour before sun-up to-morrow morning. They won't expect any attack. They won't think we've got the cheek for it. We must slip up as close as we can, jump the shack, and pour lead into everyone we can see."

Dudley slowly shook his head.

"Won't work, Dick."

"Why not?" demanded Dick.

"I reckon you forget we've got to get up the cliff first."

"We can go up through the water cave."

"I guess not. We haven't a candle or a rope."

Dick gave an impatient exclamation.

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"I'd clean forgotten that! Then the only thing is to take to the gully."

"And get plugged for our pains. You're forgetting a whole heap more, Dick. Cray's crowd are reckoning that they've got us to rights. They know as well as we do that we can't stop here without grub or water. You can take your oath that they've got the beach and the gully guarded to-night, and that they'll keep a guard there from now on. Whichever way we try to go, they're bound to nab us."

Dick was silent. He realised that what Dudley said was perfectly true. There seemed no way out of the fix.

"What in the name of sense are we to do, then?" he asked at last in a tone that was very near despair.

"If we can't go by land," replied Dudley, "I guess we'll have to take to water. That's all I can see for it."

"But I've told you we have no sail!"

"We don't need it. The oars are safe. They're hid in a cleft down below—just where we came ashore that night after the fight with the barracuda. My notion is that we slide out a couple of hours before light, go down into Hidden Bay, bail out the old tub, and pull right around the north end of the island."

"And what then?"

"That leaves me guessing. Take our chances, I reckon. Maybe we can slip ashore, maybe we could raid one of their craft."

"One of them?" repeated Dick.

"Yes. I'm reckoning they got a second one to bring over those niggers of theirs. And the boats will both be in that big bay up on the eastern shore."

"Jove, it's worth thinking about!" declared Dick, his confidence reviving somewhat. "Right you are, Dudley! We'll try your scheme."

He paused, and thought for a few moments.

"One thing's bothering me," he continued. "When they raided the cave, why didn't they stay here and lay for us? They could have got us both without any sort of trouble if they'd done that."

"I've been kind of thinking the same thing myself," answered Dudley. "My notion is that they must have been scared. We've soaked it into them every time we've run against them, and I guess they're a bit shy of losing any more of their men."

"I expect you're right," returned Dick. "And now I've got to think of a nap. We've got to be fit for what's before us to-morrow."

"I guess one of us ought to keep watch," said Dudley.

But Dick said no. He declared he felt sure that there would be no attack during the night. And anyhow, if anyone did come round, they would be sure to knock down the loose stones which they had piled over the gaps in the outer walls.

"Besides," he added, "we're both pretty well lagged out, and we've simply got to be fresh for the morning."

Dudley, who was half asleep already, agreed, and they lay down on the bare rock, and were asleep in next to no time. Luckily, the night was so warm that they did not suffer for lack of blankets, and both were so tired that they could have slept standing up.

When people have been living in constant danger for some time, it is wonderful how the slightest sound arouses them. Dick suddenly found himself sitting bolt upright, broad awake, staring around him through the gloom.

"The stones!" he muttered. "Yes; I heard some fall! Not a doubt about it!"

"That's not our wall," whispered Dudley. "That's a bigish boulder gone over the cliff."

"What for? What are they playing at?" growled Dick.

"Might have been a bit of a slip from the top," said Dudley.

"No likely. That's the second I've heard. No; Cray's up to some dirty trick."

"The sound comes from the north side," he added. "It's just on the cards that they're having another shot at our boat."

As he spoke he slipped out, and, carrying his rifle ready cocked, made his way towards the northern barricade. Dudley followed. Just inside the wall Dick stopped, and held up his hand.

Crash! came another rock, then the thud as it reached the shingle.

"That hit sand, not water," he muttered in a puzzled tone. "They're not at Hidden Bay."

"It's a mighty queer business!" replied Dudley, badly puzzled.

At that very moment there came from close behind them a shattering roar. From the mouth of the cave which they had just left leaped a great blaze of flame. There followed a thunderous crashing as rocks rained down, some of the pieces leaping out across the ledge and rolling away over it to the beach below.



"It's a mighty queer business!" said Dudley, badly puzzled. At that moment there came from close behind them a shattering roar. From the mouth of the cave they had just left leaped a great blaze of flame.
(See page 22.)

For some seconds the two were absolutely struck dumb by the shock. They lay where they were, unable to speak, their hearts pounding against their ribs.

