

**"THE FIGHTING FORM!"** THRILL-PACKED  
STAY-IN STRIKE  
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# The Magnet <sup>2<sup>D</sup></sup>

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"LET 'EM ALL COME!" HARRY WHARTON & CO., THE SCHOOLBOY STRIKERS, ARE FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS, AND THEY FEAR NO FOE. THEIR MOTTO IS: "UNITED WE STAND—DIVIDED WE FALL!"

# The FIGHTING FORM!

By FRANK RICHARDS



A Sensational Story of Schoolboy Rebellion, Starring HARRY WHARTON & CO., of the GREYFRIARS REMOVE.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### No Rations for Bunter!

"**R**ATIONS!" said Billy Bunter. Lord Mauleverer nodded. "Yaas!" he assented. "Rations!" Billy Bunter seemed hardly able to believe his fat ears. "Did you say rations? You silly ass!"

Bunter's voice thrilled with indignation. His very spectacles gleamed with indignant wrath as he blinked at Mauly.

"You see——" said Mauleverer.

"Idiot!" said Bunter.

"You see, the grub won't last for ever—especially with you here."

"Fathead!"

"And that's that!"

"Beast!" hooted Bunter.

"Shut up, Bunter!" said a dozen voices.

"Shan't!" roared Bunter. "Think I'm going short of grub? I say, you fellows, if the grub's going to be short, the sooner this strike is over the better. I can tell you I'm not going short of grub. It's not much I eat, as you know——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I'm not going short! Rations, be blowed!"

It was morning—a cold and bright February morning—at Greyfriars School. The Remove were getting breakfast.

Brekker was not the orderly meal at table in Hall, with a master at the head of the table, as of old. In the kitchen of Mrs. Mumble's tuckshop, in

the corner of the quad, the Remove fellows were scrounging breakfast for themselves.

A big fire burned in the kitchen range. Bob Cherry, in his shirtsleeves, with a red face and a smut on his nose, was frying bacon—the last of the bacon. Harry Wharton, in charge of a saucepan, was boiling eggs—the last of the eggs. Johnny Bull was slicing the last of the loaves at the kitchen table, and Frank Nugent was spreading the slices with the last of the butter. Harree Jamset Ram Singh was scraping the last of the jam from the last jam-pot.

There had been a very considerable stock in the school shop at Greyfriars when the Form that had gone "on strike" had taken possession of that establishment, and turned it into a fortress.

But thirty fellows, all of them blessed with healthy appetites, made deep inroads on the stock, considerable as it was, and every day it had grown smaller by degrees, and beautifully less.

So long as Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, reigned at Greyfriars in the place of the absent Head, that strike was going on—all, or nearly all, the Remove were determined on that. Lord Mauleverer, elected commander-in-chief, was loyally backed up by the Famous Five, and most of the Form. And when Mauly announced that morning that rations were going to be the order of the day, some of the fellows had rather long faces; but only Billy Bunter raised objections.

Bunter's objections, however, were strenuous.

Billy Bunter had been quite keen on a "stay-in" strike. The fact that the strikers were "staying-in" in the tuckshop, appealed to Bunter.

The fat Owl of the Remove had spread himself happily over the tuckshop. No lessons, not much washing, and plenty of grub, made William George Bunter think that a stay-in strike was the very best wheeze ever mooted at Greyfriars. On those lines Billy Bunter would have been prepared to carry on the strike, not only during the temporary period of Hacker's authority, but after the Head came back—in fact, for the whole term. So long as the grub was all right, everything was all right.

But at the mere mention of the horrid word "rations," a change came o'er the spirit of his dream, as the poet puts it. If the schoolboy strikers were going to be short of grub, they were going to be short of Bunter.

"Rations!" repeated Bunter. "Why, you silly ass, Mauly! You blithering idiot! I'd rather have a whopping from Hacker."

"You fat Owl!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith. "It's not a matter of whoppings. Hacker has sacked seven chaps in the Form, and if he gets the upper hand, he will boot them out of the school."

"Well, he hasn't sacked me," said Bunter. "That's all right."

"All right, is it?" roared Johnny Bull, ceasing to slice stale loaves for a moment, while he bestowed a ferocious glare on the fat Owl.



"Well, I'm sorry for you, of course," said Bunter. "But you can't expect me to starve, because Hacker's going to boot you out. That's asking rather too much of any fellow, I think."

"My esteemed and idiotic Bunter—" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"No good jawing," said Bunter. "I'm not going short of grub. There's a limit, and that's it! But I'll tell you fellows what! If you want to go on rations—"

"We don't want to, ass!" said Harry Wharton. "But there's no choice about it, if we're going to make the grub last."

"Well, look here!" said Bunter. "Suppose you fellows go on rations, as you like the idea? And I won't, as I don't like it—see? What about that?"

"Kick him!" said Bob Cherry.

Bunter's suggestion did not seem popular.

"Well, the sooner you chuck this strike then, the better," said Bunter firmly. "Hacker might let us off, if we chuck it. Anyhow, I'd rather have a whopping than go on rations!"

"Kick him!"

"Bump him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Hold on!" said Lord Mauleverer, gently interposing as several fellows made a converging movement on the fat and indignant Owl. "Let's have this clear! If Bunter really means that—"

"I jolly well do!" declared Bunter. "Why, we're in time for brekker in Hall, if we cut across to the House now. As much as we want! Rations, be blowed!"

"Every man to his taste!" said Lord Mauleverer. "If you'd really rather have a whopping than your rations here, Bunter—"

"I've said so, fathead!"

"That's all right, then!"

"You silly ass, Mauly!" roared the Bounder. "Nobody's going to be allowed to desert! The whole Form have got to stick together to the finish."

"Yes, rather!" growled Johnny Bull. "Bunter's no good, and any fellow would prefer his room to his company; but nobody's going to desert."

"Not a man," said Peter Todd. "Even worms like Bunter and Skinner, and Snoop and Fishy, have got to stick it out. United we stand, divided we don't!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Don't be an ass, Mauly!"

"I say, you fellows, you shut up!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "Mauly's leader, ain't he, and Mauly gives orders? You ring off—see?"

"If you'd let a fellow speak, you men—" said Lord Mauleverer plaintively.

"Well, don't talk rot!" snapped Smithy.

"Nobody's deserting the Form!" hooted Bolsover major.

"Chuck it, you fellows!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "We've elected

Mauly leader. A leader's no good if his orders are not obeyed. We're standing for whatever Mauly says."

"Yaas," said Lord Mauleverer. "If you want me to resign, I'll chuck it, as soon as you like! You're captain of the Form, Wharton, and I'll resign in your favour, as soon as the fellows like."

"Rot!" said Harry. "Carry on, fathead! We're backing you up!"

"Right!" said Mauleverer. "Now listen to the oracle, then. Bunter says that he would prefer a whopping to rations."

"Yes, rather; I jolly well would!" said Bunter emphatically.

"Bunter's going to be taken at his word," said Mauleverer. "Bob, old man, get that ashplant that Wingate dropped here the other day."

"Eh? Oh! All right!"

Bob Cherry fetched the prefect's ashplant.

Billy Bunter blinked at it through his big spectacles.

"What the thump's that for?" he asked. "Wharrer you mean, Mauly?"

"That's to whop you!" explained Mauleverer.

"Wha-a-t?"

## HACKER'S LITTLE PROBLEM!

Authority having broken like a reed in his hands, Mr. Hacker, the temporary headmaster of Greyfriars, has got to restore it. But how to do this seems an insoluble problem!

"You're not going to have any brekker!"

"Eh?"

"Put him over the table!" said Lord Mauleverer cheerfully. "You all heard him say that he'd rather have a whopping than rations. He's going to have it! Why not let a fellow have what he wants?"

For a moment the juniors stared at Mauleverer. Then there was a roar:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter, as Johnny Bull and Vernon-Smith, grinning, grasped him, and flattened him out on the table. "I say, I never meant—"

"I did!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, leggo!" roared Bunter. "Don't you bring that cane near me, Bob Cherry, you beast! I never meant to—"

"Give him six!" said Lord Mauleverer. "What are you grousing about, Bunter? Didn't you say you'd rather have a whopping than rations? Well, you're going to have a whopping, and you're not going to have any rations! You can make the same choice at dinner-time, if you like! Keep it up every meal-time, if you want to!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Greyfriars strikers.

"I meant a whopping from Hacker, if I went back to the House for brekker!" shrieked Bunter. "You jolly well know I did, you beast!"

"Never mind what you meant, old fat man! It's what I mean that counts, as I'm the jolly old leader, as you've just pointed out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bob!"

"Whack, whack, whack, whack!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Whack, whack!"

"Whoop! Oh crikey! Yaroogh!" roared Billy Bunter, wriggling frantically. "I say, you fellows— Yow-ow-ow!"

"Roll him away!" said Lord Mauleverer. "But keep in sight, Bunter! If you try to desert, you'll get some more—lots more! Stick in that corner! You fellows kick him if he shifts! That's right! Now shut up, Bunter! You've had your whopping, and we're going to have our rations."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars strikers proceeded with breakfast.

Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles, with infuriated and devastating blinks. But there were no rations for Bunter. Two or three fellows, whose views were similar to Bunter's, decided not to make them public. Skinner and his friends were not keen on rations, but they were still less keen on sharing the fat Owl's unhappy fate.

"I say, you fellows," groaned Bunter, "I say, just a mouthful—"

"He wants the whole lot, as usual!" remarked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

And while the Greyfriars strikers disposed of a frugal breakfast, Billy Bunter watched them sorrowfully, like a fat Peri at the gate of paradise.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The High Hand!

**M**R. HORACE HACKER, the master of the Shell, stood at his study window, after breakfast that morning, and looked out into the quad.

It was quite a bright morning, with a cheery gleam of sunshine. But the face of Mr. Hacker was neither bright nor cheery.

His face was clouded and grim.

The temporary headmaster of Greyfriars was not having a good time.

He had expected quite a good time, when, in Dr. Locke's absence, the governors appointed him to carry on in place of the old Head. Supreme authority was in his hands. And Hacker liked authority, and the exercise thereof.

The trouble was, that he had exercised authority not wisely but too well! Frowning at his study window, he

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looked across the quad, at the school shop visible in a distant corner.

Every window that he could see there was broken. Glass, and most of the sashes, gone; the spaces barred with nailed planks and boards.

In that building the Removes were barricaded, setting his authority at naught. It had gone on for days and days; and it was going on, according to the rebels, until the Head came back.

They were prepared to let the Head judge between them and Hacker!

The bell had not yet rung for classes, and there were crowds of fellows in the quad. Most of them were keenly interested in the strikers' stronghold.

Every now and then a fellow would stroll towards the school shop, with the evident intention of exchanging a word or two with the garrison. But they were always turned back.

Mr. Hacker had given strict orders to the Sixth Form prefects to stop all communication between the strikers and the rest of the school. He had a misgiving that other Forms might follow the example of the Removes.

Of all the prefects, however, only one was at all keen on carrying out Hacker's orders; that was his favourite, Carne of the Sixth. The others turned a blind eye. When Hobson of the Shell—unaware, no doubt, that his Form-master was looking out of the window—walked over towards the shop, he passed Wingate and Gwynne, and several other prefects, who took no notice of him. Two or three other fellows followed Hobson. But Carne pounced on them, and walked them off into the House.

Mr. Hacker's frown intensified. He had no support from the prefects; none from the other masters. All Greyfriars was against him—though only one Form was in a state of open rebellion and defiance.

This might have made anybody but Horace Hacker feel a misgiving about his own methods. But Hacker felt no such misgiving. He was satisfied with his methods, if nobody else was.

Under the big elm, in front of the school shop a peculiar party was gathered. There were seven of them—frowsy, stubbly faced, unwashed, and tattered. They looked like a bunch of tramps—which was, in fact, what they were! These were the assistants Mr. Hacker had called in to deal with the schoolboy strikers.

Even Hacker was not glad to see such a crew in the Greyfriars quad. He would gladly have raised a more respectable force to deal with the rebellion, had any been available.

A glint came into Mr. Hacker's eyes as he saw Coker of the Fifth Form walk across towards the school shop—directly disregarding the known commands of the new headmaster.

Carne had gone into the House. Five or six other prefects were in the quad, in a group, talking. They took no notice of Coker. The Fifth Former walked on—followed by Hacker's glare from a distance.

But he was not allowed to arrive at the barricaded shop. Two or three of the tramps rose from the bench under the elm. They hustled Coker away—and when Coker resisted hustling, they collared him, grinning, and ran him off, and pitched him over in a heap.

Mr. Hacker smiled, a sour smile. If his prefects failed him, he could rely, at least, on Ginger, and Ike the Weasel, and Jimmy the Pincher, and the rest.

Coker, breathless and tousled, sat and spluttered.

Wingate of the Sixth glanced at him,

spoke to his friends, and the half-dozen Sixth Formers came towards the House. A minute later there was a knock at Mr. Hacker's study door, and he turned from the window.

"Come in!" rapped Mr. Hacker. The door opened, and Wingate came in, followed by Gwynne and the rest.

Mr. Hacker eyed them grimly. Wingate, as head prefect and captain of the school, was a great man at Greyfriars. It rather pleased Mr. Hacker to make it clear to him that he was nobody in particular.

"Well?" rapped Hacker. "We've decided to speak to you, sir!" said Wingate, with as much respect as he could muster—which was not very much. "Those tramps are still here, and—"

"You need say nothing on that subject, Wingate!"

"I'm bound to, sir!" said the captain of Greyfriars. "I hear that they camped in Gosling's wood-shed—and this morning they're still here. When are they going, sir?"

"That is for me to decide!"

"From what I've heard, they made some sort of an attack on the Remove boys in the school shop, last night, and one of them was caught, and the juniors seem to be keeping him a prisoner—"

"That does not concern you."

"It does, sir," said the Greyfriars captain. "It concerns the whole school. This can't go on. I suggest, sir, that you send these men away at once, and that you give the Remove boys an assurance that the expulsions will be cancelled. Then this state of affairs may come to an end."

Mr. Hacker breathed hard and deep. Wingate was giving him good advice. But the new headmaster of Greyfriars had no use for good advice.

"So you are undertaking to dictate to your headmaster, Wingate?" said Mr. Hacker, in his bitterest tones.

"I must speak plainly, sir! You have expelled Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Bull, Hurree Singh, Mauleverer and Vernon-Smith. None of these boys would have been sacked by Dr. Locke. If the Head came back to-day, he would wash out those sentences. The boys know it, and so does the whole school. It's only natural, in the circumstances, that they should stick it out till the Head comes back. The only way to put an end to this outbreak is to do the right thing."

Mr. Hacker raised his hand. "That is enough!" he said. "Wingate, you are no longer a prefect! Leave my study; and take five hundred lines for your insolence!"

Wingate of the Sixth looked at him long and hard. Hacker was narrow-minded and obstinate. Wingate did not expect much from him in the way of sweet reasonableness. But this was the limit.

"Is that all you have to say, sir?" he asked.

"That is all! Go! I shall expect the lines this evening."

"You may expect, sir!" said Wingate contemptuously. "I shall certainly not take any notice of such an order."

"In that case, Wingate, I shall cane you!"

"Eh?"

"I hope I speak plainly!" said Mr. Hacker, with acid calmness. "If you are disobedient, Wingate, I shall cane you, like a boy in the Second Form! I warn you to take care! You are not dealing with Dr. Locke now, but with a man who knows how to make himself obeyed."

Mr. Hacker stepped to his table and

picked up a cane therefrom. The Sixth Form men eyed him blankly. Hacker swished the cane.

"Utter another word, Wingate, and I shall cane you!" he said. "One more syllable, and I shall order you to bend over and take a caning."

Wingate stared at him, and then laughed.

"You may order!" he said.

Hacker's eyes glinted. He had said that he would cane the captain of Greyfriars if he uttered one word more. Wingate had uttered three more! Hacker pointed to the table with the cane.

"Bend over that table, Wingate!" he rapped.

"Don't be an ass!" said Wingate.

"What—what?"

"Come on, you men," said the Greyfriars captain. "It's no good talking to him. This row will have to go on—till Dr. Locke comes back."

The prefects turned to the door.

"Wingate!" roared Mr. Hacker. "Stop!"

The Greyfriars captain did not heed. He followed the other fellows out. In the doorway a clutch fell on his shoulder, and he turned, staring at Hacker.

Hacker's left hand grasped his shoulder. Hacker's right lifted the cane. It would have come down in another moment.

In that moment, however, Wingate grasped at the cane and wrenched it out of Hacker's hand. He tossed it across the study. Then he knocked Hacker's other hand from his shoulder and walked away after his friends.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Hacker. He was left gasping.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Caught!

"I SAY, you fellows!" "Shut up, Bunter!" "I haven't had enough!" roared Bunter.

"That's all right—you never have!"

It was dinner-time. Billy Bunter had turned up his fat little nose at rations that morning. He had missed his breakfast in consequence. So he had an uncommonly healthy appetite at dinner. The portion assigned to Bunter vanished like an oyster. Bunter wanted more. Like Oliver Twist, he asked for more—and, like Oliver again, he did not get any more!

That morning the food supplies had been carefully packed in the larder, and locked up. There were plenty of provisions, on rationing lines, to last quite a long time, but it was clear that if the siege of the school shop went on, there would be little chance of renewing the supply.

During the first days of the strike Billy Bunter had lived on the fat of the land. He had been sticky and happy. Now he was still sticky, but no longer happy.

His indignation could hardly have been expressed in words. However, Bunter did his best to express it.

Bread had entirely petered out. Luckily, there were many tins of biscuits in the shop stock; but they were dealt out with a sparing hand. The strikers were not going to run the risk of being starved out, even if an aching void had to be left inside Billy Bunter's extensive circumference! There were canned meats of various kinds. Half a dozen of them would have satisfied Bunter. And he was allowed only a portion of one!



It was no wonder that his very spectacles gleamed with wrath and indignation. Having scoffed his rations, Bunter made known the urgent and important fact that he had not had enough to eat! And nobody cared!

It was time, Bunter considered, for the strike to come to an end. No doubt it was rather unfortunate that seven fellows were going to be turned out of the school if Hacker got the upper hand. Still, as Bunter was not one of the seven, it did not really matter very much—not so much, at all events, as regular and ample meals for Bunter!

But, so far from thinking of ending the strike, the rebels would not even allow a single member of the garrison to quit. The whole Form had to stand together, till they pulled through. Bunter was prepared to let the other fellows

ping, to be followed by an ample dinner. Hacker, at any rate, would not keep a fellow short of grub. Indeed, it was even possible that he might let a fellow off a whopping—a fellow who set the example of returning to duty and obedience! Bunter hoped so! He was going to chance it, anyhow!

Bunter's fat thoughts now were concentrated on getting away. Dinner was going on in Hall, over the way—if only he could get there!

But it was not easy to get away!

Every door and every window in the building was bolted and barred and barricaded, to keep the enemy out. The defences had the effect of keeping a deserter in, as well as an enemy out!

The fat junior examined door after door and window after window. He

Bunter breathed the air of liberty! He wriggled onward.

But the rest of Bunter did not follow easily. He wriggled, he squeezed, and he squirmed! He got out as far as his waist! But it was a case of thus far, and no farther!

Panting, gasping, crimson with exertion, Bunter squeezed and wriggled on, inch by inch, till he came to a dead stop. Any other fellow in the Remove could have squeezed through that aperture. Bunter couldn't! His circumference was against it.

"Oooogh!" gasped Bunter. "Oh crikey! Oooogh!"

Again and again he strove; but it was in vain! He was hopelessly caught! Between the plank above and the window-frame below, Bunter was jammed!



"Mr. Hacker stepped to the table and picked up his cane. The Sixth Form men eyed him blankly as he pointed to the table with the cane. "Bend over that table, Wingate!" rapped out the temporary headmaster. "Don't be an ass!" said the Greyfriars captain. "What—what!" gasped Mr. Hacker.

keep it up as long as they liked, so long as he was permitted to clear off and get back to the fleshpots of Egypt. But he was not permitted.

"If you fellows think you're going to keep me here and starve me—" said Bunter, with a quiver of thrilling indignation in his voice.

Lord Mauleverer looked up from his corned beef.

"You're nearest to Bunter, Cherry! Kick him!"

"Right-ho, old bean!"

"Yooo-hoop!" roared Bunter.

He struggled out of the kitchen, where the Remove strikers were at dinner. One lift from the biggest foot in the Remove was enough for Bunter.

He breathed indignant wrath as he went.

Hacker was a beast, no doubt—altogether too fond of whopping fellows! But Hacker was better than this!

Bunter did not like whoppings; but he would willingly have faced a whop-

stopped, at last, at a window in the side-passage beside the shop.

For the moment there was no eye on him; but when dinner was over the juniors would be all over the place again. He had no time to lose.

The window was small. Glass and sashes were gone. But boards were nailed over it. Plenty of tools were available. The fat Owl of the Remove, making up his mind to it, jammed a big chisel under the end of one of the boards, and wrenched. He gasped and panted as he exerted himself. But the end of the board came loose, and he jerked it away.

A space was left. It was not a wide space; but Bunter had no time to get more of the boards off. Already he was afraid that the noise of the wrenching might have been heard. He squeezed through.

Head and shoulders came out into the open air, over the window-sill. Billy

Clearly, there was nothing doing! The fat Owl could only make up his mind to wriggle back and try again. Then he made the painful discovery that he could not wriggle back!

Having jammed himself in the narrow aperture, Bunter stayed jammed! He could neither advance nor retreat.

His fat legs whisked on the inner side, his fat head projected on the outer side—and there was Bunter, caught!

"Oooooooooogh!" gurgled Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a sudden roar behind him.

"Oh crikey! Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

"Bunter, you fat villain—"

"Urrrggh!"

There was a sudden grasp on a pair of fat ankles. Bob Cherry's voice rang far and wide.

"This way, you fellows! I've caught a deserter!"

There was a tramp of feet in the



passage. Billy Bunter twisted and wriggled, and squeaked:

"I say, you fellows, help me in, will you? I—I wasn't going to get away, I—I was only—only just looking out to see if Hacker was coming! I say, I'm stuck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Blessed if I see anything to cackle at, you beasts! Help me out of this!" howled Bunter. "I've got a pain in my tummy."

