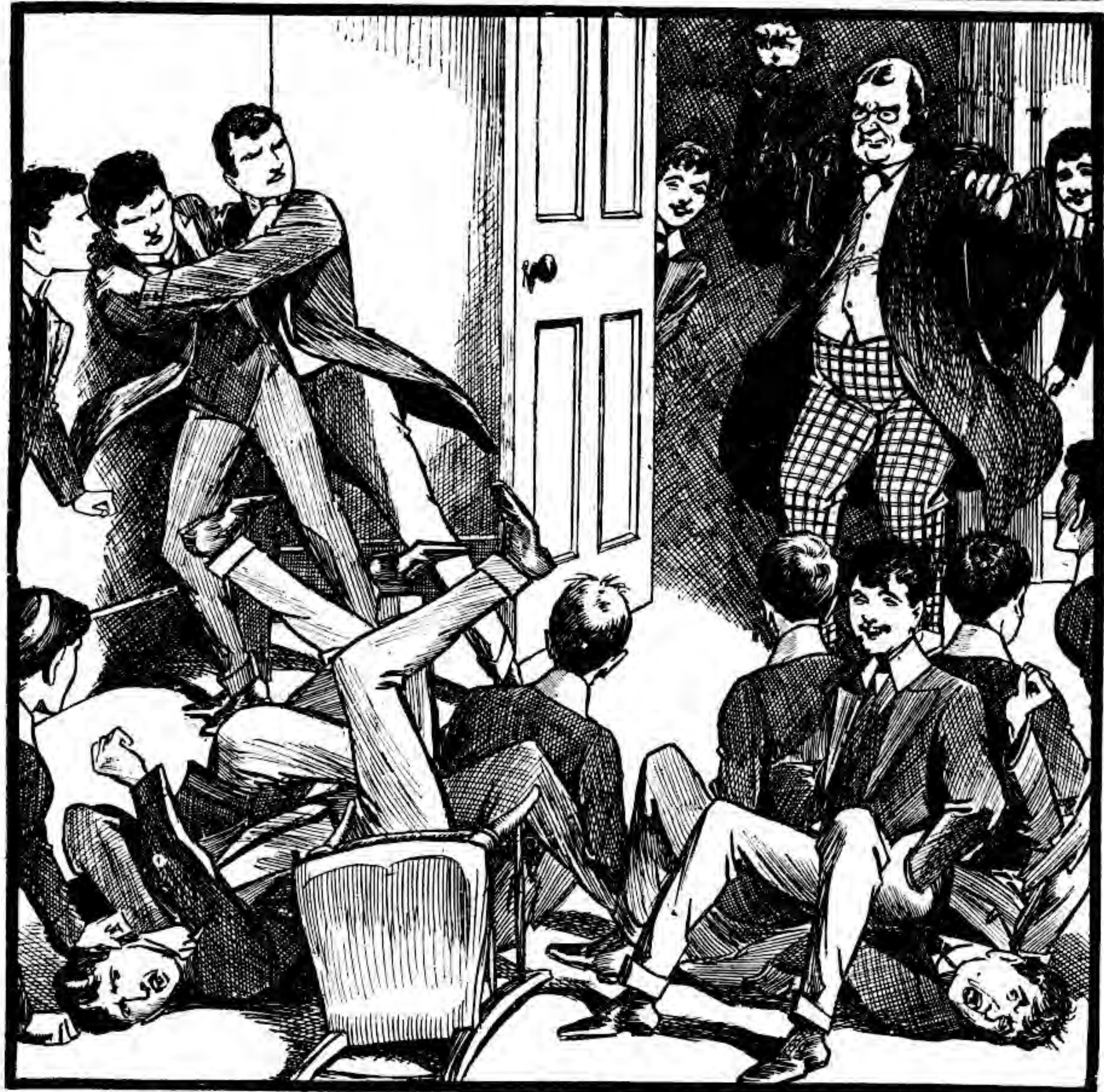
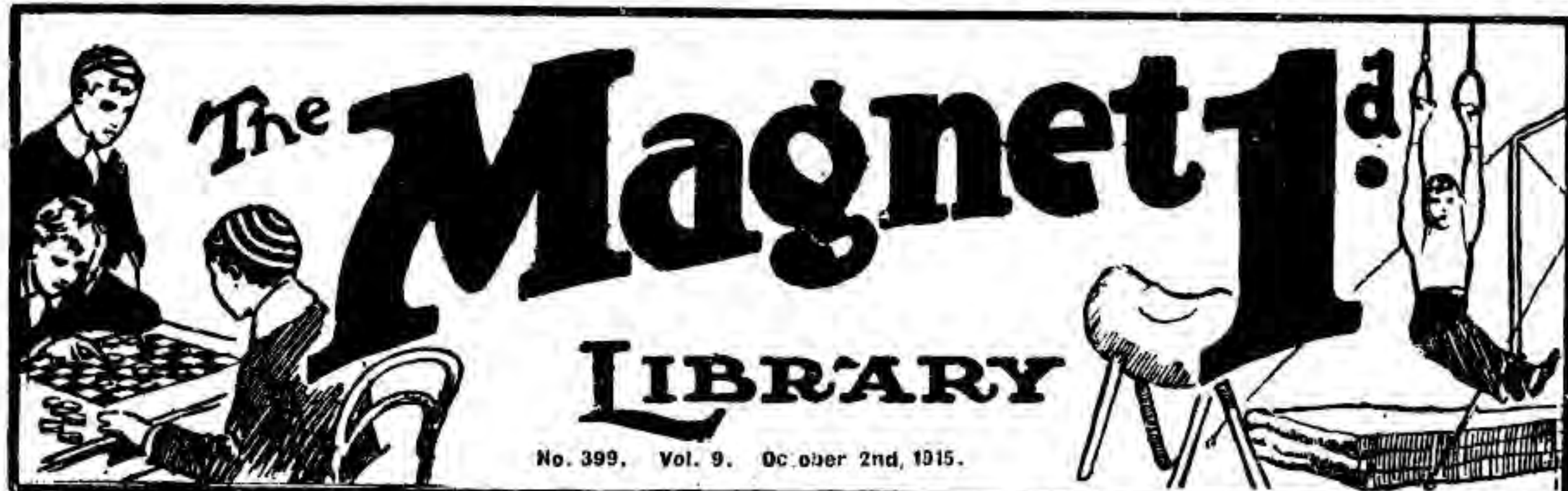


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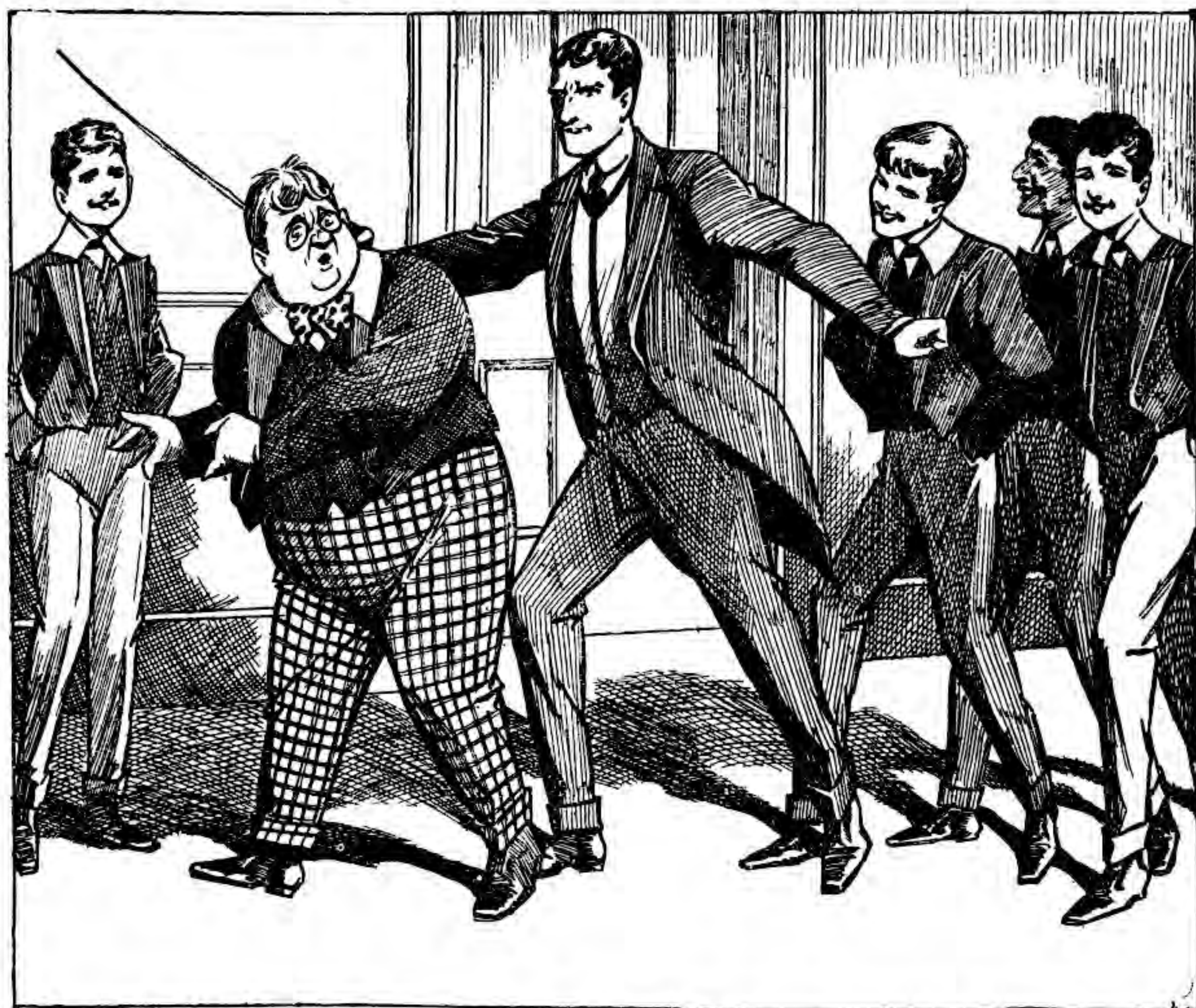


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CHAMPION OF THE OPPRESSED!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



"What's the little game?" asked Vernon-Smith. "Where are you off to?" inquired Peter Todd. "We're following in father's footsteps," explained Bob Cherry. "We're following the dear old dad! Look at old Daddy Loder laying into poor old Billy Bunter." (See Chapter 4.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Coker Chips In!

"YOW!"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"
"Wow!"
"What's the matter, Tubby?"

"Yow-wow!"

That was Billy Bunter's reply. He seemed to be unable

to make any remark excepting "yow" or "wow," or both together.

Harry Wharton & Co. had come upon him in the Close of Greyfriars. The fat junior was rubbing two fat ears with two fat hands, and yowing and wowing as if for a wager. The Famous Five gave him sympathetic looks. There was no doubt that Billy Bunter was suffering.

"Banged your silly head against something?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yow!"

"Coker been thumping you?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Wow!"

Bunter rubbed his ears furiously.

"It's Loder!" he groaned. "The beast! Loder, the rotter! Loder of the Sixth, the bully worm! Yow-ow-wow!"

"Oh, Loder!" said the juniors together.

They were still more sympathetic. Loder of the Sixth was a bully of the first water; and the chums of the Remove had suffered at his hands themselves. In fact, they regarded Loder of the Sixth as a natural enemy. Loder was a prefect, and as a prefect he had a great deal of power in his hands; and he never failed to make use of it.

"Rotter!" said Frank Nugent. "It's time we gave Loder another fall. He's got to learn to keep his paws off the Remove."

"He has—he have!" agreed Bob Cherry.

"What did you do, Bunter?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Nothing!" groaned Bunter. "Loder was talking to Carne under the elms, and the beast thought I was listening. Of course, I wasn't."

"Of course you weren't," said Johnny Bull sarcastically. "You never do anything of that kind, do you, Bunter? You didn't happen to be stopping to tie up your shoelace quite close to them—what?"

"As it happens, I did," snorted Bunter. "But I suppose a chap can tie up his bootlace if he likes? You know I'm not an inquisitive chap——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five were sympathetic towards Loder's victim; but they could not help chuckling. Billy Bunter was the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars; and the number of things he heard by sheer chance was astonishing.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," growled Bunter. "I didn't hear a word he said about breaking bounds to-night——"

"What!"

"I don't care if the two rotters go down to the Cross Keys after lights out," said Bunter. "There was nothing for Loder to get his rag out for. But he thought I was listening when he spotted me behind the tree——"

"So you were listening, you fat bounder!"

"And I know jolly well what I'm going to do," howled Bunter. "I'm going to tell the Head. He would be a bit surprised to hear that a prefect goes down to a pub to see betting rotters there. Loder will get the sack."

"Hold on——"

"Rats! I'm going to the Head," said Bunter; and he started for the School House.

Johnny Bull caught him and whirled him back.

"Hold on!" he said. "You're not going to sneak, even about Loder."

"Look at my ears!" roared Bunter.

"Serve you jolly well right for listening to him!" said Harry Wharton. "Why can't you mind your own business?"

The sympathy of the Famous Five had evaporated. They had none to waste upon an eavesdropper.

"Well, if you approve of a fellow breaking bounds to go pub-haunting, I can only say I'm disgusted," said Bunter, with a sniff. "The Head ought to know. That's my duty."

"The Head ought to know, right enough," said Harry. "But it's not your business to sneak, Tabby. Two wrongs don't make a right. Loder is a beastly black-guard, and he ought to get the boot. But——"

"I'm going to——"

"You're not!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Besides, you fat duffer, if you tell the Head, he'll call Loder in at once, and Loder will deny it point blank. You'll get licked for saying such things about a prefect."

"Oh!" said Bunter, in dismay.

"A still tongue saves a stitch in time, my esteemed Bunter," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, whose knowledge of English proverbs was as wonderful as his knowledge of the English language. "Speech is silver, but silence goes longest to the well."

"He ought to be bowled out!" growled Bunter. "Look at my ears! He pulled one, and Carne pulled the other. Then they kicked me, the beasts! And I wasn't really

listening at all, only I happened to hear them say they'd get out by Loder's study window at eleven o'clock."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five walked on, leaving Billy Bunter to yow and wow. Bunter was still rubbing his ears, and yowling and wowing, when a sharp and angry voice startled him.

"You fat rascal!"

Bunter blinked round nervously through his big spectacles. It was Loder of the Sixth. The prefect was frowning savagely, and he had his ashplant in his hand.

"You've been pitching those young rotters a yarn about me," said Loder, eyeing Billy Bunter as if he would eat him.

"Oh, no; I—I haven't!" stammered Bunter. "I—I haven't mentioned your name, Loder. I simply told them you had bullied me. Here, keep off! I didn't mention about what you said to Carne; in fact, I didn't hear you say anything, and I wasn't thinking of going to the Head—— Yow-wow-wow-wow!" yelled Bunter, as Loder grasped his fat ear again and twisted it.

"I'll teach you to mind your own business, you cheeky fat sweep!" said Loder. "Mind, I was only joking to Carne, because I knew you were listening. I never go out after lights out; a prefect can't do that kind of thing. And I'm jolly well going to make you sorry you spied, you fat rotter!"

"Yow-wow-wow! Help!" roared Bunter.

The fat Removite wriggled in Loder's grasp, and blinked round wildly for help.

The Famous Five had gone out of the gates, and there was no help from them. Skinner of the Remove was near at hand, but Skinner had no intention of trying to interfere with a prefect. Loder twisted Bunter's fat ears in a really cruel way, and the unfortunate Owl of the Remove howled with pain.

Coker of the Fifth came striding out of the school shop.

He paused as he heard Bunter's yelps, and then came striding under the elms. He frowned as he saw how Gerald Loder was engaged.

Coker of the Fifth was a high-handed fellow himself. He believed in licking fags, and often said so, which led to a certain amount of trouble between Horace Coker and the fags. But Coker, if he was high-handed and sometimes came down heavily, wasn't a bully, and he disapproved of bullying. When Coker disapproved of a thing he always said so.

He strode upon the scene at once.

"Stop that, Loder!" he rapped out.

Loder stopped it, in sheer astonishment. For a Fifth-Former to interfere with a prefect of the Sixth was a piece of cheek that almost took Loder's breath away. But Horace Coker was not a common-or-garden member of the Fifth Form. Coker was a tremendously big fellow, with a four-point-seven punch. Coker had been known to lick a Sixth-Former, and more than once. Coker feared no foe.

"Why, you cheeky idiot——" began Loder.

"Nuff said!" broke in Coker decidedly. "Let Bunter alone."

"Keep him off, Coker!" wailed Bunter, dodging behind the big Fifth-Former. "Look at my ears! Yow-wow!"

"I'll keep him off!" said Coker coolly. "I don't like bullying, Loder. You can give Bunter lines, if you like. But you'll draw the line at that."

Loder turned purple with wrath.

"Come here, Bunter!" he shouted.

"Keep behind me, Bunter," said Coker.

There wasn't much doubt which of those commands Billy Bunter would obey. He kept behind Coker.

Loder made a furious stride forward.

"Get aside, Coker!"

"Eh?" said Coker, in surprise. "Are you giving me orders, Loder?"