Then Dick raised himself.

"Just in time," he remarked grimly.

"B-but what the mischief—" stammered Dudley, for once knocked clean off his balance.

"They mined it," cut in Dick curtly. "A time fuse. Wonder we didn't see or hear it; but they're engineers enough to hide a thing like that."

"Cray, you mean?"

"Cray, of course. Now we know why they didn't wait for us. They reckoned to do the job without risk to their dirty skins."

"B-but if that was the game, what in thunder made them go rolling rocks to wake us up and get us out just in the nick of time?" asked Dudley.

"There you've got me beat," responded Dick, as he rose to his feet and went back to the cave.

It was a cave no longer. The charge had been a heavy one, and had brought down the whole of the roof. The floor was piled high with masses of shattered rock. The spot in The Magnet Library.—No. 424.

which they had been lying two minutes earlier was buried under tons of jagged debris.

"A fairly close call," remarked Dick.

"All the better for us," answered Dudley, who, as usual, had recovered his spirits with marvellous rapidity.

"What do you mean?"

"Clear enough, I should have reckoned. They'll be so precious certain that they've not only slain but buried us that they won't worry about us any more."

"Jove, you're right! I hadn't thought of that!" Dick chuckled grimly. "They'll get a worse shock than Rufe did that night he saw the ghost!"

He paused and looked round.

"I don't feel like sleeping again," he added. "Suppose we make a start?"

Dudley agreed, and like two shadows they passed through the barricade, which they had piled with so much labour, and so down to the bottom of the cliff.

(Another long instalment of this splendid new serial story next Monday. To avoid disappointment order your copy early.)

NEXT
MONDAY—

"MICKY DESMOND'S LUCK!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

MY READERS' PAGE

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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:

"MICKY DESMOND'S LUCK!"

By Frank Richards.

Mr. Richards is at the top of his form in the splendid story which appears next Monday. My readers in the Emerald Isle will be especially pleased with it, for they have long been asking for a yarn in which Micky Desmond, the leading Irish character at Greyfriars, shall play something more than a mere walking-on part. In this story Desmond finds in his neglected stamp-album a stamp which is said to be worth something like one thousand pounds! There is naturally much excitement at Greyfriars, and the greed of some of the black sheep is aroused. Trouble with Highholife also arises. How everything is cleared up, and whether Micky's luck was good or bad, you will all be able to read next week in

"MICKY DESMOND'S LUCK!"

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

I should be glad if in future readers writing to me would give their names and addresses, not for publication, but that it may be possible to answer them by post if necessary. For some time to come the space given to "Replies in Brief" will have to be cut down, as they simply cannot be answered at all.

This is due to the Government's paper restriction, which has forced upon us the reduction of pages. I am doing all that I can to ensure that this shall not entail any considerable cutting-down of reading matter, at any rate as far as the stories are concerned.

TO ALL READERS.

Have you taken my tip and ordered your papers in advance? If not, don't delay another day! And don't forget that

"RIVALS AND CHUMS!"

the great Greyfriars 3d. book in the "Boys' Friend" Library, is now on sale. Hurry up and get it, if you have not got it already, for if you miss it you are going to be very sorry for yourselves a little later on!

OUR PORTRAIT GALLERY.

For a few weeks this popular feature will be discontinued, so that the conclusion of Mark Linley's famous "Greyfriars Herald" serial story may be published.

As soon as "The Pride of the Ring" is completed, readers' photographs will again adorn page iii. of the cover, and meantime Magnetites are invited to send in their photographs. They will appear in print in due course.

NOTICES.

Leonard J. Haynes, 12, River View, New Ferry, Cheshire, is starting a Correspondence Club, and will be pleased to send particulars to any reader who will send him a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

Lower Swanwick F.C. require home and away matches for the rest of the season. Average age 16. Apply to C. Burt, Mayfield, South East Road, Sholing, Southampton.

Driver T. Carpenter, 106723, 73rd Battery, 5th Brigade, R.F.A., Indian Expeditionary Force, France, c/o India Office, London, would be glad to have back numbers of the Companion Papers.

Stanley J. Higgins, 22, Upper Camden Place, Camden Road, Bath, would be glad to exchange a dozen numbers of the "B. F." 3d. Library for fifty copies of the "Magnet," any numbers between 1 and 100.