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

"Ow! Beasts! I say——"

The passage was crowded with the Remove fellows, yelling with laughter. They had a view of an extensive pair of trousers, as tight as a drum; two little fat legs wriggled wildly.

"Fetch that ash somebody!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I wasn't going to desert!" howled Bunter. "I—I wasn't going to cut across for dinner! I—I just put my head out, you know——"

"I know!" assented Mauleverer. "Hand me that cane! Stand clear!"

"I say—— Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter.

Whack, whack, whack!

Billy Bunter could not have been more favourably placed for a whopping. The cane rang on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars. It rang like a series of pistol-shots!

Whack, whack, whack!

"Ow! Leave off!" yelled Bunter. "I say, you fellows—— Whoop! I say—— Yaroooo! Oh crikey! Oh lor! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now pull him in!" said Mauly.

"All hands on deck!" chorled Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Leggo! Wow! You're pulling my legs off!" shrieked Bunter, as three or four pairs of hands grasped and tugged. "I say, I'm stuck here! I've got a pain in my tummy! Leave off! Leggo—— Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter wriggled like a fat eel. Four fellows had hold of his legs, tugging.

Tightly as he was jammed, Bunter came loose at last, and sprawled on the floor, waking the echoes.

"Yow-ow-ow! Beasts! Wow! Yow! Oh crikey! I've got a pain—— Wow! I say, you fellows—— Oh crumbs! Oooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! My back's broken!" groaned Bunter. "My legs are fractured—— Wow!"

"Can't you get up?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"Ow! No! How can I get up when my legs are broken? Wow!"

"All of you kick him together!" said Mauleverer. "Kick him jolly hard—as hard as you can!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Boot him!"

"Go it!"

Billy Bunter found, suddenly, that he could get up—broken legs and all! In fact, he bounded!

Only one boot had reached him, when he bounced up like an india-rubber ball and whizzed up the passage.

A yell of laughter followed him. But Billy Bunter saw nothing to cackle at. He collapsed into a chair, pressed his fat hands to his fat equator, and groaned.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Strategic!

**M**R. HACKER came out of the House and walked across the quad, to the corner where the school shop stood.

But he did not approach near that building. A good many grinning faces were watching him from various windows; and he knew, from painful experience, that missiles were ready for him if he came within range.

He stopped under the big elm-tree that grew at a little distance, under which his "army" was loafing. Fighting Fred, the ex-bruiser, like the Weasel, Ginger, Jimmy the Pincher, and the rest, eyed him as he came up. Albert Juggins, the leader of the rough gang, was absent; he was a prisoner in the hands of the schoolboy strikers since the last attack.

Matters had not gone as Mr. Hacker had hoped when he called in the aid of the gang of tramps to deal with the rebels. He had fully expected Juggins & Co. to overcome the Removites' resistance, in an hour or so. Instead of which, they had been beaten all the time, and they were still at Greyfriars, and still at the beginning of their task.

A shout from the tuckshop reached Hacker's ears.

"Come on, Hacker! Why don't you come on, old bean?"

Mr. Hacker recognised the voice of Herbert Vernon-Smith—one of the expelled Removites. He set his lips hard. Smithy was "sacked," and he was going as soon as Hacker could lay hands on him; but the master of the Shell resolved to give him a record flogging before he went.

"Come on, Hacker!" It was Bob Cherry's cheery roar this time. "Lead on, old bony bean, and set those sportsmen an example!"

"Fauk!" roared Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Hacker's face was red with rage. He detected lurking grins on the faces of his grubby "army."

"Catch Hacker leading on!" He heard Peter Todd's voice. "Hacker's got cold feet—haven't you, Hacker?"

"The coldfulness of the esteemed Hacker's feet is——"

"Terrific!" chuckled Bob Cherry. And Bob began to chant, at the top of his powerful voice, a verse from the "Gondoliers," referring to the celebrated Duke of Plaza-Toro:

"In enterprise of martial kind,  
When there was any fighting,  
He led his regiment from behind,  
He found it less exciting!"

A yell of laughter from the juniors followed.

Mr. Hacker's face became crimson—and the grins on the faces of his grubby assistants more pronounced. But he turned a deaf ear to the gibes of the Remove rebels. He gave Fighting Fred & Co. his most acid glare.

"This cannot continue!" he snapped. "It is impossible for you to remain here much longer—your presence causes too much commotion in the school. You were brought here to force an entrance into that building. You have not done so. If you can do nothing you had better go."

"You 'and over the quid, like it was agreed, and we'll mizzle fast enough," granted Fighting Fred sulkily.

"I shall certainly not pay you for nothing!" rapped Mr. Hacker. "You will hardly expect me to do so, I think."

They looked at Mr. Hacker. The gang had been promised a "quid" each,

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# SCHOOLBOYS' OWN

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for forcing a way into the strikers' stronghold. So far, they had gained nothing but a variety of hard knocks. The task which had seemed to them extremely easy, had turned out exceedingly difficult. Mr. Hacker expected results, and he certainly did not feel disposed to pay for nothing.

"Wot's a bloke to do?" grunted Ike the Weasel. "Them young rips squirts 'ot water over a cove when he tries to bust in. And when we tries to get in at the trap in the roof they gets 'old of a bloke's legs. They got Albert, and they got him shut up there. There ain't nothing doing!"

"There ain't!" agreed Ginger.

"If you can do nothing, the sooner you go, the better," said Mr. Hacker coldly. "You appear to be unable to force an entrance. If one of you could contrive to enter, and open a door or window for the others——"

"Ow!" demanded Fighting Fred.

"That's it—'ow?" said Jimmy the Pincher. "We'll get at them young raskils fast enough, if you'll tell us 'ow."

Mr. Hacker turned his head and stared at the building. It was not an easy matter to "get at" the schoolboy strikers. A piece of coal, whizzing from a window, dropped a foot short of Mr. Hacker. He set his teeth.

This could not go on. Every day, he dreaded that the state of affairs at Greyfriars might come to the knowledge of the governors, and cause some of those gentlemen to pay the school a visit. What would they think of Horace Hacker as Head, if they found a junior Form in a state of rebellion, barricaded in the school shop? And the Bouncer's father, Mr. Vernon-Smith, had declared that he would take the matter up with the governors. It had to end—but how? Hacker was getting into a rather desperate frame of mind.

The school shop was a detached building. It was an old prior's house, with modern additions. Every approach to it could be watched by the rebels. It seemed impossible to take them by surprise, even a night attack had failed. How was it to be done?

Hacker's eyes fixed on the chimneys. From two of them smoke rose against the steely February sky. But from one big, ancient chimney at the back of the building no smoke rose. Hacker fixed his eyes on it. The rebels were keeping up two fires—one in the kitchen, one in the large front room upstairs. That old chimney at the back, as Mr. Hacker knew, communicated with the big, old-fashioned grate in Mrs. Mumble's parlour, and as there was no smoke from the chimney, there was evidently no fire in the grate. His eyes gleamed.

"One of you——" His glance rested on the thin, wiry figure of the ferret-eyed Ike. "One of you could descend into the building by that chimney——"

"My eye!" said Fred.

"I will pay five pounds to the man who can enter, and open the way to the others!" said Mr. Hacker.

The ruffians exchanged glances. Five pounds was a large sum to them.

"I will leave it in your hands," said Mr. Hacker. "But if you can do nothing, it is useless for you to remain here longer."

And he walked back to the House, to take his place in the Shell Form-room. And Hobson & Co., of the Shell, who had been crowded at the Form-room windows, made a rush for their places, as they saw him coming.

The rough gang stood looking towards the school shop. Ike the Weasel cocked his eye reflectively at the chimney.

"A bloke could do it," he said. "I've

been down a chimbley afore, and a smaller chimbley than that. Once I was inside, I'd soon get a winder open for you coveys."

"Try it on!" said Fred. "The ladder's there, where we left it, at the back. Look 'ere, you go and give Ike a 'and with the ladder, Ginger, and we'll start a shindy with them at the front of the 'ouse, and keep 'em looking this 'ere way, see?"

"You got it, Fred!" said Ginger.

And there was a general nodding of frowzy heads. Five of the tattered gang made a move towards the school shop—and were immediately greeted by whizzing pieces of coal.

Ike and Ginger strolled off, by different ways, to meet again at the back of the building. There lay Gosling's long ladder, which had been used in the night-attack. All the back windows were boarded up, and an attack on that side would quickly have brought a rush of defenders to the spot; but Ike and Ginger made no noise as they reared the long ladder to the roof.

At the front of the building, Fighting Fred and the rest were drawing the attention of the garrison. All sorts of missiles whizzed out at them, and they replied with whirling half-bricks, and anything else that came to hand. Every now and then a missile from without whizzed in at an aperture, and there was a yell from within. But there was no doubt that the assailants had the worst of the exchanges.

Meanwhile, however, Ginger held the ladder, and the nimble, wiry Weasel scrambled swiftly up to the roof. Active as a cat, he clambered into the wide old chimney. He grinned as he blinked down into its sooty depths.

"Jest pie!" murmured the Weasel.

The old climbing-irons, left from ancient times, were still sticking in the interior brickwork. The descent was easy enough, for anyone who did not mind getting extremely dirty—and Ike had no objection to that. Indeed, his objections were rather to cleanliness! He swung himself nimbly down.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### A Surprise for Mr. Juggins!

"AYTISHOOOH!"

Albert Juggins sneezed. Albert was not enjoying his day. Albert was accustomed to liberty of action, to the spacious freedom of the roads and hedges; and now he was, as Shakespeare would have described it, "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd." He was seated in an armchair in the little parlour behind the tuckshop, which was comfortable, so far as that went; but as his legs were tied to the legs of the chair, and his arms to the arms thereof, there was little comfort for Mr. Juggins.

He did not like it at all—and that fact he had loudly announced, with a string of expressions seldom heard by Greyfriars ears. But Juggins was silent now. Whenever he used expressions unsuitable for polite society, some fellow would pop in for a moment and pull his ears, or tweak his broken nose. Juggins tired of this!

He had been given biscuits and cheese for lunch—frugal fare. Certainly, it was as good as the fare to which Albert was accustomed; but he missed the accompanying beer. Very much he missed the beer. Albert was a

convinced and earnest supporter of the drink traffic.

A whole day without beer seemed to Albert one of those dreadful nightmares too horrible to be anything like reality. But it was real—awfully, fearfully real—and the lamentations of Job, in ancient times, were nothing, compared with the lamentations of Mr. Juggins. Beerless and disconsolate, he groaned in anguish of spirit.

And then he began to sneeze!

A shindy was going on. Albert rather liked shindies—in fact, a shindy was his delight on any night, in any season of the year! But a shindy in which he could not take part was no use to Albert.

He could see nothing from the little parlour. There were two doors—both taken down to be used in the barricade. One doorless doorway gave him a partial view of the barricade in the shop—the other opened on the side-passage. The parlour window was boarded over. From what he could hear, he judged that his associates were making an attack—he could hear the crashing of innumerable missiles, and yells and shouts from the schoolboy defenders, most of them at the windows in the upper rooms in front.

Nothing was likely to come of such an attack; there was no chance of rescue for Albert Juggins. No doubt heaving half-bricks was a relief to the feelings of his friends; but they could not expect to overcome the defence by such methods.

So far as Juggins could see, he was booked, so long as this affair went on. Having captured the leader of the rough gang, the schoolboys were keeping him a prisoner. He could not, perhaps, be kept permanently tied in an armchair; but being locked in a cellar by way of a change was no great comfort. Albert's feelings were bitter as he listened to the shindy. And then, as if things were not bad enough already, a whiff of soot caught him, and he sneezed.

"Aytishoo! A t e h o o h! Ooooh!" sneezed Albert. "Bust my buttons! Blow me tight! Strike me pink and yaller! Aytishoo!"

He glared round towards the wide, old-fashioned grate in the parlour. There was no fire, and it was rather surprising where the soot came from. But it came—and was still coming!

Soot dropped out on the old hearth. It whiffed about the room. It smote Albert's broken nose and made him sneeze and sneeze again!

"Aytishoo! Shoo! Ooooh!" sneezed Mr. Juggins. "Blow my blinking buttons, what's the matter with that blooming chimbley?"

Then he gave quite a jump, as something appeared, dangling, below the old chimney. It was a ragged boot.

"My eye!" murmured Albert.

He stared at the dangling boot. It was joined by another. Then a very tattered and dirty pair of trousers came into view.

Mr. Juggins gasped. He knew those trousers! Certain large patches on them, of a different colour from that of the original fabric, were familiar to his eyes.

"Ike!" gasped Albert.

The tattered feet dropped to the hearth. The rest of Ike the Weasel appeared in view. Sooty and extremely unclean, the Weasel stooped his head and stared into the room.

He gave a start at the sight of Juggins in the armchair. To his relief, there was no one else in sight.

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Fighting Fred's strategy had been successful. The attention of the garrison was drawn to the front of the house. Nobody was in the back rooms—excepting the prisoner tied in the chair.

"You, Albert!" breathed the Weasel, as he stooped out into the room, shaking soot from his tattered garments.

"Me!" breathed Mr. Juggins. "My eye! You've come down that there chimbley, Ike?"

"It was the old bony cove's idea!" said Ike. "It's a spin note for me, Albert, if I git through. You taking it heavy 'ere?"

"Can't you see I'm tied?" grunted Albert. "You let me loose, Ike, and I'll lend you a 'and."

"Wot!" agreed Ike.

He cut Mr. Juggins loose in a few moments. Then he stepped to the door and listened. Shouting came from above, and the crashing of missiles on boards. But it was clear that none of the garrison had any suspicion that an enemy had penetrated the defences.

Ike turned back to Mr. Juggins, grinning.

"This 'ere looks like pie!" he murmured. "We got to get a winder open for our pals, and then I got to whistle. Them young rips don't know I'm 'ere! I fancied I should ketch 'em all right—and I 'ave!"

"You 'ave Ike!" agreed Mr. Juggins.

"This 'ere winder will do!"

Ike stepped to the window of the parlour, which overlooked the yard at the back.

"Don't you make no row, Ike!" breathed Juggins. "They'll be on us like a blinking pack on a fox. I tell you! I don't want them to begin 'andling me agin till the other coveys are 'ere!"

"These 'ere planks is screwed," said Ike. "It wouldn't be easy to shift 'em from outside; but from this side, Albert, I call it pie, if we can get 'old of a screwdriver."

"They got a lot of tools in the shop. Wait a tick!"

Albert Juggins stepped into the shop. He came back with a couple of screwdrivers and an iron wrench.

"Er, you are, Ike!"

They set to work. From outside, a terrific onslaught would have been required to get through that window; but from inside, it was, as Ike had remarked, a very different matter.

Swiftly they unscrewed screw after screw. It was rather hard work, and hard work was deeply disliked by both Ike and Albert. But for once in their unsavoury lives they exerted themselves.

The screws were out at last with hardly a sound. There were a considerable number of nails, also; but by inserting the wrench under the ends of the planks, and exerting a steady pressure, the nails were drawn. One big plank was removed—then another—and then another!

There were several more; but there was now sufficient space open for a man to get in and out.

"One more, and then I'll whistle!" murmured Ike. He chuckled softly. "Them young raskils won't kick much when we get at them all together, Albert!"

"I believe you, Ike!" assented Mr. Juggins.

The fourth board was loosened. Two grubby pairs of hands grasped it to remove it, when there was a sudden

footstep in the doorway and a startled exclamation.

Albert and Ike spun round, glaring. They had had great luck, so far—but now they were discovered!

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### A Narrow Escape!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"I say, what about tea?"

"Nothing about tea! Shut up!"

"Beast!"

Most of the Remove fellows were crowded in the big front room over the shop. Scuttles of coal had been carried up to supply ammunition, and they were using it liberally.

They seemed to be rather enjoying the "shindy." A little liveliness was very welcome to the garrison of the school shop.

Ginger had come round the front of the building and joined his friends, and there were six of them attacking. They dodged missiles that flew from within, and hurled missiles back at the loopholes in the boarded windows. Most of those missiles crashed on the boards; but every now and then one came through, which caused a "casualty" in the ranks of the defenders.

Bolsover major had caught a turf with his ear, and Peter Todd had stopped a half-brick with his chin with painful results. But the defenders landed ten times as many missiles as they received, and Fighting Fred & Co. were undoubtedly getting the worst of it.

Billy Bunter was interested neither in the attack nor in the defence. The enemy couldn't get in, and Bunter did not care very much if they did. Bunter was interested in tea. Tea-time was approaching, and Bunter's idea was that it would be a jolly good thing if the strike ended in time for tea. Anyhow, he wanted his tea, whether the strike ended or not.

With the selfishness to which he was accustomed, nobody cared whether Bunter wanted his tea or not.

All the fellows seemed to care about was landing a bullseye on the enemy outside.

"Got him!" yelled the Bounder, as he landed a piece of coal on Fighting Fred's ear; and the ex-pugilist staggered and roared.

"Good man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fighting Fred roared, and rubbed a coal ear. Jimmy the Pincher sent a half-brick whizzing back, and it whizzed between the boards at the window, and shot across the room.

Smithy dodged it. But every bullet has its billet. There was a fearful roar from Billy Bunter as the half-brick landed on the widest waist at Greyfriars School.

"Yaroooo!" roared Bunter.

He sat down suddenly clasping his extensive waistcoat.

"Ooogh! I'm killed!" gurgled Bunter. "Owl! I'm injured! Wooooogh!"

Even the fact that Bunter was killed and injured did not seem to worry the Removes. They gave the fat Owl no attention, bestowing it all on the enemy.

The fat Owl picked himself up and rolled away. He did not want any more of the fusillade; one half-brick was enough for Bunter. Grunting and gasping, Billy Bunter went down the stairs, to wait for tea in a safer spot.

He blinked in at the doorway of the little parlour, where Albert Juggins had been left, safely tied in the arm-

chair. His eyes almost popped through his spectacles at what he saw there.

"Oh crikey!" squeaked Bunter.

"Bust my buttons!" breathed Albert, glaring round at him. "That fat covey! You git the blokes here, Ike—quick!"

The Weasel put his head out of the window and gave utterance to a loud, shrill whistle that was heard far and wide. It was the signal to Fighting Fred & Co. that the way was now open.

At the same moment Albert rushed across at Bunter.

Billy Bunter, seldom rapid in his movements, moved now like a particularly active kangaroo. He bounded back from the doorway, and leaped for the stairs as the broken-nosed man rushed on him.

"I say, you fellows!" shrieked Bunter.

He tore up the stairs. But Albert was after him like a shot, and he grabbed a fat ankle as the fat Owl flew.

"Gotcher!" hissed Mr. Juggins.

Bunter clung to the banisters, and bellowed:

"I say, you fellows! Rescue! Help! Yaroooooh!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a shout from above. "What's up?"

"Only that fat fool Bunter!" snapped the Bounder. "Fallen downstairs or something—"

"Owl! Help! Rescue!" yelled Bunter, struggling and kicking wildly. "He's got me! Yaroooo! I say, you fellows—Woooo-hooh!"

"This way!" shouted Lord Mauleverer.

He came down the stairs three at a time.

Albert wrenched Billy Bunter away from the banisters and dragged him down. His idea was to keep Bunter quiet till Fighting Fred & Co. got round to the window at the back. But there was no chance of that. Billy Bunter's frantic yells were waking the echoes of the building.

"Oh gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer at the sight of Albert, whom he had last seen tied in the armchair.

"Owl! Help! Wow!"

Billy Bunter forgot all about his desire for the Greyfriars strike to come to an end as he felt Albert's savage grip on him. He yelled and kicked and howled in terror.

Lord Mauleverer was half-way down the stairs when he spotted Albert. He did the remainder of the staircase in one landing with both feet on Mr. Juggins.

Juggins went over with a roar, and Mauleverer sprawled headlong over him. Billy Bunter was distributed on the stairs, bellowing:

"Yow-ow-owl! Wow! Owl! Wow!"

"Back up!" roared Mauleverer.

"Come on, you men!" shouted Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five rushed down the stairs. The fusillade at the front of the building had suddenly ceased, and the gang of roughs had rushed away in answer to Ike's signal whistle.

At the foot of the staircase, Albert pitched Lord Mauleverer off, and staggered to his feet spluttering.

"That blighter Juggins—" shouted Johnny Bull.

"He's got loose—"

"Collar him!"

"Bag him!"

The juniors tore down the stairs. Albert, gasping for breath, darted back into the parlour.

Lord Mauleverer picked himself up.

"Follow on!" he gasped.

And he rushed after Albert.

"Urrrgh! I say, you—oooh!—fellows—woooogh!—d-d-d-don't tread on





"Pull the fat idiot in!" said Mauleverer. "Right!" chortled Bob Cherry. "All hands on deck!" "Ow! Leggo! Wow! You're pulling my legs off!" shrieked Billy Bunter, as several pairs of hands grasped his legs and tugged. "I say, I'm stuck here—I've got a pain in my tummy—leave off—leggo—ow!"

a chap! Oooogh! Grooogh!" gurgled Billy Bunter, as a rush of the Removites passed over him on the stairs. They had no time to wait till the fat Owl wriggled out of the way. Bunter was left gurgling.

Harry Wharton & Co. rushed into Mrs. Mimble's parlour at the heels of Lord Mauleverer.

Juggins and Ike were standing at the opened window, with their knuckly fists up. Already in sight, the whole gang could be seen, cutting round the back of the building, heading for that window.

"Oh gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer. "Go for 'em, dear men!" He led the rush.

But for Billy Bunter's interruption, it would have been "pie" for Mr. Hacker's "army." But the alarm had been given in time.

Fighting Fred & Co. were still at a distance when the mob of juniors rushed on Ike and Albert.

That rush overwhelmed the two tramps. They fought valiantly, and some of the Removites received terrifically hard knocks; but numbers told, and Ike and Albert went down, with a crowd of fellows swarming over them.

Winded to the wide, they sprawled on the floor under innumerable feet.

"The sideboard—quick!" yelled Mauleverer.

There was a big, heavy sideboard standing by the wall. Five or six of the juniors grasped it and jammed it in the window.

It filled most of the available space. Half a minute more, and Fighting Fred & Co. came up with a rush—to find the window blocked.

Bob Cherry had already seized hammer and nails, and was nailing the sideboard in place. It was fortunate for Mrs. Mimble, perhaps, that she was not present to see the way her furniture was handled. Long nails, driven in by

terrific swipes of the hammer, fastened the sideboard to the window frame.