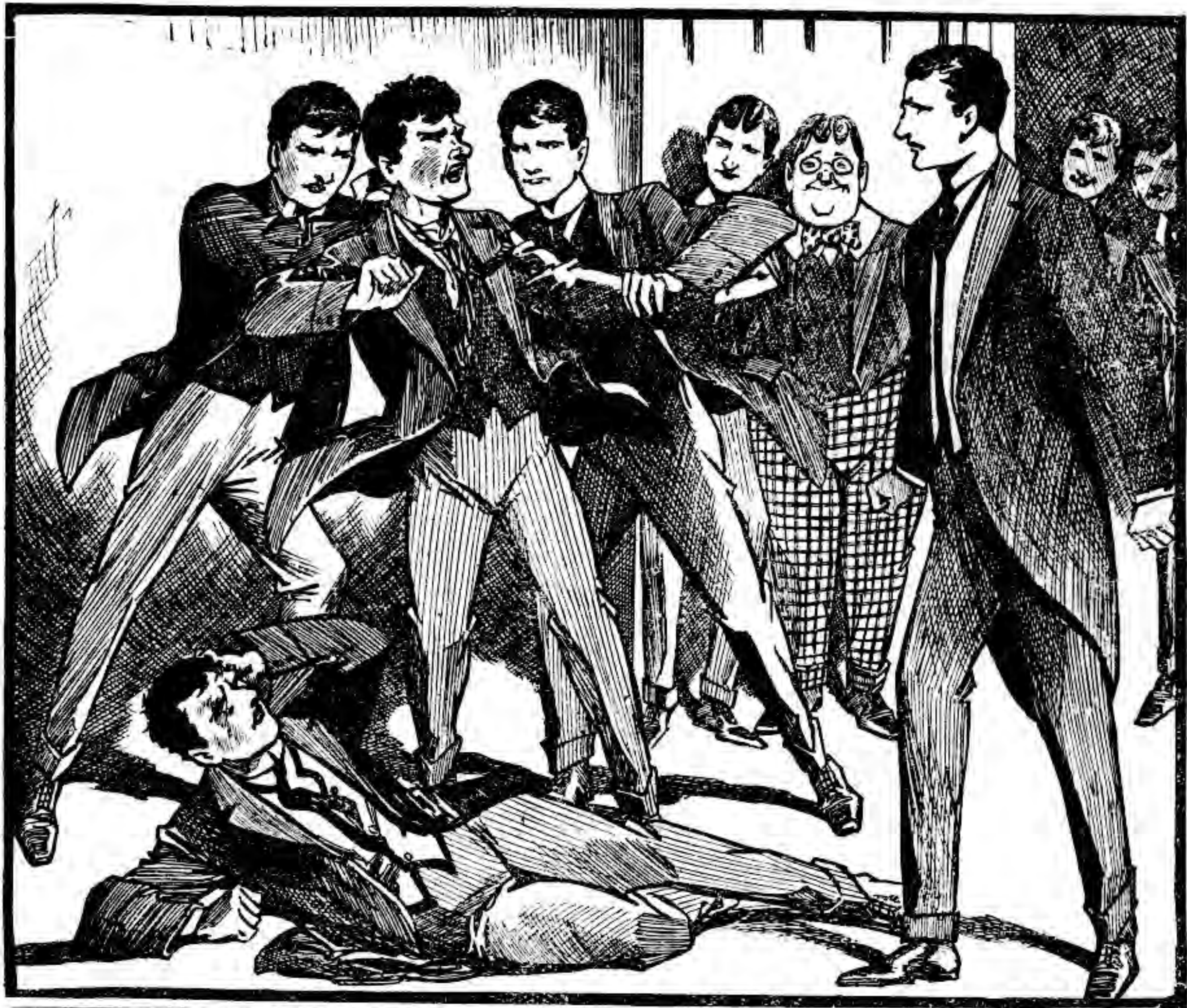
"How dare you interfere with a prefect?" roared Loder.

"You were going too far," explained Coker. "I believe in keeping the fags in their place. I've always said so. But I'm down on bullying."

"Get aside at once!"

"Oh, don't be funny," said Coker.

"Do you want me to knock you down?" shouted Loder. Coker stared.



"Coker! Are you out of your senses?" exclaimed Wingate. "How dare you make such a scene in the quadrangle?" "He knocked me down!" roared Coker. "Me!" "If you don't keep back I'll knock you down!" shouted Wingate angrily. (See Chapter 2.)

"Knock me down! Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you don't get from between that fag and me I'll knock you flying, Coker!" said the Sixth-Former between his teeth.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker. "Ha, ha—yaaaoooh! Oh, my hat!"

Biff!

Loder kept his word. He hit right out, and Coker caught his knuckles with his chin, and he went fairly flying. Coker sat down so suddenly that it seemed to him that the earth rose up to meet him.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Coker.

Then there was a yell from Billy Bunter as the grasp of the bully of the Sixth closed upon him again.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Licked!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! It's Coker on the warpath!" "Good old Horace!"

Harry Wharton & Co. had gone out into the road to look for the postman. They were anxious about a certain remittance, upon the arrival of which depended tea in No. 1 Study. But they looked in at the gateway as they heard Bunter's yells, and they saw a sight that was worth seeing.

Horace Coker had reposed upon the cold, unsympathetic

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SUNDAY CRUSADERS!"

earth for several seconds in a dazed state. Loder thought he had done with him. He had put the cheeky Fifth-Former in his place. But Loder was mistaken. He had not done with Coker; he had hardly begun with him, in fact.

Coker jumped up.

Loder was boxing Bunter's ears with one hand, holding him by the collar with the other. Bunter was roaring.

"My hat!" ejaculated Coker. "Knocked down—me! Why, I'll—I'll—I'll—"

Coker did not finish saying what he would do; he did it.

He made a terrific rush at Loder.

Biff! Biff! Clump! Thump! Crash!

Loder let go Billy Bunter, as Horace Coker's four-point-seven punch came on him like a battering-ram. He staggered against a tree, gasping. But Coker did not stop. The blood of all the Cokers was boiling in his veins. He had been knocked down—knocked down in the quadrangle! It was incredible, unthinkable; but it had happened. Vengeance swift and sweeping was what Coker wanted now. He proceeded to get it.

Thump! Thump! Whack! Wallop!

"Gerroff!" yelled Loder. "Why, you cheeky villain—oh, my hat!—take that—yoop! Great Scott! Oh! Ah! Ow!"

"Knocked down!" roared Coker. "I'll show you!"

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

That's one for your nob! That's one for your nose! And that's one for your eye! And that——"

"Yaroooh!"

"I'll prefect you!" bellowed Coker. "I'll teach you to come the prefect over me! Take that, and that, and that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, speeding to the spot. "Go it, Coker! I'll hold your cap. Pitch into him!"

"Pile in, Coker!" chorused the Famous Five.

The Co. had had their own little differences with Coker—owing to his short way with fags, as he called it—but they were ready to back him up now as one man. To see Coker pitching into the bully of the Sixth was worth a term's pocket-money.

Other fellows crowded round from all quarters, a ring was formed under the elms, and the juniors cheered Coker on. Loder had dropped his ash-plant; he had his hands up, and was fighting for all he was worth. It was shockingly undignified for a prefect of the Sixth to fight in the quadrangle like a rowdy fag; but Loder had no time to think about his dignity, with Coker's huge and heavy fists crashing upon him. Coker was wildly excited, and he was hitting out as if he took Loder for a punch-ball.

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, loudly offered ten to one on Coker; but there were no takers. Coker was getting evidently the best of it.

"Go it, Coker!"

"Give him one in his other eye!"

"One more on his nose, Coker!"

"Another on the mark, Coker!"

"Mop him up, Coker!"

"The mop-upfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Singh.

There was no doubt as to which party had the sympathy of the onlookers. Coker was first favourite, and Gerald Loder nowhere.

Loder put up a good fight. He was a big fellow, really bigger than Coker, though not so tremendously powerful; but he was knocked right and left.

Coker drove him up, and drove him down, and drove him round, and nearly every drive came home on Loder's features.

The crowd of juniors simply chirruped with delight. It was not often that they had the great joy of beholding a fight in the quadrangle between a senior of the Fifth Form and a prefect of the Sixth.

"Stop it!" Loder was roaring. "You villain, you'll get sacked for this! I'll have you flogged! Yaroooh!"

Potter and Greene of the Fifth arrived on the scene, astounded and aghast. They yelled to Coker to chuck it. Pounding a prefect was a little too thick, even for their truculent study-mate Horace Coker.

But Coker did not heed the voices of Potter and Greene. He went on pounding. Loder fairly dodged round a tree at last.

"Keep off, you ruffianly beast! Oh, my hat!"

"Coker, old man!" urged Potter.

"Draw it mild, old chap!" gasped Greene. "You mustn't lick a prefect, you know."

"Knocked me down!" roared Coker. "Me!"

"I'll knock you down again!" shrieked Loder. "I'll have you flogged! You—you scoundrel, I'll—yaroooh!"

Coker was going for him again.

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter, rubbing his ears, but grinning now. "How do you like it yourself, Loder? He, he, he!"

"Cave!" yelled Squiff of the Remove. "Here comes Wingate!"

"Look out, Coker!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Coker! Cave!"

Coker did not heed. Big, broad-shouldered George Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, was bearing down on the scene. Wingate was frowning angrily. The scene did not appeal to him as it did to the juniors. The captain of the school had a clearer idea of the fitness of things.

"Coker!" he shouted. "Coker, are you mad? Stop this at once!"

Wingate, as captain of the school and head prefect of Greyfriars, ought to have been obeyed at once. But Coker did not even listen. He was still after vengeance. Wingate did not wait. He strode straight at Coker,

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grasped him by the shoulder, and swung him back. Coker staggered against a tree.

"Ow!" said Coker.

"Groooogh!" gasped Loder.

"Lemme get at him!"

"Keep him off!"

Wingate's stalwart form stood between the combatants. He pushed Coker roughly back as the Fifth-Former came on again. Loder did not need pushing back; he had not the slightest desire to come on.

"Coker, are you out of your senses?" exclaimed Wingate. "How dare you make such a scene in the quadrangle!"

"He knocked me down!" roared Coker. "Me!"

"If you don't keep back I'll knock you down!" shouted Wingate angrily.

"Will you, by Jove?"

Potter and Greene grasped their study-mate, and dragged him back. Coker was quite excited enough to tackle the captain of the school himself.

"Leggo!" roared Coker, struggling in the grasp of his friends.

"Shush!" murmured Potter. "You don't want the sack, old chap?"

"Easy does it!" muttered Greene.

Wingate frowned sternly at the furious Coker.

"You've attacked a prefect of the Sixth, Coker," he said. "You'll answer for this to the Head!"

"Do you think I'm going to be knocked down like a skittle!" roared Coker.

"He interfered with me in doing my duty," said Loder. "Naturally, I knocked him down. Greyfriars is coming to something when Fifth-Form fellows begin dictating to prefects."

"He was bullying," said Coker. "I'm down on bullying."

Some of the spectators chuckled. Coker's own high-handed methods came perilously near bullying at times. But Coker's intentions were good.

Wingate paused. He was down on bullying himself; and he had not failed to observe Gerald Loder's proclivities in that direction.

"I'm going to report this to the Head," said Loder, before Wingate could speak. "I'm going to ask him to expel Coker, or I shall resign."

And Loder walked away to the School House.

Coker snorted.

"Report and be blowed!" he said. "I'm down on bullying. I won't have it! You ought to see that there's no bullying, Wingate!"

"What?"

"As captain of the school it's your duty."

"Why, you cheeky ass——"

"Ass yourself!" said Coker independently. "I don't think much of you as captain of the school, George Wingate, if you ask me!"

"I don't ask you," said Wingate. "I know my duty, Coker, without you telling me. If I see any bullying I stop it. You are a bit of a bully yourself, Coker, and I've had to speak to you about it!"

"That was simply cheek!" said Coker.

"Here, you come away, Coker!" said Potter. "You come to the study. It's teatime."

"Leggo!"

Potter and Greene simply dragged Coker away. Fitzgerald and Smith major lent a hand, and Coker, in spite of his loud objections, was rushed off the scene. Coker had licked Loder; but there was no doubt that Wingate would have licked him if it had come to a combat, to say nothing of the awful seriousness of getting into a fight with the captain of the school.

Wingate looked round frowningly at the grinning juniors.

"There's nothing to laugh at," he said. "Coker will be up before the Head, and I shouldn't wonder if he gets a flogging. What was this trouble about?"

"Look at my ears!" howled Bunter. "Loder did that."

"So you were at the bottom of it?"

"Loder was bullying me," growled Bunter, "all because he fancied I was listening——"

"And I dare say you were!" snapped Wingate.

"Oh, really, Wingate——"

Wingate grunted, and strode away. He was worried

and annoyed by the occurrence. The scene was unexampled, and the public licking of a prefect before a crowd of juniors was likely to have a very bad effect upon the discipline of the school. Wingate had the good of the school very much at heart.

But the juniors, who were not given to deep thinking, were in a state of exuberant delight.

"Loder's been licked!" was the joyful news that spread through the Lower School.

And the juniors rejoiced. The Shell, the Fourth, the Remove, the Third, and the Second all heard the news with intense satisfaction.

And—in the eyes of the fags, at least—Horace Coker was the hero of the hour.

Coker had many shortcomings. He was several kinds of an ass. He was given to interfering with the juniors—for their own good, of course. Coker's intentions were always excellent. He had a heavy-handed way of dealing with fags that was scarcely to be distinguished from bullying. But he had licked Loder, the most unpopular prefect in the Sixth. He had tackled him, prefect as he was, reckless of the consequences, and he had licked him. That atoned for all Coker's failings. That afternoon the most popular fellow in Greyfriars, so far as the Lower School was concerned, was Coker of the Fifth.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Chance for Loder!

"WHAT'S the news?"

Harry Wharton asked that question as Bob Cherry came into No. 1 Study some hours later.

Bob shook his head.

"About Coker?" said Nugent.

"There isn't any," said Bob. "Loder's let it drop."

"My hat!"

Wharton whistled.

Although the Famous Five were not on the best of terms with Coker, they had been feeling a little anxious about him. "Whopping" a prefect was an awfully serious matter, and they had fully expected that Loder of the Sixth would lay his wrongs before the Head. Then Coker would have been called up into the awful presence.

Whatever explanations Coker might make, and whatever excuses he might offer, nothing could alter the fact that he had taken the law into his own hands and licked a prefect of the Sixth. Dr. Locke was certain to take a severe view of the matter. Coker might be flogged; he might even be sacked. At least, he would get a severe caning—that at the very least. Fifth-Formers were not caned, as a rule, that punishment being reserved for juniors; but the Head could not possibly allow such an outrage on authority to pass unpunished.

And Loder, apparently, had let it drop. If he had been going to the Head, he would certainly have gone before this.

"Well, that's not like Loder," remarked Johnny Bull. "He doesn't like old Coker either. I thought he'd be glad of getting a chance at him. Coker's punched him before this."

"And it was such a giddy outrage," grinned Bob Cherry. "a licking in the quad, with half the school looking on. The Head would have been bound to come down heavy."

"The esteemed Loder is very deep," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head. "The revered Head would inquiringly look into the matter, and Bunter would be questioned. Then it would come outfully what Bunter heard the esteemed rotten Loder saying to Carne."

"But Loder would deny all that," said Johnny Bull. "He don't mind telling whoppers. And he couldn't admit that he was going pub-haunting, unless he wants the sack."

"There wouldn't be any proof, especially as Bunter has the reputation of being a giddy Ananias," remarked Wharton.

"Quitefully so, my esteemed chums," said the nabob sagely. "But it would direct the Head's attention to Loder's little gamefulness, and Loder thinks that the least said the soonest mended. His deepfulness is terrific. He would not be able to break bounds to-night if Bunter talked to the Head."

"Well, no; he'd hardly risk it, if there was any talk on the subject," assented Wharton.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SUNDAY CRUSADERS!"

EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

"And probably he has an important appointment with his esteemed sportful friends," remarked Hurree Singh. "But I thinkfully fancy he will pay out Coker in some other way. He will let the sun go down upon his wrathfulness."

"Well, I'm glad Coker's getting out of it all right," said Wharton. "Coker's a silly ass, and he never can mind his own business, but it was decent of him to chip in for Bunter. Bunter's a spying beast, but Loder's a rotten bully, and I'm jolly glad he's been licked!"

"Hear, hear!"

Bob Cherry frowned thoughtfully.

"I don't know whether the licking will do him any good," he remarked. "He didn't like the way we were cheering on Coker. I could see that."

"Well, he wouldn't enjoy it, of course!" chuckled Nugent. "But nearly all the fellows were cheering on Coker. Of course, Loder knows we were glad to see him licked."

"And he'll make us sit up for it if he can," said Bob, with a shake of the head. "I fancy that licking will make Loder worse instead of better. We shall have to mind our p's and q's for a bit, and not give him a chance at us."

The chums of the Remove nodded assent. They could imagine how furious Loder would be over his licking, and the fact that it had been witnessed by the juniors. All the fellows who had looked on and enjoyed the scene could expect to feel Loder's heavy hand if they gave him a chance. Loder was only too likely to bestow upon them what he could not venture to bestow upon Horace Coker.

"I say, you fellows"—Billy Bunter blinked into the study—"have you seen Smithy?"

"No!" growled Bob.

"I'm looking for him," said Bunter. "I was going to ask him to cash a postal-order for me. Perhaps you could do it, Bob, old man?"

"Where's the postal-order, you fat fraud?"

"There's been a delay in the post——"

"Oh, scat!"

"Owing to the war," explained Bunter. "However, it will be here to-morrow morning at the latest. Only five bob, you know."

"Go and eat coke!"

"Now, look here, Bob, old chap——"

"If you 'Bob, old chap,' me I'll boot you down the passage!"

"I know you had a remittance at tea-time," said Bunter. "You must have five bob left out of the ten you got."

"How do you know I had ten, you fat spoofer?"

"I happened to hear you say so."

"You happen to hear too much, Bunter," said Bob Cherry. "You happened to be listening to Loder, and caused all the trouble this afternoon. These happenings have got to stop."

"Oh, really, Bob—— Leggo, Cherry, you beast! Ow!"

Bob Cherry had seized the fat Removite by the collar. He winked at his chums over Billy Bunter's head.

"Now, I'll hold him in the doorway," he said. "You fellows kick your very hardest all together!"

"Right-ho!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter, in anticipation. "Leggo! Help! Murder! Fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"One, two——" counted Bob Cherry. "When I say 'three,' land out! All together, mind, and your very hardest. One, two——"

"Yaroooh! Help!"

Bob held the fat junior in the doorway, with his face to the passage. None of the other juniors were near him, and they had not the least intention of kicking him. It was only Bob's little joke. But Bunter knew what he deserved, and his anticipations were terrible.

"Three!" roared Bob, letting go Bunter's collar as he spoke. "Now, then, all together!"

Bunter bolted like a stone from a catapult. A roar of laughter followed him from No. 1 Study. Bunter went down the passage with a speed that was marvellous, considering the weight he had to carry. There was a terrific

concussion as he bolted fairly into Loder of the Sixth, who was coming up the passage.

"Yow!" roared Bunter, as Loder, gasping for breath, grasped him furiously. "Yow! Lemme go! They're after me! Murder! Fire! Yah!"

"You fat idiot! You——"

"They're after me, Loder!" shrieked Bunter. "Stop 'em!"

Loder's heavy hand was lifted, but he dropped it again. His eyes gleamed. He saw five grinning faces in the doorway of No. 1 Study, and he knew to whom the fat junior referred.

"So they are bullying you, Bunter?" said Loder, quite amiably.