Miss Gertie A. Davey, 35, Gillingham Street, Eccleston Square, London, S.W., would particularly like to hear from Miss Grace Wilcox and Miss Winnie Reason, the two Canadian Girl Guides, whose photo appeared in a recent number.

Sydney Jacobs, 41, Marine Crescent, South Shields, particularly wants a copy each of "Bunter the Masher" and another Bunter story, the title of which he cannot remember. It is about Bunter's cousin, he says, and the great W. G. B. going on holiday. Will any reader oblige?

Private R. S. King, 48907, B Section, 131st Field Ambulance, 38th Welsh Division, B. E. F., France, appeals for back numbers of the "Magnet" and "Gem."

Private Jack Ross, 1235, H. Company, South African Scottish, B. E. F., Egypt, would like to correspond with some girl readers of the Companion Papers.

Charles Shuttleworth, 9, Great George Square, Liverpool, whose age is 18, wants to join a junior football team in his district. He can play either outside-right or outside-left, but prefers the right wing.

Readers wishing to join a "Magnet" Club in the Hants, Hampshire, should apply to J. Greenhalgh, 39, Cornwall Street, West Hartlepool.

R. L. Fraser, Chrissy Cottage, Kirkfieldbank, via Lanark, wishes to start a "Magnet" League in his neighbourhood, and will be glad to hear from readers interested.

A. Clifford and He Burgess, 25, Pencina, Melencrythan, Neath, would like to exchange back numbers of the "B. F." 3d. Library for others which they have not read.

Will junior cricket teams in Swindon (age limit 18) wanting fixtures for the coming season write to P. G. North, 129, Cricklade Road, Swindon.

G. Stevens, 4, Gladstone Hope Road, Elmfield, Ryde, Isle of Wight, wants to buy back numbers of the "Magnet."

Private A. Newstead, 17744, C Company, 2nd Batt. Royal Berkshire Regiment, B.E.F., France, will be very glad to receive back numbers of the "Magnet."

James Hickey, Benekerry Cottage, Co. Carlow, Ireland, wishes to form a "Gem" and "Magnet" League, and would like to hear from readers in any part of Ireland, but particularly in Co. Carlow, who would care to join.

C. H. King, 10, Clurton Place, Pimlico, wants to form a "Gem" and "Magnet" League for both boy and girl readers. He will be glad to see anyone who thinks of joining between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Thursdays.

Private S. J. Kirby, 2567, 15 Platoon, Z Company, 6th Durham Light Infantry, 50th Northumbrian Division, B.E.F., France, would be very glad to hear from some girl reader of the "Magnet."

S. Hodges and J. Chappell, 31, Beacon Street, Wolverhampton, are thinking of starting a small amateur journal, and would like to hear from readers willing to contribute.

Arthur L. (co. Down).—Thanks for letter. By the way, I am not Mr. Richards. "School and Sport" is still obtainable from your newsgate for threepence, or from this office for fourpence in stamps.

"Dear Old Dublin."—Thanks for a very interesting letter. Your brother and his American chum certainly seem to have been in the thick of it all out there.

Your Editor

THE PRIDE OF THE RING!

A Magnificent Serial Story dealing with the Noble Art of Self-defence.

By MARK LINLEY.

(EDITORIAL NOTE.—Although the Government restrictions on the import of paper has brought the "Greyfriars Herald" to an untimely conclusion, readers may still continue Mark Linley's rousing serial story of school and boxing life, which will run its course in the MAGNET Library.)

WHAT CAME BEFORE.

Neddy Welsh, one of the best boy boxers of the day, is at Earlingham School, where he wins for himself the captaincy of the Fourth, despite the bitter enmity of a bully named Barker. "Dolly" Gray, another splendid boxer, is Neddy's chief enemy.

Bob Sullivan, Neddy's former trainer, is appointed to the post of drill-instructor at the school, and he arranges for a renowned fighting man named Ben Barnes to come to Earlingham and tackle Welsh. Neddy holds his own with consummate skill and courage, and gradually succeeds in wearing his man down. At a critical period of the fight Barnes happens to lower his guard for a brief instant.

(Now read on.)

Fun in the Fourth.

Barnes' movement was fatal. Neddy Welsh dashed in, and that fearsome straight left of his shot out, catching Barnes within the fraction of an inch of the point of the jaw. He tottered giddily for an instant, and then fell backwards with a thud. Smiling all over his face, Bob Sullivan methodically counted him out.