Fighting Fred grasped it, to heave it away. Bob reached out with the hammer.

Bang! Fred had a powerful voice when he let it go. He let it go now as the hammer banged on his knuckles.

"Yoo-hooop!" bellowed Fred. He was heard all over Greyfriars. Every fellow in the Form-rooms heard him; Gosling heard him at his lodge—in fact, he was heard over quite a wide space all round Greyfriars School.

Fighting Fred—no longer thinking or dreaming of fighting—sucked his knuckles, roared, and danced with anguish. Two or three other hands were hastily withdrawn.

"Come on!" chortled Bob. "Have a few more!"

But Fighting Fred & Co. did not want any more. Jimmy the Pincher glared in, and the Boulder charged at the glaring face with a mop, and Jimmy went over on his back, yelling.

The attack was stopped. It had been a narrow escape, but the schoolboy strikers had put paid to it.

In the yard outside, Fighting Fred sucked his knuckles and mumbled, and the others prowled and glared, while within the hammers rang and clanged, repairing the defences. Ike and Albert, breathless and all in, were rolled away down the cellar stairs and locked in a cellar. The Removites had two prisoners instead of one, which was the only result of Hacker's latest move.

That was the news that greeted Mr. Hacker when he dismissed the Shell that afternoon and came out to inquire how his "army" had progressed. And even Horace Hacker began to wonder how it was going to end—and whether it was, indeed, going to end at all!

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter's Bolt!

**C**LANG, clang! The rising-bell rang out over Greyfriars School in the misty February morning.

In the dormitories over in the House, the various Forms were turning out. And in the strikers' stronghold, the rebels of the Remove turned out as the bell clanged. Bob Cherry's powerful voice, raised in song, almost drowned the clanging of the rising-bell as he roared out a Greyfriars refrain:

"When the rising-bell clangs in the dewy morn,  
We roll out of bed by the light of dawn.  
'Now, then, they're my trousers!  
They're my bags, you tick!  
What swab's got my socks? I say,  
this is too thick!'"

"I say, shut up that row!" yapped Skinner.

"What row?" demanded Bob warmly. "What the dickens are you bawling for?"

"I was singing, you silly ass——"

"Oh, my mistake!" said Skinner sarcastically. "I couldn't guess that one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob hurled a pillow at Skinner. Bob was, as usual, in exuberant spirits that morning. With the aid of a bolster, he rooted out Snoop and one or two more slackers, and looked for Bunter.

"Turn out, fatty!" roared Bob.

There was no answer from Bunter's bed. Nothing was to be seen of the fat Owl except a mountain of bedclothes. Bob lifted his bolster over that mountain.



"Wake up, Bunter!" he roared. "Turn out! The bell's stopped!" No reply—not even a snore! The bolster came down. Whop!

"Oh!" gasped Bob. That terrific whop knocked the mountain of bedclothes right and left. No doubt it would have turned Bunter out, had Bunter been there.

But Billy Bunter was not there! In the bed lay a rolled-up rug! Bob Cherry stared at it in astonishment. The other fellows stared at it.

"He's bolted!" yelled the Bounder. "Bolted!" repeated Bob.

"Oh, my hat!" "The fat villain!" "Deserted!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Great pip!" There could be no doubt about it. Evidently, he had turned out while all the other fellows were asleep, fixing up the dummy in the bed to deceive a casual glance, and gone. Bunter had had enough of rations!

"After him!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "He mayn't have got out of the place yet!"

There was a rush down the stairs. Most of the Removites slept in the big attic over the building, which had been turned into a dormitory. But other rooms were occupied, and in the large front room over the shop, Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing were on sentry duty. But nobody had seen anything of Bunter.

"Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

But answer there came none. Billy Bunter had failed to get away the previous day, but it looked as if he had succeeded during the night.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" yelled Bob. "Look here!"

The juniors gathered at a little back window on the ground floor. Two or three boards had been taken down, and it was clear that this was the way the fat Owl had gone. And the way had been left open for the enemy if they had chanced to discover it!

"Oh gad!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer. "If they'd spotted that——"

"I'll burst him!" gasped Bob.

"The fat scoundrel!"

"The podgy porpoise!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, look at this!" howled Bob.

A torn sheet of paper was pinned on the window-frame. It was pencilled on in Billy Bunter's well-known scrawl:

"Beests! I'm gowing! If you think yore gowing to starve me, yore mistaken! Gow and eat koke!" "W. G. B."

The Removites stared at that farewell epistle from William George Bunter.

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Bob Cherry put his head out of the window and looked round in a faint hope that Billy Bunter might still be in sight. But the fat Owl was gone.

"I—I—I'll burst him all over Greyfriars when I get hold of him again!" gasped Bob.

"The fat rotter!"

"The pernicious porpoise!"

"Bung up that window, you men!" said Mauleverer. "Lucky those blighters never spotted it! We should have had a surprise! Smithy, old bean, you're a rotten sentry! Same to you, Redwing!"

"We were keeping watch for the enemy," growled the Bounder. "I never thought about that fat freak!"

"Same here!" said Redwing.

"Can't be helped!" said Mauleverer. "Keep watch inside as well as outside after this! If fellows begin sneaking off, the game's up!"

Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish were exchanging glances. But if they were thinking of following Billy Bunter's example, they had no chance at present, at all events. The boards were promptly nailed over the window again.

Harry Wharton went to the front room and looked out over the quad. A few fellows were to be seen in the distance, over by the House.

Fighting Fred & Co. were not visible. They had camped for the night in Gosling's wood-shed, and had not turned out yet. But among the fellows near the House, the captain of the Remove spotted a familiar fat figure. It was Billy Bunter—speaking to Hobson and Stewart of the Shell.

"Bunter!" shouted Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Can you see him?" Bob Cherry joined the captain of the Remove at the front window.

"There he is!" Harry Wharton pointed to the fat figure in the distance. "Give him a yell, old chap—he will hear that megaphone you call a voice."

"Fathead!" said Bob.

He put out his head and roared:

"Bunter!"

Nearly all Greyfriars heard that roar. It reached the Owl of the Remove, and he blinked round with a gleam of morning sunshine on his big spectacles.

He grinned.

"Bunter!" roared Bob. "Come back, you fat rotter! Do you hear, you blinking barbling handersnatch! Come back, you fat funk!"

Billy Bunter did not reply in words. But his actions made it clear that he did not intend to come back. He put a fat thumb to his fat little nose and extended the fingers of his right hand. Then he added another fat thumb to the little finger of his right paw and extended the fingers of his left hand.

That disrespectful gesture was intended to convey his derision and contempt.

Bob Cherry breathed hard.

"If a fellow could only get at him——" he gasped.

Hobson and Stewart were grinning. Billy Bunter, having made his scornful defiance clear, turned and cut into the House. He disappeared from view.

"I'll burst him!" gasped Bob.

But that was only a consolation for the future. Billy Bunter was out of reach, and the only present consolation was that he was within Hacker's reach! It was quite probable that Hacker's reception of the deserter would make Billy repent him that he had deserted!

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Beastly for Bunter

"I—I say, Wingate——" Wingate of the Sixth stared at Billy Bunter. "Where did you spring from?" he inquired.

"I've come back!" explained Bunter. "I—I say, where's Hacker, Wingate? Is—is he in a good temper this morning?"

"I think he went to his study after prayers," answered the Greyfriars captain. "I don't think he looked fearfully good-tempered."

"Oh lor'!" said Bunter. "I suppose I shall have to see him—he would spot me at brekker. Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter rolled away to Masters' Studies.

He had to see Hacker—and he hoped that Hacker would be pleased to see one of the rebel Form returning to duty! If he was pleased, he might let Bunter off the whopping! Indeed, it would be only judicious, on Hacker's part, to deal gently with a repentant sheep returning to the fold, as an encouragement for others to follow his example. It was doubtful, however, whether Horace Hacker would be judicious!

Bunter halted at the dreaded study door, and raised a fat hand to tap. He lowered it again.

On short commons in the strikers' stronghold, it had seemed to Billy Bunter worth a whopping to get back to regular and ample meals. Now that the whopping was close at hand, however, he did not feel so sure about that.

He raised his fat hand again. Again he lowered it. At Hacker's door, Bunter felt rather like Daniel entering the den of lions, and Bunter did not dare to be a Daniel!

He was still in a state of doubt and hesitation, when the door suddenly opened, and Mr. Hacker came striding out.

Bump!

Not expecting to find a fat junior standing just outside his study door, Mr. Hacker walked into him. There was a collision.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

"Who—what——" ejaculated Mr. Hacker.

"Oh dear! If—if you please, sir——" gasped Bunter.

Hacker stared at him—then he glared.

"Bunter!" he exclaimed. "A Remove boy!"

"Yes, sir! I—I've come back——"

Billy Bunter was going to explain to Hacker that he had realised how wrong it was to set up against authority, and had returned to his duty like the really good, obedient fellow he was at heart. That, Bunter hoped, would make Hacker go easy with the cane.

But he did not have time to get that explanation out.

Hacker, after one astonished stare, grasped him by the collar, and hooked him into the study.

Every fellow in the Remove was hooked for a whopping, as soon as he fell into Hacker's hands. Bunter was the first to fall!

Mr. Hacker had no use for Bunter's explanations. He fairly whirled the fat junior into the study.

Bunter gave a breathless yelp.

Then the master of the Shell grabbed up a cane from the table. He turned to Bunter, swishing it.

"Bend over that chair, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey! I—I say, sir——" gasped Bunter.

"Bend over, Bunter."

"Oh, yes, sir! Certainly, sir! But I



say—" spluttered Bunter. "I—I say—yaroooooh! Leggo! Ow!"

A grasp on his collar bent Bunter over the chair. Pinning him there with his left hand, Hacker handled the cane with his right.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Oh lor'! Oh crikey! Ow!" roared Bunter.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooooooooooooh!"

Whack, whack, whack!  
"Yooo-hoooooooooooo!" yelled Bunter, wriggling frantically.

It was double-six! And every whop was a swipe! Rations or no rations, Billy Bunter would have been glad, just then, to be back with the rebel Remove.

He howled, he yelled, and he roared.

Mr. Hacker seemed rather inclined to continue. However, he left it at that, and Bunter wriggled away, roaring.

"Yow! Ow! Wow! Oh crikey! Wow!"

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Hacker, glaring at him.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Will you be silent, Bunter?"

"Wow! Wow!"

"Do you desire me to cane you again?"

"Oh crikey! No, sir! Oh lor'!"

"Then be silent! Where are the others?" rapped Mr. Hacker. "Have other boys returned with you?"

"Ow! Wow! I mean no, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I wish I hadn't—I—I mean, I'm glad I have, sir! Oh crumbs! Wow! Wooooogh!" The fat Owl wriggled in anguish.

"You have returned alone?" snapped Mr. Hacker. He was disappointed and annoyed, and his hand strayed to the cane again. Bunter gave a squeak of apprehension.

"Oh dear! Yes, sir! I—I came back to—to set them an example!" he stuttered. "I—I realised how wrong it was, sir, to—wow! Wow!"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I—I felt that I couldn't go on being disobedient any longer, sir, when—when you're so—so nice!" groaned Bunter. "That's why I came back, sir. It wasn't because the grub was running short, or anything of that kind! Just to set them an example, sir—wow!"

Mr. Hacker's eyes glinted.

It was news to him—and welcome news—that supplies were running short with the rebels. It gave him a hopeful glimpse of a possible end of the strike.

"So that is why you have left the other young rascals?" he exclaimed.

"Ow! Yes, sir, because I'm so good and—wow!—obedient—"

"Silence! No doubt the food is running short after all this time," said Mr. Hacker. "Very good—very good indeed! Do you mean that the food is actually short, Bunter, and that they have not enough to eat?"

"Ow! Yes, sir! They're on rations now, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I had only half a pound of corned beef, and a pound of biscuits, and a bit of cake, for my supper last night, sir—ow!"

Mr. Hacker stared at him.

"I went to bed hungry, sir!" moaned Bunter. "I couldn't sleep for it! That isn't why I came back, of course. I came back because—"

"That will do!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "Bunter, if you make any attempt to rejoin those rebellious young rascals, I shall expel you from the school. Now you may go."

Billy Bunter wriggled out of the study.

He was not likely to make any attempt to rejoin the rebellious young rascals—not so long as they were on rations! He wriggled away to Hall, where the Greyfriars fellows were going in to breakfast.

Coker of the Fifth stared at him as he went in wriggling.

"Hallo, here's one of them!" exclaimed Coker. "What are you doing here, Bunter? Left the others in the lurch, what?"

"Oh, really, Coker—ow!" roared Bunter, as Coker kicked him, and passed on to the Fifth Form table.

Hobson and Hoskins and Stewart of the Shell came in. All three of them kicked Bunter, in passing. Tubb of the Third kicked him next, and then Nugent minor of the Second. It was rather fortunate for Bunter that Mr. Hacker came in. The Remove deserter did not seem to be popular.

Even breakfast, good and ample as it was, did not wholly console Billy Bunter for the aches and pains he had accumulated.

After breakfast, Billy Bunter had a faint hope that there would be no lessons for him that morning. He was the only member of the Remove there, and there could hardly be a Form consisting of only one fellow. But Mr. Hacker was equal to that little difficulty.

He called to the fat Owl when the fellows were going out.

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"You will go into class with the Shell this morning!"

"Oh crikey!"

"What—what did you say, Bunter?"

"I—I said how—how nice, sir!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled out dismally. The Shell was Hacker's Form—and Bunter did not want any more of Hacker! He had had too much Hacker already!

And during the morning the master of the Shell gave him quite a lot of attention. Bunter was lazy and obtuse; and with his obtuseness, at least, Mr. Quelch had been accustomed to be patient. But Hacker had no patience to waste on him. A dozen times, at least, Hacker's acid tongue scarified Bunter—and twice the cane came into play—and before the morning was over, Billy Bunter had made up his fat mind to rejoin the strikers, grub shortage or no.

But he changed his mind again when the dinner-bell rang. Happily, there was steak-and-kidney pie—and with steak-and-kidney pie before him Billy Bunter was able to forget all troubles. He ate, and ate, and was comforted.

# THE NINTH CHAPTER. Hacker Asks For It! CRASH!

A half-brick smote a boarded window and dropped. From an aperture a piece of coal whizzed in return, and Fighting Fred barely dodged it.

The Greyfriars fellows were in class in the afternoon; but in all the Form-rooms they could hear banging and crashing from the direction of the school shop!

Mr. Hacker's "army" was making no attempt to get to close quarters with the Greyfriars strikers; but the tramps found occupation for their time, and relief for their feelings, in shying things at the building.

Mr. Hacker frowned as he came over from the House. It was clear to the new headmaster of Greyfriars, by this time, that the peculiar assistants he had called in were not going to be of much use to him.

What he had learned from Bunter had given him a new hope. Sooner or later—sooner rather than later, if the rebels were already on rations—the food supply would give out. Then there would be nothing for it but surrender.

To that hope Horace Hacker now pinned his faith.

Albert Juggins & Co. had failed him. The sooner they went, the better. Even the obstinate Hacker could not wholly disregard the disapproval and condemnation of the whole school. He knew how the staff commented on the present state of affairs in Common-room; and the prefects in the prefects' room; and, in fact, everybody at Greyfriars. And he shuddered at the thought of a governor dropping in and finding Juggins & Co. on the premises.

Mr. Hacker had sourly made up his mind—either the rowdies had to do, at once, what they had come there to do, or they had to go! The prospect of losing their promised reward might, he considered, spur them on to make an effort and get the upper hand of a mob of schoolboys. Anyhow, he was not going to have them hanging about the school, kicking up a disgraceful disturbance with nothing to come of it.

"That will do!" he rapped, as Fighting Fred picked up a jagged fragment of brick, to take aim at a loophole.

Fred stared round at him.

"Torking to me?" he inquired surlily.

"I am speaking to you, my man!" said Mr. Hacker acidly. "Kindly make no further disturbance. This noise can be heard all over the school."

"Wot do I care?" inquired Fred.

(Continued on next page.)

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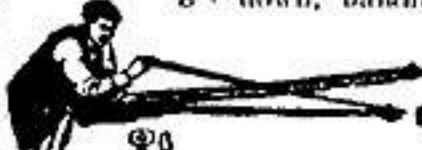
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"Well, I care, if you do not!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "Listen to me! You men were sent for to force an entrance into that building and overcome the resistance of a number of rebellious boys. Are you going to do so, and receive the payment promised for it?"

Fred glared at him.

"Ain't we been going it?" he demanded. "You figger that a bloke can knock in a door with a young covey inside squirting 'ot water over his 'ead? You figger that blokes can get into a winder with them young rips banging blokes' 'eads with golf clubs and sich? Eh?"

"That is neither here nor there!" said Mr. Hacker. "If you cannot do as you have undertaken to do, the sooner you go, the better."

"Dror it mild!" said Jimmy the Pincher. "We done our best! And we've 'ad some blooming 'ard knocks a-doing it, too, so I tell yer."

"Yus," said Ginger. "You look 'ere—"

"Please do not interrupt me," said Mr. Hacker in the same cold, acid tone. He pointed to the school shop. "Are you going to enter that building, or not?"

"Can't be done!" said Jimmy.

"Then you had better go!" said Mr. Hacker.

"We'll go fast enough, old bony-face!" snorted Fighting Fred. "You 'and over the quid each, like you promised, and you won't see our 'eels for dust!"

Hacker gave him an icy stare.

"You were promised payment for doing the work you undertook to do," he answered. "The offer is still open! But I shall certainly not pay you for nothing."

The six tramps gathered round him with scowling brows and glittering eyes.

"You ain't going to pay a bloke?" demanded Fred.

"Certainly not, for nothing! If you desire me to pay you, all you have to do is to earn the money!" said Mr. Hacker contemptuously.

"There ain't no way of getting into that blinking show, and well you know it," snarled the ex-bruiser, "and we've all got knocked about something crool a-trying of it on! Think we're doing that for nothing?"

"Not 'arf!" said Jimmy the Pincher with emphasis.

"Why, you ole bag of bones," said Fred, with rising indignation, "look at my 'and, 'orribly 'urt with bein' 'ammered! Look at my 'ead, with more bruises and bumps on it than a bloke could count! Look at my nose, what has been fair squashed with a 'cavy lump of blinking coal! I can tell yer, old pieface, we'll be glad to get outer this, but we ain't going without being paid."

"Don't you think it!" said Ginger.

"'And it over, and let's mizzle!" said Fred.

Hacker set his thin lips. He was not a firm man—but he was an obstinate one; very obstinate indeed. A very little concession to the Remove when the trouble began would have saved him the trouble; but he was not the man to make concessions. He was not making any now.

From his own point of view, he was right. Fred & Co. had been engaged to perform a certain task, to be paid accordingly. They had not performed it, so he was not going to pay them. That seemed quite reasonable to Hacker.

It did not seem so reasonable to the gang of tramps, every one of whom had

collected a large variety of damages in the conflict with the schoolboy strikers. Scowling faces and knuckly fists surrounded Mr. Hacker.

He pointed to the distant gates.

"Go!" he said acidly.

"Go?" repeated Fred.

"And at once! You are no use here!" said Mr. Hacker, with bitter contempt. "You have allowed a few impudent schoolboys to defeat you—to frighten you! Go away immediately."

"Well, strike me pink!" said Fighting Fred, with a deep breath. "You're the bloke to ask for it, you are, and no error! You paying a covey?"

"Nothing!" said Mr. Hacker.

"And you figger that we'll go without?" roared Fred.

"You will leave these premises at once, or I shall telephone to the police station to have you removed!" answered Mr. Hacker coldly. "Now go!"

Fighting Fred & Co. did not go. Fred drew back a fist like a leg of mutton.

"Where will you 'ave it?" he asked.

Mr. Hacker stepped quickly back.

He was no coward; but he did not want that leg-of-mutton fist to land on him. One knock from that huge paw and Greyfriars would have been in need of another temporary headmaster!

"No violence!" said Mr. Hacker. "I warn you—"

"You goin' to pay up?" bawled Fred.

"Certainly not!"

"Pay up, you ole skinflint!" roared Ginger.

"Knock his 'at off!" said Jimmy the Pincher.

"Stand back!" exclaimed Mr. Hacker. "I warn you— Oh! Goodness gracious! Oh!" His mortar-board flew off and sailed away in the quad.

There was a yell from the tuckshop! A good many eyes were watching from the boarded windows.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Hacker's scrap-ping with his tramps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Punch his nose!"

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

Hacker made a dive after his mortar-board! Fighting Fred let out a foot as he stooped and Mr. Hacker was caught bending.

He gave a startled yelp as he went over on his hands and knees.

"Oh! What— Ooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from the Greyfriars strikers.

"Go it!"

"Give him beans!"

"The beanfulness is terrific!" chortled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, as the mob of tramps surrounded Hacker.

The hapless master of the Shell scrambled to his feet, red with rage, to find himself in the midst of a circle of clutching hands. His scholastic gown was torn from his back in a moment. A heavy hand smote him on one ear, and he staggered—then a heavy hand smote him on the other ear and righted him again. Two or three boots landed on him, not gently.

"Oh! Ow! Help! Hands off!" gasped Hacker, reeling to and fro. "Ruffians—rascals—I will give you into custody—I will— Whoop-hoop!"

"You paying up?" roared Fighting Fred. He grasped Hacker by the back of the collar and shook him, rather like a terrier shaking a rat. "Now then, old bony—you paying up, like was agreed?"

"Urrrgh! Release me!"

"It him, Fred!" exclaimed Jimmy the Pincher. "Jest give him a oner in the weskit!"

"I'll 'it 'im fast enough, if he don't square!" exclaimed the indignant Fred.

"Welshing of a bloke, after a bloke's 'and 'as been 'ammered something crool, and a bloke's 'ead banged like a blooming banjo! Now, ole bag of bones—"

Mr. Hacker, with a terrific wrench, tore loose from Fighting Fred's grasp, leaving his collar in the bruiser's hand, and bolted.

Having woke up a hornets' nest in the Greyfriars Remove, Hacker had now woke up another hornets' nest in his gang of rowdies—and these hornets were much more dangerous than the rebel Removites.

Hacker ran for the House.

"Arter him!" roared Fred.

"Get 'old of him!" yelled Jimmy the Pincher.