"Yes!" roared Bunter. "Keep 'em off!"

"Come with me," said Loder.

"I—I say, I'm not going there!" gasped Bunter, in alarm, as Loder marched him towards No. 1 Study. "They—they——"

"I will protect you," said Loder. "Come with me. I've got to see into this. It's my duty as a prefect to put down bullying."

Bunter gasped; as well he might. Loder, with a stern and severe frown, marched him into No. 1 Study. And Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. Loder's chance had come, and it was pretty clear that he was going to make full use of it.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Rank Rebellion!

LODER fixed his eyes upon the chums of the Remove. They fixed their eyes upon Loder.

"Very lucky I came by, I think," said Loder.

"It's always lucky when you come by, Loder," said Bob Cherry, in his sweetest tone. "It's such a pleasure to see you. On a dull day there's no pick-me-up like a glance at your lovely countenance, Loder. We're always glad to see your face, Loder!"

"Always!" said Nugent.

"It's as good as the front page of 'Chuckles'!" explained Bob.

"Better!" said Johnny Bull.

"The betterfulness is terrific, my august Loder!" chuckled Hurree Singh.

Loder frowned still more portentously. Evidently the Famous Five could not be quelled by the terror of his glance.

"You were bullying Bunter!" he rapped out. "I don't want any of your cheek. I've got to look into this. I've had my eye on this study already. I suspect you of habitual bullying!"

"Well, you ought to know all about it," conceded Bob. "You're a connoisseur in bullying, Loder!"

"I met Bunter running as if for his life," continued Loder. "You had been bullying and ill-using him—a helpless, fat fellow in glasses!"

"Oh, really!" murmured Billy Bunter. Loder's sympathy was all very well, but the Owl of the Remove did not like to be described as a helpless, fat fellow in glasses. According to Bunter, it was his glasses that gave him his distinguished look.

"Now," continued Loder. "Now I've caught you fairly in the act, bullying and ragging in a cowardly way!"

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"That's not true," he said, "and you know it!"

"What?"

"You know it's not true!" said Wharton coolly.

"Take care what you say, Wharton. Bunter, you were rushing away from this study like a lunatic. You bumped into me, and hurt me considerably. If you had good reason for doing so, I will excuse you. If you had no good reason, I will thrash you within an inch of your life!"

"Ow!" murmured Bunter.

"Now, what was your reason for rushing away like that?" demanded Loder.

Billy Bunter blinked at the juniors. He did not really want to sneak, though he was feeling very wrathful. But Loder gave him no chance. Bunter had to furnish an

excellent reason for rushing away from No. 1 Study, or else be thrashed within an inch of his life. The latter alternative was not attractive.

But there were drawbacks to sneaking, too—such as being ragged and bumped by the Removites afterwards as a reward.

"I—I say," stammered Bunter, "I—I looked in, you know, to—to speak to these chaps in a friendly way——"

"Well?"

"And—and then they ragged me," said Bunter. "You know you did, you fellows. I can't help telling the truth. You know I never tell lies!"

"You never tell anything else!" growled Johnny Bull.

"What did they do to you?" asked Loder.

Bunter hesitated again, balancing in his mind the thrashing promised by Loder, and the probable results of laying a complaint before a prefect.

"Oh, get on!" said Wharton, taking pity on the wretched Owl of the Remove. "You can go ahead, Bunter."

"Silence, Wharton! Bunter, I require a full statement of the truth of this matter. I regard it as a very serious matter indeed."

"Well, that beast—I mean Bob Cherry—took me by the neck!" said Bunter. "You know you did, Bob!"

"Exactly!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Or, to be more precise, by your collar. We must have this matter quite precise, because Loder says he regards it as a very serious matter indeed!"

The juniors chuckled, and Loder scowled. Somehow his magisterial manner did not seem to produce a proper effect upon No. 1 Study.

"Then they all kicked me!" said Bunter. "I mean they were going to kick me; you know you were, you fellows."

"Did they say so, Bunter?"

"Yes. I say, you fellows, you know you did!"

"And you escaped barely in time?"

"Yes, Loder. They were all going to kick me together, their very hardest. They were Bob Cherry's very words!"

"Do you deny that, Cherry?"

"Not at all," said Bob.

"You were going to kick Bunter——"

"Oh, no!"

"What! You have just admitted——"

"I've admitted I said so, but it was only a little joke to make him run," explained Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Bob——"

"I do not believe that statement, Cherry!"

"Go hon!"

"Don't answer me in that impertinent manner, Cherry. It appears that you seized Bunter in a rough and brutal manner."

"Bow-wow!"

"And he barely escaped in time before you all piled on him and kicked him. I am shocked and disgusted with you!"

"Same to you, Loder!"

"I look upon you as a rascally and unscrupulous bully!"

"My very sentiments about you, Loder. You simply take the words out of a fellow's mouth!" said Bob, in surprise.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I shall punish you for your conduct!" said Loder, letting his ashplant slip down into his hand. "I shall cane you all round!"

"Will you?" said Harry Wharton grimly.

"If you resist a prefect, Wharton——"

"You're not going to cane us," said Harry. "You came nosing into our quarters looking for trouble, Loder; we know you. You want to square up because we watched Coker lick you. We we're jolly glad he licked you!"

"Hear, hear!" said the Co.

"And if you begin with that ashplant, Loder, I shall begin with this ruler!" said Wharton. "I give you fair warning!"

"And I shall start with the poker!" remarked Bob Cherry, picking up that instrument.

"And the tongfulness will be terrific!" said Hurree Singh, taking possession of the tongs.

Johnny Bull picked up a cushion.

"Say the word, Loder, and we'll all begin together!" he remarked.

Loder gripped his ashplant, and glared at the Famous Five. According to the fitness of things, the Removites ought to have submitted quietly to being caned by a prefect of the Sixth. They would have done so if the prefect had been Wingate or Courtney or North. But they knew that Loder knew perfectly well that they had not been bullying Bunter, and that he was simply making an excuse to punish them for the sake of the old score. That made all the difference.

"Cherry, hold out your hand!" rapped out Loder.

"Bow-wow!"

"Do you refuse to obey me, Cherry?"

"Do I?" remarked Bob, in a reflective way. "Well, how does it look, Loder, old man? Judge for yourself!"

"Then you will follow me to your Form-master, and I shall report your conduct to him!" said Loder.

"Go ahead!"

"Follow me!"

Loder strode from the study, taking Bunter with him. The juniors followed. As they went down the Remove passage there were inquiries from all sides.

"What's the little game?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Where are you off to?" inquired Peter Todd.

"We're following in father's footsteps," explained Bob Cherry. "We're following the dear old dad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder scowled furiously, and strode on. The five Removites followed him down the stairs to Mr. Quelch's study. Bob Cherry hummed, "Fall in and follow me!" Thus they arrived at Mr. Quelch's study.

"Come in!" said the Remove-master, as Loder knocked at the door.

He looked surprised as Loder marched in with Bunter, and the Famous Five at his heels. The five were looking serious now. They felt that they had acted quite within their rights; but they felt, too, that Mr. Quelch would regard disobedience to a prefect as a serious matter.

Mr. Quelch gave Loder a very peculiar look. The signs of his combat with Coker of the Fifth were very visible on Loder's face, though he had done his best to get rid of them. It was rather uncommon to see a prefect at Greyfriars with a swollen nose, and a "mouse" under his eye.

"Well?" said Mr. Quelch.

"I have to report these juniors, sir. They were caught in the very act of bullying and ill-treating Bunter—"

"Really, Loder, I think that you, as a prefect, might have dealt with the matter, without taking up my time," said Mr. Quelch peevishly.

"I desired to do so, sir; but the juniors refused to be caned by me, and took up pokers and rulers to assault me," said Loder. "I did not wish to engage in an undignified scuffle with boys in the Lower Fourth."

Mr. Quelch frowned in a way that Hurree Singh afterwards justly described as terrific.

"What?" he thundered.

And he picked up his cane.

"Now for it!" murmured Bob Cherry.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Going Through It!

MR. QUELCH rose to his feet, cane in hand. His brow was thunderous. Billy Bunter quaked as he blinked at him, though he was not there as a culprit. The Famous Five did not quake. They resigned themselves to their fate. Loder had scored, there was no doubt about that, and they had to go through it.

"Have you anything to say?" thundered the Form-master.

"Only that we were not bullying Bunter, sir," said Harry Wharton quietly, "and Loder knows that we were not."

"The knowfulness is terrific, honoured sahib."

"I met Bunter fleeing in terror, sir," said Loder. "He

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complained to me that Cherry had seized him brutally, and that they were all about to kick him when he escaped."

"It was a lark, sir," said Bob Cherry. "We weren't going to touch the silly ass—I—I mean Bunter, sir—"

"I am inclined to believe that statement," said Mr. Quelch. "Certainly, I should be surprised if those boys were guilty of brutal conduct, Loder. But I do not approve of horseplay and practical jokes, as you know very well. Bunter doubtless believed that you intended to ill-use him, and he naturally complained to a prefect—"

"Loder made him, sir," said Nugent.

"Loder did quite rightly in looking into the matter," said Mr. Quelch severely. "It was his duty as a prefect. That, in fact, is why prefects are appointed, to keep up the discipline of the school without continually troubling the masters in small matters. You know very well that you should obey the commands of a prefect."

"But Loder, sir—"

"He's a beastly bully!" blurted out Johnny Bull.

"Silence, Bull! How dare you speak of a prefect in that manner in my presence? However, to be just, I will inquire into the matter carefully. You have a right of appeal to me if you complain of Loder. Bunter, were you or were you not treated roughly by your Form-fellows?"

Bunter blinked at Loder, and blinked at the Famous Five. He debated in his mind which he had most to fear from.

"Tell me the truth, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Oh, certainly, sir. I shouldn't be likely to do anything else, I hope, sir," stammered Bunter. "I—I always tell the exact truth, sir. I've got into trouble more than once for being so truthful—"

"Please keep to the matter in hand, Bunter, and answer my question!"

"Well, sir, I—I—I was treated rather roughly, sir, but—but I don't mind," said Bunter magnanimously. "I forgive them, sir."

"That is not the point, Bunter. You were treated roughly?"

"Ye-es, sir. A—a—a little—a very little, sir. I—I think perhaps the silly duffers meant it as a joke, sir, on second thoughts."

"Bunter is afraid of being ill-treated afterwards if he tells you the truth, sir," said Loder venomously. "He dashed into me in the Remove passage, running as if in fear of his life."

"You may depend upon my protection, Bunter. Neither do I think these boys would be so cowardly as to punish you for answering at my order. You were running away from them?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"After being treated roughly?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"And you complained to Loder of your treatment?"

"I—I may have said something of the sort—"

"Did you or did you not complain to Loder?" demanded Mr. Quelch, in a voice of thunder, that made Bunter jump.

"Yes, sir," he gasped.

"Very good. Wharton, and all of you, I dare say you acted thoughtlessly, only intending horseplay, which Bunter misunderstood. But, on Bunter's complaint, Loder's duty was to punish you, as there was no doubt about the facts. You did very wrong in refusing to be caned by him. You will now be caned by him in my presence. Take this cane, Loder!"

Loder took the cane, willingly enough.

Harry Wharton & Co. set their teeth.

They would rather have been caned by their Form-master than by the bully of the Sixth; but there was no choice about the matter now.

"You will administer two strokes each, Loder," said Mr. Quelch. "You first, Wharton. Hold out your hand!"

Wharton stood motionless, a struggle in his breast. Mr. Quelch raised his eyebrows. His glance was like cold steel.

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"Wharton, is it possible that you think of disregarding my orders?" he snapped. "I warn you that I shall take you immediately to the Head, and request him to expel you from the school."

Wharton bit his lip hard.

"I shall obey your orders, sir," he said.

"Very good."

Wharton held out his hand. The struggle in his breast had been only momentary, and it was not merely Mr. Quelch's threat that had caused him to yield.

Swish! Swish!

Loder did not fail to lay on the strokes hard. Wharton stepped back, without a word or a sound, when he had received his punishment. Bob Cherry came next, then Hurree Singh, then Nugent, then Johnny Bull.

Only the swishing of the cane was heard in the study. The Famous Five were hard as nails, and they took their punishment without a murmur.

"I trust this will be a lesson to you in obedience," said Mr. Quelch. "You may go."

The Famous Five went. Loder followed them, with a mocking light in his eyes. The Co. had suffered for the delight they had so injudiciously displayed when Coker of the Fifth was licking Loder under the elms.

"I—I say, you fellows," mumbled Billy Bunter, in the passage, "I—I—I didn't mean, you know—"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bob.

"That beast, Loder, made me tell," said Bunter, anxiously. "And—and I couldn't tell a lie, you know."

"Clear off, confound you!"

"Oh, really, Cherry," protested Bunter, rolling after the five smarting juniors, "I really couldn't help it, you know, and I don't think you ought to be down on me simply because I'm a truthful chap. I know some fellows are not so particular as I am, but—"

"Do you want to be kicked from here to Jericho?" roared Bob, exasperated. "Clear off and shut up!"

"I—I say, Bob, you know, I am really, you know. I dare say you were only joking in the study. And—and now it's all over, I don't bear malice, you know. And if you like to cash my postal-order—"

"What?"

"My postal-order," said Bunter. "It's coming to-morrow morning for certain, and after what's happened, I really think you ought to oblige me—"

Billy Bunter did not stop to finish. Bob Cherry was coming for him with a look that was like that of a Hun on the warpath. Billy Bunter promptly scuttled out into the Close, with his famous postal-order still uncashed.

"I shall squash that fat beetle some day," growled Bob Cherry, rubbing his hands. "Ow! Yow! My hands! Wouldn't you fellows like to scrag Loder?"

"Scrag him!" groaned Nugent. "I'd like to boil him in oil!"

"I didn't think Quelch was such a beastful rotter!" groaned Hurree Singh. "The beastfulness of the august Quelch is terrific!"

"Tain't Quelch's fault," growled Bob. "He had to pitch into us, the way Loder put it. Loder's a cunning beast. I want to scalp Loder."

"I—I wonder if we could get Coker to lick him again?" murmured Nugent.

"Ow! My hands! Wow!"

It was a disconsolate five that wandered into the dusky Close. Loder had laid on those strokes much harder than Mr. Quelch would have laid them on. The juniors' palms felt as if they were burning.

"And to think," mumbled Johnny Bull—"to think that that beast is a blackguardly pub-haunter and a smoky beast—yow! Nice sort of a blighter to be a prefect."

Bob Cherry burst into a sudden chuckle. His chums stared at him. They could not see anything to chuckle about.

"What's the matter with you?" said Wharton. "I don't feel like laughing."

"Same here," said Nugent. "Ping off, for goodness' sake, Bob! There ain't anything funny in this."

"I'm thinking of Loder," said Bob.

"Hang Loder!"

"We're going to make him sit up for this!"

"Yow-wow! I've had enough."

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"And I know how to do it. The beast is going out to-night pub-haunting. You remember what Bunter heard?"

"We can't sneak about even such a beast as Loder," growled Johnny Bull. "Besides, we shouldn't be believed if we did."

"Who's talking about sneaking, fathead?"

"Oh, rats! What are you driving at, then?"

"Loder's getting out of his study window at eleven o'clock, according to Bunter," said Bob, "and he'll jolly well go. It must be an important appointment, I should think. He's dropped the Coker bizney because of that, it looks to me. Well, if he goes—and I'm sure he'll go—"

"Well?"

"There's going to be somebody else out at eleven o'clock, too," said Bob. "Us!"

"We can't show him up," said Wharton uneasily. "That would be rather too thick. It would amount to—"

"For goodness' sake, let a chap finish!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"You never do get finished"

"Why, you fathead—"

"Oh, rats!"

It looked as if the untoward course of events had had an acerbating effect even upon the tempers of the chums of the Remove. But Bob Cherry's face cleared immediately.

"Keep smiling," he said. "It's all in the day's work, you know. I'm not thinking about showing Loder up. I'm thinking about bumping him down."

"Oh!"

"When he drops out of his window, he's going to drop on us," said Bob, chuckling again. "He won't be able to report us to Quelch without explaining why he was getting out of his window at eleven o'clock at night."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we'll give the beast the ragging of his life, and teach him not to break bounds, too. You heard what Quelch said about looking after the discipline of the school? Why shouldn't we do our bit?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! You fellows seem to enjoy being licked," said Squiff, as he joined them. "Was it extra nice?"

But when Bob explained, Sampson Quincy Ifley Field roared, too, and declared that he was "on" in that scene. And, though their palms were still aching, and ached for the rest of the evening, the Famous Five felt greatly comforted. Revenge, as the novelists say, is sweet. And that night the blackguard of the Sixth was destined to get a Roland for his Oliver.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Night Out!

WINGATE saw lights out in the Remove dormitory that night. Wingate saw nothing unusual—the chums of the Remove were careful of that. They had rubber shoes ready for their little excursion, carefully hidden, and they looked as innocent and simple as lambs. But when the captain of Greyfriars was gone, they did not settle down to sleep with the rest of the Remove.

One by one the Removites dropped off into slumber; deep breathing came from most of the beds, and Billy Bunter's sonorous snore rumbled through the dormitory. But the Famous Five and Sampson Quincy Ifley Field remained awake. They were waiting for half-past ten to chime out from the clock-tower.

The half-hour came at last. Then, as the chime died away, half a dozen juniors sat up in bed.