Then the faintest of the mighty throng of spectators could expression in a perfect storm of applause. The Sixth Formers clapped, the Fifth shouted, and the Fourth and fags simply shrieked, whilst two hundred pairs of well-shod feet rose and fell, raising the dust almost to suffocation-point. Neddy Welsh had won!

As for Dolly Gray, he seemed, for the moment, to take leave of his senses. Dashing into the ring, he caught Neddy Welsh by the arm, and waltzed him round and round, shouting and laughing hysterically.

It was certainly a famous victory, as the poet said of the Battle of Blenheim. Even Ben Barnes the Second, who had returned from his abruptions, joined in the general cheering on Neddy Welsh's behalf.

The defeated boxer, after being helped to his feet, extended his hand.

"Put it there!" he said cordially. "You played up like a Trojan! I counted my chickens before they were hatched, and paid the penalty."

Neddy grinned breathlessly as he gripped the speaker's hand.

"No need to make a song about it," he said. "My luck was in, that's all. Now you must come and have some grub in the study—as soon as you've washed your honourable scars, that is."

Ben Barnes cheerfully accepted the invitation; and a bumper repast in Neddy's study afforded a fitting climax to the proceedings. Once again the captain of the Fourth found himself acclaimed the hero of the hour; and he felt, as he made a hearty inroad on a huge rabbit-pie, that he had indeed deserved well of his country.

When the festivities were over, and Neddy Welsh & Co. had returned from seeing the boxer off at the school gates, an antiquated cab came bowling in, headed by a lean, scraggy horse which seemed to be woefully underfed.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Dolly Gray. "Still they come! Another new kid, I suppose?"

"Don't say that!" implored Neddy Welsh. "That fat freak Barnes is quite enough for one play!"

The cab came to a standstill outside the School House, and from it stepped the most extraordinary-looking youth imaginable. He was of diminutive build, with small features, save the eyes, which bulged out with almost glaring prominence, and were surmounted by a massive pair of spectacles.

"Fellow," said this freak of nature, addressing the cabman, "to what extent am I indebted to you, pray?"

"Hold me up, someone!" gurgled Phipps.

The cabby frowned portentously.

"Which it's one-and-six, young slaver," he remarked, "though the other young gents usually hadds a pretty substantial tip."

"What the other young gents do is no concern of mine!" said the boy loftily, handing the bare one-and-six to the driver of the antiquated vehicle. "I wish you a good-evening, my man!"

The incensed cabby drove off, breathing threatnings and slaughter.

Neddy Welsh strode up to the new boy, and his companions followed, scotching fun.

"What's your name?" Neddy asked, scanning with extreme disfavour the weird object which stood before him.

"My name," said the new boy haughtily, "is Binks—Benjamin Bartholomew Baraduff Binks."

"Oh, for!" muttered Weston. "Carry me home to die!"

"That's two Bens, counting that idiot Barnes!" said Dolly Gray.

"I gather from certain school stories I have read," continued Binks, "that new boys are invariably made a target for numerous questions. I will, therefore, save time by telling you in one breath what I am and whence I came. I have traced my genealogical line back to the time of the Conquest, and find I am descended from Roger de Binks, who eventually became a monk. Other of my ancestors fought under Wellington at Quebec and Neuve Chapelle. My father is a gentleman of independent means, and I leave my term at this school of inequity as expired. I shall study my own date."

"...ance-drinks?" inquired Phipps amiably.

"Pray do not be rude. I shall expect good manners from my school-mates at all times and seasons. What are your names?"

"I'm Welsh," explained Neddy, "and this gentleman on my right is Dolly Gray."

"But how can he be a gentleman, if his name's Dolly?" asked Binks, blinking at Neddy Welsh through his big spectacles.

"It's his nickname, fathead!"

"Oh, I see! Very queer sense of humour you people seem to have! And who, may I ask, is this hulking lout now approaching, with a face not dissimilar to a hatchet?"

"Oh, that's Barker, the sweetest-tempered fellow at Earlingham!" said Neddy. "His face is unfortunate, but he has a heart of gold!"

"Why, you rotter—" began Barker wrathfully.

"And these fellows," Neddy Welsh went on, unheeding, "are Phipps and Weston—two of the best! Now, you'd better toddle along and see the Head."

And Binks scuttled off, leaving the Fourth Formers speechless with merriment.

Binks, despite his somewhat high-flown expressions, proved as ignorant as a chimpanzee when he went before the Head. Mr. Cottle bombarded him with questions, which the new boy either ignored or answered wrongly.