And the whole crew rushed in pursuit of Mr. Hacker.

Hacker fairly flew.

What would have happened to him had those half-dozen exasperated ruffians got hold of him again did not bear thinking of. There was little doubt that Hacker would have been a serious hospital case.

His long, thin legs whisked, and his feet hardly seemed to touch the ground as he flew for the House. Luckily for him, he kept ahead of the chase.

He darted into the House and raced for his study. After him charged Fighting Fred & Co.

Hacker beat them by hardly more than a head. He whirled into his study, slammed the door, and locked it just in time. Hardly had the key turned, when Fighting Fred's hefty fist crashed on the door.

Mr. Hacker reeled against his study table, panting for breath. Outside the study, Fighting Fred & Co. roared and raged. In the Form-rooms, the Greyfriars fellows looked at one another, wondering what was up now. Hacker's study door shook and creaked and groaned under hammering fists. The uproar was heard all over Greyfriars.

Bang, bang, bang!

Thump, thump! Bang!

Undoubtedly, had the governing board of Greyfriars been able to look in at that moment they would have doubted their wisdom in appointing Horace Hacker to carry on in the place of the absent Head.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Exit Mr. Juggins!

"**H**A, ha, ha!" The Greyfriars strikers roared.

The sight of Mr. Hacker chased across the quadrangle by his own "army" made them roar and howl and yell. Evidently the schoolboy rebels had nothing more to fear from that army—though it seemed that Mr. Hacker had.

"Poor old Hacker!" gasped Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "If those sportsmen get hold of him we shan't have any more trouble with Hacker. They won't leave a lot of him lying about."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Old ass!" said the Bounder. "He fancies he can manage a school, and he can't even manage half a dozen tramps!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's one of them!" exclaimed Bob.

Hacker and his pursuers, having vanished into the House, were lost to sight from the school shop. But after a time Fighting Fred was seen to emerge from the House. He went along by the study windows, evidently in search of some particular window.

He stopped outside Hacker's. The





Mr. Juggins gave quite a jump as a ragged boot appeared dangling below the chimney. The next moment, the rest of Ike the Weasel appeared in view. Sooty and extremely unclean, the Weasel stared into the room. He gave quite a start at the sight of Juggins a prisoner in the armchair. "Strike me pink, if it ain't Albert!" he gasped.

window was high from the ground; but Fred, reaching up, knocked on a pane with his knuckles. There was a clatter of breaking glass.

"You ole bag of bones!" The school-boy strikers could hear Fred's angry roar. "There you are, are you? You paying a bloke?"

Hacker's face, white with rage and apprehension, appeared at the study window.

"Go away!" he shrieked. "You hear me? Go at once! I shall telephone for the police otherwise! Go!"

Crash, crash, crash!

Fred knocked in all the panes within his reach; then he jumped back, as Hacker's hand reached out. There was a poker in that hand—and Fighting Fred did not seem to like the look of the poker.

He tramped back to the door and disappeared into the House again. The schoolboy strikers howled.

"They've got Hacker in his study!" gasped Harry Wharton. "They're besieging Hacker, instead of us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess that guy has got left, a few!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish.

"I wonder what the Head would think if he dropped in now?" said Frank Nugent.

"I jolly well wish he would!" grinned the Bounder. "It would be the boot for Hacker!"

"The bootfulness would be terrific."

The juniors watched eagerly, but nothing more was seen of Fighting Fred & Co., who remained in the House. Once or twice they glimpsed Mr. Hacker at his smashed window and that was all. They wondered whether he had telephoned for police assistance—against his own army. Probably Hacker hesitated to take such a step.

A bell rang, and the Greyfriars fellows came pouring out.

Every fellow was laughing—except the Sixth Form prefects, who looked extremely grave and disturbed. Matters were really getting to a climax when the new headmaster was besieged in his own study by a mob of tramps he had called in to deal with a rebellious Form.

Hobson of the Shell came over to the tuckshop. There was nobody to stop him now; the prefects took no notice of him, and Hacker's army were quite otherwise engaged.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Hobby!" roared Bob Cherry. "What's the giddy news from the seat of war?"

Hobson chortled.

"I say, they've got Hacker in his study!" he gurgled. "I say, ain't it rich? Hacker's locked his door, and they're banging on it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"From what I've heard them saying, Hacker won't pay them unless they mop you fellows up," chortled Hobby, "and they won't go without being paid! They're turning the air blue in Masters' Passage!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hacker all over!" said the Bounder. "Obstinate old ass! Look here, we may as well let those two brutes out of the cellar and let them have a whack at Hacker; the more the merrier."

Lord Mauleverer nodded.

"Yaas," he said. "I don't think we've got any more trouble to come from that gang; Hacker's getting the trouble now. Hook them out."

A dozen fellows went down to the cellar to "hook" out Mr. Juggins and Ike the Weasel. There was a sound of thumping on the inner side of the cellar door. Albert and Ike had long been tired of their quarters. When the door

was opened they came out with a rush.

"Nar, then!" hissed Ike, as he jumped at Harry Wharton, who was nearest.

But in a moment the Famous Five grasped him and up-ended him. The Weasel yelled and struggled furiously.

Smithy, Redwing, and two or three other fellows collared Albert Juggins at the same time.

"Bring them along," grinned the Bounder.

"You let a bloke go!" howled Juggins. "Bust my buttons! Look 'ere, I says, let a bloke go!"

"You're going, old bean!" said Bob Cherry. "We're going to drop you out of a window—head first, so that you'll have something soft to fall on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In the grasp of many hands, the two tramps were hustled up the stairs to the front room. There, a board had already been hooked off a window to give them passage.

Juggins and Ike glared at the aperture.

"Where's the other coveys?" demanded Albert.

"Over in the House," said Lord Mauleverer. "You can go and join them as soon as you like."

"Give Hacker one in the eye for me!" said Vernon-Smith.

"And a thick ear for me!" grinned Bob.

"And keep clear of us after this, old bean!" said Mauleverer. "If we catch you again we'll jolly well wash you! So look out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Out you go!" said Johnny Bull.

Ike the Weasel plunged through the opening, clambered down, and dropped.

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(Continued from page 13.)

Albert Juggins hesitated; he was not so nimble as the Weasel.

"Look 'ere, a bloke can't git down that way!" he objected. "You hopen a door for a covey to walk out! See?"

"Sorry!" said Lord Mauleverer politely. "Can't be done! Just drop."

"I'm telling you—" snorted Albert.

"Your mistake; I'm telling you," said his lordship amiably. "You men help him through, if you don't mind touchin' him. He's not nice to touch, I know."

Albert gave his lordship a look.

"Wouldn't I like to meet you on a dark road at night, and a stick in me 'and!" he breathed.

"Very likely," assented Mauleverer.

"But at the moment, Mr. Juggins, would you mind gettin' out? Push him through!"

Willing hands pushed Mr. Juggins through. He had to go, and he went. He hung on to the window-sill with his hands. It was rather a long drop, and Albert—though he often had a drop too much—seemed to object to it.

"Look 'ere!" he gasped.

"Drop!" grinned Smithy.

"The dropfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed and unwashed Juggins!"

"I tell yer—" gasped Juggins.

"Hand me that hammer!" said the Bounder. "I fancy he will drop all right, when I rap him on the knuckles!"

"Ow!" gasped Albert.

He dropped, without waiting for the hammer to rap on his knuckles. He bumped on the ground, rolled over, and sat up spluttering.

"Oooogh! Strike me pink! Ow!"

Smithy leaned out, and whizzed a piece of coal. It landed on Mr. Juggins' broken nose as he sat and spluttered.

"Goal!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Juggins gave a roar, and bounded to his feet. Like the Weasel was already streaking for the House to join his friends there; and Mr. Juggins followed him fast. An empty tomato tin, rapping on the back of his head as he went, accelerated his departure.

"Glad we're done with that crew," remarked Lord Mauleverer. "And I shouldn't wonder if Hacker's gladder by the time he's done, too."

"The gladfulness will probably be terrific," chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur.

The schoolboy strikers were done with Juggins & Co. But Horace Hacker was far from done with them yet. Hacker was rather in the position of the ancient magician, who called spirits from the vasty deep who, instead of serving him, turned on him and rent him. There was no doubt that Horace Hacker would be as glad as the schoolboy strikers to see the last of Juggins & Co.

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## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Painful for Prout!

**T**HUMP! Bang! "Come out of it!" roared Fighting Fred. "You ole bag of bones, you 'ear me?"

Mr. Hacker heard—as all Greyfriars did. Fighting Fred's roar woke all the echoes.

Hacker did not come out. He did not unlock his door. He stood at his telephone, with his hand on the receiver.

But he had not rung up the police station at Courtfield yet. Calling in the police to deal with the mob of tramps whom he had himself brought into the school was a very last resource. It would make the matter the talk of Courtfield, and of the whole neighbourhood.

Publicity in such a matter did not appeal to Mr. Hacker. He did not want to spread the news of his extraordinary methods as headmaster of Greyfriars.

Thump! Bang! came again at his study door.

Juggins and Ike had joined the rest now, and the whole gang were in Masters' Passage. All of them were fed-up with Greyfriars, and the schoolboy strikers—Juggins and Ike most of all. They were ready to go—anxious to go, in fact—but not without the promised "quids." Hacker, obstinate as ever, was not going to pay money for nothing. Juggins & Co. were not going unpaid. So the row went on.

Bang! Thump! Crash!

"You ole bony sketch, you!" shouted Albert Juggins. "You pay a bloke, like was agreed, and let a bloke mizzle. You 'ear that?"

Thump! Bang!

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, rolled along from his study. This sort of thing was, as Prout had told Mr. Capper and Mr. Wiggins, unprecedented and unparalleled, and it was also growing intolerable. Portly and majestic, Prout rolled up to the angry gang, and raised a plump hand in command.

"Cease this riot immediately!" he ordered.

They glared round at him.

Prout was majestic and impressive. But he did not seem to impress Juggins & Co. very much. They eyed him rather like wolves.

"Oo's that old codger?" asked Ginger.

"Fat Jack of the Bone'ouse!" said Jimmy the Pincher.

Prout purpled with wrath.

"No insolence!" he rapped. "I command you to cease this riot, and leave these premises! Go!"

"Ain't we ready to go, soon's we're paid?" roared Fighting Fred. "You give that bony old covey the tip to square afore we has this 'ere door in."

"It 'im in the heye!" said Ginger.

"Pray allow me to speak to Mr. Hacker!" said Prout. "No doubt the matter can be arranged. Allow me to pass."

Juggins & Co. made room for him to approach Hacker's door. The Fifth Form-master tapped thereon.

"Mr. Hacker!" he called out.

"Kindly do not interfere here, Mr. Prout!" came back Hacker's snapping voice. "Your intervention, sir, is entirely uncalled for."

"Is this riot in the House to continue?" boomed Prout. "These men, sir, claim to be paid for their services—services, sir, which no master in this

school should have called upon them to perform. Will you pay them and let them go?"

"I will not, Mr. Prout! And I refuse to allow you to intervene! Kindly remember that I am headmaster here, and that the power of dismissal is in my hands! Go away and mind your own affairs!"

"I will not permit this disgraceful scene to continue, sir!" boomed Prout.

"Another word, Mr. Prout, and you are dismissed from your post here!" roared Mr. Hacker.

"Nonsense!" boomed Prout.

"What—what did you say?"

"I said nonsense, Mr. Hacker!" howled Prout. "If you are headmaster here, sir, take this matter in hand yourself, otherwise I shall do so!"

"You are dismissed, Mr. Prout!"

"Rubbish!" snorted Prout.

He turned to the waiting tramps.

"You have heard what Mr. Hacker has said!" he boomed. "You cannot remain here. You must leave this House immediately!"

"I don't think!" jeered Ike the Weasel.

"Not arf!" agreed Ginger.

"I order you—" boomed Prout.

"Oh, shut up, you fat ole hass!" interrupted Fighting Fred rudely. "Look 'ere! You git out, afore you're 'urt! Push him along, mateys!"

A dozen grubby hands pushed Mr. Prout along. In a rather bewildered state, spluttering with wrath, the Fifth Form-master was hustled along the passage.

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Prout. "Upon my word! Hands off! Do not dare to touch me! If you lay a hand on me, I will—Ooogh! Rascal! Wooogh!"

A shove from Albert Juggins sent Mr. Prout staggering.

He rallied, and landed a plump fist on Albert's broken nose. Prout's idea was to knock the impudent rascal down—as he deserved. But the impudent rascal did not go down under Prout's punch. He staggered for a moment; then he hurled himself at Prout, hitting out.

"Oooooogh!" gurgled Prout.

He crumpled up.

There was a heavy bump as Prout's weight hit the floor. He rolled at the corner of Masters' Passage, gurgling for breath. A crowd of fellows were gathered at that corner, staring.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter. Bunter seemed amused.

"Oooooogh!" gasped Mr. Prout. "Oh! Ow! Oooooogh!" He rolled and spluttered helplessly.

"Here, you let my beak alone!" roared Coker of the Fifth.

Valiantly Coker rushed to the rescue. Coker did not think much of Prout, personally. Still, he was Coker's beak—a poor thing, but his own, as it were. Coker was not going to see him handled by a rowdy mob.

Coker had a hefty punch. It landed on Juggins' stubby chin, and sent him spinning backwards.

The next moment Coker was spinning as Ike and Ginger and Jimmy the Pincher started on him. Blundell and Fitzgerald, Potter and Greene, and two or three other Fifth Form men, rushed to his aid. For two or three minutes there was a wild and whirling combat.

Prout staggered to his feet and tottered away. Mr. Capper gave him a helping hand.

"Ooogh!" mumbled Prout, as he went. "Groogh! Oooooogh!"

Coker & Co. were driven off. They



were good fighting men, but no match for Mr. Hacker's "army." Severely damaged all round, they retreated, and Juggins & Co. tramped back to Mr. Hacker's door.

On that door Juggins banged with a heavy fist.

"You hopening this 'ere door, ole bag of bones?" he roared.

"Leave this House at once!" came Hacker's splutter from within. "If you remain until the police arrive, you will be given into custody."

"Blow me pink!" said Ginger. "We don't want to be 'ere when the coppers come, mateys. I've 'ad trouble with coppers afore!"

"Nor we don't!" agreed Albert. "But we ain't going till that ole sketch has squared! Bust in that there door!"

"Get 'old of something," said Fighting Fred, "and bust it in! And when I get at 'im, I'll knock his teeth through the back of his 'ead!"

Albert Juggins went into the next study and emerged with a table-leg wrenched off a study table.

"Stand clear, mateys!" he said.

They stood clear while Albert wielded the table-leg on the lock.

Crash! Bang! Crash! Bang!

Mr. Hacker lifted the receiver from the telephone. There was nothing else for it now.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Pay Up!

**W**INGATE of the Sixth left his friends in the quad and walked across to Mr. Hacker's window.

Nearly every pane in that window was broken. From within floated the din of the crashing at the door. Mr. Hacker was standing at the telephone, just lifting the receiver, as the captain of Greyfriars looked in.

"Mr. Hacker!" rapped Wingate.

Hacker paused, and glanced round.

"This has got to stop!" said Wingate. "From what I hear, these men want to be paid before they will go. Pay them, and let them go."

"Silence, Wingate! Are you venturing to dictate to your headmaster?" snarled Hacker.

"Oh, don't talk rot!" snapped Wingate.

"What—what?"

"There's been enough of this!" exclaimed the Greyfriars captain. "You've got to put a stop to it! Haven't you any sense?"

Mr. Hacker glared at him from the window.

"Another word, Wingate, and you are expelled!" he hooted.

"Oh, don't be a fool!" snapped Wingate—which was quite new language from a Sixth Form man to a member of the staff.

Wingate was at the end of his patience.

"You are expelled!" shrieked Mr. Hacker.

"Rubbish!"

"You—you—" stuttered Mr. Hacker.

Crash!

The lock went, and the door flew open. Albert Juggins & Co. swarmed into the study.

The receiver dropped from Horace Hacker's hand, and hung at the end of its cord as his "army" swarmed round him.

"Stand back!" gasped Mr. Hacker. "You—if you dare—Oh! Ah! Ooooh—"

Hands grasped him on all sides.

"Nar, then—" roared Fighting Fred.

"Gotcher!" hissed Albert.

"Scrag 'im!" yelled Ike.

"Bung 'im in the heyl!" bawled Jimmy the Pincher.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wingate, staring in at the window.

A crowd gathered behind him, staring.

"Oh! Ow! Ooogh! Help!" spluttered Mr. Hacker. "Goodness gracious! Hands off! Yaaaaaogh! Wretches! Rascals! Ruffians!"

"You paying hup?" roared Fred.

"Knock his 'ead orf!"

"Jump on 'im!"

"Bung 'im on the beezer!"

Hacker, struggling wildly in the grasp of his own army, hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels.

His collar and tie came off; his coat was split up the back; a red trickle ran from his nose. He gasped and panted and spluttered frantically.

"You paying hup?" bawled Fighting Fred again.

And he drew back a leg-of-mutton fist, to crash on Hacker's nose if the answer was in the negative.

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Certainly!" gasped Mr. Hacker. Even the obstinate Hacker was at the end of his tether now. "I—I— Yes! Oh, certainly! Ooogh!"

"Pay up and look pleasant, old covey!" grinned Albert Juggins. "Ain't we been 'ere for days, scrapping with them young blokes? And ain't we earned the money? You ole welsher, you!"

"Release me!" gasped Mr. Hacker. "I—I—I will—will certainly pay you, if—if you will leave these premises immediately!"

"And it out!" growled Fighting Fred. "Jest 'and it out, and not so much of your jore!"

"Shell out, you ole sketch!" said Ginger.

Mr. Hacker was released. He cast a glance at the door, and another at the window. But there was no escape for Hacker. Juggins & Co. surrounded him, and Fighting Fred made a significant gesture with his brawny fist. There was no help for it, and Mr. Hacker produced a notecase, and counted out pound notes.

"Now—now go!" he gasped.

Hacker did not like giving in, and he did not like parting with money; but all his desires now were concentrated on seeing the last of his army.

"We're going!" growled Fighting Fred. "And thank your blinking stars that I don't knock your teeth through the back of your 'ead before I go!"

"Go!" gasped Hacker. "Go at once!"

Albert Juggins & Co. crowded out of the study.

Mr. Hacker leaned on the table and pumped in breath.

He looked a dishevelled and dilapidated object. The fellows looking in from the quad chuckled.

"Looks like a headmaster, don't he?" grinned Coker of the Fifth.

"More like one of his own tramps!" chuckled Hilton.

Hacker, gasping, turned to the window. He could not deal with the tramps, and he could not deal with the Remove; but he could deal with the Fifth—at least, he fancied he could.

"Coker!" he gasped. "Hilton! Take a thousand lines!"

"Thanks!" said Hilton, with a cool, impertinent drawl.

"Rats!" said Coker.

"Did—did—did you say rats, Coker?" stuttered Hacker.

"Yes, I jolly well did!" retorted Coker. "I'll jolly well say it again, too! Rats!"

"Come to my study at once, Coker! I shall cane you!"

"Rot!" said Coker.

"Carne!" Hacker spotted his pet prefect in the crowd outside his study window. "Carne! Bring Coker to me at once!"

Carne of the Sixth looked very doubtful.

Coker gave him a belligerent glare.

"Go it!" he jeered. "You take me in to Hacker, if you can!"

"Wingate, give Carne your assistance!" hooted Mr. Hacker.

The Greyfriars captain looked at him.

"I shall do nothing of the kind!" he answered distinctly.

And he turned on his heel and walked away.

"Walker! Loder! Gwynne!"

The three prefects named walked off after Wingate.

Hacker, torn and dusty and dishevelled, glaring from the broken window, did not look much like a headmaster, and even the Sixth Form prefects had ceased to treat him as one. They walked away, unheeding.

"Carne!" roared Mr. Hacker.

Arthur Carne stepped up to Coker of the Fifth.

The next moment he wished that he hadn't. Coker's hefty fist lashed out, and Carne went headlong, sprawling on his back in the quad.

In normal circumstances, even the reckless Coker would have thought twice, if not three or four times, before knocking down a Sixth Form prefect. But authority was going to the winds now at Greyfriars School. Coker punched Carne of the Sixth as cheerfully as he would have punched a Fifth Form man.

"Now get up and have another!" roared Coker.

Carne of the Sixth got up, but he did not stop for another. He tottered away, with his hand to a streaming nose.

From the House doorway came Albert Juggins & Co., departing. They slouched away down to the gates, a crowd watching them as they went. From the distant school shop came a roar from the schoolboy strikers.

"Good-bye, Juggins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Call again when you want some more, Juggins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Albert shook a knuckly fist at the school shop and slouched on after his friends.

Gosling made haste to shut the gate after them when they were outside. Everybody at Greyfriars was glad to see them go, and gladdest of all, perhaps, was Mr. Hacker, who had called them in.

Mr. Hacker, for the next hour or so, was busy repairing damages. Meanwhile, the school was in an uproar.

Coker of the Fifth was booked for a caning, and he loudly announced his intention of knocking Hacker down if Hacker attempted to administer the same. Wingate of the Sixth was "sacked"—if Hacker was still to be regarded as one having authority. Prout was dismissed—if Hacker's word was worth anything.

Prout, in Common-room, told the other beaks that he had not the slightest intention of taking any notice of what he described as Hacker's impudence. The other beaks gave him unanimous support.

Wingate told the other prefects, in the prefects' room, that Hacker's gas



was not worth bothering about, and the other prefects agreed that it wasn't. Coker seemed rather keen for Hacker to get on with that caning, being more than ready to carry out his announced intention of knocking Hacker down if he did.

With the Remove in rebellion, and the rest of the school on the verge of it, the new headmaster had enough trouble on hand. And even upon Hacker's obstinate mind it dawned that he had, perhaps, asked for rather more than he could handle.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Coker Keeps His Word!

**"M**R. PROUT!"  
"Mr. Hacker!"  
"What are you doing here, sir?"

"I am taking my Form, sir, as usual!" boomed Prout.

It was morning and the Greyfriars fellows had gone into the Form-rooms. Overnight there had been a great deal of excitement and speculation as to what Hacker was going to do next. Hacker had, so far, done nothing next!