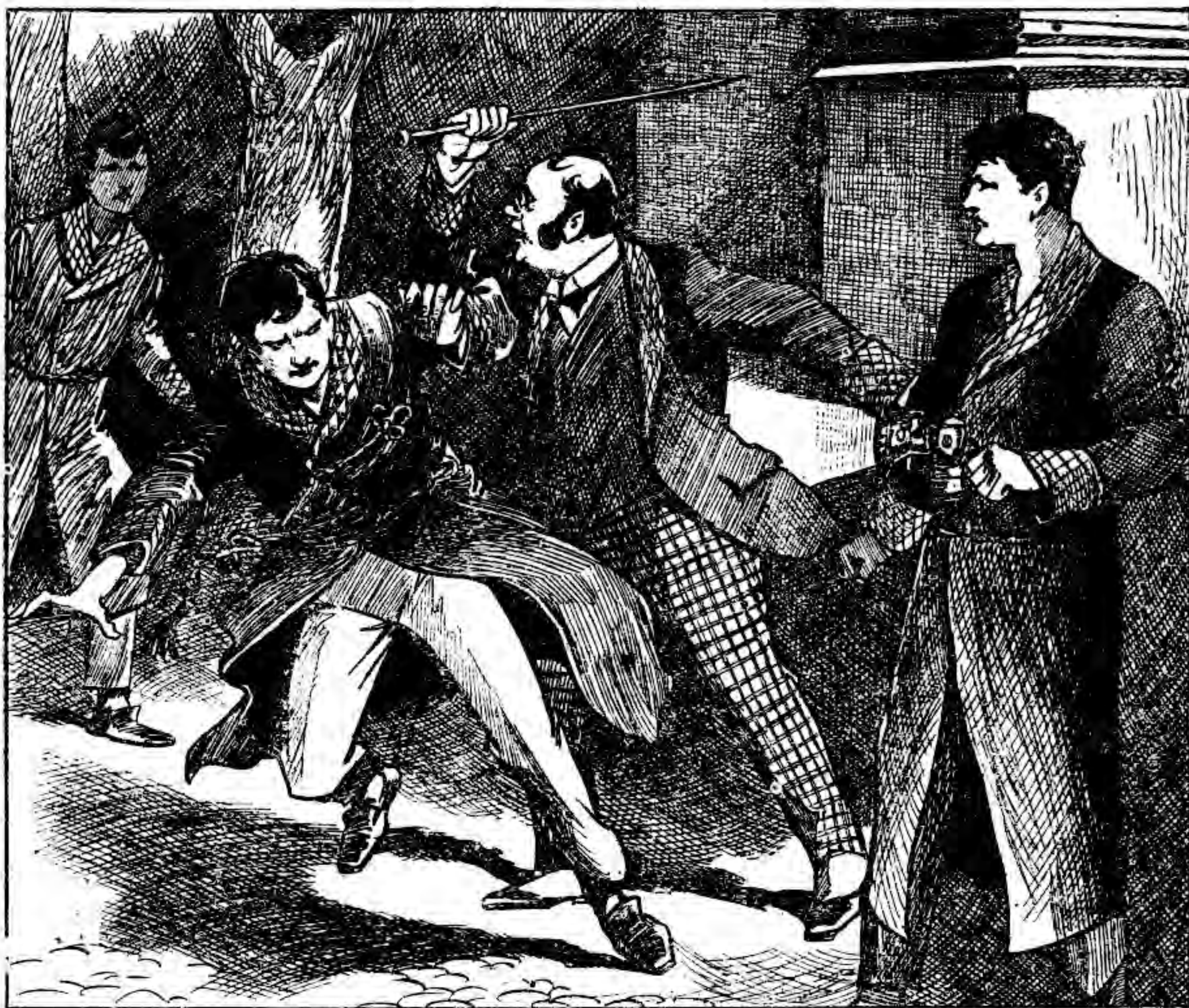
"You fellows awake?" It was Bob Cherry's voice. And the chuckling tones of the Nabob of Bhanipur answered:

"The wakefulness is terrific, my esteemed Bob."

"Shush!" murmured Frank Nugent.

"Here we go on the giddy warpath!" said Squiff, slipping out of bed. "Half an hour yet, and lots of time for Loder."

The six juniors dressed quickly in the dark. They put on their rubber shoes, in which they made no sound as they moved.



"It is undoubtedly a burglar!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "Fortunately, I thought of bringing a poker. Let me get in one blow——" "Oh, my hat!" murmured Valence, almost yelling at the idea of Mr. Prout getting in one blow with that poker at the unfortunate Loder. (See Chapter 7.)

Harry Wharton led the way from the dormitory. There were lights in the house below, but the upper passages were dark. All the Greyfriars fellows were in bed by half-past ten, excepting for a few of the Sixth Form.

The juniors groped their way cautiously along the dark passages to the box-room, and slipped into it and closed the door behind them.

"All serene so far!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"Now for the window."

Wharton opened the window.

To the lithe and active juniors it was easy enough to drop lightly upon the leads of the outhouse below the box-room window, and thence clamber to the ground. In a few minutes more they stood upon the earth.

Then they scouted round the house.

Lights gleamed from the windows of several of the masters' rooms. The Head's study, Mr. Quelch's study, and Mr. Prout's, were all lighted. But the blinds were down, and the Close was very shadowy.

In a few minutes more the Removites were close by the Sixth-Form windows.

Loder's window was already dark. A quarter to eleven was chiming faintly out through the night. But Wingate's window was lighted, and shadows could be seen on the blind. The captain of Greyfriars was still up, and probably Courtney or North was with him.

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"Quiet, my sons!" murmured Bob Cherry, as he spotted Wingate's window. "Our respected skipper is burning the midnight gas."

"All the better," grinned Squiff. "Loder won't dare to make a sound, to make Wingate look out of his window."

The juniors chuckled softly. Below Loder's window was a mass of thick ivy, and a tree was close at hand. In the deep, dark shadow of the tree the six juniors ensconced themselves—to wait. Bob Cherry loosened the lid of a tin he carried under his arm. There was treacle in the tin. The treacle was for Loder. It was, as Bob had remarked, a waste of good treacle; and, in order to eke it out, he had mixed in a quantity of gum and ink. This did not improve the treacle, as treacle, but it made it much more suitable for the purpose for which it was designed.

The Co. waited and watched patiently. The light was still burning in Wingate's study, which was next but one to Loder's.

Eleven o'clock sounded at last from the clock-tower. The juniors made a movement of anticipation.

"Now for Loder," murmured Bob Cherry—"unless Bunter got it wrong."

The juniors had not long to wait now. Their eyes were fixed upon Loder's window, only a couple of yards away, and glimmering faintly in the darkness. There

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was a faint creak as the lower sash was cautiously raised.

"Shush!" murmured Bob breathlessly.

The sash was pushed up higher. Dimly in the darkness a face looked out. The juniors could catch only the faintest glimmer of it. Another face appeared beside it, dim and shadowy.

"All serene!" came in a faint whisper; and the juniors recognised Gerald Loder's voice.

"It's risky," whispered the voice of Carne of the Sixth.

"Rot! You've put the dummy in your bed?"

"Yes; but——"

"So have I. Safe as houses, if anybody looks in—not that anybody is at all likely to look into a Sixth Form room."

"But you know that fat beast was listening to-day."

Loder grunted.

"If he had been talking we should have heard something of it before this."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Besides, I gave him a lesson. That's all right. But if you're in a blue funk, Carne——"

"Oh, rats! I'm ready," said Carne sulkily.

"The coast's clear. Look for yourself."

A head and shoulders came from the window.

"Wingate's still up," muttered Carne.

"But his blind's down."

"If he should hear——"

"Don't jaw, and then he won't," said Loder politely.

"Well, I'm ready," said Carne, but not very heartily. It was evident that the minor blackguard was not so reckless and hardened as his associate.

"Follow me," said Loder.

The prefect swung himself actively from the window, grasped at the ivy below, and dropped to the ground almost noiselessly.

"Now!" muttered Harry Wharton. "Pile on the cad!"

There was a sudden rush in the darkness.

Six juniors bolted from under the tree, and even as Loder touched the ground he was seized on all sides.

Loder gasped with startled affright, as well he might.

"Why—what—ow-ah——"

Bump!

Loder descended upon the earth with a heavy concussion, in the grasp of the juniors, and a loud yell escaped his lips.

"Yow-wowwooh!"

In that sudden attack he forgot caution. His yell rang through the silent Close, waking a thousand echoes.

Carne, who was already out on the window-sill, rolled back into the room in alarm.

"Yaroooh! What—what—— Yooop!" yelled Loder.

Splash! Swoosh! Squash!

"Gerrrrrooooggghh!"

Bob Cherry's tin of treacle was up-ended over Loder's head. Treacle and ink and gum, horribly mixed together, swamped over Loder's hair, over his face, and over his neck. There was more than a pint of the terrible concoction, and Loder had it all.

"Gurrurrugg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yowwwwggggggg!"

"Hook it!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Wingate——"

Suppressing their laughter, the six juniors fled in the darkness. Loder rolled on the ground, dazed and blinded by the treacle, gasping and snorting. A window was thrown up, and light streamed out, and Wingate of the Sixth looked out in amazement into the quad.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Hunt in the Dark!

WHAT the thunder——

"What the deuce——"

"What—what——"

Wingate stared out into the darkness in blank astonishment. Courtney and Valence, who were in the captain's study, joined him there, and stared out.

From the darkness outside came the most extraordinary sounds.

"Gerrrrr! Yurrrrg! Yooooooop!"

"Sounds like somebody choking!" said Courtney.

"A dog got loose, perhaps," said Valence.

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"Who's there?" shouted Wingate.

"Gerrrrrr!"

A window closed softly, and at the same moment another window opened loudly. Mr. Quelch looked out from some distance along the house front.

"Whatever is the matter? What is that?"

"Yurrrrrrrg!"

"I don't know, sir," called out Wingate. "There's something going on in the quad; I can't make it out. I'll get out and see."

"I will join you, Wingate. I will open the door——"

"I'll drop from the window, sir."

Loder of the Sixth suddenly ceased to gurgle. He rubbed some of the treacle out of his eyes, and spat it out of his mouth. He was half-blinded and half-choked, and his hair, his face, his neck, and clothes were thick with it. He wanted cleaning more than anything else; but he had no time to think about cleaning then.

Wingate's words struck on his ears, and gave him a chill at his heart. In a few moments Wingate would be on the spot—and Mr. Quelch to follow!

How was the prefect to explain his presence in the quad, fully dressed, at eleven o'clock at night? And there was the dummy in his bed. Whatever lie he might invent to account for his presence there, suppose the dummy was seen in his bed? That would disprove everything. And for a prefect to be discovered surreptitiously breaking bounds late at night meant one thing and one thing only—the "sack," short and sharp.

He could not climb back into his window by the ivy without being seen by the fellows at Wingate's window. And a hurried glance showed him that his window was closed. Carne had evidently closed it from within. There was only one thing to do—and he did it. He took to his heels.

Wingate dropped from the window, and ran towards the spot where he had heard the gasping, snorting, and gurgling. It was vacant. The spot was directly under Loder's window, and Wingate glanced at that window; and it was lucky for Loder that his comrade had had the ready wit to close it. Had the window been open Wingate would have been in no doubt as to who it was that had gurgled and snorted there.

"Got him?" called out Courtney.

"Nobody here."

"Well, there was somebody," said Valence. "I'll get my electric-lamp."

"Do—and buck up!"

Valence ran out of the study and down the passage to his own room. He almost ran into Carne.

"Hallo! You up?" he said. "Have you heard?"

"What's the row?" stuttered Carne.

"Somebody's kicking up a row in the quad," said Valence. "Some fag jape, very likely. I'm going to get my lamp——"

Carne gripped him by the arm. Valence was one of the merry society of "blades," of which Loder was the chief, though he was not quite so bad as the others.

"Don't," whispered Carne.

Valence stared at him.

"What? Let go! Wingate's out, and he's waiting——"

"It's Loder!" whispered Carne.

"Oh, my hat!"

"He got out, and I was going after him, and something happened to him. Looked to me as if he was collared by somebody—some cheeky fags, perhaps——"

Valence chuckled.

"Nothing to cackle at," growled Carne. "Keep it dark, for goodness' sake. It will be the sack for Loder. He's still out there somewhere. Wingate would give him away like a shot."

"Rely on me," said Valence.

He returned to Wingate's study. Courtney had joined the captain of Greyfriars in the quad, and Mr. Quelch was there now.

"Got the lamp, Valence?"

"Busted, I'm sorry to say," replied Valence coolly.

"Oh, rotten!"

"There is certainly someone in the quadrangle," said Mr. Quelch frowning. "I heard some very extraordinary sounds—as if someone were choking. It may be a practical joke of some of the juniors. Kindly look through

the quadrangle, Wingate, while I visit the junior dormitories."

"Certainly, sir."

Courtney fetched a bicycle-lamp, and Mr. Quelch went into the House again, frowning portentously. The first dormitory he paid a visit to was the Remove. Perhaps Mr. Quelch had an idea that if any juniors had been "larking" in the quad it was probable that they belonged to his own Form.

He switched on the electric light, and looked into the room.

Every bed was occupied.

Six of the juniors had been in bed about three minutes when Mr. Quelch arrived there. But the Remove-master could not guess that. So far as he could see, the Removites were sleeping the sleep of the just.

He turned out the light and closed the door, and went away to pursue his investigations in other quarters.

Then Bob Cherry sat up in bed.

"Just did it, dear boys," said Bob cheerfully. "If Quelch had come three minutes earlier—what?"

"A miss is as good as a mile," said Squiff. "Some silly ass bunged an elbow into my eye when we were scrambling into that dashed box-room window—"

"Yow!" said Nugent.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter with you, Franky?"

"I've knocked my funny-bone getting in at the window. Yow! I didn't know it was that fathead's silly eye—Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I knocked my esteemed knee against something very hard," remarked Hurree Singh.

"It was my head!" growled Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never mind," said Bob Cherry comfortingly. "I wonder where Loder is now! I wonder how he likes the treacle!"

And the young rascals chuckled gleefully. Their chuckles awoke most of the Removites, who wanted to know what the row was about, and there was still more chuckling when they explained.

Meanwhile, Wingate and Courtney were searching for the mysterious lurker in the Close. They searched through the trees, with the bicycle-lantern gleaming before them. Valence and Carne joined them—not with the intention of discovering the lurker, however. They wondered what on earth had become of Loder, and whether they would have a chance of helping him. From Wingate and Courtney he had no help to expect. Wingate would have done his duty pitilessly if he had discovered the true character of Gerald Loder.

Mr. Quelch came out again, looking very angry, and joined them, and with him came Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth.

"The juniors all appear to be in their dormitories," said Mr. Quelch. "It must be some person from outside who has entered the precincts of the school."

"Unless it was a junior, and he cut back to bed before you looked in, sir," suggested Carne, who was naturally anxious for the search to end.

"I suppose that is possible—"

"Here he is!" shouted Courtney.

He rushed forward as he caught a glimpse of a shadowy figure. There was a rapid patter of footsteps.

"Got him?" shouted Wingate.

"No; he's bunked into the cloisters."

"It is undoubtedly a burglar!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "Fortunately, I thought of bringing a poker. Let me get one blow—"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Valence, almost yelling at the idea of Mr. Prout getting one blow with that poker at the unfortunate Loder.

"This way!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "He must be found. What was he like, Courtney? You saw him?"

"I had just a glimpse, sir. A queer-looking face, quite black," said Courtney. "He looked like a nigger."

"Bless my soul!"

The party rushed on into the cloisters. Gerald Loder

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was in the cloisters, quaking. If he were run down now, it was all over with him at Greyfriars, he knew.

He retreated through the cloisters, with palpitating heart, cudgelling his brains for some scheme of getting back to his room. There was a shout from Wingate. For an instant the light had gleamed on a fleeing figure.

"Here he is! Collar him! Why, you fathead, Carne—"

Carne, springing forward, bumped into Wingate, and sent him staggering. The lantern cropped the stone flags with a crash, and was extinguished. There were several loud yelps as the pursuers ran into one another in the darkness.

"Sorry!" panted Carne. "I—I—"

"Yow! You ran right into me!" roared Wingate.

"I—I— Sorry! Quite an accident—"

"Light the lantern!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Broken, sir," said Courtney, feeling for the lantern and picking it up. "We sha'n't keep it alight now."

"Dear me, how annoying!"

Loder of the Sixth did not think it annoying. He was scudding away in the darkness, doubling back towards the Close. While the exasperated searchers were fumbling round the lantern, Loder was sprinting towards the School House for all he was worth. He dared not go in by the door, where a light was burning, and Mr. Capper was standing, looking out. He headed for his own window, but paused outside Wingate's. His own window was shut, but Wingate's was wide open. Loder clambered

up furiously over the ivy.

Voices could be heard in the darkness of the Close.

"He's vanished; gone off, most likely."

"I fancy he cut off towards the House."

"There must be a thorough search. It is undoubtedly a burglar."

Loder, gasping, rolled down inside Wingate's study. He did not pause to take breath. He bounded up, scudded into the passage, and into his own room. He panted with relief as he closed the door behind him and locked it.

"Oh—oh—oh, crumbs! Oh, dear! Yow-ow!" gasped Loder.

While the search was still going on outside, Loder was washing his face

and neck and head, in the dark; rubbing and scrubbing, and murmuring remarks that would certainly have earned him the "sack" if the Head had heard them. The search went on for some time, but it was given up at last. Loder, having got rid of most of the treacle, ink, and gum, was towelling his head furiously, when a tap came at the door, and the handle was tried.

"Hallo!" called out Loder, yawning loudly, as if he had been just awakened.

"All serene, old man," said Carne's voice through the keyhole. "I—I wondered if you were—ahem!—awake."

"You woke me up," said Loder.

"Oh, did I?" gasped Carne.

"Yes; I went to bed early. Anything on?"

"Yes—no! All right."

Carne went on to his own room. Loder turned in, greatly relieved at his escape, and not thinking in the least of keeping his appointment for that night at the Cross Keys. But it was a long time before he slept. He was thinking of the merry card-party he had missed, and of the unknown, unseen practical jokers who had made him miss it. Who was it that had collared him under his window, and bumped him and smothered him with treacle? Loder did not know, but he meant to discover, and to make the culprits feel the full weight of his hand.

ANSWERS

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Coker Feels Insulted!

HORACE COKER frowned.

It was the morning, and Coker of the Fifth was strolling in the quadrangle, getting an appetite for his breakfast. He came upon a group of Removites and Fourth-Form fellows, and a roar of laughter greeted his ears.

Hence Coker's frown.

Like the gentleman in the old comedy, who was certain that he was being spoken of because the speakers "laughed consumedly," Horace Coker was assured that he was the object of the juniors' mirth. It was not an uncommon thing for Coker to be the object of mirth.

"Well, you cheeky young sweeps!" said Coker, halting, and surveying the Famous Five, and Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth, with a majestic frown.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry affably. "Top of the morning to you, Coker! Where did you dig up that face?"

"If you fags," said Coker, "can't learn to treat seniors with proper respect, there's nothing for it but licking you!"

"Can't you answer a civil question?" demanded Bob.

"Eh? What—what question?"

"Where did you get that face?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker had an ashplant under his arm. It was simply cheek on Coker's part that led him to carry an ashplant—a symbol of authority that belonged only to prefects of the Sixth. But Coker was like that.