"I will test your knowledge of English History," said the Head. "Tell me, who was Oliver Cromwell?"

"Goodness knows!" said Binks frankly. "Who was he?"

"Boy!"

"If he's the fellow who wrote 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,'" said Binks, "he's a chap after my own heart! I take a frenzied delight in poetry. Would you care to listen to a ditty I composed coming along in the train?"

"No, I would not!" thundered the Head. "How dare you, sir! Since your mind seems to be drained of even the rudiments of history, we will pass on to geography. Name a large and well-fortified city on the Thames."

"Really, that is quite beyond me!" murmured Binks.

Mr. Cottle almost foamed at the mouth.

"London!" he barked out.

"But it can't be!" protested the new boy.

"Why not, imbecile?"

"Because the Zeppelins have been over London, and they never go over a fortified town. You said London was well fortified."

"Go away!" said Mr. Cottle fiercely. "Your very presence is repulsive to me! I will place you in the Fourth

(Continued on page iv of cover.)

THE PRIDE OF THE RING!

(Continued from previous page.)

Form—not that you deserve to be there, but because your father desires it. Go!”

“Shall I declaim to you a few lines of my ‘Ode to a Sickened Walrus?’”

Stark Head snatched up a cane, and that was quite enough for Binks. He bolted precipitately from the study.

Next morning Barker accosted the new boy in the quad, and drew him aside.

“Congratulations!” he said.

“Dear me! What ever for?”

“You’re to take the Fourth this morning at first lesson,” explained Barker. “Snope, who usually performs that duty, is down with a chill on the liver. I need hardly say that it is indeed a high honour for a new kid to have to manage a class, but I know you’ll go about it in the right way, and stand no nonsense! Come along!—Bell’s ringing!”

Binks was far too obtuse to see through Barker’s little pape, and he accordingly availed himself of the chair on which Mr. Snope was wont to be seated when conducting first lesson.

“Now, I hope you’ll be good boys, and give me no trouble,” said Binks, in a shrill, high-pitched voice.

The Fourth-Formers nearly went into convulsions.

“The silly ass! It’ll get it in the neck when Snope comes!” murmured Phipps.

“Better warn him in time,” said Neddy Welsh thoughtfully. “Binks, you thundering idiot!”

But at that moment the door of the Form-room was thrown open, and Mr. Snope rushed in. He almost fell down as he glanced towards his desk.

The amazing new boy was seated in Mr. Snope’s chair, and was calmly overhauling the contents of the master’s desk. He had already thrown out half a dozen literary treasures, and even while Mr. Snope stood there Binks set out a few more things that did not seem to take his fancy.

“Boy!” panted the enraged master, “you must be mad! What is the meaning of this? Explain at once, or things will go hard with you!”

Binks’ Bad Behaviour.

Binks opened countenance in amazement at Mr. Snope’s thunderous voice.

“Who are you, fellow?” he exclaimed. “I trust you will not interfere with me in the discharge of my duties!”

“Oh, my hat!” murmured Dolly Gray. “Somebody’s going to get it in the neck this journey!”

Mr. Snope almost foamed at the mouth.

“How dare you?” he roared. “Do you not realise my identity? I am Mr. Snope, your master!”

“You’ve got over your indisposition quick enough, then,” said Binks. “I understood from Barker that you were indisposed, and that I was to conduct the class this morning in your absence.”

“Rotten sneak!” growled Barker.

Mr. Snope glared at the cad of the Fourth.

“Stand out!” he rumbled. “Do I understand that you have played a practical joke upon this—this imbecile?”

“No, sir!” said Barker promptly. “He imagines these things, sir!”

“Oh, you awful provocateur!” said Binks, aglance. “I wonder you do not share the same fate as Annulus, for your wicked persecution of the truth! He distinctly told me, sir, that I was to deputise for you this morning!”

“And you have had the amazing impudence to play pitch-and-toss with my private papers?” snapped Mr. Snope.

“I naturally concluded that I had the run of the desk, sir,” said Binks. “However, as I have been labouring under a misapprehension, I had better retire gracefully and in order.”

And Binks stepped down from the dais and took up his position at the end of the front row.

Mr. Snope turned to Barker.

“I shall have much pleasure,” he said, “in administering a terrible thrashing to you, firstly, for encouraging Binks to make a bigger idiot of himself than he is already, and secondly, for telling lies in the most flagrant manner. Touch your toes, sir!”