He had said no word to Wingate of the Sixth, who was still at Greyfriars, hardly knowing whether he was sacked or not. He had not sent for Coker, who had had no opportunity of showing all whom it might concern that he really meant to knock down Hacker if he started in with the cane. He had not asked Hilton of the Fifth for his lines; which he certainly would not have received had he asked for them. Neither had he spoken a word to Mr. Prout.

Hacker, perhaps, had been a little dismayed and uncertain, after the disturbing, extraordinary, and uproarious happenings of the previous day. Now, however, he was his old self once more—cool, calm, acid, bitter. And he was beginning on Prout.

Leaving his own Form, Mr. Hacker walked along to the Fifth Form Room, where the Fifth were at their desks—and Prout, getting into his stride, regardless of the fact that the temporary headmaster of Greyfriars had dismissed him from his post.

The Fifth Form sat up and took notice, as it were, when Hacker walked in, and the backchat began.

"Asking for it!" Coker murmured to Potter and Greene, and they grinned and nodded.

"Hacker wants more!" remarked Blundell, the captain of the Fifth. "He hasn't enough on hand with the Remove—he wants the Fifth to kick, too! By gum, if it wasn't beneath the dignity of a senior Form, we'd kick fast enough!"

"Might, anyhow, if he gets cheeky here!" said Fitzgerald.

"Listen to the old ass!" said Coker.

Mr. Hacker and Mr. Prout were facing one another in the middle of the Fifth Form Room, the Fifth sitting and watching. Really, it was rather like a stage performance between two comedians, with the Fifth Form as the audience. The Fifth were prepared to enjoy the show. The most studious fellow in the Form agreed that this was better than Latin.

Heedless of the grinning faces and murmuring voices in the Fifth, Hacker fixed the portly Prout with his cold, acid eye.

"You have not a good memory, I think, Mr. Prout!" said Hacker, with the cold sarcasm that made the Shell fellows loathe him in his own Form.

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"My memory, sir, serves me quite well!" yapped Prout.

"Apparently not," said Mr. Hacker, "for you appear to have forgotten that you are dismissed from your post here, and no longer entitled to enter this Form-room. I must remind you of it, Mr. Prout."

Prout's plump face reddened.

He had told all the other beaks, in Common-room, that he was going to treat that dismissal with the contempt it deserved. He was going to pass Hacker by, like the idle wind which he regarded not.

It was rather a delicate matter, for there was no doubt that Hacker represented constituted authority, acting in the place of the absent Head. But Prout had made up his portly mind, and he could be obstinate, as well as Hacker.

He waved a portly hand at Hacker, as if waving him out of the Form-room, like a troublesome bluebottle.

"You need remind me of nothing, Mr. Hacker!" boomed Prout. "As you choose to discuss this matter, with your usual want of tact, in the presence of the boys, I will tell you plainly that I regard your dismissal of me, sir, with scorn! With contempt, sir!" added Prout. "To make it quite clear—with utter contempt and scorn."

"I must remind you that I am headmaster here now, Mr. Prout!" said Hacker, in his coldest and bitterest tone.

"A jack-in-office, sir!" boomed Prout. "Mr. Vernon-Smith, the father of one of the Remove boys whom you have driven into resistance, applied that epithet to you, sir, when he was here a few days ago—and I repeat it, sir! Jack-in-office!" boomed Prout. "Do you hear me, sir? Jack-in-office!"

"Hear, hear!" murmured Coker.

Hacker compressed his thin lips in a tight line.

"Do you dispute the authority of the governing board?" he snapped.

"No, sir," said Prout; "but before I accept dismissal from a post I have long held at this ancient foundation, I shall place the matter before my chief—Dr. Locke, sir, when he returns. From you, sir, I will hear nothing!"

"I shall insist, Mr. Prout! I have dismissed you, and you will not be permitted to remain here, where you are an intruder!"

"Nonsense!" roared Prout. "Leave this Form-room, Mr. Hacker! You are interrupting class with this idle talk!"

"Are you leaving, or not, Mr. Prout?"

"Not!" hooted Prout. "Not, sir, at the orders of a dozen such puppies as yourself, Mr. Hacker!"

"You will be removed from this building in that case!" said Mr. Hacker. "I shall not hesitate to exercise my authority, and probably you will prefer not to leave with a police-constable's hand on your shoulder."

Prout almost gurgled.

He gazed speechlessly at the new headmaster of Greyfriars. The Fifth Formers exchanged glances.

"We shall have Prout putting up a stay-in strike, like the Remove!" murmured Cedric Hilton. "What a game!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the seniors, quite taken by storm at the idea of the portly and pompous Prout following the example of the Lower Fourth.

Mr. Prout stared round.

"Silence!" he rapped. "Silence in the Form! Mr. Hacker, I refuse to answer you, or to take any notice of

your ridiculous threat! Leave this Form-room!"

Coker jumped up.

"Shall we chuck him out, sir?" he asked eagerly.

"What—what? Do not make such absurd suggestions, Coker! Mr. Hacker, will you have the kindness to return to your own Form-room? I repeat that you are interrupting class."

"You will not be permitted to carry on here, Mr. Prout. I shall send a prefect to take charge of this Form until I can make other arrangements," said Mr. Hacker. "I order you, sir, to go!"

"And I refuse!" boomed Prout. "Perhaps, sir, you would like to call in a mob of tramps from the roads and hedges, to deal with me?"

The seniors chortled. Whatever Hacker did, he was not likely to call in Juggins & Co. again. He had had more than enough of that kind of assistance.

"I shall call in an officer of the law, and order him to remove you, if you are not gone by this evening!" said Mr. Hacker. "In the meantime, I shall make arrangements to carry on your work here, Coker!"

He stepped to Prout's desk, and picked up a cane.

That cane, in the Fifth Form Room, was merely a symbol of authority. It was never used. Fifth Form men were not caned.

But it looked as if Hacker was bent on making history in that Form-room. He turned towards the staring Form, swishing the cane.

"Hallo!" said Coker carelessly. He did not feel any respect for Hacker, and was not going to pretend that he did.

Prout gazed on, spellbound. He was resolved to disregard Hacker's temporary authority; but he could not prevent Hacker from carrying on in his Form-room, without actually grabbing him, and pitching him out on his neck. That was a drastic measure for which Prout was hardly prepared.

"Stand out, Coker!" said Hacker.

"Stand out?" repeated Coker.

"Yes, and at once!"

"I'll stand out if my Form-master orders me to do so!" answered Coker, disdainfully. "Not otherwise!"

"I order you, Coker, as your headmaster!"

"Bosh!" said Coker. And there was a chuckle in the Fifth.

Fifth Form men at Greyfriars seldom saw eye to eye with the great Coker. But they were quite at one with him now. Every man in the Fifth was ready to testify unto Hacker that he couldn't throw his weight about in that Form-room.

"Mr. Hacker!" gasped Prout, finding his voice.

"Be silent, please!" said Mr. Hacker coldly. "I require no remarks from a master whom I have dismissed."

"Oh, chuck it!" said Coker.

"Will you stand out before the Form at once, Coker?"

"No!" said Coker. "I jolly well won't! Not till Mr. Prout tells me to! Am I to stand out, sir?" he added, addressing Prout.

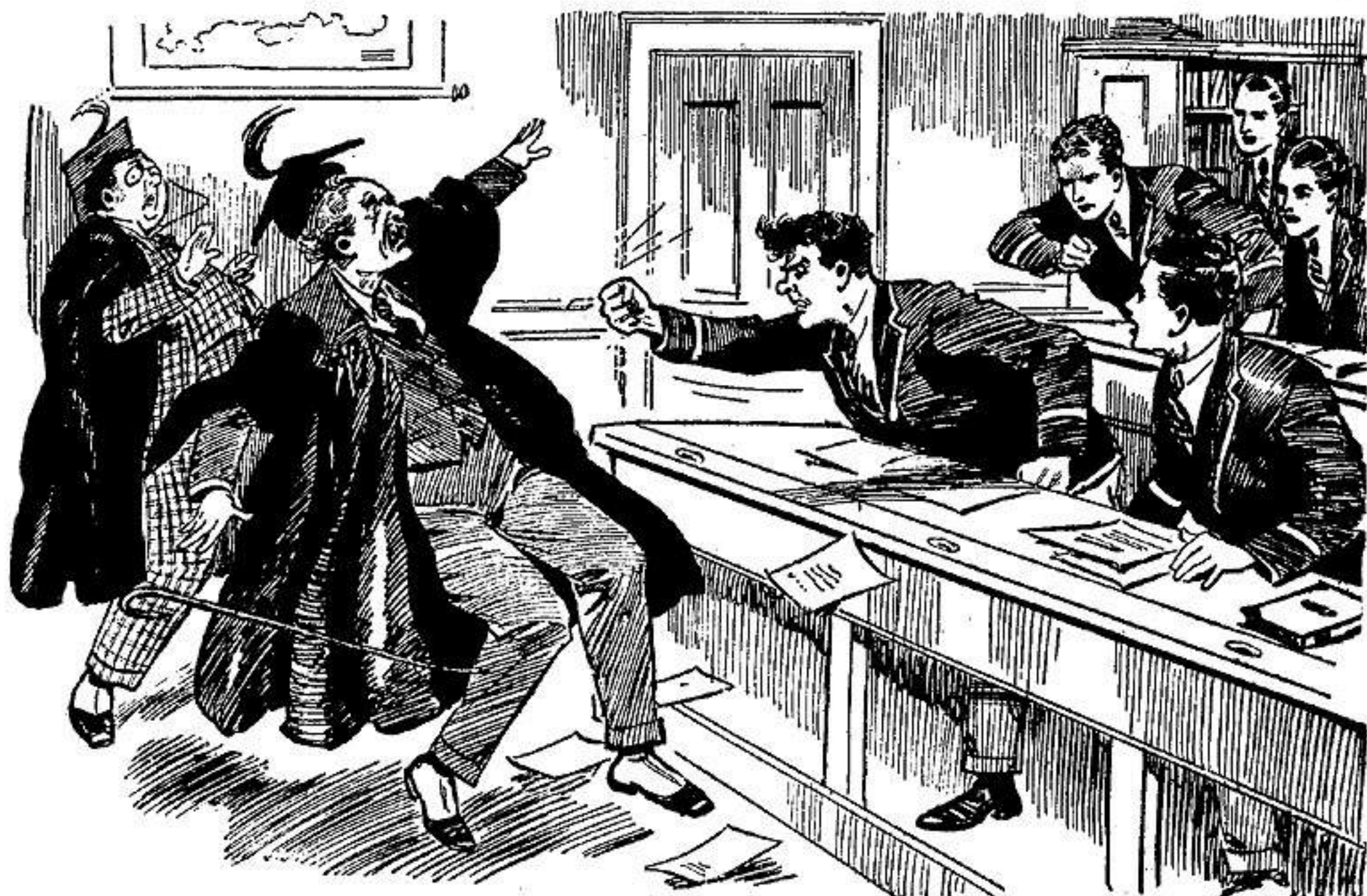
"No!" boomed Prout. "Certainly not, Coker! I forbid you, or any boy here, to obey a single order from Mr. Hacker!"

"That does it!" said Coker. "You'd better get out, Hacker! You're not wanted here! Do you fancy you can rag senior men, as you do the kids in the Shell? Go to bed and dream again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker, evidently, was not going to





Before Hacker's cane could descend a second time, Horace Coker reached across his desk and hit out. A punch that was rather like the kick of a mule landed on Hacker's chest. Biff! "Oh!" gasped the temporary headmaster, tottering. "Want some more?" bawled Coker. "There's plenty more on tap, if you want it!"

step out for a whopping! But if the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet could go to the mountain.

Mr. Hacker, gripping the cane, strode at Coker.

That hefty youth glared defiance at him. The Fifth Formers gazed on breathlessly. Coker had said, not once, but many times, that he would knock Hacker down if he started in with the cane. The hour was at hand!

"Bend over that desk!" rapped Hacker.

"Shan't!" retorted Coker.

Swish! Whop!

Up went the cane, and down it came on Coker's broad shoulders. It was a terrific whop, and it rang like a rifle shot. Following it came a terrific roar from Coker. Coker was hurt.

"Yoo-hoo!" roared Coker.

"Now—" said Mr. Hacker.

He got no further.

Coker was a man of his word! What he had said, he had said! And what he had said, he now did!

Reaching across the desk at Hacker, Coker hit out! A punch that was rather like the kick of a mule landed on Hacker's chest.

He went over backwards.

Bump!

He sat down.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Hacker.

"Man down!" roared Fitzgerald

"Good old Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker pranced out from his desk. He pranced round Hacker as he sat and spluttered, and almost gibbered.

"Is that enough for you?" bawled Coker. "Want some more? More on tap if you want it! By gum, for two pins I'd take that cane away from you, and lay it round your coat-tails!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Fifth.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Prout. "Coker, go back to your place! Boys,

be silent, please be silent! Mr. Hacker, you had better go!"

Horace Hacker staggered to his feet. His cold eyes glinted at Coker. But he did not raise the cane again. One punch with Coker's weight behind it was enough for Hacker.

"Coker!" he gasped. "You are expelled!"

"Rats!" retorted Coker.

"You will leave Greyfriars to-day—"

"Pack it up!" said Coker.

"You will do nothing of the kind, Coker!" said Mr. Prout. "Mr. Hacker, I insist upon your leaving this Form-room. I disdain, sir, to enter into a scuffle with you, but I cannot and will not permit you to continue this—this disturbance. If you do not immediately take your departure, sir, I shall request my boys to—to assist you from the room."

"We're ready, sir!" exclaimed Blundell, jumping up.

"Yes, rather!" grinned Potter.

"Go it!" yelled Greene.

A dozen hefty seniors crowded out of their places, without waiting for Prout to make his request. A hint was enough for them.

Hacker, surrounded by grinning Fifth Formers, was hustled to the door, and hustled out. A bump was heard in the passage. Then the door slammed on him.

Mr. Prout, with a heightened colour, proceeded to carry on in the Fifth Form Room. The Fifth gave him their most particular attention, with the greatest respect. Being Fifth Formers and seniors, and great men generally, they wanted to make it quite clear that they weren't an unruly mob of fags like the Remove, absolutely nothing of the sort. They were ready, however, to act just like Removites if Hacker came back again. Luckily, Hacker didn't.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Butts!

"I SAY, you fellows, that old goat, Hacker is kicking up a shindy in the Fifth!"

Billy Bunter made that remark in the Shell Form Room.

He made it as Mr. Hacker opened the door.

Which was just like Bunter!

The Shell were all in their places, listening. They had heard a row from the direction of the Fifth Form Room, and hoped to hear some more. But they did not leave their places. Hacker had a soft and stealthy step, and if he came back and found a fellow out of his place, he was only too likely to make that fellow pay scot and lot for all the offences given by all the offenders in the school.

Bunter was with the Shell. The flesh-pots of Egypt still held the fat Owl of the Remove back from rejoining the rebels. In every class with Mr. Hacker, Bunter made up his fat mind to escape at the first opportunity and rejoin the strikers, but with every meal-time, he unmade it again. So Billy Bunter was still there.

Hacker being busy in the Fifth, was late for his own Form that morning, which was a relief to every fellow there, especially Bunter. Bunter hoped that he would remain busy in the Fifth.

Alas for Bunter! Mr. Hacker's activities in Prout's Form-room had been cut suddenly short, and he had returned—at an unlucky moment for the fat Owl—in the worst temper ever.

Bunter's remark greeted his ears as he opened the door and stepped in. Everybody saw him but Bunter!

"I say, I hope they're jolly well mobbing him!" went on Bunter. "I wonder THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,514.



if Coker's knocked him down as he said he would! He, he, he!"

"Shut up, you fat ass!" breathed Hobson.

"Quiet, fathead!" hissed Stewart.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!" Billy Bunter blinked round, his horrified eyes almost popping through his spectacles at Mr. Hacker.

"Oh lor'!"

"Stand out before the Form, Bunter."

"Oh crumbs!"

Bunter was no Coker. He rolled out at Mr. Hacker's order. Hacker picked up a cane from the desk, a cane which, unlike that in the Fifth Form Room, had a lot of exercise! The fat Owl eyed him rather like a fat rabbit fascinated by a serpent.

"I—I—I say, sir," gasped Bunter.

"I—I wasn't calling you a—a—a goat, sir! I—I was speaking of another old goat, sir——"

"Bend over that desk, Bunter!"

"Oh scissors!"

A fat figure bent over the desk. Hacker's eyes glinted, they almost gloated.

Bitter tempered as he was, Mr. Hacker would not have punished any fellow without what seemed to him, at least, just cause. But the fat Owl had certainly given him cause! Even a good-tempered master might have been annoyed by hearing himself described as an old goat! Hacker did not realise that he was glad to take it out of a member of that unruly Form, the Remove; though that was, as a matter of fact, the case. Bunter was going to get what he would have liked to hand out to all the strikers.

Whack!

"Phew!" murmured Hobson, as the cane came down on Bunter's tight trousers.

It was a fearful whop!

The yell that came from Bunter would have done credit to a Red Indian on the warpath. It rang and echoed far and wide. Hacker, perhaps unconsciously, was putting uncommon beef into it.

Bunter had been whopped before, often; though not as often as he had deserved. Mr. Quelch had no light hand with a cane. But the Remove master, in his sternest mood, had never inflicted such a whop as that. And there were more to come.

Up went the cane again.

Bunter bounded.

Flesh and blood could not stand it! One whop like that was more than enough for Bunter! Without even stopping to think, he leaped!

The cane swept down.

It missed Bunter by a foot as he bounded clear, passed on its way, and landed on Hacker's own calf!

Then it was Mr. Hacker's turn to yell and bound.

No doubt, at that moment, he wished that he had not put quite so much force into the swipe. The cane fairly crashed on his leg, and he gave a yell of anguish.

"Oh!" roared Mr. Hacker. "Ow! Oooooogh!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Hobson.

The Shell fellows dared not laugh. But it was hard to resist. Hacker, hopping wildly on one leg, clasped the other with both hands, and bellowed.

Bunter dodged round the master's desk.

He blinked back at Mr. Hacker in horror. What was going to happen to him after that did not bear thinking of. Grub or no grub, rations or no rations,

Billy Bunter would have given all the postal orders he had ever expected to have been safe back in the strikers' stronghold at that awful moment!

"Ow! Oh! Ooogh!" spluttered Mr. Hacker. "Oh! Ah! Ow! Wooo-hooooop!"

The Shell fellows suppressed their merriment with great difficulty. Mr. Hacker ceased to do his song and dance, and set his damaged leg down. He winced with pain as he did so. He limped as he started after Bunter.

"I—I say, sir——" gasped Bunter.

"Come here!" hissed Mr. Hacker.

"I—I say—— Oh crikey!" Bunter dodged round the master's desk, with Hacker after him.

He cut across the Form-room.

"Stop!" roared Mr. Hacker, charging in pursuit with brandished cane.

Bunter was not likely to stop.

He tore on round the desks. A lick from the cane, that just reached him, spurred him on.

Right round the desks they went, and then round the master's desk again, as if playing the game of the mulberry-bush! Then the hapless Owl was cornered, in a corner of the Form-room, and Hacker closed in on him.

Bunter backed into the corner, like a frightened rabbit, eyeing the master of the Shell in terror. Mr. Hacker stretched out his hand to grasp a fat shoulder and hook Bunter out.

Hardly knowing what he did in his terror, the fat Owl lowered his fat head and butted.

Right on Mr. Hacker's waistcoat came the bullet head of the fat junior. It smote like a battering-ram.

Mr. Hacker gave one hideous gurgle and folded up like a pocket-knife. Every ounce of wind was driven out of him. The long, thin figure collapsed, doubled up—and Hacker sat down on the floor of his own Form-room, with a bump, pressing both hands to the spot where he had lately packed his breakfast, and groaning and gurgling horribly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a howl from the Shell.

They could not help it.

"Urrrrrgh!" came from Mr. Hacker.

Billy Bunter reeled from the shock. He gave the winded, gurgling Form-master one terrified blink and bounded for the door. The Form-room door opened and closed again with a slam—and long before Mr. Hacker recovered his wind and tottered to his feet, William George Bunter had vanished into space.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Putting Paid to Popper!

**B** UZZZZZ!

"Oh!" gasped Billy Bunter.

He shook a fat fist at the headmaster's telephone.

It was just Bunter's luck!

Bunter was in the Head's study. While Dr. Locke was away from the school, that study was unoccupied, Mr. Hacker still occupying his old quarters while he carried on as headmaster. So the fat Owl of the Remove, hunting for a hiding-place, dodged into that empty study, shut the door, and locked it.

He hoped that he was safe there. If that beast Hacker set the prefects looking for him, and they came in that direction, they would find the door locked, and—Bunter hoped—pass on. It was a respite, at least.

Bunter wanted time to think. The strikers' stronghold was his only refuge from Hacker. But there was a shortage

of grub there. So the situation bristled with difficulties.

What he was going to do, the fat Owl did not know yet. The most pressing matter was to keep out of Hacker's clutches, at the moment. And he had hardly locked the study door when the telephone-bell rang.

Some silly ass who did not know that the Head was away, was ringing him up, Bunter supposed. He rushed across to the phone.

He clutched off the receiver in time to stop a second raucous buzz. If that buzz drew attention to the Head's study, Bunter's number was up.

A deep, barking voice came through:

"Mr Hacker! Is that Mr. Hacker?"

The silly ass, apparently, was ringing up Hacker. Hacker had a phone in his own study. This ass had got the wrong number, Bunter concluded.

"Eh? Are you there?" came the bark.

"Wrong number!" gasped Bunter.

"Eh, what? Isn't that Greyfriars School?"

"Oh, no! This—this is Chunkley's Stores!" gasped Bunter—and he shut off, hoping that the man on the wire would be satisfied with that.

Bunter had recognised that deep bark. It was the voice of Sir Hilton Popper, of Popper Court. It was a governor of the school who had rung up.

It dawned on Bunter now why Sir Hilton Popper had rung up on the Head's phone. As a governor of Greyfriars, he knew that Hacker was temporary headmaster, and perhaps took it for granted that he was using the Head's study. Anyhow, he knew the Head's number, and did not know Hacker's.

Buzzzz!

Bunter's relief lasted a minute. Then the bell rang again. He grabbed the receiver at the first hoot.

"Hallo,!" he gasped.

"Is that Greyfriars School?" came the bark of Sir Hilton Popper.