He slipped it into his hand, and started towards Bob Cherry. Bob promptly backed away. He had no desire to sample Coker's ashplant at close quarters.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Temple of the Fourth indignantly. "What cheek! Don't you put on the airs of a giddy prefect, Coker!"

Whack!

"Yaroooh!" roared Temple, in surprise and wrath, as the ashplant came across his shoulders.

"I don't allow cheek!" said Coker loftily. "If you fags can't learn—Here, get off! My hat! You cheeky young villains! Oh, crumbs!"

Like one man the juniors rushed at Coker. There were five of the Remove and four of the Fourth. They were simply all over Coker.

What happened next seemed like a nightmare to the great man of the Fifth. When he woke up, so to speak, he was reclining in the quad, and the juniors were walking away, Bob Cherry triumphantly flourishing his ashplant. Coker sat up and gasped.

"My hat! Why, I'll—I'll— Yow-ow!"

The juniors carried off the captured ashplant to the woodshed. There it was promptly chopped up. It was not the first time they had chopped up an ashplant of Coker's. They would have been equally pleased to chop up the ashplants belonging to the prefects; but that was not feasible.

Coker picked himself up and snorted, and dusted down his clothes. Coker never knew when he was beaten; and he was about to start on the track of the merry juniors, when Loder of the Sixth bore down on him.

"Coker!" he rapped out.

"Hallo!" said Coker. "What's the matter with you?"

Loder was looking very bad-tempered. He had not yet recovered from the effects of his night out, so far as his temper was concerned.

"I saw you going for those kids," said Loder magisterially.

Coker looked dangerous.

"Well?" he said.

"Bullying's not allowed," said Loder. "I won't have it—see? I shall report this to your Form-master."

"Why, you cheeky rotter!" gasped Coker. "Bullying! Me—me! Why, only yesterday I licked you for bullying the fags, and I'll jolly well do it again if I catch you at the same game!"

Evidently Coker did not regard his own proceedings as savouring of bullying.

"Follow me into the House!" said Loder, his eyes gleaming. It was his chance of getting back on Coker at last.

"Rats!" said Coker.

"I shall report you."

"Silly ass!" said Coker.

"Very well; you will be called in to Mr. Prout."

"Go and chop chips!"

Loder strode into the house. Coker stood glowering with indignation. To be called a bully was a little too much. He felt that Loder was only doing it because of that licking of yesterday. He felt greatly inclined to go after Loder and bestow upon him "another of the same." He quite forgot about the juniors, who were merrily chopping up his ashplant in the woodshed.

Mr. Prout came to the door and beckoned to him. Coker came up.

"Ahem! Coker," said Mr. Prout, with a cough. "Loder informs me—ahem!—that you have been guilty of—ahem!—bullying—"

"He's lying, sir?" said Coker, with beautiful frankness.

"Coker!"

"The fact is, sir, Loder is a beastly bully," explained Coker. "I'm down on bullying. I had to chip in yesterday to stop him. Lots of fellows saw us."

"Ahem—ahem! You must not interfere with a prefect, Coker. It appears that Loder has just seen you chastising a junior."

"Only keeping him in order, sir."

"Kindly refrain from doing anything of the kind in future, Coker. You are not in the Sixth Form, and you are not a prefect. You will take a hundred lines."

"Why, sir, I—I—"

"That will do, Coker!" said Mr. Prout; and he retired majestically.

He left Coker almost bursting with wrath and indignation on the steps. He was still simmering with it, when his chums Potter and Greene came out. They looked at him inquiringly.

"What's the row?" asked Potter.

"Prout!" gasped Coker. "Loder! Reported me—for bullying! What do you think of that?"

"Whom were you bullying?" asked Greene innocently.

"Why, you silly ass—"

"I—I mean—"

"I was licking some juniors for their own good, of course! I believe in having a firm hand with fags, as you know," said Coker, "and that bullying brute Loder actually said I was bullying!"

"Pot calling kettle black!" grinned Potter.

"But I wasn't doing anything of the kind!" roared Coker, exasperated.

"Of course not!" said Potter soothingly. "When Loder licks a fag, it's beastly bullying!"

"Yes, rather!"

"But when you lick a fag, it's nothing of the kind," continued Potter. "There's a distinction—it wants seeing, but it's there."

"If you want a thick ear, George Potter—"

Potter walked off, grinning—without waiting for the thick ear. Greene followed him, chuckling. The great Horace was a source of never-ending hilarity to his study-mates in one way or another.

Coker snorted.

"Bullying!" he murmured. "By Jove! I'll show you the cad! Bullying, my hat!"

And Coker was still snorting with indignation when he went in to breakfast.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Heavy Hand!

LODER of the Sixth had his eye on the chums of the Remove that morning.

Loder, as well as the great Horace, had observed that merry group in the quad, chuckling consumedly over, apparently, some excellent joke.

Loder thought he could guess what that excellent joke was.

Horace Coker had assumed that the laughter was directed towards himself; Coker never quite realised that there were times when persons were not thinking of him at all. Loder guessed, more correctly, that the juniors

had been chuckling over the adventure of the previous night.

His suspicions had turned naturally to the Famous Five, his old enemies in the Remove. He had given them very recent cause to feel vengeful. And he remembered that a Remove junior—Billy Bunter—had been listening when he was talking to Carne about his plans for that night.

"They did it," Loder murmured to himself. "They—a lot of them—some of the Fourth, too, perhaps—they were all grinning over it!—I know it was that! I'll find out which of the young cads it was, and then—"

Loder gritted his teeth by way of finishing the sentence. "Then" there was to be a high old time for the heroes of the treacle incident.

After morning lessons, when the Remove came out, they found Loder of the Sixth waiting for them. Hobson and Hoskins of the Shell came out with the Famous Five, and they were all grinning. Hobson had heard something from Temple, and he had come to the Famous Five for particulars. But he left off chuckling suddenly as he caught sight of Gerald Loder's scowling face.

"Look out!" he murmured.

Loder signed to them to stop.

"Were any of you out of your dormitory last night?" he demanded.

"I wasn't, Loder," said Hobson cheerily. "I've heard that there was quite a row—somebody was dodging about the Close with Wingate after him. I wonder whom it could have been?"

"I wonder!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "I seem to have heard that there was some treacle spilled on somebody. Can you guess who it was, Loder?"

"Some beastly bully, you know!" said Nugent innocently. "Some chap must have caught him breaking bounds and treacled him, you know. Funny, wasn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder gave the juniors a glare like a basilisk, and turned away. He was quite sure about it now. Punishing the juniors for being out of their dormitory was out of the question; he did not want the whole story to come out. Certainly, Mr. Quelch would have been very severe upon them for getting out of the dorm at night—but it would have come out what they had done so far—and that would not have suited Loder at all. The young rascals had calculated well; Loder dared not say a word.

But they were not done with Loder. Having given tit for tat, the chums of the Remove would have been satisfied to call it square. And during that day and the next they had reason to suppose that Loder had let it drop. The prefect did not single them out, after that one interview. As a matter of fact, Loder was understudying the celebrated Brer Rabbit, and lying low. He was waiting for the affair to blow over; waiting with undiminished bitterness and vengeance.

Loder was biding his time—and calculating. Who was the mysterious lurker in the quadrangle on that mysterious night had not been revealed. The juniors, though they chuckled over the matter among themselves, had no intention of giving Loder away to the powers. If they had told, Loder was prepared to deny the whole story, and brazen it out; and there was in point of fact no proof against him. It suited both parties to keep their own counsel.

Still, the prefect considered it judicious to let a few days pass before he visited vengeance upon the merry raggars. During those few days his wrath had to be bottled up, and, instead of calming down, it grew more bitter. There was a very unpleasant time in store for the chums of the Remove—just as unpleasant as Gerald Loder could make it, with all his energy devoted to the task.

Bob Cherry was the first victim. Bob had been warned by Mr. Quelch on the subject of a little way he had of sliding down the banisters. Bob took Mr. Quelch's warning meekly; but, in an absent-minded sort of way, continued to descend staircases by way of the banisters. He did not mean any harm, though he sometimes did some to fellows who happened to be in the way. And a few days after the treacle incident, as Bob came sailing down the banisters of the big staircase, he landed fairly at Loder's feet.

Loder had had an eye open, evidently. Bob had not caught sight of him till he was half-way down, and then

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it was too late to stop. As he landed in the hall, Loder's hand dropped on his collar.

"Caught you at it, have I?" said Loder.

"Looks like it!" agreed Bob.

"Hold out your hand!"

Loder gripped his ashplant. Bob Cherry eyed him dubiously. It was within the rights of the prefect to cane him, and Bob was certainly in the wrong. So, after a moment's hesitation, his hand came out.

Swish!

"Wow!" murmured Bob.

"Now the other!" commanded Loder.

"I—I say, Loder, ain't you over-doing it?" murmured Bob.

"Will you hold out your hand, Cherry, or shall I take you to Mr. Quelch?"

"Anything for a quiet life," said Bob.

Swish!

"I shall cane you severely next time!" said Loder.

"I will not allow you to disregard your Form-master's orders in this way!"

Bob Cherry did not reply; he departed with his hands tucked under his arms. He joined his chums, who were waiting for him in the common-room.

"Hallo! What's the matter with your paws?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Loder!" groaned Bob.

"That beast again?"

"The beastfulness of Loder is terrific!"

"Rotten cad!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh," said a bitter voice in the doorway, "that is the way you speak of your prefects, is it? Wharton, Bull, and Hurree Singh, hold out your hands!"

The juniors were fairly caught. They knew that Loder was after vengeance for the treacle incident; but he had a good excuse. Certainly, any prefect would have caned juniors for describing him as a beast and a cad.

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"I didn't know you were listening, Loder," he said.

"Don't cheek me, Wharton, or you'll get it worse! Hold out your hand at once!" said Loder harshly.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Each of you will take a hundred lines," said Loder, with a bitter smile, "and if they're not handed in this evening I shall double them!"

Loder walked away with his ashplant under his arm, grinning. He felt that he was getting his own back for the treacle. He left the Famous Five looking at one another with slaughterous expressions.

"He's got us by the short hairs!" groaned Bob Cherry. "After all, the beast is a prefect! We shall have to mind our p's and q's!"

"Lines instead of footer practice!" grunted Nugent. "And I didn't call him a beast, either! I only thought it!"

"We're not going to miss practice," said Wharton decidedly. "It gets dark early now. We'll do the lines afterwards."

This was assented to, and the Remove chums went down to the footer field with smarting hands. Footer practice kept them longer than they had intended, however, and when they came in they had barely time to do their preparation. The lines remained undone. Loder met them as they went up to the dormitory.

"I haven't seen those lines," he remarked.

"Not done," said Wharton shortly.

"They are doubled, and you will write them out to-morrow afternoon," said Loder agreeably.

The morrow afternoon was a half-holiday, so it was not a happy prospect. The Famous Five went to bed feeling perfectly Hunnish towards Loder.

"We shall have to give him some more somehow," grunted Johnny Bull.

The next morning, just before lessons, Billy Bunter was discovered in the quad, rubbing his fat ears and groaning. It was Loder again. Even the Owl of the Remove was not too insignificant a person for Loder's vengeance to fall upon. Loder had worked it out in his mind that the raggars must have known exactly when he was going to get out of his window that night, and

that they owed the information to Bunter. Billy Bunter was destined to suffer for his sins.

"The beast!" gasped Bunter. "I wasn't doing anything, you know. He said I pushed against him, and he simply slogged me. I never pushed against him. Ow!"

"It's for listening to him the other day," said Bob. "Serves you right, really, though he might let an old story drop. You shouldn't listen."

"Yow-wow!" said Bunter. "I was only tying my bootlace, as I told you! Wow!"

"Better leave your bootlaces untied when Loder's around!" grinned Johnny Bull.

That afternoon, instead of going down to the playing-fields, the Famous Five had the pleasure of staying in the Form-room to write out two hundred lines each. They had company there. Squiff had a hundred lines for treading on Loder's toe. Squiff solemnly asseverated that he hadn't done anything of the sort; it was Loder's little excuse. Rake and Mark Linley had a hundred lines each for punting a footer at Loder in the quad, and they declared that Loder had deliberately stepped in the way of the footer. Billy Bunter had a hundred lines for having called Loder a beast when he boxed his ears.

"And we didn't have anything to do with treaching him," said Rake wrathfully—"didn't even know about it till afterwards."

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Loder doesn't know how many of us were there," he remarked. "He's going for everybody in general to make sure of the right persons. If there's much more of it there will be a row."

And the juniors soon discovered that there was destined to be much more.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Up to Coker!

COKER wore a thoughtful look. He was at tea in his study with Potter and Greene. Potter and Greene were busy with tea, and Coker was busy with his thoughts. Coker was in danger of not getting any of the cake, but he did not seem to notice it.

Potter and Green wondered a little what was stirring in the mighty brain of Horace Coker. They were not accustomed to seeing him look so thoughtful. As a rule, Coker managed to get on without doing much thinking.

The great Horace came out of his reverie at last with a remark that surprised his study-mates a little.

"I've got to chip in."

"Hum! Rather too late. I'm afraid," said Potter apologetically.

"Too late?" repeated Coker, with a stare.

"I'm afraid so. We've finished it."

"Eh? Finished what?"

"The cake."

"The cake!" said Coker, in measured tones of contempt. "Blow the cake! Do you think I was thinking of cake, you ass?"

"Oh, all serene!" said Potter, relieved.

Coker had stood that cake. It had been a large one, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 399.

and Coker had not even touched it. But Coker's reflections at the present moment were on a subject more important than cake, and his study-mates were relieved that it was so.

"It's all gone, anyway," remarked Greene. "There's some biscuits."

"Blow the biscuits!" said Coker.

Potter and Greene proceeded to finish the biscuits. They were nice biscuits, and if Coker was indifferent to such things there was no reason why his study-mates should be.

"I feel that it's up to me," said Coker. "I'm going to chip in."

"Chip in?" said Potter vaguely.

"Yes. You remember that I licked Loder the other day for bullying?"

"Ahem! Yes."

"I rather expected to hear from the Head about it," said Coker. "I fully expected Loder to pitch him a yarn. The fellow's rather a cad, you know."

"I thought you'd be flogged," agreed Greene. "'Tain't allowed to punch prefects."

"I'm down on bullying," said Coker. "Now, Loder is a bully. Carne's another. So is Walker. And lately there's been too much of it!"

"Oh," said Potter, "I haven't noticed it!"

"You wouldn't," said Coker, "but I have. A fellow in my position is called upon to take a certain amount of interest in the fags. I believe in keeping 'em in their place, mind. Licking does a fag good—in reason."

"For instance, when you give 'em a licking," suggested Potter, closing the that was furthest away from Coker in the direction of Greene.

"Exactly," said Coker unsuspiciously. "You just hit my meaning, Potter. But my idea is that, while a judicious amount of licking is good for a fag, indiscriminate bullying is bad—very bad indeed."

Potter yawned a little. Not being a fag himself, he took a very academic interest in the subject of bullying or licking fags. But Coker was evidently very much in earnest. Coker felt called upon to chip in, as he had said. Coker was a good-natured chap, and he was prepared to be the kind friend and protector of all and sundry if they treated him with proper respect. Coker was always ready to protect a fag from a licking, or to lick him himself with equal facility.

"I licked Loder," said Coker. "I dare say he had his own reasons for not complaining to the Head. My belief is that the Head would have been down on him, and would have backed me up."

"I don't think!" murmured Potter.

"Otherwise why didn't Loder complain?" demanded Coker.

"Blessed if I know!" said Potter. "It puzzled me at the time. I daresay he had some reason."

"It was because he was in the wrong, and he knew

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See Page iv. of the Cover of this issue of the "Magnet" Library.



Horace Coker landed on the table with a crash. Books and papers and inkpot went flying. The great man of the Fifth sprawled across the table, gasping for breath. "There!" panted Wharton. "He's returned with thanks, Potter. I recommend a strait waistcoat for him." (See Chapter 12.)

the Head would see it," said Coker. "I shouldn't mind going before the Head. I'm a plain chap; I should speak my mind. It's simply rot, as you know, that they don't appoint prefects from the Fifth Form. Now, lately there's been too much of it. I'm not going to stand it any longer!"

"Nobody's been bullying you, I suppose?" said Greene.

"Hardly," said Coker. "I'd like to see anybody bully me! I'm thinking of the fags. They naturally look to me for protection."

"Do they?"

"They do!"

"That's the first I've heard of it," said Potter.

Coker gave him a withering look.

"I mean, they are entitled to protection from a fellow in my position," he said.

Potter was inclined to ask how Coker's position differed from his—Potter's—or that of any other fellow in the Fifth Form, but he held his peace. It was no use arguing.

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with Coker. Coker's study-mates were accustomed to giving him his head.

"I came on Bunter this afternoon," went on Coker, frowning. "He was blubbing. Loder had been licking him, hard."

"Fat little beast!" said Greene.

"Well, even a fat little beast ought to have justice," said Coker.

"I dare say that's what he got."

"Nothing of the sort. He told me that he had been stopping to tie up his shoelace near Loder, who was talking to Walker, and Loder kicked him over, and then both of them larruped him. He simply hadn't done anything."

"Injured innocent!" yawned Greene. "I dare say he deserved it!"

"Don't be heartless, Greene."

"Eh?"

"I don't approve of cynicism," said Coker. "There's

such a thing as justice. Then there was Skinner of the Remove—

"A practical-joking beast!" said Potter.

"Yes, I dare say. But Loder waled him with an ash-plant for nothing. I asked Skinner, and he said it was for nothing; he said it was because Loder had been japed by some kids last week, and was going for all the Remove simply to get at the right ones. Skinner hadn't had a hand in it, whatever it was."

"Well, that's like Loder," agreed Greene, "but I don't see that it's any business of ours."

"Not ours exactly," said Coker. "Mine."

"Oh, yours!" said Potter. "I suppose you're not setting up as a giddy champion of the oppressed, are you?"

Coker nodded.

"Exactly!"

"Oh, are you? My hat!"

"Somebody ought to do it, and I'm the chap," said Coker.

"I should think Wingate——"

"Wingate doesn't seem to notice what's going on. Loder keeps it out of his sight a bit, I think, and Wingate isn't suspicious."

"The fags should tell him if they don't like it."

"Well, that would be like sneaking. I don't approve of sneaking," said Coker. "I should lick them if I caught them sneaking. I'm going to stand up for them. I feel it's up to me."