The class shivered a little, despite themselves. Corporal punishment at Baringham was usually administered on the hands.

On this occasion, however, Mr. Snope was in a royal rage. He swung the long, cruel-looking cane through the air, and Barker jumped three inches from the floor when the first stroke descended.

“Yaroooboh!” he roared.

“Cease making that ridiculous noise, you craven coward, and prepare yourself for the remainder of your punishment. You are to receive half a dozen strokes in all!”

“Mercy!” moaned Barker.

“Hurry up, my dear sir, and get on with the washing!” piped Binks, from his seat. “There is nothing which gives me a greater measure of delight than to see a bullying cad being taught the error of his ways! It is as balm of Gilead to my soul!”

“Silence, sir!” thundered Mr. Snope. “If you are not careful, you, too, will undergo similar chastisement. Now, Barker!”

Swish, swish, swish!

“Ow-ow-ow!”

“Reminds you of pig-killing, don’t it?” murmured Phipps. Swish, swish!

Barker grovelled at Mr. Snope’s feet after the last stroke had descended, yelling with wild anguish. Binks, who was close at hand, reached out his foot, and prodded the prostrate bully in the ribs.

“A little overweight,” he explained sweetly.

Mr. Snope saw the action, pounced upon the amazing new boy, and rained him from his seat by the scruff of his scraggy neck.

“Come out, sir!” he stormed. “How dare you resort to such unparliamentary brutality? Touch your toes!”

“Don’t you strike me!” said Binks loftily. “I refuse to be stricken—I mean—”

Mr. Snope held the junior in position with one hand, and proceeded to castigate him with the other. The howls of the victim rang through the class-room, awaking the echoes.

“Now,” said Mr. Snope, flogging the new boy from him, “we will commence first lesson.”

Binks lurched to his place, and blinked at the master through his big spectacles.

“You have used personal violence against me, Mr. Soap!” he exclaimed. “Beware!”

“Silence, imbecile!” Another word, and I shall take you before the headmaster!”

Morning lessons proceeded fairly quietly after that, though Mr. Snope did not forget to dole out lines when occasion demanded. The juniors were greatly relieved when popular Mr. Fenn appeared, to steer them through the latter part of morning school.

“That chap Binks will be the death of me before he’s finished!” said Neddy Welsh when the Fourth-Formers streamed out into the quadrangle. “He’s the funniest cote I ever clapped eyes on!”

A few minutes later the dinner-bell rang, and the foot-boys hurriedly ushered the juniors into the dining hall.

“What is the food like in this hotbed of iniquity?” asked Binks, in a shrill voice, as he took his seat at the table.

“The breakfast was abominable, but I trust the dinner will make ample amends!”

“Pork and greens,” muttered Phipps.

“Ugh-h-h!”

The complexion of Benjamin Bartholomew Baraduff Binks changed to a sickly yellow.

“You don’t like pork?” asked Weston sympathetically.

“Like it? I loathe it! The very smell of it is repulsive to me! Far rather would I starve in the streets than replenish myself with portions of pig!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“You’d better go and tell Snope your likes and dislikes!” said Lomax.

“Very well!”

And Binks rose obediently, and carried his plate to the end of the table, where Mr. Snope was seated.

“What do you want?” snapped the Form-master.

“I cannot eat this—this muck!” said Binks, with asperity. “The potatoes are insufficiently baked, and the pork is revolting! Instruct the cook to send me chicken at once!”

Mr. Snope glared at the junior as if he would eat him.

“Are you mad?” he stormed.

“I should be if I tried to sample that lot!” said Binks, with a sniff. “And the plate is stone-cold, too! I am accustomed to having it warmed. Why don’t you dish up something a bit more appetising?”

Mr. Snope almost fell out of his chair.

“You will be reported to the headmaster for satirising the school diet!”

“Report, and be hanged!” said Binks.

And, raising the plate above his head, he hurled it to the floor with a force that sent the fragments flying in all directions.

“Boy! Binks! Idiot! Depraved blackguard!” raved the Form-master, beside himself with passion. “Come with me at once to Mr. Cattle!”

“I refuse—”

Mr. Snope grasped the new boy by the collar and marched him out of the hall, to the accompaniment of an unrestrained roar of laughter.

(Another magnificent instalment of Mark Linley’s grand serial will appear next Monday. Order your copy of the “Magnet” Library in advance.)