"Oh, no! This is—this Courtfield Picture Palace."

"Good gad! Am I never to get the right number?" growled Sir Hilton, at the other end. "Good gad! I will write to the Postmaster-General—I will not tolerate this carelessness—this inefficiency! Do we pay taxes to have the Public Services run in this disgraceful manner? Ring off, please!"

Bunter grinned a breathless grin and replaced the receiver. He hoped that the lord of Popper Court was done with this time!

There was no sound in the corridor without. If he was being searched for, the searchers were not coming that way. But he had to keep that telephone-bell quiet. If it went on, somebody would hear it and arrive.

Buzzzzz!

"Beast!" hissed Bunter.

He grabbed the receiver again.

"Is that Greyfriars School?" It was Sir Hilton Popper again. "Mr. Hacker—is that Mr. Hacker?"

"No!" yelled Bunter. "Wrong number!"

"What—what? Who is speaking?"

"Inspector Grimes!" gasped Bunter.

"They've put you on to the police station."

"Good gad! This inefficiency—this blundering—this gross carelessness—Good gad, I have never heard of such a thing, even on a telephone exchange, before! Gross carelessness—laziness—inefficiency—burrh!"

Bunter jammed down the receiver. Sir Hilton Popper, in the library at



Popper Court, was snorting with rage. Three times he had—as he supposed—been given the wrong number! It was rather a record, even for a Telephone Department run by a Government!

"Beast!" murmured Bunter. Three times he had barred-off Sir Hilton. It might really have occurred to Billy Bunter's fat brain that Sir Hilton, supposing that he had got wrong numbers, would keep on till he got the right one. But Billy Bunter's podgy intellect moved in its own mysterious way, its wonders to perform. He hoped that he was done with old Popper now.

Buzz!

"Oh, you beast!" hissed Bunter, as he made another grab at the telephone. "Hallo! Are you there?" came Sir Hilton Popper's bark. "Is that Greyfriars School? What?"

Billy Bunter was about to reply that it was the railway station, when he paused. Even Bunter realised, by this time, that the old baronet was not to be got rid of permanently in that manner.

He decided to take the call and "stuff" Sir Hilton somehow. That ought to put paid to him.

"Oh, yes!" he snorted. "Greyfriars School? Good! I have been given three wrong numbers in succession!" snorted Sir Hilton, at the other end. "Is that Mr. Hacker speaking?"

"Oh, yes!" Having decided to take the call, Bunter had to go the whole hog, as it were.

"Oh, good-morning, Mr. Hacker! You would hardly believe that I have been on this telephone a quarter of an hour, getting through to a place a few miles away! Wrong number after wrong number, by gad! They take a quarter of our income in taxes, and this is what they give us for it, by gad! Huh!"

Bunter grinned. "Well, thank goodness, I am through at last!" grunted Sir Hilton Popper. "I believe I have met you, Mr. Hacker—some time ago, what, what?"

Evidently Sir Hilton was not well acquainted with the master of the Shell.

"Oh, no!" "What?"

"I—I mean, yes!" stammered Bunter.

Bunter did not mind what he said, so long as he kept the lord of Popper Court quiet.

"I think so!" snapped Sir Hilton. "Anyhow, I shall meet you to-day, Mr. Hacker. It is a dashed bore, as I am a busy man, but I shall have to find time to come across. What is all this trouble at the school?"

"Oh!" breathed Bunter.

Sir Hilton, it seemed, had learned that there was trouble going on at Greyfriars.

He was the only governor of the school who resided anywhere near the spot, Popper Court being only a few miles away; and Mr. Hacker had, as a matter of fact, been extremely uneasy lest some rumour might reach his ears and bring him along to the school.

"What—what?" went on Sir Hilton. "I have had a letter from the chairman of the governing board, Mr. Hacker. He tells me that Mr. Vernon-Smith, the father of some boy in a junior Form—has called on him—Are you there?"

"Oh, yes!" "This man Smith—I mean, Vernon-Smith—some City man, I fancy—"

Sir Hilton gave a grunt as he said that. City men were miles, if not leagues, beneath the notice of the lord of a thousand mortgaged acres. "Some—some stockbroker, or—or shopkeeper, or somethin'. Well, this man Smith—that is, Vernon-Smith—has made some extraordinary statement about some

sort of riot going on in the school, and asked—indeed, I gather that he has demanded—that the governors take it up. Do you hear me?"

"Oh, yes!" "I have been asked, as I reside in the neighbourhood, to pay a visit to (Continued on next page.)

# The STately HOMES of GREYFRIARS

## MOOR FELL

By  
The Greyfriars Rhymester



(1)  
Ee, lad, he's fra Yorkshire, ahr Johnny!  
A right proper Yorkshireman, too;  
Says nowt, but tak's care o' his monny,  
Hissen, he is sturdy and true!  
A hard-bitten lad of West Riding,  
Where Bull & Co.'s factories stand,  
He'll give any rascal a hiding,  
And give any comrade a hand!

Johnny Bull comes fra York-  
shire, and he's proud of it, too.  
Read what our clever Grey-  
friars Rhymester has to say  
about his home where the  
great West Riding factories  
flourish.

(2)  
His father, to business devoted,  
Has made the firm's much-honoured  
name,  
For woollens and worsteds they're noted,  
Their goods have won very great fame;  
Their mills are all busy preparing  
The cloth-lengths of fine-staple wool,  
Why, even the suit you are wearing  
May possibly come from John Bull!

(3)  
Away on the edge of the city,  
There lie the great moors, bleak and  
bare;  
Above the smoke choking and gritty,  
They lie in the cold mountain air;  
And there with the larks and the curlews,  
With bogs and black rocks all around,  
Alone in those solitary purlieus,  
Moor Fell, Johnny's home, may be  
found.

(4)  
A grim-looking house, dark and fearful,  
It matches the mountains and moors.  
But Johnny soon makes the place cheerful  
The moment he enters its doors!  
He whistles in light-hearted fashion,  
While great winds are raging outside  
And tearing the house in a passion  
To see their keen fury defied.

(5)  
I once stayed with Johnny: Oh, luvvus!  
I don't think I'll try it again!  
With peaks looming darkly above us,  
And gales howling, sprinkled with rain,  
He made me set out on a journey  
To climb up a rock like a wall!  
And when I desired to return, he  
Just answered: "Rats! Mind you  
don't fall!"

(6)  
He led me down frightful abysses  
On purpose to put me to death,  
And wriggled on sheer precipices  
Without ever stopping for breath!  
The last one we tried was appalling,  
I think it was Mount Everest,  
I shut my eyes, felt myself falling,  
And shouted: "No flowers by  
request!"

(7)  
Of course, Johnny loves mountaineering,  
He's tried it full many a time,  
It thrills him to know he is nearing  
The end of a dangerous climb.  
Up high Pennine peaks he has scrambled,  
He takes a good climb as a gift.  
But I've had enough when I've ambled  
Upstairs without using the lift!

NEXT WEEK: THE PALACE OF BHANIPUR Hurree Singh's home  
in India.



the school, and look into the matter, Mr. Hacker. Kindly tell me what it all means. What is the trouble? The governors select you, sir, to carry on, in Dr. Locke's place. A simple matter, I should have supposed. What?"

"Oh! Yes!"

"Well, what is going on?" rapped Sir Hilton. "According to this man Smith—I mean Vernon-Smith—there is some sort of a rebellion, or somethin', which Smith fancies is due to your mismanagement, sir. Can you explain it? There was nothin' of this kind under Dr. Locke. What does it mean?"

Sir Hilton paused for a reply.

Bunter paused also. Billy Bunter's only object was to get Sir Hilton Popper off the phone. Anything else did not matter. So the only question was, what could he say that would have the effect of shutting him off?

"What—what?" The old baronet was barking again. "Are you there? Do you hear me, Mr. Hacker? What? I am waiting, sir! I think I have mentioned that I am a busy man! What?"

"Oh, shut up!" said Bunter.

"What?"

"Don't bother!"

"Mr. Hacker!"

"Old ass!" said Bunter.

"Are you mad?" came a gasping voice from the telephone. "Are you out of your senses, Mr. Hacker? Are you aware, sir, that you are speaking to a governor of the school? Have you been drinking, sir?"

"Shut it!" said Bunter.

"Sir!"

"You talk too much."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Gabbling old ass!"

"Good gad! The man is mad! Good gad! Mr. Hacker—Hacker—" spluttered Sir Hilton. "What do you mean? What?"

"Mind your own business, you old fathead!" said Bunter. "Shut up! Don't worry! Gabbling old gander!"

There was a sort of choking gurgle on the wires. Sir Hilton Popper rang off. Bunter, with a fat grin, replaced the receiver. He had got rid of Sir Hilton Popper, at all events.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### No Exit!

**F**ISHER T. FISH eyed the rather sparse dinner-table with a jaundiced eye.

Fisher T. Fish was feeling fed up—metaphorically, of course. Since the Greyfriars strikers had gone on rations, nobody was able to feel literally fed up. There was enough to go round, on short commons. That was all. And Fisher T. Fish had declared—not once, but many times—that it got his goat.

Skinner and Snoop were thinking of following Bunter's example, if an opportunity offered. Fishy was determined on it. The fact that the strikers could only hope to pull through by sticking together did not cut much ice with Fishy. Seven members of the Form were under sentence of expulsion, and could only avoid that sad fate by beating Hacker in this tussle. But Fisher T. Fish guessed, reckoned, and calculated, that he wasn't worrying a whole lot about lame ducks. The guys could take what was coming to them. Fishy figured.

His bony face grew grimmer as a moderate portion of corned beef was put on his plate. He mentally compared it with the ample dinner that would be served in Hall, over the way.

Fishy was not so keen on provender as Billy Bunter, but he liked enough. And

there was another consideration that appealed to Fishy very strongly.

The food at the school was paid for. If it was left uneaten it was throwing away money. Over in Hall, there was a solid, satisfying meal, for which Mr. Hiram K. Fish had paid, in his son's school fees. It was a loss of actual cash not to eat it. Any fellow who was indifferent to the loss of cash was, in Fishy's opinion, a prize jay, a pesky bonehead and a boob from Boobsville.

Fisher T. Fish could have lost his dearest friend or his nearest relative, and borne it with fortitude. But losing money was quite another matter. That was the sort of thing that hit an American citizen right where he lived!

"I guess I've had enough of this!" growled Fisher T. Fish.

Lord Mauleverer glanced at him.

"You've had enough?" he asked.

"Yep," said Fisher T. Fish emphatically, "and then some."

"Right! Take that away, Smithy!" said his lordship, pointing, with a fork, to Fishy's as yet untouched plate. "Mustn't waste grub when a man's had enough!"

The Bouncer, with a grin, lifted Fishy's portion back to the dish.

Fisher T. Fish eyed that proceeding in surprise and wrath.

"Say, what's this game?" he demanded. "You figure that I ain't going to have any eats?"

"Didn't you say you'd had enough?" asked Lord Mauleverer mildly.

"You boneheaded jay, I didn't mean that I didn't want any eats!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "I guess you're wise to that, you boob!"

Lord Mauleverer nodded cheerily.

"Yaas," he agreed, "but what you have said, you have said, dear man. You said you'd had enough, and that goes."

"Hear, hear!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific!" chortled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I guess I'm going to have some eats!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish.

"Guess again!" grinned Frank Nugent. "Mauly's in command here, Fishy!"

"Yaas," assented his lordship placidly. "Take it out in grousing, Fishy! You said plainly that you'd had enough—"

"I didn't mean eats!" yelled Fishy.

"Never mind what you meant. Shut up!"

Fisher T. Fish glared. The strikers' dinner was sparse, but, such as it was, Fishy wanted it. And he was not going to have it—as a tip not to grouse. That was Mauly's idea. Grousing was no use to fellows who had to hold out in a fight to a finish.

"Look yere—" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"Shut up, Fishy!"

Fisher T. Fish reached across the table to help himself.

Bob Cherry promptly rapped a bony paw with a knife-handle.

Crack!

"Yarrroop!" howled Fishy. The bony paw popped back, and Fisher T. Fish sucked his knuckles and howled. "Wow!"

"Nothing for you, Fishy!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You said you'd had enough of this—"

"I guess—"

"Shut up, Fishy!"

"I reckon—" howled Fisher T. Fish.

"Shy something at him, you fellows!" said Lord Mauleverer.

Two or three fellows obliged. Fisher T. Fish retreated from the table. Like Bunter before him, Fisher T. Fish had

been taken at his word, though not in the way he intended. Lord Mauleverer was developing into a strict disciplinarian. There was no tiffin for Fishy.

Fisher T. Fish wandered about like an unquiet ghost, while the other fellows were finishing dinner. If he had been doubtful before, his mind was made up now. He was going!

He stopped at the little window in the passage, by which Billy Bunter had made his first attempt to escape. The bony Fishy was not likely to stick in transit, as Bunter had done. The removal of one board would have been enough.

He glanced round cautiously—to see the Bouncer grinning at him from the end of the passage.

Fishy breathed hard and deep. The Bouncer was keeping an eye on him. With a casual air he lounged away and went into Mrs. Mumble's little back parlour.

A few minutes later Smithy glanced in, to behold Fisher T. Fish sprawling in the armchair there. His bony jaws were twitching like a rabbit's, which revealed the fact that he was masticating chewing-gun. The Bouncer grinned, and left him to it.

Fisher T. Fish scowled. Breaking a way through the barricades to escape from the building was impossible, with wary eyes and ears about. Neither was it likely that Fishy would be able to sneak off at night, as Bunter had done; the garrison were on the alert for deserters now. But an idea was germinating in Fishy's keen Transatlantic brain. His sharp eyes were fixed on the wide, old-fashioned chimney in that parlour.

That was the way Ike the Weasel had got in. Where one guy had got in, Fishy guessed that another guy could get out.

It was not a nice way—it was sooty and disagreeable. Ike had looked far from pleasant after his travels down that chimney. But it was a case of any port in a storm.

Once on the roof a guy could clamber down, or let himself down on a rope. Fishy resolved to try it on. He slipped into the shop and secured a coil of rope and stepped softly back into the parlour.

He could not close the door to screen his movements. The doors had been taken off their hinges, to be built into the barricades. But there was no eye on him at the moment.

After a stealthy glance round, Fisher T. Fish stepped under the wide old chimney, reached up, and began to climb.

The old climbing-irons were there, but it was densely dark in the interior of the chimney, and they had to be groped for. Groping for them disturbed quite a lot of ancient soot, which settled on Fisher T. Fish and filled his hair, his ears, and his nose, and drifted into his mouth when he opened it. Soot smothered Fisher T. Fish like a garment, and dropped down the chimney round him into the old hearth below.

It was not nice! It was nasty! It was horrible! But Fisher T. Fish was for it now, and he groped, and gargled, and gasped, and clambered on.

Higher and higher he went, sootier and sootier. He expected to glimpse the sky at the top of the chimney as he clambered higher and higher. But all was densely dark.

Fisher T. Fish discovered the reason suddenly, as his bony head bumped on something above him.

Bump!





"Go!" roared Hacker. "I will remove you with my own hands! Go!" "Good gad! Yurrrrooop! Urrgh!" spluttered Sir Hilton Popper. Mr. Hacker, too enraged to think or care about considerations of prudence, grasped the bony old baronet and whirled him away towards his car. "Two to one on Hacker!" chortled Vernon-Smith from the window of the rebels' stronghold.

"Aw! Wakes snakes!" gasped Fishy.

He held on to an iron with one hand and groped over his head with the other. His bony fingers passed over the rough surface of a sack. That sack was crammed with various things—lumps of coal, half-bricks, odds and ends of various kinds, to distend it to the fullest extent. And it had—evidently—been crammed into the chimney from above and rammed well down.

"Carry me home to die!" groaned Fisher T. Fish.

Fisher T. Fish took no interest whatever in the defensive measures of the garrison, of which he was an unwilling member. He rather wished now that he had been a little more interested. After the exploit of Ike the Weasel, one of the juniors had gone out by the trapdoor in the roof, and blocked the chimney from above, to prevent any repetition of that exploit. Fisher T. Fish now made the disagreeable and dismaying discovery of that defensive measure.

He groped, and grabbed, and jerked at the stuffed sack. But it was jammed hard and fast, and he could not shift it an inch.

"Aw, search me!" moaned Fishy. "If this ain't the bee's knee, and then some! I'll tell a man, this is the elephant's side-whiskers! Oh, gee-whizz!"

He was quite near the top! But there was no exit!

Fishy's feelings were too deep for words! There were no words in the American language, or any other, that could have done justice to them!

He had to clamber down again—and the state he was in would reveal to every eye in the garrison what he had been up to! He had the ragging of

his life to expect. There was, perhaps, a remote chance that he might be able to emerge, and dodge away, and get himself cleaned before he was spotted. Fisher T. Fish banked on that chance, as he began, slowly and sadly, to descend the chimney he had climbed with so much effort!

## THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Fierce for Fishy!

"SEEN Fishy?"

"No. Bother Fishy!"

The voices in the little back parlour floated up to the American junior in the chimney.

Fisher T. Fish ceased his descent. Herbert Vernon-Smith and Bob Cherry were below. Another minute, and Fisher's skinny legs would have swung down into their view. Fishy tucked up those skinny legs in time.

He jammed himself in the chimney and waited for them to go. The juniors never used that little room, which had no fire in it, and was half-filled by the barricade stacked at the window. So Fishy wondered what the John James Brown they wanted there now—at such an inopportune moment for himself.

It was fearfully annoying. It got Fishy's goat. He wanted to keep his attempted escape a secret—to avoid a ragging, and to get another chance later. Revealing himself smothered with soot was to give the whole thing away. So he clung to the iron in the old brickwork, and breathed soot, and waited for the guys to absquatulate.

"But, I say, I saw him here ten minutes ago!" said the Bounder's voice. He was in the parlour, Bob looking in at the doorway.

"Well, you don't want Fishy, I suppose?" said Bob, puzzled. "How could anybody want Fishy? Want to hear him talking about dollars and cents?"

Herbert Vernon-Smith grinned. He was looking at a little heap of soot in the hearth; and he had heard faint sounds from the interior of the old chimney. He put one finger to his lips—and with the other hand pointed to the telltale signs in the hearth.

Bob Cherry stared for a moment, and then grinned. He understood. The Bounder went on, in a loud voice:

"Well, I'd like to know where he is! I fancy he's trying to get away! If we catch him at it, we'll make an example of him."

Bob Cherry chuckled. Aware now that Fisher T. Fish had climbed the chimney, and aware also that the American junior could not possibly get out at the top, Bob entered cheerily into the Bounder's game.

"Yes, rather!" he said. "If Fishy's trying to get away, we'll jolly well make an example of him, as a warning to the other slackers. Bunter had six—we'll give Fishy two dozen with a fives bat!"

"And lock him in the coal-cellar!" said the Bounder. "Say, a couple of days in the coal-cellar, without grub—"

"Good!"

"That will teach him not to try to desert. Better look round and see if you can spot him. He was here ten minutes ago, but he's gone now."

"I'll pass the word along," said Bob. "If he's caught trying to get out of a window, he's for it!"

Fisher T. Fish, in the chimney, heard Bob's heavy footsteps tramp away. He hoped to hear the Bounder follow. But Smithy remained in the



parlour. The hapless Fishy waited for him to go. But he waited in vain.

After what he had heard—which he did not guess that he had been intended to hear—Fishy was less willing than ever to reveal himself.

Two dozen from a fives bat was not pleasant—and a couple of days in the coal-cellar, without grub, was an awful prospect!

It was not nice in the chimney; but wild horses would hardly have dragged Fisher T. Fish out into view. He was going to stick there, if it lasted for hours, till he had a chance of dodging out unseen and cleaning off the soot.

He wondered if that bonehead, that pesky galoot, that mugwump, would ever go. But Smithy did not go.

There was a sound of voices again—voices and footsteps! Five or six Removites had come into the little parlour.

Fisher T. Fish suppressed a groan. That little room, which the fellows hardly ever entered, seemed to have become a meeting-place all of a sudden. It was cruel luck—it was, indeed, the elephant's side-whiskers, and then some. Sticking in the chimney, breathing soot, Fisher T. Fish waited in anguish for the galoots to beat it. Instead of the galoots beating it, they were joined by other fellows who came in. It was sure fierce!

Fishy cou' hear, but he was unable to see into the room below. So he was happily unaware that all the fellows there were grinning at one another, enjoying the joke. Bob had passed the word along that Fishy was parked in the parlour chimney; hence the gathering.

"Nobody seen Fishy?" came Lord Mauleverer's voice.

"Seems to have disappeared!" said Harry Wharton.

"The disappearfulness is terrific!"

"Well, he can't have got away!" remarked Peter Todd. "I've been round the whole place, and there's nothing open."

"Might have tried his luck up a chimney?" suggested Bob.

Fisher T. Fish trembled as he heard

that. If they looked up the chimney and spotted him—

But Lord Mauleverer's next words relieved him.

"Well, there's only one chimney here that a fellow could climb—the one in this room—and that's blocked at the top, you know. Fishy can't have got out that way. He's about somewhere."

"Sitting in some corner, counting his money, perhaps!" suggested Johnny Bull. "That's Fishy's usual game."

"Well, if he's trying to get away, he's got to be caught!" said Mauleverer. "There's two or three slackers who would like to sneak off—and we've got to be a bit severe, to set an example. It will save the grub, too, if we put a man on punishment diet for a few days—say, three or four—"

"But where is he?"

"Must be somewhere!" said Mauleverer. "I say, it's a bit parky here. What about lighting a fire in this room?"

Fisher T. Fish almost let go his hold and dropped, as he heard that suggestion.

A fire lighted on the hearth below him, filling the chimney with smoke, would have been the last drop in his cup of misfortunes, altogether too fierce!

"Can't light a fire here, Mauly, with the chimney plugged up above," said Harry Wharton. "We should get all the smoke."

"Oh, I dare say there's room for the smoke to get out," said Mauleverer. "Just a spot of fire, what?"

"Oh, all right!"

Fisher T. Fish groaned aloud.

Looking down, he saw a little heap of firewood thrown into the grate, over a torn newspaper.

It was really extraordinary that any guy could be such a bonehead, as to think of lighting a fire under a blocked chimney. But that, it seemed, was what those pesky jays were going to do.

"Got a match?" asked Bob Cherry's voice.