"Go ahead!" said Potter encouragingly. "Give Loder another licking, and then Carne, and then Walker—all the Sixth, in fact. Finish with Wingate. Greene and I will come to the funeral, and bring a wreath for you when Wingate's done with you!"

Coker did not reply to that humorous remark. He jumped up, and whipped round the table at Potter. Potter whipped into the passage and fled, laughing loudly. Coker shook his fist after him.

"Dashed funny, isn't it?" said Coker, with a glare at Greene.

"Ahem! Yes—I mean no," stammered Greene. "But I—I say, Coker, how will the fags take it, you know? They mayn't appreciate it. Ungrateful little beasts, you know."

"It's a question of duty with me," said Coker loftily. "However, I should think they would be properly grateful. If they're not, I shall probably lick them."

"Suppose they tell you to mind your own business?" suggested Greene, as if struck by a sudden thought.

"You silly ass! It is my business, isn't it?"

"Ahem!"

"You're as big an idiot as Potter," said Coker wrathfully. "I'm going to give Potter a thick ear when I see him again. I'll teach him not to be so jolly funny on a serious subject. And if you cackle at me, William Greene, I'll jolly well give you a thick ear, too. My hat! I'll give you one any way——"

Greene dodged out of the study and fled.

Coker snorted. He was very much exasperated. The least his study-mates could have done, he considered, was to take his new departure seriously. But they hadn't done even that. Coker was prepared to bestow thick ears ad lib. upon Potter and Greene, until they became properly serious on a serious subject. It really looked as if Coker would begin his campaign against bullying by a tremendous amount of bullying in his own study. But that was just like Coker.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Champion of the Oppressed!

THERE was a meeting in No. 1 Study.

The Famous Five were there, with the leading spirits of the Remove—Mark Linley, and Squiff, and Vernon-Smith, and Tom Brown, and Peter Todd, and Penfold, and Newland, and Rake, and Micky Desmond, and Wibley, and one or two others. The study was crowded.

The meeting was upon the subject of Loder.

There was hardly a fellow in the study who hadn't

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"lines" galore, and several of them were smarting from recent canings.

Loder was going strong.

The bully of the Sixth was amply avenging that adventure with the treacle. The Famous Five and Billy Bunter came in for the keenest edge of his temper. But all their friends had a share in it. How many of them, and which, had been concerned in the outrage of that unforgotten night, Gerald Loder did not know, but he did not mean to let anyone escape. By spreading his net wide enough he was sure to catch all the delinquents.

As a prefect he had power in his hands, and he was generally careful to find some excuse for the infliction of punishment. Loder seemed to have given up all other considerations for the present, and to be devoting himself wholly to the Remove. It was flattering, perhaps, but the Removites did not like it. Hence the meeting in No. 1 Study.

The Remove were fed up, and that meeting was for the purpose of discussing what was to be done with Loder. Something had to be done, that was certain.

None of the Co. were inclined to take the method of sneaking. That was miles below the dignity of the Remove. Skinner, in fact, had tried it, without any happy results. He had taken his right of appealing to the Head against punishment, but Loder clearly established that he had caned Skinner for putting a bent pin on a seat in the Hall. Whereupon the Head lectured Skinner severely for playing a foolish and dangerous trick, and gave him a hundred lines in addition to the caning he had received from Loder. And when Skinner, in a great rage, ventured to say that Loder was really paying him out for an old grudge, and didn't care twopence about the bent pin, or who might have sat on it, the Head cut Skinner very short, and caned him on the spot for saying such wicked things about a prefect.

Billy Bunter, too, had gone to Mr. Quelch with an indignant complaint. But it came out that Bunter had been listening at a keyhole, and Mr. Quelch expressed the fullest approval of the punishment Loder had administered, and talked to Bunter for a full five minutes in a way that made him quite limp.

Harry Wharton & Co. certainly never played ill-natured tricks like Skinner, and were never guilty of meanness like Bunter. But they had their faults, and they did not always observe the rules of the school, like Good Little Georgie in the story-book; so Loder had plenty of chances when he had once set his mind to it.

Indeed, some of the Co. were beginning to feel that it would have been more judicious not to have bestowed that treacle upon Loder, after all. And it was still harder upon fellows who had not had a hand in the jape at all, but were suffering Loder's vengeance upon mere suspicion.

The meeting was thrilling with indignation. Various schemes were propounded for dealing with the odious prefect. Boiling him in oil was an attractive idea, but unfortunately impossible. Collaring him and bumping him, tarring and feathering him, "seragging" him, and lynching him, were all very well to propose, but a little difficult to put into execution.

For a prefect was a sacred person, upon whom sacrilegious hands might not be laid, and nobody wanted a flogging or the "sack."

The meeting was very excited, and most of the fellows were talking at once, when the door of No. 1 Study was thrown open.

Horace Coker entered.

Immediately the juniors glared at him. Coker had not knocked; he did not waste politeness of that kind upon fags. Coker meant to be kind to the fags, but he was always Coker.

Harry Wharton pointed to the door.

"Outside!" he said.

"I've come here——" began Coker.

"We can see that, fathead!" interrupted Bob Cherry. "And now you can go. We've no time to bother with Fifth-Formers."

"Travel along, Coker!"

"Clear off, do!"

"Take your features away and bury them!"

"I've come here——" roared Coker.

"Outside!"

"Get off!"

"I've come here——"

"Blessed if he isn't a giddy parrot!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Look here, Coker, this is a meeting, and we can't be interrupted while you do your parrot turn. Go and play marbles!"

"Go and chop chips!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Coker began to glare. This was not a suitable reception for a champion of the oppressed.

"Look here, you cheeky fags——"

"Bow-wow! Outside!"

"I've come here to tell you what I'm going to do!" roared Coker. "I don't want to begin by licking you——"

"Ha, ha! Pile in, Coker!"

"The lickfulness would be a boot on the other foot," chuckled Hurree Singh.

"Look here, Coker, we're busy," said Wharton. "We've no time to listen to your rot now. Are you going on your feet, or on your neck?"

"I don't expect any gratitude from you fags," said Coker bitterly. "It's a question of duty with me. I feel it's up to me to chip in. I'm going to look after you."

"Eh?"

"Which?"

"I'm going to put down bullying."

"Wha-a-at?"

"That's it," said Coker, pleased with having made an impression at last. Certainly he had made an impression. The juniors were staring at him open-mouthed. "That's the programme, my boys. I'm going to take the matter in hand, and put down bullying by the Sixth-Form fellows, especially prefects."

"And what about Fifth-Form fellows?" queried Nugent.

Coker ignored that query.

"You kids saw me lick Loder the other day. I'm quite prepared to lick him again, if necessary, and anybody else in the Sixth. Wingate himself, if needed——"

"Is that how you're going to put down bullying?" asked Squiff.

"Don't interrupt me. I don't like being interrupted by fags. I'm taking the matter in hand because I feel that it's up to me. Loder has been treating your fags very badly, in my opinion. Carne and Walker, too."

"Well, my hat!"

The juniors simply blinked at Coker. They realised that he had come as a friend this time, that he was taking the Remove under his lofty patronage. Strange as it would have seemed to Coker, the Removites were not in the least inclined to be taken under his lofty patronage. They preferred to fight their own battles, and their only wish, with regard to Coker, was a wish that he would keep off the grass.

Coker wasn't at all likely to understand that. He had descended upon the Lower Fourth like Jove from high Olympus, and their business was to regard him with awe and gratitude and admiration.

"Now," said Coker, "you see how it is!"

"Nunno!" stuttered Wharton. "Not quite."

"I'm taking you fags under my protection."

"Oh, scissors!"

"When you are bullied by seniors, all you have to do is to come to me," explained Coker. "You'll lay the matter before me, and I shall decide what to do. I shall take it up for you, and see justice done."

"Great Scott!"

"If necessary, I shall whop any of the Sixth who overstep the line. Of course, discipline must be maintained. I believe in keeping fags in their places. No good coming to me with all sorts of complaints when you've only got what you deserved. In such cases I shall probably lick you myself!"

"Oh!"

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ONE
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"But in cases of bullying—real bullying—you will acquaint me with the whole matter, and leave it in my hands."

"Oh, dear!"

"You will not," went on Coker, very sternly, "get up to any tricks to get your own back, as you call it. You will treat seniors with proper respect, even when they come down heavy on you. You will simply report the matter to me, and I shall be the judge, and act as required."

"The editor's decision is final?" queried Bob Cherry. And there was a chuckle.

"I don't want any cheek, Cherry. Now, you kids understand what you've got to do?" said Coker, looking round.

"Got to!" grinned Nugent. "Not asked to, or requested to, or advised to, but got to! Oh, Coker!"

"I dare say some of you have been through it this afternoon," said Coker. "I saw you and Loder in the quad, Field. Now you can tell me all about the matter, and stick to the facts, mind. No exaggeration. I shall decide whether you were to blame in the matter, and if I exonerate you I shall go at once and see Loder about it. Mind you stick to the facts. If there's any exaggeration or fibbing I shall lick you as an example."

Sampson Quincy Ifley Field gasped. Certainly, for a champion of the oppressed and an opponent of bullies, Coker had very remarkable methods.

"Well?" said Coker.

"Well?" gasped Squiff.

"Now, what have you to tell me?" asked Coker, with a magisterial air.

"Lemme see! I think I'll tell you to go and eat coke!" said Squiff, in a reflective sort of way.

"What?"

"I might also tell you to mind your own business, but that wouldn't be any good. You can't do that, I suppose? But I can tell you to get off the grass."

"Field!"

"And take your face away!" concluded Squiff. "You know how it worries people. It worries me. Take it away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker fairly snorted with wrath. He had not expected gratitude, but this was a little too thick. He shoved the juniors aside with a heavy hand to get at Sampson Quincy Ifley Field. He grasped Field by the collar.

"You cheeky young rascal!" he roared. "I'll teach you manners to begin with!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Yaroooh!" roared Squiff. "Rescue!"

"Hands off, you cheeky sweeps! I'll——"

Bump! Horace Coker, the champion of the oppressed, descended upon the study carpet, with a concussion that made dust rise from the carpet, and a fiendish yell from Coker.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Black Ingratitude!

"SIT on him!"

"Tread on him!"

"Stand on his legs!"

"Squat on his head!"

Coker simply disappeared. The whole meeting piled on Coker. He was extended on the study carpet, and juniors stood on him, and sat on him, and clutched him. The great man of the Fifth gasped and gurgled under the swarm.

"Gerroff!" spluttered Coker. "You—you young villains! Gerroff! Lemme gerrup! You ungrateful young blackguards! Oh, my hat! Yooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Squash him!"

"Will you gerroff?" shrieked Coker. "I'll thrash you all round! I'll smash you! I'll whop you black and blue! Ow! Ow! Yow!"

But Coker simply couldn't thrash, or smash, or whop. It was Coker who was getting the thrashing, smashing, and whopping.

"Sit on him!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Pin him down! Now, Coker——"

"Yoop! Lemme up!"

"Don't stamp too hard, you chaps. Coker means well. Coker, old man, we're going easy with you, because we know you mean well, and you're only a harmless idiot!"

If the juniors were going easy, Coker had reason to feel thankful that they were not going hard. It did not feel easy.

"But we don't want you meddling," continued Wharton, "and we don't want you bullying!"

"Bullying!" stuttered Coker. "Wharrer you mean, you young scoundrel?"

"We're not coming to you with complaints, and we're not making you our judge, and we don't want you chipping in, anyway," explained Wharton.

"You ungrateful little beast——"

"And we don't want your swanking, and we don't want your playing the giddy ox—anyway, so far as we're concerned," said Bob Cherry.

"You—you—— Grooh! Gerroff!"

"Thanks! I'm quite comfy on your neck!"

"Yooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we're jolly well going to show you that you can't thump us, you silly ass!" roared Squiff. "Why, the silly beast is worse than Loder!"

"Bump him!"

"Scrag him!"

"No, we won't bump or scrag him!" said Wharton. "Coker means well. He's a lunatic, but his intentions are good. We only want to impress upon him that he's not wanted. Up with him, and carry him home!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors, roaring with laughter, clutched up Coker from the floor. The indignant and infuriated Horace struggled desperately. But two or three pairs of hands were grasping each arm and leg, and his neck, and his ears, and his hair. He simply had no chance.

With a rush the juniors came out into the passage, carrying Coker in their midst, wriggling spasmodically.

"Pumme down!" shrieked Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll smash you! I'll wallop you! I'll—I'll—I'll—— Yow-ow-ow!"

"Follow your leader!" said Wharton, chuckling. He led the way to the Fifth-Form passage.

Loud shouts of laughter greeted the procession from every fellow they passed.

Coker was looking very dilapidated by this time.

He had left his collar and tie in No. 1 Study, and his jacket was split up the back; all the buttons had come off his waistcoat, and his hair was a mop. His face was crimson with fury.

If Coker could have handled the juniors at that moment, certainly Loder in his worst temper would have been nothing to it. Fortunately, he could not handle them; they were doing the handling.

The wriggling and struggling Fifth-Former was rushed along the passage. He was brought into the Fifth-Form quarters with a rush, still struggling. Several of the Fifth looked out of their studies, in amazement, and a shout of laughter greeted the arrival of Coker.

"Open his door!" called out Wharton.

Squiff threw open the door of Coker's study. Potter and Greene were there at their prep. They jumped up.

"Hallo!"

"What the thunder——"

"We've brought home your prize idiot!" said Squiff cheerily.

"Great Scott! Coker!" yelled Potter. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooh! Yow! Lemme a hand!" spluttered Coker.

"You cackling idiots, lend a chap a hand! Smash these rotten fags! Yooooop!"

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Potter and Greene didn't lend a hand; they were doubled up with merriment. They had not expected Horace Coker's new departure to be a success. But they had not looked for his return to his study in this style.

"Bring him in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker was through the doorway in the midst of the swarm of juniors. He was still struggling. Coker never gave in.

"Put him on the table!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash!

Horace Coker landed on the table with a crash. Books and papers and inkpot went flying. The great man of the Fifth sprawled across the table, gasping for breath. Potter and Greene shrieked.

"There!" panted Wharton. "He's returned with thanks, Potter. I recommend a strait-waistcoat for him. Good-bye, Coker!"

"Groooh!"

The Removites crowded out of the study, yelling. Coker sat up breathlessly on the table. Potter and Greene were shrieking hysterically.

"You silly idiots!" roared Coker. "What are you cackling at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is that how it worked?" sobbed Greene. "Weren't they grateful?"

"Ungrateful young villains——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll whop 'em! I'll smash 'em! I'll lick the whole Remove from end to end!" bellowed Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As for you, you cackling imbeciles——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker rolled off the table, and clutched at the poker. Potter and Greene fled, choking with laughter. They hastened to spread the news along the passage, and Coker had the pleasure of hearing roars of laughter from every study. Coker was not unaccustomed to causing merriment, but it was agreed on all hands that Coker as champion of the oppressed quite put the lid on.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Another Chance for Coker!

"YOW-WOW-WOW!"

Thus Billy Bunter.

Coker of the Fifth paused in the passage and looked at him. Billy Bunter, thinking he detected sympathy in Coker's glance, redoubled his "wowing."

It might have been supposed, after his reception in No. 1 Study, that Horace Coker would have given up his role of champion of the oppressed. But anyone who had supposed that would not have known Coker.

Coker didn't give up an idea so easily as all that. He had, as he told Potter and Greene, put his hand to the plough, and he wasn't going to turn back. Remove kids might be guilty of disrespect and black ingratitude, but Coker's duty, as he saw it, remained unchanged.

True, with regard to the Famous Five, Coker had come to the conclusion that the more Loder licked them, the better it would be. Indeed, he would have been willing to lend Loder a hand, so far as that went.

But in other directions, Coker was as keen as ever to stand up for the oppressed, and secure justice for the down-trodden with his strong right hand. It was really very noble of Coker—as he realised himself. His intention, in fact, was to act nobly.

"Wow-wow-wow!" continued Bunter, as he found Coker's eye on him. "Oh, my shoulders! Oh, my back! Oh, my neck! Oh, my backbone! Oh, my arms! Oh, dear!"

"What's the matter with you?" asked Coker kindly.

"Oh, my back! Oh, my neck!" repeated Bunter, going through the list of his injuries again.

"Loder?" asked Coker.

"Loder and Walker," groaned Bunter. "They're beastly bullies, Coker. Not at all like you—h'm! I wish you'd lick 'em, Coker. Oh, my neck! Oh, dear!"

I've been punched and bashed and bullied and kicked and scragged!"

Coker smiled genially. Bunter, at least, was more reasonable than those cheeky young rascals in No. 1 Study. Bunter was willing to throw himself upon Coker's protection. Coker was pleased. His business hitherto as a champion of the oppressed had been thankless.

Bunter evidently had more sense. He realised the tremendous favour Coker was doing the fags, and seemed to have a proper appreciation of the importance of Horace Coker, and of the respect that was his due.

"I'll look into this," said Coker. "Mind, I want the facts. You say that Loder and Walker have been bullying you, Bunter?"

"Ow! Wow! Yes! Horribly! Ow, my neck! Can you see whether my neck's broken, Coker?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"What did you do, Bunter?"

"Nothing," said Bunter promptly.

"Sure?"

"Nothing at all. I was stooping near Loder's door, tying up my bootlace, when he opened the door suddenly and rushed on me like a wild beast. Walker rushed after him like—like another wild beast—like a pair of Prussians, you know. Then they hit me, and biffed me, and bashed me, and thumped me, and jumped on me——"

"Jumped on you!" ejaculated Coker.

"With both feet!" said Bunter. "I think my leg's broken. In two places, I think."

"It seems to be a pretty clear case," said Coker thoughtfully. "You were simply tying up your bootlace!"

"Simply," assented Bunter. He did not mention that his fat ear had been in contact with the keyhole in Loder's door. That was a point there was no need to mention to Coker. It might have damped his sympathy. Coker frowned.

"I'm down on this kind of thing," he said. "I've said I'm going to put a stop to it, and I will, by Jove!"

"That ain't all," said Bunter, blinking at him out of the corners of his eyes. "When they were kicking me—I mean, jumping on me—I—I somehow lost my postal-order."

"Didn't you find it again?"

"Nunno. It was for five bob," said Bunter pathetically. "I suppose it blew away. You know, there's a draught in the passage. That's a dead loss to me, you know, and I'm quite stony. I—I suppose you couldn't lend me five bob, Coker, till I get my next postal-order?"

"You're quite sure it's lost?" said Coker.