"Here you are!"

Scratch!

Fisher T. Fish, staring down in horror, saw a lighted match approaching the heap of fuel below him. Another moment, and there would be a flare of flame and a rolling volume of smoke!

That did it! Fisher T. Fish was anxious to keep out of sight, but he was not anxious to be smoke-cured like bacon! He gave a frantic yell.

"Let up, you galoots! Jerusalem cricket! Let up, I'm telling you!"

Fisher T. Fish dropped.

He landed on the heap of fuel, scattering it right and left. He plunged headlong out of the chimney.

There was a roar of laughter as he appeared. Smothered with soot from head to foot, Fisher T. Fish was hardly recognisable. He looked like a chimney sweep—only more so!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is that Fishy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What were you doing up the chimney, Fishy?"

"Urrrgh!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, gouging soot. "Urrgh! I—I guess I—I—wurrgh—ooch—atchoo—aytishoo—chooo—oooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish gave the yelling juniors a sooty glare.

He could see that his sudden appearance from the chimney had not surprised them. It dawned upon him that they had known that he was there—and that the fire-lighting was only a little joke on him. He glared and spluttered.

"Urrgh! You pesky boneheads, you was wise to it that I was there!" he gasped. "You all-fired mugwumps—urrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I—Groooooogh!"

"You're not nice to touch, Fishy!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "You'll have to get a wash before you can have a batting! Go and wash yourself!"

"Look yere—"

"Kick him!"

Fisher T. Fish fled from the room in a cloud of soot. A howl of laughter followed him.

For the next hour Fisher T. Fish was busy cleaning off soot. By that time he was clean enough to touch—and the fives bat was featured in the next scene. He was not, after all, locked in the coal-cellar; but the fives bat was laid on with great energy; after which, Fisher T. Fish moaned, and mumbled, and groaned, and gave up the idea of deserting. He was keener than ever to get away; but it was likely to be a long time before he made another attempt.

## THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.]

### A Hot Chase!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter!" A dozen fellows stared down at the fat figure. Billy Bunter blinked up through his big spectacles. Then he blinked round over a fat shoulder in the direction of the House. Bunter, evidently, was in a state of trepidation.

"I say, you fellows, let me in!" he squeaked. "I say, Carne may be after me any minute! Or Hacker! I say, I—I've come back."

Billy Bunter had been driven to his last resource.

At dinner-time he dared not enter Hall. Hacker was there. Even the lure of food could not draw Bunter into Hacker's presence after what had happened in the Shell Form-room that morning. He had remained hidden in

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the Head's deserted study till the dinner-bell rang.

That sound, generally like the music of the spheres to Bunter, brought no joy to him now. It did not spell dinner to Bunter. Bunter was, of course, fearfully hungry. He had had only one breakfast that morning.

He had not dared to emerge till all the school was at dinner. Then he had emerged; and here he was. Having waited and watched for an opportunity he had cut across the quad to the school shop—to join up once more. Rations were awful—but better than nothing—half a loaf was better than no bread! He blinked up appealingly at the grinning faces at the windows above.

"Let me in, you fellows!" he squeaked. "Hacker may be after me any minute! I say, you fellows, I—I wasn't going to let you down, you know! I—I never meant to—to desert, of course! I—I—"

"That little note you left for us was only a joke, what?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes, old chap! Exactly! You can take a joke, old fellow! I say, come down and let me in! I say, I've had a fearful row with Hacker! He heard me call him an old goat—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He pitched into me!" gasped Bunter. "And I butted him in the bread-basket—"

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

"I can't go in to dinner, you know! I'm awfully hungry! That isn't why I've come back, of course!" added Bunter hastily. "I've come back to back you up and—and stick to you, you know."

"You mean, stick to the grub?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, do let a fellow in! After all I've done for you, you know! I say, Hacker may spot me any minute! I believe they've finished dinner—"

"Look out!" yelled the Bounder. "Here comes Hacker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hook it, Bunter!"

"Put it on!"

Billy Bunter blinked round in terrified alarm.

From the distant House a long, thin figure came striding. Probably Bunter had not been so unnoticed as he had supposed when he broke cover. Anyhow, here was Mr. Hacker, heading for him with long strides.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Whether the Greyfriars strikers would have taken the repentant Owl back into the fold was a question which did not need an answer. After one blink at Mr. Hacker, Bunter bolted.

Even the pressing necessity of food was forgotten at the sight of Hacker's grim face.

"Bunter!" roared Mr. Hacker. "Stop!"

Bunter flew.

From the windows the Remove strikers watched him in great entertainment. The way of the transgressor was hard; and Billy Bunter did not seem to have derived much benefit from his desertion of the rebels. He cut across the quad as fast as his fat little legs could go.

"Go it, Bunter!" roared Bob.

"Sprint, old fat man!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Put it on, porpoise!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter's fat little legs went like machinery. But they had no chance against Mr. Hacker's long, thin ones.

Hacker gained on him hand-over-fist.

His extended hand was almost on the fat Owl's shoulder when Billy Bunter dodged round an elm and Hacker, fortunately, stumbled over a projecting root.

Bump!

Bunter flew back towards the school shop, while Hacker sat on the quad and yelped. But he was up again in a few moments; and racing after Bunter with an expression on his face that promised a hectic time for Bunter when he was captured.

Billy Bunter reached the shop and blinked round, breathless. Hacker was only three yards behind.

"Ow!" gasped the hapless Owl.

He did not stop. He flew on. After him flew Hacker.

Capture would have been certain the next moment. But the chase had drawn Hacker within range of the school shop windows. The Bounder weighed in at once with an empty tomato-tin, which caught Hacker on his left ear.

Mr. Hacker staggered and lost his stride. As he staggered, a lump of coal crashed in his neck and a bundle of firewood caught him behind the ear. Hacker went over sprawling.

Missiles rained on him as he sprawled.

"Hook it, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

It was a respite for the fat Owl. He flew off, heading for the House now, in the hope of finding a lair to hide in.

Mr. Hacker scrambled to his feet, gave the faces at the window a glare of fury, and raced away after Bunter. Three or four missiles dropped behind him as he sprinted. The Greyfriars strikers watched the chase with keen interest. Bunter had a good start—but Hacker was gaining fast.

From the direction of the gates a motor-car turned in and moved up the drive to the House. But in the excitement of the moment nobody noticed the car, or the stiff, white-moustached gentleman sitting like a ramrod in it. Least of all did Bunter as he streaked for the House—or Mr. Hacker, as he streaked after the fleeing Owl.

Billy Bunter had nearly reached the steps of the House when a long arm behind him reached out and a bony hand clutched.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

He was grabbed and caught! The bony fingers fastened on the fat shoulder like a vice. Bunter was in Hacker's grip.

"Now, you young rascal—" panted Mr. Hacker.

"Ow! Leggo! Wow!" yelled Bunter. "Oh crikey! Help! Rescue! Beast! Yow-ow-ow!"

"You will come to my study immediately, Bunter!" roared Mr. Hacker. "I shall cane you with such severity that—"

"Yaroooooh! Leggo!" shrieked Bunter.

He wriggled and struggled wildly as the master of the Shell hooked him up the steps.

The car came to a halt, the door flew open, and an angular gentleman with a mastiff-face jumped out.

"What is this?" Sir Hilton Popper barked. "Is that Mr. Hacker? Good gad! Sir! Are you Mr. Hacker? What—what?"

Mr. Hacker jumped almost clear of the steps. He spun round and stared blankly at the lord of Popper Court.

His grasp dropped from Bunter's fat shoulder as he stared at Sir Hilton Popper in astonishment and dismay.

The very last person Mr. Hacker desired to see at Greyfriars, in the present state of affairs, was a governor of the school. Knowing nothing of the

telephone-call Bunter had answered that morning in the Head's study, he had not expected to see Sir Hilton Popper—had not, indeed, given a thought to the existence of that important gentleman. He blinked at him.

Bunter, the moment he was released, did not lose his chance. He bolted into the House like a fat rabbit into a burrow, and disappeared.

But Mr. Hacker did not heed him. He stood petrified, staring at Sir Hilton Popper. It was a most unfortunate moment for a governor of Greyfriars to drop in—catching Mr. Hacker in the very act of dragging a junior bodily into the House. Unfortunate, that is, for Horace Hacker! It had been rather fortunate for William George Bunter!

"Sus-sus-sus-Sir Hilton Popper!" stuttered Mr. Hacker.

"Yes, sir!" roared Sir Hilton. "And what do I find here, sir? What is your explanation of this, sir? What—what?"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, staring from the window over the tuckshop. "That's old Popper! A jolly old governor! Your pater's set the governors on the trail, Smithy, as he said he would."

The Bounder grinned.

"This is the finish for Hacker!" he declared.

And, judging by the expression they could read on the mastiff-face of the lord of Popper Court, the schoolboy strikers rather fancied that the Bounder was right!

## THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

### Unpleasant for Hacker!

SIR HILTON POPPER screwed his eyeglass a little more tightly into his fierce old eye, and glared at Mr. Hacker.

He had arrived at the school in an angry mood—which was not surprising after the talk he had had on the telephone that morning with—as he supposed—Mr. Hacker.

Ever since that talk on the phone, Sir Hilton had been fuming. He had cut his lunch short, and motored over to the school to see this man Hacker—this dashed usher, as the lordly old baronet regarded him—who had dared to be insolent on the telephone. And he had arrived in a sulphurous state, to behold Mr. Hacker yanking a yelling fat junior along by the shoulder—such a sight as was seldom, or never, witnessed at Greyfriars School. It was no wonder that Sir Hilton Popper glared. Indeed, it was rather surprising that he had not brought a riding-crop with him, to deal with the man who had called him fancy names on the phone.

"Now, sir," hooted Sir Hilton, his fiery old eye gleaming through his eyeglass—"now, sir—"

"Pip—pip—pray step into the House, Sir Hilton!" stammered Mr. Hacker. He was taken quite aback, and almost overwhelmed with dismay and confusion.

Everything that Hacker did was right in Hacker's eyes. But even Hacker could not help feeling that it was unfortunate that the old baronet had barged in to see him dragging Bunter about. That was not the sort of thing that headmasters did, as Hacker had to admit.

On the other hand, he was deeply thankful that Sir Hilton's call had not been paid twenty-four hours earlier, while Fighting Fred & Co. were on the scene. It would have been disastrous had Sir Hilton Popper beheld Albert



Juggins, Fighting Fred, Jimmy the Pincher, and the rest, on the warpath at Greyfriars. It was bad enough as it was.

So far from stepping into the House at Mr. Hacker's invitation, the lord of Popper Court simply snorted. Hacker was anxious to get him out of sight, and to hold this unpleasant interview in private. The Greyfriars fellows were coming out after dinner, and gathering to look on—and across at the barricaded school shop, the windows were packed with faces. But Sir Hilton Popper had not come there for a quiet chat with Mr. Hacker. He had come rather like a lion seeking what he might devour.

"Pray, Sir Hilton—" gasped Hacker.

Snort!

"No, sir!" hooted Sir Hilton. "I understand that a rebellion is going on here—that some boys are barricaded in some building—what—what? Take me to the spot at once! I must look into this. Your own fault, I have no doubt."

"Really, Sir Hilton—"

"I repeat, sir, that I have not the slightest doubt that you are wholly and solely to blame!" roared Sir Hilton Popper.

Mr. Hacker blinked at him. Fifty or sixty fellows exchanged glances, and grinned.

"The old bean's going strong!" murmured Hobson of the Shell.

"He's jolly well right!" declared Coker of the Fifth. "Looks as if he's come here to comb Hacker's hair for him. I jolly well hope he has!"

"Will you step into my study, Sir Hilton Popper?" exclaimed Mr. Hacker. His own temper was rising.

"No, sir; I will not step into your study!" snorted Sir Hilton Popper. "I have no desire for further conversation with you, Mr. Hacker, after the sample I had this morning!"

"This morning!" stuttered Hacker. "What do you mean, please? I have not seen you this morning, sir!"

"I am aware of that, sir! You know perfectly well what I mean! You have not forgotten your own insolence, I presume?"

"I—I fail to understand—"

"No doubt!" hooted Sir Hilton. "You fail to understand how this school should be managed, sir, in the absence of the headmaster; and I have no doubt that you fail to understand anything else. I will hold no talk with you, sir—none! I shall take this matter into my own hands!"

Mr. Hacker compressed his lips.

He was prepared to admit that the state of affairs looked rather unusual and unfortunate; but he could not understand why Sir Hilton Popper took it for granted, in this way, that he was to blame. He was unaware that Sir Hilton had been called an old ass and a gabbling gander, on the telephone, and supposed that those compliments had come from Mr. Hacker. Sir Hilton had been told to shut up and mind his own business—after which he was not likely to believe anything in favour of Hacker. A man who was capable of telling Sir Hilton Popper, of Popper Court, to shut up, was capable of anything.

But Hacker had a temper, and it was rising fast. He wanted to stand well with the governing board, and with Sir Hilton as a member thereof. But he was not going to be bully-ragged, even by a governor.

"If you will let me speak, sir—" he hooted.

Sir Hilton waved a large hand at him.

"You need say nothing, Mr. Hacker! I repeat that I have heard enough from you! If you venture, in my actual presence, to repeat the abusive epithets you applied to me on the telephone, I shall very soon stop you, by Jove!"

"On the—the tut-tut-telephone!" stammered Mr. Hacker.

"Yes, sir; on the telephone this morning! Insolence, by gad! Mind my own business, by Jove. A governor of the school—"

"Hacker's been slanging the old bean on the phone!" breathed Stewart of the Shell. "Oh, my hat!"

"There is some mistake, sir!" stammered Mr. Hacker. "If you will step into my study—"

"I will do nothing of the kind!"

"This scene, sir—before a crowd of boys, Sir Hilton—"

"This scene is of your making, Mr. Hacker. No governor of the school was called upon to intervene when Dr. Locke was here! Cannot you manage schoolboys, sir? Why did you accept an appointment you were incapable of dealing with? What—what?" hooted Sir Hilton. "I decline conversation with you, Mr. Hacker, after your dashed insolence on the telephone this morning—"

"I did not speak to you on the telephone this morning!" shrieked Mr. Hacker. "There is some mistake—"

"Nonsense! Is your name Hacker or not?"

"Yes; my name is Hacker—"

"Then you are the man I talked with on the telephone! There are not two Mr. Hackers here, I presume?"

"No, certainly not; but—"

"Enough! You had the insolence to—"

"I have not been on the telephone this morning at all, sir!" roared Mr. Hacker. "I have not spoken to you this term! You must have been given a wrong number!"

"I was given three wrong numbers before I got through to you, Mr. Hacker. That is immaterial. I spoke to you—"

"You did not—"

"And you answered me with outrageous insolence, sir! I desire to hear no more of it! I refuse to hear any more of it!"

"I repeat that I did not—"

"And I repeat that you did, Mr. Hacker, and I will not listen to prevarication!" roared Sir Hilton Popper. "No doubt you regret having displayed such insolence to a governor of Greyfriars—but it is too late, sir! Prevarication will not serve you!"

"Sir Hilton Popper—"

"Enough! Say no more! Where are these boys who are in a state of rebellion? I demand to be taken to them at once! I shall take this matter into my own hands, regardless of you, sir!"

Mr. Hacker's eyes blazed. He was quite as angry as Sir Hilton now. He was, after all, headmaster by appointment of the governing board. Only by a vote of the board could he be displaced. The autocratic lord of Popper Court rather overlooked that circumstance.

"You will do nothing of the kind, Sir Hilton Popper!" almost shouted Mr. Hacker. "I will not allow it, sir!"

"You will not allow it!" gasped Sir Hilton.

"No, sir! I refuse—"

"Pah! Where are the boys? Take me to them at once!"

"I will not! I—"

"Pah!" snorted Sir Hilton. He turned a lordly back on Mr. Hacker, and strode towards the crowd of grinning Greyfriars fellows. "Here, you —," He made a gesture to Coker of the Fifth. "Do you know where the boys are?"

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Coker.

"Take me to them at once!"

"This way, sir!"

"Coker!" bawled Mr. Hacker. "I forbid you to take one step!"

"Bow-wow!" answered Coker, over his shoulder; and there was a howl of laughter.

Coker marched off, with Sir Hilton Popper at his heels, in the direction of the school shop, leaving Mr. Hacker rooted to the quad, purple with rage, and the Greyfriars crowd chortling.

## THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

### Chucked Out!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & Co. watched with grinning faces as the tall, angular baronet stalked across the quad, and arrived at the barricaded school shop.

Exactly how this was going to turn out the schoolboy strikers did not know, but it was clear, at least, that this member of the governing board was very much down on Hacker. Why, they did not know, being unaware of Billy Bunter's antics on the telephone that morning.

From "old Popper's" autocratic manners and customs, they would rather have expected him to take the side of authority in such a dispute. But it was plain that it was very much otherwise.

"Here you are, sir!" grinned Coker.

Sir Hilton Popper jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and stared at the school shop, as if he could hardly believe either his eye or his eyeglass.

Every window was smashed, doors were split, boards and planks were nailed across windows, and from the apertures between them the faces of the rebel Removites looked out.

Sir Hilton gazed, and gazed.

"Good gad!" he ejaculated at last.

"The old bean looks shirty," grinned the Bounder.

"The shirtfulness is terrific!"

Sir Hilton glared up. He was annoyed with Hacker. But what met his eyes at the strikers' stronghold evidently did not please him.

"Here, you!" he exclaimed. "Boys! You young rascals! Come out of that building at once! Do you hear me?"

Lord Mauleverer leaned out.

"Good-afternoon, Sir Hilton!" he said politely. "Awfully glad to see you at Greyfriars, sir."

"What—what!" Sir Hilton barked up at him. "I have seen you before! You are Mauleverer, I think! Are you the ringleader in this?"

"Yaas!"

"Come out at once—all of you! By Jove, I will not allow this to continue for one moment, now that it has come to my knowledge! I order you all out of that building this instant!" bawled Sir Hilton.



"Old ass!" murmured the Bounder. "I say, shall I get the cheeky old goat with a lump of coal?"

"Shut up, Smithy, you fathead!" said Harry Wharton hastily. "Leave it to Mauly!"

"Do you hear me?" roared Sir Hilton Popper.

"Yaas! Please let me explain, sir!"

"I desire to hear no explanations! I am here to put an end to this disgraceful state of affairs! Come out at once!"

"Only too pleased, sir! But what about Mr. Hacker?" asked Mauleverer amiably. "We're on strike, sir!"

"Nonsense!"

"Hacker's sacked some of us, sir, and nobody's goin'. He's promised the whole Form floggings. Nobody's going to be flogged. We're holdin' out till the Head comes back!"

"You are doing nothing of the sort! You will leave that building immediately! I will not bandy words with a schoolboy! Come out at once!"

Lord Mauleverer shook his head gently.

"I'm afraid that's not quite good enough, sir," he answered. "So long as Hacker's headmaster, we're stickin' to our guns!"

Sir Hilton snorted. He had no patience whatever to waste on rebellious schoolboys. His word was law—or, at all events, he fancied that it was.

"I order you out of that building!" he exclaimed angrily. "You will return to the House immediately, under my eye! With regard to your punishment, I will consider that matter later. For the present, it is sufficient for you to obey my orders without delay—at once!"

"Hadn't I better get him with a

(Continued on next page.)



## COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

**E**VERY week I get a large mail from readers, but this week's pile of letters is greater than ever.

Of course, the majority of them refer to our splendid Photogravure Postcards—the last of which is Presented Free in this issue of the MAGNET. Everyone is delighted with them.

"We've started off well this year," writes James Robertson, of Staffs. "Let's hope our luck will continue throughout 1937. When it comes to good stories the MAGNET has got all other boys' papers beaten to a frazzle!"

Let me say here and now, Jimmy, keep your eyes on the MAGNET. You won't regret it, believe me.

Another interesting letter comes from Fred Farmer, a Dawlish reader, who tells me he read the MAGNET

### BEFORE THE GREAT WAR!

and still takes it every week, and to quote his own words: "enjoys it every bit as much as he did twenty-three years ago." He hands me so many bouquets in his letter that I feel quite flattered, as I'm sure Mr. Frank Richards will be when I pass the letter on to him.

The next letter in my postbag comes from a Resident Medical Officer of a large hospital in Kent who was a staunch reader of the MAGNET twenty years ago, and has commenced reading it again. This is what he says: "It is indeed refreshing to find, after all these years, Bob Cherry still bellowing: 'Hallo, hallo, hallo!' and Loder the same awful cad, and Vernon-Smith the same cool Bounder. May your paper still continue to flourish and print such good, clean reading matter for the younger generation."

Reference was also made to the good old MAGNET by Noel Coward, author of the famous play "Cavalcade," whose life story was published recently in one of our big Sunday papers. In his younger days, this brilliant dramatist derived many hours of enjoyment reading yarns of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars. After perusing a current copy of the MAGNET he remarked that the paper is as good now as it was in its early days. It is not too much to say that the great majority of the distinguished men in the country to-day have been readers of the MAGNET in their youth and to this day have an affectionate regard for it. To read

the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. is really part of every boy's education.

From "Film Fan," of Worcester, comes a query concerning the cinema. He asks me to tell him where and when was

### THE FIRST FILM SHOW

given in this country? This was in May, 1896, at the Alhambra Theatre, in Leicester Square, London. In those days people thought it was marvellous to see an extremely short film which merely showed such things as the arrival and departure of a train from a station. How the films have changed! It's rather interesting to note that, just before the work of demolishing the Alhambra Theatre was commenced, this former home of films was used as a film "set." The place was packed with 1,700 film "extras," who played the part of the audience at an operatic performance which will figure in a forthcoming film. This is claimed to be the largest crowd that has ever been used in an interior shot in a British film.

I'm always interested to get letters from readers telling me quaint items about the part of the country—or countries—in which they live. This week I've received a letter from a Sheffield reader, who tells me he lives near

### THE VILLAGE WITH SEVERAL NAMES.

Some people, he says, call the village Kexborough, but no one seems to know the proper way of spelling the name. On the maps it appears as 'Kexbrough,' while a sign-post pointing to the village calls it 'Kexbro,' and a local bus timetable gives the name as 'Kexboro.' One would at least imagine that the post-office would know the name of the village. Well, the post-office guide and the official postmark give it as 'Kexbrough,' although there is a notice hanging in the post-office stating that the correct way of addressing letters is to 'Kexboro'—thus agreeing with the bus time-table.