"Oh, yes—quite!"

"Then Loder and Walker are called upon to refund it," said Coker. "Come with me, Bunter."

Bunter backed away a little.

"W-w-where?" he stammered.

"To see Loder and Walker, of course. This matter has got to be thrashed out at once."

"Oh, my aunt!" gasped Bunter. He had a strong suspicion that if he went to see Loder and Walker he might be thrashed out at once himself.

"Don't be nervous," said Coker encouragingly. "Rely on me. I'm going to put a stop to this bullying."

"Ye-es; but—but I'd rather you lent me the five bob, Coker."

"You will come with me and tell Loder about your loss. I shall point out to him that it is up to him to make it good. I shall insist upon his doing so. Come on!"

"I—I'd rather not, Coker," mumbled Bunter. "I—I don't really mind—'tain't so very much, after all."

"Why, you just said you were stony."

"Did I? I—I meant to say——" Bunter stammered. As a matter of absolute fact, Billy Bunter had invented that postal-order on the spur of the moment, in the hope of extracting five shillings from the sympathetic Coker.

The turn affairs were taking dismayed him. He certainly didn't feel inclined to face the bully of the Sixth, on his own native heath, and demand compensation for a postal-order that was non-existent.

"It's too bad," said Coker, frowning. "This bullying is going altogether too far, when a miserable fag is willing to lose money rather than ask for compensation that he's fully entitled to. It's high time I took the matter up, by Jove! Come on, Bunter! There's nothing to be afraid of. You'll be with me."

That was all very well, Bunter thought, but even the

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ONE
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presence of the great Coker would not be much use against two big Sixth-Form fellows, both prefects. Coker never counted odds. Bunter did.

"I'd rather let the matter drop, Coker," stuttered Bunter at last. "I—I'd like you to go and lick Loder, but I decline to claim any compensation from him. I—I despise him too much, you know. I—I think it would be more—more dignified to treat him with contempt."

"Come on!" said Coker, unheeding.

"I'd rather not, really."

"I'm not asking what you'd rather," said Coker. "I'm telling you what to do. Come with me at once."

Bunter backed away.

"I'm jolly well not coming!" he said.

"What! You cheeky fat rascal!" Coker stepped at Bunter and grasped him by the collar before he could flee. "Come on!"

Bunter wriggled like a very fat eel.

"Leggo!" he roared.

"This way!" said Coker.

"Leggo!" yelled Bunter, utterly terrified at the idea of being marched into Loder's study, to get another and more severe licking from the bully of the Sixth. Inciting Coker to go and tackle Loder was one matter; keeping him company when he did it was quite another. "I'm not going! I won't go! Leggo, or I'll kick your shins!"

Biff! Biff! Biff!

"Yaroooh!" bellowed Bunter, as the incensed Coker boxed his ears right and left. "Yow-ow! Beast! Wharrer you doing? Chuck it! I—I—I'll come. I—I want to come. I—I meant to come all along. Oh, crumbs!"

"Come on, then!" said Coker.

And the unhappy Bunter went. He had no choice about it. But his feelings towards Coker quite put in the shade his feelings towards Loder. That was one of the unfortunate results of Coker's methods. Bunter had only one consolation—that, in all probability, Loder and Walker would give Coker a fearful licking between them. Such was his gratitude towards his champion!

Bang! Coker's heavy hand smote upon Loder's door, and it flew open. Loder and Walker, who were talking "geegees" in the study, jumped to their feet in surprise. They stared blankly at Coker of the Fifth as he marched Billy Bunter in with a grip of iron on his collar.

"Hallo!" said Walker. "What's the name of this game?"

"You've been bullying Bunter," said Coker.

"Wha-a-at!"

"I'm taking it up for him. I'm not going to have fags punched, kicked, cuffed, thumped, and jumped on while I'm in the school. I've taken this up as a duty. You are a cowardly bully, Loder!"

"What!" yelled Loder.

"And you are a blackguardly, bullying bounder, Walker!"

"Am I?" howled Walker.

"Yes. I'm putting it plainly—I find it's always best to put things plainly. It's got to stop. I licked you the other day for bullying, Loder. I'm prepared to lick you again. And you after him, Walker. As often as necessary, too! Now, when you were bullying Bunter, he lost a postal-order, and it got blown away, or something—anyway, he can't find it. It was for five shillings. The five shillings has got to be paid to Bunter, here and now!"

"I—I say," mumbled Bunter.

"Hold your tongue, Bunter! I'm attending to this matter, and I'm going to see justice done! Pay up, you two—it will cost you half-a-crown each!"

"My only hat!"

"Great pip!"

Loder and Walker simply stared at Coker as if they were mesmerised. It was true that Coker had licked Loder the previous week, and but for Loder's private reasons for letting the matter drop, he would have got into trouble over it. But that the Fifth-Former should come into Loder's study and talk to a couple of prefects in this manner simply took their breath away. They could not have been much more surprised if Tubb of the Third had done it.

Coker waited—for the two prefects to hand over the two half-crowns. They did not make a move to do so.

Horace Coker did not wait long. He was not there to waste time.

"You heard what I said?" he rapped out.

"Yes!" gasped Walker. "I heard what you said. I suppose I'm dreaming."

"Pay up, then!"

"Eh?"

"Are you going to pay Bunter his money, and express your regret for having ill-used him?"

"My only hat! Not quite!"

"Then," said Coker, with great deliberation, "I'm going to lick you!"

"Lick us? My hat!"

"Wait there, Bunter!" said Coker, pushing the Owl of the Remove into a corner. "You're not to leave this study without your money! Do you hear?"

"I—I say, Coker—"

"Do you hear?" roared Coker.

"Yes!" gasped Bunter, with a jump.

"Now, then, you first, Walker," said the hero of the Fifth. "Put up your hands! Here, I say, not both together! Why, you cads!" howled Coker, as the two infuriated prefects rushed on him. "Fair play's a jewel. Don't be Huns! One at a time!"

"Smash him!" gasped Loder.

"Yah! Rotters!" roared Coker. "Come one at a time, and I'll mop up the study with you! I'll mop you up anyway, you skunks!"

Both the Sixth-Formers had collared Coker, and they were punching him as if they mistook him for a punch-ball. But Horace Coker was a terrific handful even for two prefects of the Sixth. He had a four-point-seven punch, and he brought it into play at once, with great effect. The scene that followed during the next few minutes was simply terrific.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Going Strong!

CRASH! Bang! Bump! Crash! Smash!

Coker was going strong!

One of his eyes was closed, and his nose looked a little sideways, and he had lost his collar. He had been down once, but he was up again as if he were made of rubber. He was hitting out in great style, and Loder and Walker, in spite of the odds on their side, found that it was no walk-over they had started upon.

Loder had been knocked into the grate, but he came on again. Walker had been hurled at the table, and the table had spun over, and Walker was yelling with pain and rage as he came back for more. Every chair in the study was overturned, and the three of them, clinging together, and struggling furiously, bumped into the bookcase, and there was a shower of broken glass and books. Then they staggered against the mantelpiece. Coker's arm swept along the mantelpiece as he gave Loder a round-arm "oner," and a clock and two vases went into the grate, arriving there in about fifty fragments. Meanwhile, Coker's heavy boots were making ducks and drakes of the brass fender.

Billy Bunter stood rooted to the floor, his round eyes nearly starting through his spectacles as he gazed on that Homeric combat. A lurch of the struggling trio brought them in contact with Bunter, and he roared as he went over with three furious combatants rolling over him. They were punching out fiercely, and Bunter caught about half the punches for several minutes.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Coker. "Funky cads—two to one! But I'll show you! Yah! I'll teach you to handle me—me, by gum! Yah! Take that! And that! Yarrah!"

Then the door was thrown open. The din in the study was deafening; it rang the whole length of the Sixth-Form passage, and further. In the stately quarters of the Sixth, the Palladium of the school, rags and rows were not supposed to occur. But even in the Remove passage the present scene in Loder's study had never been equalled.

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Sixth-Form fellows crowded round the doorway; it was Valence who had opened the door. They stared in, in blank astonishment. They could see hardly anything but dust and flying furniture and waving arms and legs.

Not only the Sixth were gathering round. Fellows of other forms came along to see what the terrific din was about—Fifth-Formers and Fourth and Remove and Shell. The passage was swarming. And there was a roar as the word passed along that it was Coker on the warpath.

"Coker!" yelled Bob Cherry. "He's putting down bullying again! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coker!" shrieked Wingate. "Coker, have you gone mad?"

"I say, you fellows—yow-ow!—help!" screamed Bunter.

"Look out! Here comes Prouty!"

"Bless my soul! What ever is the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, as he tore upon the scene. "Surely—surely it is not suffragettes!"

Crash! Smash Bang! Bump! Whoop!

"Loder! Walker! Coker! Bless my soul! It is Coker! Are they—are they fighting?" stuttered Mr. Prout, aghast.

"They look as if they are, sir," said Harry Wharton demurely. "Shall we—ahem!—separate them, sir?"

"Yes—yes—at once—separate them!" gasped Mr. Prout.

"Come on, Remove!" shouted Wharton.

"Keep back, you fags!" rapped out Wingate.

"My dear Wingate," said Mr. Prout, "the—the young ruffians must be separated! They may hurt one another."

Harry Wharton & Co. swarmed into the study. They were glad to be useful in that emergency—very glad. Wingate and Courtney rushed in and grasped Coker. The juniors attended to Loder and Walker. They grasped them, and dragged at them, and Wingate and Courtney dragged at Coker. The combatants had to come apart.

"Let me go, you silly idiots!" roared Coker, struggling. "I haven't finished yet!"

"Yes, you have, my pippin," said Wingate grimly, as he fastened an iron grip on Coker. "Pin him, Courtney!"

"You bet!" grinned Courtney.

Coker was still resisting, and Courtney and the Greyfriars captain had plenty to do to hold him. Fortunately, Harry Wharton & Co. were equal to dealing with Loder and Walker.

They dealt with them promptly and effectively. It was their chance of getting a little of their own back on the bully of the Sixth, and they did not neglect it.

Hurree Singh and Squiff and Nugent grabbed Walker and sat on him, and Walker collapsed under their weight. Wharton and Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull and Tom Brown, had hold of Loder. They bumped him down on the floor with a crash that made the wrecked furniture jump. They rubbed his nose into the hearthrug, and Hurree Singh sat on the back of his head to keep it there. Loder struggled furiously, but he had no chance. In that couple of minutes he paid dearly for a long course of tyranny. Every dog has his day—Loder had had his; and now the chums of the Remove were having theirs. The opportunity of handling a prefect, bumping him, squashing him, and rubbing his nose in the rug, and sitting on his head, was not to be lost.

Mr. Prout was waving his hands with excitement and anger and horror. The crowd of fellows in the passage roared with laughter. It was, as Temple of the Fourth remarked, as good as the most exciting show on a cinema.

"Separate them! Separate them!" Mr. Prout was shrieking. "Do not let them recommence! Wharton—Cherry—keep him secure!"

"Certainly, sir," said Wharton. "We're holding him quite tight!"

"Leggo, my ear!" shrieked Loder. "You're pulling it off, you young villain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You hear what Mr. Prout says, Loder? We are obeying Mr. Prout's orders!"

"Gerroff my head!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Prout. "This—this is unexampled—unprecedented! I am amazed—shocked—"

disgusted—outraged—horrified! Dear me! The Head must deal with this! Temple, what are you laughing at? Temple, this is not a laughing matter! Temple, go to the Head at once!"

"Here he comes, sir!" sang out Tubb of the Third.

"Thank goodness! Dr. Locke—you—you see——"

The crowd in the passage made way for the Head. Dr. Locke strode upon the scene, his brow like a thundercloud.

"What does this mean?" thundered the Head.

"Wharton—Cherry—Bull—how dare you!"

"If you please, sir——" said Wharton meekly.

"Release Loder at once! Why, you——"

"They are restraining Loder at my request, sir," said Mr. Prout. "Loder was engaged in fighting with Walker and Coker. I requested the boys to restrain him."

"Oh! That alters the case," said the Head. "However, release Loder at once! I presume that he will not venture to fight in my presence."

The juniors reluctantly rose from their agreeable task. Loder sat up; he could not get up for the moment; he wanted his second wind.

"Grooooooh!" was Loder's remark. "You young scoundrels——"

"Silence. Loder! The juniors acted at Mr. Prout's request, and acted very rightly. How dare you enact such a scene! It is disgraceful! And you, Walker, and Coker? Coker, what are you doing here at all?"

Walker staggered up.

"He came in here and pitched into us, sir," he panted. "I suppose Fifth-Formers ain't allowed to pitch into prefects?"

"We had to defend ourselves, sir!" gasped Loder.

Wingate and Courtney released Coker. Even the great Horace was not inclined to carry on his warlike operations under the stern eyes of the Head. But he did not look scared. He looked an utter wreck—but not scared. He was quite satisfied with his proceedings, and he saw no reason why the Head should not be satisfied, too, when he explained.

"Well, Coker?" said the Head, in a grinding voice. "What have you to say for yourself?"

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Coker Chucks It!

COKER gasped for breath. Coker was tough, but that terrific battle had somewhat taken it out of him.

"Well, Coker?"

"Yes, sir," gasped Coker; "I—I'm rather winded, sir. Those two bullying cads gave me a lot of trouble—two to one, by Jove! It's all right, sir."

"What?"

"I'm sure you'll approve, sir, when I explain. It was not my intention to drag you into the matter, sir, but you must know the facts now. I was quite willing to keep it in my own hands entirely."

"Coker!"

"There has been a lot of bullying lately, sir," explained Coker—"bullying the fags. I believe myself in a firm hand with fags——"

"I am not asking for your opinions, Coker. I am asking for an explanation of this disgraceful scene."

"I'm coming to that, sir," said Coker confidently. "There has been a great deal of bullying, and I decided to put it down."

"You decided?"

"Certainly, sir."

"If such a state of affairs really obtained, you should have brought it to the notice of the prefects."

"I haven't much confidence in the prefects, sir," said Coker, with a shake of the head. "Some of them are the very bullies I'm down on. Wingate is all right, but he's a bit of an ass!"

There was a chuckle from the crowded passage, and Wingate turned crimson. Coker went on cheerfully:

"I regarded it as up to me, sir. Some of the fags were ungrateful for my protection—very ungrateful, but that made no difference. I'm going to see that the fags are not bullied, if I have to thrash them all round——"

"Coker! I have asked you——"

"Yes, sir. This time it was Bunter. He's here to speak for himself, sir. Loder and Walker jumped on him!"

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"Impossible!"

"Jumped on him, sir, with both feet. He lost a postal-order owing to their ragging him—five shillings, sir. I pointed out to them that it was up to them to compensate him. I insisted upon it, naturally, having taken the matter into my hands. That was the cause of the trouble. There wouldn't have been any row at all if Loder and Walker had done as I directed them."

Another chuckle from the passage. The Head looked round with a frown, and the juniors all looked as grave as owls. But it was difficult to look grave while Horace Coker was talking.

"Coker, you—a boy in the Fifth Form—ventured to come here and give directions to prefects!" ejaculated the Head.

"I took the matter up, sir, to see justice done. When a prefect jumps on a junior with both feet——"

"Loder! Walker! It is barely possible that you——"

"Certainly not, sir!" stuttered Loder.

"N-n-never thought of such a thing," gasped Walker.

"My hat!"

"Do you tell me that you actually saw this, Coker?"

"Oh, no, sir. I got it from Bunter!"

"Bunter, come here!"

Billy Bunter almost crawled towards the Head. The Head's tone made him quake.

"Bunter, did you tell Coker that two prefects jumped on you?"

"Certainly not, sir!" gasped Bunter.

Coker blinked.

"Why, you—you lying fat villain!" he roared. "You told me they punched you, and bashed you, and smashed you, and jumped on you with both feet!"

"What did you actually tell Coker, Bunter?"

"I—I—I was speaking—er—figuratively, sir," stammered the wretched Bunter. "I—I—what I really meant to say to Coker, sir, was—was that they didn't jump on me with both feet, sir. That's really what I meant. Coker misunderstood, sir. He's always chipping in, and never will mind his own business, sir."

"Why, you—you——" spluttered Coker. "You—you——"

"You informed Coker that you had lost a postal-order, Bunter, though——"

"Nunno, sir. I didn't mean exactly that. I—I meant that—that I was expecting a postal-order."

"What?" gasped Coker.

"You see, sir, Coker misunderstood me—he always does misunderstand. Anybody will tell you what a perfect idiot Coker is, sir."

"Why, he told me——" stuttered Coker. "The lying young villain! He told me——"

"I fear that Bunter was prevaricating, Coker, and that you were foolish enough to believe him."

"Oh, my hat!" said Coker.

"It appears, Loder, that you punished Bunter."

"I found him listening at my keyhole, sir."

"He told me that he was tying his bootlace, and they rushed on him!" roared Coker.

The Removites grinned. They knew all about Bunter's bootlace.

"Bunter, you are a young rascal, sir!" thundered the Head. "I have heard before of your eavesdropping habits. You brought your punishment upon yourself, and you deliberately deceived this foolish, hot-headed, unreflecting, and impertinent boy, Coker."

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Coker.

"Bunter, go to your Form-master at once. Tell him that I specially request him to administer a severe caning to you."