With all this uncertainty, you'd wonder what the villagers themselves call the place? Actually they pronounce the name as 'Kesber' and that, incidentally, is the way that the name of the village was spelled in the Domesday Book!

**H**ERE'S an interesting paragraph about a man who, not wanting to go to war, lived

IN ONE ROOM FOR TWENTY-TWO YEARS!

A Frenchman who "joined up" in August, 1914, served one week in the Great War, and got a slight wound. He was in hospital for a while, and then suddenly disappeared. The man was never heard of again by the authorities until just recently. They decided he was a deserter, but his family claimed that he was "missing." A little while ago a terrific row broke out in a room of the house in which the particular Frenchman's parents lived. The police broke in, and there they found the deserter! Ever since he had run away from the army, the man had lived in that same room—a period of twenty-two years! During that time he had never even dared to go near the window. I think most of us would have preferred the war to such monotonous voluntary imprisonment. The strange thing is that if the man had not quarrelled with his father, and had kept to his room for another three years, he could not, according to French law, have been prosecuted as a deserter!

**S**PACE is running short, but I must say a word or two about next week's spanking fine yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. Entrenched in the school tuckshop, the Remove stay-in strikers are still holding their own under the capable leadership of Lord Mauleverer. Although the whole school is against him—with the exception of Carne, the bully of the Sixth—Hacker is not thinking of retreat! By a stroke of luck he succeeds in entering the strikers' stronghold. But instead of crumpling up at the terror of his glance and the swish of his cane, Harry Wharton & Co. overpower the tyrannical Horace and keep him a prisoner, forcing him to obey their orders—a humiliating position indeed for Hacker. Fun and excitement in plenty you will find in—

### "THE PRISONER OF THE STRONGHOLD!" By Frank Richards

—next Saturday's sparkling school story. Don't miss this splendid treat whatever you do. As usual, there will be another tip-top issue of the "Greyfriars Herald" and more snappy verses by our long-haired poet—the Greyfriars Rhymester.

Before winding up this chat I would like to remind all "Magnetites" of the rollicking fine yarns dealing with the early adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. now appearing in our companion paper—the "Gem." You'll enjoy reading them, you can take it from me.

YOUR EDITOR.  
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,514.



chunk of coal?" murmured Vernon-Smith.

"Shut up, ass!"

"Sorry that won't do, sir!" said Lord Mauleverer, with a polite regret. "Nobody here is goin' to be punished. We make rather a point of that."

"You see, Sir Hilton—" began Harry Wharton.

"Silence! Say no more! I have no time to waste here!" hooted Sir Hilton Popper. "I shall see the end of this with my own eyes before I go. You are wasting my time. Come out of that building at once!"

"Can't be done, sir!" said Lord Mauleverer gently.

Sir Hilton glared up at the rebels. Opposition to his lofty will and pleasure was more than enough to rouse his deepest ire. But for that talk on the telephone, it was probable that the lord of Popper Court would have taken sides with Mr. Hacker. But he could not forget that he had been called an ass, and told to shut up. He had no use for Hacker. He was rather at a loss.

"If you will see us clear of Hacker, sir—" said Lord Mauleverer. "You see, sir, some of us are sacked, according to Hacker—"

"I will direct Mr. Hacker to leave the whole matter over until the headmaster returns," said Sir Hilton. "Now let this end."

"That's good enough," said Bob Cherry.

"Yaas; if Hacker stands for it," murmured Lord Mauleverer. "I'd rather be sure of that before we let Hacker in."

"You bet!" said the Bounder emphatically.

"Here he comes!" murmured Nugent.

Mr. Hacker was coming across the quad. Behind him, at a respectful distance, followed a grinning crowd. All Greyfriars was deeply interested in this latest development of the school-boys' strike.

Sir Hilton Popper seemed to have no doubt that his word would be law to a dashed usher. But Hacker's face did not indicate as much by any means.

He arrived on the spot, a little breathless. Sir Hilton, unheeding him, stared up at the strikers.

"You hear me?" he rapped. "Let this end at once! I shall give Mr. Hacker instructions—"

"You will do nothing of the kind, Sir Hilton Popper!" roared Hacker, over his shoulder.

Hacker's temper was at boiling point now.

Sir Hilton swung round and stared at him.

"You will take instructions from me, Mr. Hacker!" he bawled. "You will take orders from me, sir!"

"I shall certainly not do anything of the sort!" bawled back Hacker. "Only a written order from the whole body of governors, sir, can shake my position here, and you, sir, have no authority to—"

"Enough! These boys will return to their duty, and the matter will be left over until Dr. Locke returns!"

"It will not be left over one hour, sir—not one minute—after I have reduced these rebellious young rascals to obedience!"

"That won't be just yet awhile, Hacker!" called out the Bounder. "Not in your lifetime, old bean!"

"I order you, Mr. Hacker—" shouted Sir Hilton.

"And I, sir, regard your orders with contempt!" shouted back Hacker. "It is for me to give orders, Sir Hilton Popper, and I order you to go back to your car and leave this school immediately!"

"You—you—you what?" gasped Sir Hilton.

"Go, sir!" roared Mr. Hacker. "Your interference here is uncalled for! You are encouraging these young rascals in rebellion! Go! Leave this school, sir!"

Enjoyed this week's yarn,  
chum? Good! Now read:

### "THE FADDIST FORM-MASTER!"

starring the chums of Greyfriars, in the

**GEM**

Now on Sale - - - Price 2d.

"You—you—you dare to order me to go!" gasped Sir Hilton Popper, hardly able to believe his lordly ears. "You—you—"

"Yes, sir! And I repeat—Ow!" yelled Mr. Hacker, as a condensed-milk tin whizzed from a window and landed in his neck. "Ow! Oh! Ah!"

"Goal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Hacker rubbed his neck, glared up at the yelling rebels, and glared at Sir Hilton Popper. His temper, already boiling, boiled over. He advanced on the lord of Popper Court, and Sir Hilton tottered as he received a shove on his lordly chest. He tottered back, dizzy with amazement, and Mr. Hacker followed him up, with another shove.

"By guin!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Are they going to scrap?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hands off! Are you mad?" roared Sir Hilton Popper. "Are you—By Jove!"

Another shove cut him short. He staggered and almost toppled over.

The Greyfriars crowd gazed on breathlessly. Mr. Hacker was shoving Sir Hilton back, step by step, towards his car. Sir Hilton toppled, and nearly went down; but he recovered himself, and lashed out a bony fist at Mr. Hacker.

Bang!

"Right on the wicket!" gasped Bob. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Hacker gave a wild splutter as the bony knuckles banged on his nose. He staggered for a moment.

Then he hurled himself at Sir Hilton Popper.

"Go!" he roared. "I will remove you with my own hands! Go!"

"Good gad! Yurrrrooop! Urrgh!" spluttered Sir Hilton.

Mr. Hacker, too enraged to think or care about considerations of prudence, grasped the bony old baronet and whirled him away towards his car. Sir Hilton Popper, as enraged as Mr. Hacker, forgot that he was a dignified baronet, lord of a thousand acres, and grasped Mr. Hacker in turn, struggling fiercely. And all Greyfriars stared on at the unprecedented scene of a Form-master engaged in a rough-and-tumble in the quad with a governor of the school.

"Go it!" yelled Bob Cherry, in great delight. "Pitch into him, Popper!"

"Go it, Hacker!"

"Two to one on Hacker!" chortled the Bounder. "He's got muscle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder was right. Sir Hilton, spluttering, struggling, was whirled away to his car. He resisted manfully, but he went.

The door of the car stood open. Right up to the car went Sir Hilton, struggling and puffing and blowing. Mr. Hacker pitched him in headlong.

"Oooooooooogh!" gurgled Sir Hilton, as he landed.

Mr. Hacker picked up his hat and threw it into the car after him.

"Now go!" he hooted.

He slammed the door on the breathless, gurgling baronet. Then he turned a baleful eye on the staring chauffeur.

"Go!" he snapped.

"Yes, sir!" gasped the chauffeur.

And he went.

Sir Hilton Popper sat up dizzily in the car. He held his hat in one hand, his nose in the other. He blinked back dizzily. In that dazed and dizzy state, the lord of Popper Court disappeared out of the gates of Greyfriars. He left the whole school yelling as he went.

Mr. Hacker glared after the car till it disappeared, and then turned and strode into the House, and disappeared also. His reflections, when he had calmed down, were probably unpleasant.

"The strike's still on!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "But I fancy it won't last long now. Hacker can't really expect to get by with this sort of thing."

And the chortling strikers agreed that Hacker really couldn't.

THE END.

(Horace Hacker's reign as headmaster is fast coming to a close. Be sure and read the final yarn in this exciting story in strike series. It's entitled: "THE PRISONER OF THE STRONG-HOLD!" and is, undoubtedly, one of Frank Richards' best stories.)

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# DOCTOR BIRCHEMALL'S BLUNDER!

Another Ripping Instalment of Dicky Nugent's  
Rolling Serial:  
"THE ST. SAM'S TREZZURE HUNT!"

**DIDLING THE PERLICE!**  
"Got the false whiskers?"  
"Yes, sir!"  
"And the culled glasses—and the hat-box?"  
"What ho, sir!"  
Doctor Birchermall, the headmaster of St. Sam's, rubbed his hands gleefully.  
"Then the stage is set, Scrownger, for my daring raid on the Muggleton Perlice Station. While the rest of the skool is innersently sitting down to brekker, I shall sally fourth. I hoap to return in a very short space of time with a perlice-man's helmet, which I shall secretly pass on to you."  
"Thanks, awfully, sir!" chortled Scrownger.  
The Head chuckled as he fixed on his false whiskers.  
"It will be as easy as pie! As soon as I make publick Sir Gouty Greybeard's announcement that the first part of the trezzure-hunt is a hunt for a perlice-man's helmet, you will dash off, get the helmet, and then rush back to me like billy-ho!"  
"Rely on me, sir," said Scrownger with an unplezzant leer.  
"Thus you will score the first mark in the kontest. Or I should say we will score it," added Doctor Birchermall hurriedly, just to remind Scrownger that he was taking three-fifths of the prize-money.  
"After that, we can sit back and wait for the second round of the trezzure-hunt in quiet konfidence. Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Scrownger.  
The Head wiped the tears of merriment from his eyes before he put on his culled glasses. Then he surveyed himself in his study mirror. The result evidently pleased him, for he gave a grunt of satisfaction.  
"This is grato, Scrownger! In this get-up, even my own mother would have a job to reckernise me. Certainly none of these ignorant bobbies down at Muggleton Perlice Station will dream for a moment who I am."  
"I hoap not, sir, anyway, for your sake," larfed Scrownger. "There won't half be trubble if

they nab you pinching one of their helmets!"  
"Look out and see if the coast is clear, will you?" said the Head.  
Scrownger noddod and looked out.  
"Nobody about, sir," he whispered.  
"Good! Then I'll buzz. Wait for me near the gates soon after brekker."  
With these words, Doctor Birchermall grabbed the big hat-box which Scrownger had brought with him, and quitted his study at the dubble.  
Arriving at the perlice station at Muggleton, he marched boldly in, and informed the sarjent in charge that he was a sellybrated professor and that he had lost a tin of dangerous microbes. The Head had deliberately dropped a tin marked "MICROBES" in the street the previous day, so he felt pretty sure that it had been found and handed to the perlice and that the sarjent would go out of the room to get it. And that was eggactly what he did.  
The moment the sarjent turned his back, Doctor Birchermall grabbed one of the helmets that were hanging up in a row on the wall and transferred it, swiftly to his hat-box. Then he waited for the sarjent to return.  
The sarjent came back triumphantly holding the lost tin of "microbes" aloft. He handed over the tin, and the bogus professor thanked him profowsly and trotted out. After that, he made tracks for St. Sam's, larfing fit to bust as he did so.  
Had he known what he had left behind him on the floor of the perlice station, he would not have larfed so hartily. As a matter of fakt it was a visiting-card bearing his real name and address, which had dropped out of his pocket when he bent over to place the purloined helmet in the hat-box. But the Head was ignorant of his loss, so there was nothing to mar his joy!  
Pawsing only to dodge behind a tree and remove his disguise, Doctor Birchermall returned to St. Sam's.  
Scrownger was waiting for him near the

gates. He took the hat-box eagerly.  
"So you got it, sir?" he grinned.  
"Yes, rather! Look it up in your study for safety, Scrownger. See you anonymously!"  
The Head and the Fourth Formor went their respektive ways.  
And neither of them dreamed for a moment that Tubby Barrell, the only man in the skool who knew their secret, had been watching and lissening from behind the nearest shrub!  
**THE MISSING HELMET!**  
The eggitement in Big Hall that morning was tremenjous, when the skool assemblled to hear the Head read out details of the first round of Sir Gouty Greybeard's grate trezzure hunt. The peppery old gentleman's offer of fifty pounds had made every fellow worth his salt as keen as mustard to get it.  
Doctor Birchermall russed up on to the platform, holding in his hand an important-looking envelope and grinning all over his dial.  
"Boys!" grinned the Head. "It is now my privilege to open Sir Gouty Greybeard's sealed orders regarding the first round of the grate trezzure hunt. The orders are contained in this envelope which reached me from Sir Gouty yesterday. Needless to say, I have kept the envelope under my wing very carefully and have not tampered with it in any way."  
"Eggsept," he muttered to himself, "that I steamed it open and had a lookinside myself." But, of course, nobody heard him say that!  
Doctor Birchermall then inserted a somewhat grimy thumb and tore the flap open. A pin mitto have been heard to drop as he drew out a sheet of paper and unfolded it.  
"Ahom!" coffered the Head. Then he read aloud the announcement which Scrownger and Barrell had already heard before.  
"St. Sam's Trezzure Hunt.  
Round One.  
One mark will be awarded to the first boy who brings back to St. Sam's a genuine perlice-man's helmet."  
(Signed) Gouty Greybeard, Bart."  
"Few!"  
It was a long drawn-out wissle from the skool. In their wildest dreams none of the fellows had imagined that Sir Gouty would choose a perlice-man's helmet!  
"Boys!" said the Head, as he silenced the eggaited skool with a jesture. "The hunt for a perlice-man's helmet will begin as soon as I give the word 'Go!' Are you ready?"  
"I, I, sir!"  
"Then, one—two—three—GO!"  
Like unleashed greyhounds the boys of St. Sam's raced pell-mell out of Big Hall! None of them had the slitest idea for the moment how they were going to get hold of a perlice-man's helmet; but they went all the same.  
Jack Jolly & Co. were the first out of the Hall.  
"There's only one place to go for a perlice-man's helmet," said Jolly, as they pawed breathlessly outside.  
"That's the nearest town—Muggleton. We'll go

there and get a helmet from the first bobby we find. It's the only way, you fellows."  
And Jack Jolly & Co. galloped off to the gates.  
Meanwhile, Scrownger was rushing up to the Fourth Form passidgo at full speed. When he arrived there, he bust into his own study and swooped on to his locker, pulling out a bunch of keys from his pocket as he did so.  
As things turned out, however, there was no need for a key. The floor of the locker swung open as soon as Scrownger touched it.  
"My locker!" he cried horse y. "Someone's forced it open!"  
He looked inside. A hollow groan escaped him at what he saw.  
"The perlice-man's helmet!" he roaned. "It's gone!"  
**TUBBY'S TRIUMF!**  
Doctor Birchermall sat in statu on the platform in Big Hall.  
The St. Sam's masters sat round him, lissening to his words of wisdom on the subject of the grate trezzure hunt.  
"I don't care what you gentlemen think," he was saying. "What I say is this here: to a lad of resource—say, for instance, yung Scrownger of the Fourth—the problem of acquiring a perlice-man's helmet should be simplissity itself. Now, if I were been dubble-crossed!"  
hist Doctor Birchermall.  
"Follow me!"  
With these words the Head tore madly out of Big Hall and up the stairs to the Fourth-Form passidgo.  
A fat junior was just coming out of a study with a bulky parcel tucked underneath his arm when Doctor Birchermall arrived. He promptly dodged back again on seeing the Head and, with grate prezzence of mind, dropped the parcel out of the winder into the bushes below.  
When the Head's frantick search took him to Tubby Barrell's study a few minnits later, there was conselkwontly no sign of the purloined helmet. Nor, as a matter of fakt, was there any sign of Tubby. He was down below retreoving it.  
The Head gave it up as hoapless at last, and went downstairs and stood at the top of the Skool House steps for a breth of fresh air.  
It was there that Jack Jolly spotted him, as he raced through the gates, triumphantly holding aloft a helmet pinched from P.-c. Podge. But before Jolly could reach the Skool House, Tubby Barrell had appeared as if from nowhere.  
"Bust it! Then we've

allowed to go in for Sir Gouty Greybeard's kontest, I should meerly walk into the nearest perlice station and—"  
"Eggscuse me, sir!"  
It was Scrownger's voice. The Head beamed.  
"Ah, here is the bright yung man I just mentioned, gentlemen! What is it, my dear Scrownger? Is it possibl that your brilliant gifts have enabled you already to return with a perlice-man's helmet?"  
"Nunno, sir! Not eggactly, sir!" said Scrownger.  
"Mite I have a word with you privitly, sir?"  
The Head glared.  
"Eggscuse me, gentlemen! Thanks," he added, as the masters scuttled away.  
"Sir! Something terribul has happened!" gasped Scrownger, when they were alone. "The helmet has vannedish! My locker has been broken open and—"  
"Bust it! Then we've

# The GREYFRIARS HERALD

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# HOW TO CONDUCT A MEETING!

**FIFTH FORMER'S INSTRUCTIVE LECTURE!**  
A long-felt want was supplied a few weeks back, when Horace Coker of the Fifth gave a lecture on "How to Conduct a Meeting."  
Any fellow who has attended meetings at Greyfriars recently will agree that most of them are more like a Rugger scrum than what they are intended to be.  
Nobody seems to have the faintest idea of the procedure or rules and regulations. Chaps stand up whenever they feel like it, hurl insults at each other instead of at the chairman, and commit many other ghastly breaches of parliamentary etiquette.  
Coker, with his customary keen insight into civilised requirements, decided to put things right by giving a public lecture on how a meeting should be run.  
The lecture, which attracted a huge audience mostly drawn from the Remove, Third and Second Forms, was a great success.  
Coker opened the proceedings by bellowing "Put a sock in it, you fags!" Students of the art of running meetings promptly jotted down this valuable tip in their notebooks.  
Failing to obtain silence, Coker made rush at his audience and started knocking chaps' heads together. This admirable example was eagerly noted by the students. As Brown remarked, an ounce of illustration is worth a ton of theoretical lecturing.  
Coker then proceeded to his lecture. He remarked that there were too many silly young asses about at Greyfriars and that was what was wrong with meetings. Apart from that he considered—  
Unfortunately, the remainder of his remarks were inaudible to our reporter.  
That they were appreciated by the audience, however, was obvious from the frequent bursts of cheering and stamping of feet—not to mention the regular presentations of fruit and books which admirers hurled at the lecturer.  
There was some slight disorder at the finish, when Coker tried to knock the heads off about thirty fellows at once. Coker finished up by giving head first out of the window.  
We are all indebted to him for his noble endeavour to put us on the right track. After this, we shall have no excuse to offer.  
Coker has shown us how to conduct a meeting!



**SPORT in the SANNY!**  
News from Invalid Athletes!  
If you imagine the only recreations in the school sanatorium are reading and playing patience (writes our Sporting Editor), you've made a jolly big mistake.  
I spent three days there in bed with a cold last week and the amount of sporting activity going on was a proper eye-opener to me.  
Most of it goes on while the nurse is out of the ward, but even while she's present, the chaps manage to get in an odd game of pellet-fighting now and again.  
Pellet-fighting, by the way, is one of the pet sports of Greyfriars invalids. The fellows on opposite sides of the ward automatically make up the two teams and each team is allowed an equal number of paper pellets. The game is to score as

many hits on opponents' faces as you can, and each separate hit is noted by the scorer. I can assure you, it's a rattling good game. When the two teams are level and ammunition is running short, the excitement is terrific!  
A much more restful game which can, however, be quite thrilling is "shadow-timing." The aim in this game, which, by the way, can be played only when the sun shines, is to judge in minutes and seconds how long a given shadow will take to travel a given distance, as the sun's position alters in the sky. It's surprisingly fascinating, and some chaps become regular dabsters at it by the time they recover their health.  
Then there's the balloon game, in which the fellows in alternate beds make up the two opposing teams. The balloon is biffed up and down the ward, one

team trying to get it to one end and the other team the other end. Whenever it reaches either end it's a goal for one of the teams.  
Believe it or not, kids, I've worked up as much enthusiasm over a balloon game as over many a game of football on Little Side.  
You might think that professional invalids like Snoop and Stott, who make a practice of adjournin' to the sanny for a rest every few weeks, would be experts at these indoor pastimes. Think again! Snoop and Stott were both inmates during my brief stay. They both played a piffing game of pellet-fighting, while their ballooning was simply putrid! Johnny Bull, Temple of the Fourth and Stewart of the Shell were streets ahead of them at both games soon after admission!  
The athletic chap wins—even when he's lying on his back!

# BUMPER POST ON VALENTINE'S DAY!

Says DICK PENFOLD

The Editor told you last week how I solved the mystery of the blushing toughs in Courtfield High Street. They were all buying valentines to send to the various damsels whose charms had smitten them!  
This week I can give you the lurid details of their reactions to Valentine's Day itself.  
Bolsover major awaited the postman with a countenance the colour of a ripe tomato.  
Bulstrode supported him, looking like a human beetroot.  
Russell sat on the School House steps, reading a book of sonnets and rolling his eyes.  
Bob Cherry tramped up and down the quad, running his hand through his hair.  
Hobson of the Shell got Hoskins up long before brekker and made him play plaintive piano solos.  
Blundell strolled down to the gates, his eyes glinting.  
Coker had a sprint round the quad, wearing running shorts and vest and a rather preoccupied air.  
Then the postman came.  
There was a rush—and a letter for everybody!  
Alas! The sad truth must be told. The letters all consisted of circulars from a firm of sports outfitters.  
Not a single, solitary valentine reached Greyfriars on Valentine's Day!  
How sad it all seems!