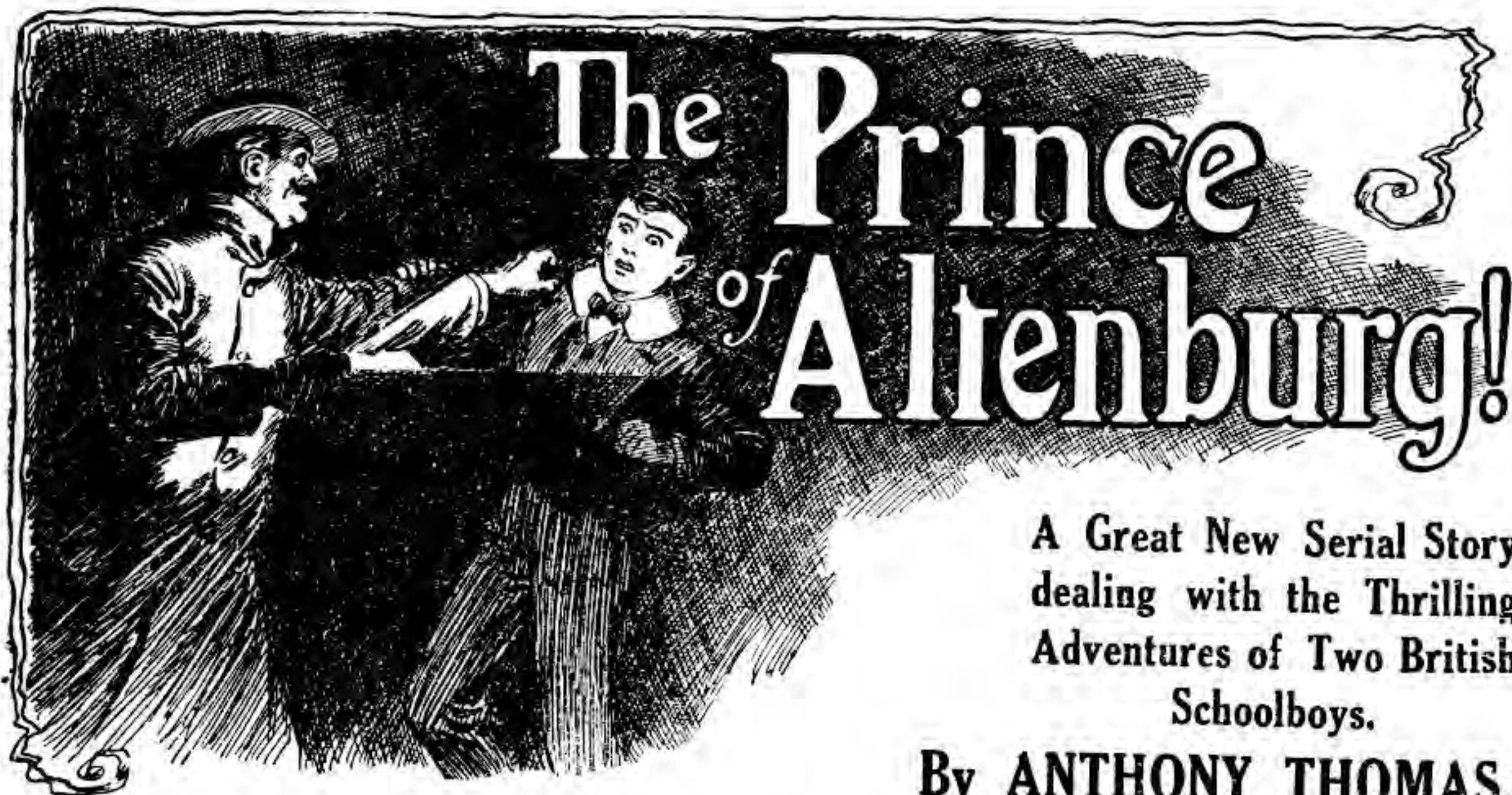
"If—if you please, sir, I—I——"

"Not a word more! Go!"

Billy Bunter crawled out of the study to carry that happy message to Mr. Quelch. Then the Head fixed his eyes on Coker. There was a lush; the fellows waited for the chopper to come down.

"Coker, I hardly know how to address you. I do you the credit of believing that your intentions were good. But good intentions do not excuse stupidity, foolishness, recklessness, insubordination, and disrespect to

(Continued on page 26, Col. 2.)



The Prince of Altenburg!

A Great New Serial Story
dealing with the Thrilling
Adventures of Two British
Schoolboys.

By ANTHONY THOMAS.

THE FIRST INSTALMENTS.

Two boys of St. Dunstan's School, JACK DARRELL and TEDDY BURKE, are discovered trespassing by an irate farmer, Mr. Stone.

In order to appease the farmer's wrath, Teddy Burke shows him a copy of a newspaper containing a portrait of THE PRINCE OF ALTENBURG, and leads him to believe that Jack Darrell, who bears a strong resemblance to the portrait, is really the prince, and that they were coming to ask his permission to be shown over the farm.

Mr. Stone is unable to keep the knowledge that a prince is a scholar at the local college to himself, and eventually the news reaches the ears of a person named Lewis Mackay, who is staying in the neighbourhood.

Mackay, under the impression that Jack Darrell is really the Prince of Altenburg, kidnaps both him and his chum, Teddy Burke.

The chums eventually find themselves on board the Kielberg, a German cruiser, under the care of BARON ZELLING.

Meanwhile, DERWENT HOOD, chief of the British Counter-Espionage Department, hearing that the baron and the two boys are on board the Kielberg, goes in chase of that vessel in H.M.S. Chatswood.

The Kielberg seeks refuge about sixty miles up the River Kunene, on the west coast of Africa, where she runs aground.

The Chatswood discovers the German cruiser's hiding-place, but, to avoid meeting the same fate as the Kielberg, does not continue the chase.

Derwent Hood, however, decides to go in search of the baron and the boys, and, after obtaining permission to use a steam-launch belonging to the Chatswood, sets out on his purpose accompanied by two members of the crew.

They come across the boys fishing in the river, and take them aboard the launch. Suddenly another launch appears, in which is Baron Zelling, accompanied by six members of the Kielberg's crew.

The baron invites Hood to the German camp to talk over matters, and Hood accepts the invitation.

(Now go on with the story.)

Prisoners All.

When Hood accepted Zelling's invitation he had forgotten for the moment that Midshipman Dexter might have other ideas.

Dexter was a full ten years younger than Hood, but nominally he was in command of the boat. On the slow journey from the Chatswood up the river the two had become firm friends, and Dexter's admiration for the Secret Service man was only equalled by the respect with which Derwent Hood regarded the future admiral—for the Navy held out a big career for young Grenville Dexter.

But the idea of giving in, even to a superior force, did not appeal to the middy. He began to protest the moment it was suggested.

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"Go back with them?" he asked, as Hood bent down. "What for? We've got a fighting chance at least. Why not take it?"

"Because we run too many risks, Dexter," Hood answered. "They'd pick off one of us at least, and we want to return with a clean sheet. We should have to go back in any case to see how the Kielberg lies. I fancy we shall be safer in going back cheerfully with them now—and choosing our own time for getting away again."

Dexter saw the force of the argument.

"Right-ho!" he nodded. "I'll follow your advice, though I don't like being robbed of a fight. It will be up to you to arrange our farewells to them."

The other boat had by now turned broadside on to them, and its occupants were watching carefully every movement of Dexter's, in case he meant to make a dash for it. But the midshipman quietly and carefully turned his boat round and slowly began to go up-stream again.

When eventually Dexter landed and looked on the Kielberg, lying uselessly on the sandbank, he felt more inclined to think that Hood had been quite right. His report on what he had seen would make pleasant reading for his commander.

He secured his own boat safely, and then stepped ashore. Hood followed him, with Darrell and Burke, while Walters was told to remain in charge, lest anyone should come along and begin to try experiments with the launch. Hood went back for a moment to speak to Walters again, but he rejoined the others almost immediately.

The Kielberg's boat was tied up alongside theirs, and some four or five officers, including Von Bohn and his friend, stepping off. Zelling came ashore, looking more pleased with himself than he had done for many a long day.

"The little beast!" Burke whispered to Darrell. "He's done no one any good; but the idea that he's upset other people's plans is just what he glories in. Look at him now, grinning and smirking!"

The two chums were feeling horribly sick over the turn events had taken. Just when the wonderful thing happened, and they were getting right away from Zelling and his crowd, the beast had stepped in and spoiled everything again.

"That chap seems to know him all right," Darrell said, as they watched Hood go forward to meet Zelling. "Wonder who on earth he is? And how did he know about us?"

It was Dexter who told them. He had said very little since the dash down the river had been frustrated, and at present he was wondering very much in his own mind just what Derwent Hood's plan could be. As he heard Darrell's question he joined the two and introduced himself.

"My name's Dexter," he said—"Grenville Dexter, of H.M.S. Chatswood. Your name's Darrell, isn't it? And yours Burke? Glad to meet you! Though I wish we'd been about six miles from here."

"But how did you know about us?" Darrell queried.

"That's the other man's job," Dexter answered. "He's been chasing you half round the world. His name's Derwent

Hood, and he's—well, something in the Secret Service or Counter-Espionage, or whatever they call it."

"St. Christopher!" It was Burke who interrupted. He could never forget just how their troubles had started, and it made him realise the hugeness of his joke on Farmer Stone. A Secret Service man had followed them all this way!

"He's a very decent chap," Dexter went on. "I think he'll get us out of this mess in some way or other. Hallo! He wants us to join him now. But, if they'll let us, I'd like to have a long jaw with you two fellows as soon as we can. I expect Hood will want to do the same. Do you know the chap Hood is talking to now?"

Darrell nodded.

"That's Baron Zelling," he said quietly. "He's the man who caused all the trouble, and he's just about the frozen limit. I expect Mr. Hood will know all about him. But he's a first-class beast is old Zelling."

"He looks it," Dexter agreed. "Now then, what's the game?"

Derwent Hood had turned from the baron, and came to meet the three. On his face rested a curious, half-pleased, half-cynical smile, and the conversation appeared to have given him food for thought.

"Hallo! Everything quite cheerful?" he asked, as they came up to him. "We're all going to see the captain now. I've just been having a little argument with an old enemy of mine, Baron Zelling, and I imagine there's going to be some fun before we've been in this place very long. But come along! They're all waiting for us."

It was quite a considerable party that crossed the gangway to the boat. Captain Diemster was in his cabin, and one of the officers had already reported to him exactly what had happened.

Zelling and this officer now led the party of five in, for Walters had already been commanded to come aboard.

"Shall I do the talking—or would you prefer to handle it?" Derwent Hood asked Dexter as they entered.

"You! I guess it's more in your line!" laughed the midshipman.

"Pray be seated, gentlemen!" Captain Diemster's greeting was far from unfriendly, and they all took chairs. It was a little awkward at first, as the tilt of the boat upset their proper view of things. The captain, apparently, had grown quite accustomed to it.

Derwent Hood promptly opened the conversation. "I have just been protesting to my old acquaintance, Baron Zelling," he began, "against his conduct in interfering with our trip up this river. One must observe the rules, even though we are at war."

"I agree," Captain Diemster nodded. "In what way have we offended?"

"This river does not belong to Germany," Hood answered, "even though it does in places touch her land. In any case, I observe you have settled on the Portuguese side of the river. If you will allow me, I will just quote to you the laws governing the matter."

He entered into a learned discussion on the subject of international law, in which only Zelling and Diemster were the least bit interested. To the others it was merely talk.

"In any case, these two boys are not prisoners of war," Hood went on. "I really think, captain, that the best plan would be for you to give us safe conduct down the river."

"And then you would promptly report my whereabouts?" smiled Diemster. "I'm afraid I cannot agree, Mr. Hood. For our own safety, we shall simply keep you here; you will be at perfect liberty to do what you choose, and I will make all arrangements possible for your convenience. But if you attempt to escape it will be at your peril."

The answer did not perturb Hood in the least.

"Very well, captain," he said, smiling. "I accept your decision. To be quite truthful, I shall appreciate a rest. You will give orders for us to be attended to? I should prefer to sleep on board, if convenient. And my friend Mr. Dexter would doubtless prefer the same. I really don't think you will find us any trouble."

"It shall be done," the captain agreed. "You shall have the cabin next the one occupied by the two boys. Your meals also will be served on board, and I will have your own stores sent up some time. Only you quite understand that precautions will be taken to prevent you returning to your own ship? That is all, I think. Do you wish to say anything, baron?"

"No!"

Zelling rose abruptly, and left the cabin. A gentle smile stole over the captain's face as he watched him go. Then he rose.

"That is all, gentlemen," he said. "I regret I cannot do more for you. But if there is anything you want to make your stay here more comfortable, please let me know."

He bowed to them, and presently the five were walking care-

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ONE
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fully along the deck. There was no sign of Zelling and the officers who had been waiting outside.

Not until they were on the shore again did any of them speak. Then it was Dexter who turned to Derwent Hood.

"What do you think of the situation now?" he asked. "Diemster didn't seem to be impressed by your arguments on international law."

"I scarcely expected he would be," Hood answered. "But I'm an optimist, Dexter, and I feel very cheerful this evening. We're not out of the wood yet, by any means, but I begin to think I can see where we can all make good. We must talk the whole business over to-night. For the moment—What about something to eat and a cup of tea, Walters?"

"Yes, sir."

And they all turned towards Dexter's launch. It still lay exactly as when they left it.

While Walters was making the tea Dexter went to the driving-seat. He turned to Hood as he sat there.

"What's to prevent us from slipping away now?" he asked. "We're all on board, and we'd get a good start before anyone knew what was happening."

Hood shook his head.

"I don't think we should. I fancy every movement we make is being watched. And where is their motor-launch? It was alongside us before."

"Anyway, I'll just fill the tank, and everything will be ready," Dexter said, and bent down to open the locker by his side. A moment later he called out sharply: "What have you done with the petrol, Walters?"

The sailor turned.

"It's in the locker, sir," he answered.

Dexter hunted about for a short time, then turned to his engine again, and pulled one or two levers. Hood, who had been watching him anxiously, now came to his side.

"Anything wrong?" he asked quickly.

"Only that they've emptied our tank, and pinched all our stock of petrol," Dexter answered. "There's not much chance of our getting away now, I'm thinking."

He looked at Hood, expecting him to take the news badly. Instead, Hood smiled that little, half-cynical smile of his, and appeared to be in no way surprised.

"I expected that," he said slowly. "It isn't Diemster's idea, I'm sure. In fact, I fancy he would be rather glad if we did get away, even though I see he's keeping a watch on us. But Zelling is the man we have to fight."

"But what use are we without petrol?" demanded Dexter.

Hood called out softly to their handyman.

"Did you do that job all right, Walters?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," Walters also smiled as he began to pass round the tea. "I think it's safe enough now."

"Good!" Hood turned to Dexter again. "They've stolen a fair amount of our stock," he explained, almost apologetically. "I hope you won't mind, but before I left the boat, just after we tied up here, I told Walters to drop a couple of those special patent tins of yours overboard. They may come in useful."

"Good man!" Dexter said, as he took up his tea. "I'd never have thought of that."

"You didn't know Zelling," Hood answered. "That's the simplest thing he'd think about. Ask our young friends here how far they'd trust Zelling."

"He's a miserable beast," Darrell said.

Teddy Burke said nothing. He was trying to discover what could be said about him, and before he succeeded Derwent Hood was speaking again.

"I'm out for a big thing, Dexter. Zelling is out for something equally big. You and Walters, I think, can rely on getting back to the Chatswood safely enough. But Darrell and Burke and I—" Hood shrugged his shoulders. "We're in for a rough time."

"But why?" Dexter demanded.

"Shall we have a long talk about it later on?" Hood asked in answer to him. "It will be dark in an hour or so, and I want to have a look round. If you don't mind, I'm going to leave you here with Walters while Darrell and Burke come and tell me all they've gone through, and show me the way about my new home."

"All right," Dexter said. "I shall wait here until you return."

Accompanied by Darrell and Burke, Derwent Hood set off on his tour of exploration.

"Tell me," he said to Darrell, as they climbed up from the river, "just exactly how you came to know Zelling, and what has happened since."

Darrell looked at Burke.

"I think I'd better tell you the first part, Mr. Hood," Teddy said, "and Jack will tell you the other."

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SUNDAY CRUSADER!"

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

The Baron's Move.

It was almost an hour later before Hood came back to Dexter, but by that time he knew the whole story of how the two chums came to be mixed up with Zelling.

He had laughed joyfully over the first part of the story.

"I should think this would be a lesson to you, young man," he said. "I have had a fair amount of experience in playing games of bluff, but I never met with such a tremendous and immediate success as you've achieved."

But the latter part of their adventures held nothing which brought amusement to him.

"It's only another proof of Zelling's character," he told Darrell. "We have to realise the fact that, no matter what happens, Zelling always keeps his main object in view. He will stop at nothing to achieve his ends. Come! We'll get back to Dexter now, and begin to consider our plans at once."

When they reached the boat Dexter was patiently waiting for them.

"I began to think you chaps had been kidnapped again," he said. "What's the move now?"

"We're going back to the ship, leaving Walters here in charge of our boat," Hood answered. "Then we're going to have a long chat on the best course to take."

He turned to Walters.

"You can make yourself comfortable here for the night?" he asked the sailor. "And if by any chance you do want our help, you know the signal?"

"Yes, sir."

Walters nodded quite cheerfully, and produced his whistle as proof of the fact that he was ready to give the signal Hood had arranged with him.

"It's best not to leave the boat unguarded for a moment," Derwent Hood explained, as they walked towards the gangway. "Zelling, I expect, intends to use it sooner or later for himself, but I hope we shall stop his plans completely."

They crossed over to the Kielberg, and went to the cabin which had now been arranged for the use of Hood and Dexter.

It was Hood who did most of the talking. He discussed every possible plan which he believed Zelling could follow, and the manner in which it could be met.

"There's no use in under-estimating Zelling's power," he said. "I know him, and I know something of what he has done in the past. You can take it for granted that he has no intention of letting me get away from here. And he means to get Darrell to Germany."

"What about Burke?" asked Dexter.

"Burke is very much in the same position as I am," laughed Hood. "So long as we behave, and don't interfere in any way with Zelling's plans, we are fairly safe. The moment we become a nuisance, a stray bullet would settle the argument. Unless I'm very much mistaken, that is the stage which Zelling has now reached."

"But he couldn't—I mean, he's not the captain," protested Teddy Burke.

Again Hood smiled gently.

"Isn't he? I fancy you will find that Captain Diemster is already a back number. Can't you see that Zelling has now another object in view? He is going to take the credit of saving the officers and crew from surrendering. We shall have to act pretty quickly, and I suggest that you, Dexter—"

He broke off abruptly, and listened.

"What was that? Did you hear it?" he asked.

Even as he spoke the sound of shooting reached their ears. Both Dexter and Hood sprang to their feet.

"It's on deck," Dexter said quickly. "I'm going up."

"You'd better not come," Hood said, as he turned for a moment to Darrell and Burke. "It will be safer here."

Dexter and Hood went from the cabin, and for a few moments the two youngsters stood listening. The sound of another shot reached them. Teddy Burke looked at Darrell.

"We'll just creep along and see what is really happening," he said. "Besides, you never know—we might be useful."

Darrell agreed promptly, and the two of them went cautiously out. The corridor was in total darkness, and it took them some time to reach the deck.

Here again they crept along very quietly in the direction of the captain's cabin, whence the sound of shooting had apparently come.

Suddenly Darrell, who was leading the way, drew up and pushed Burke behind one of the guns. From here they could see the cabin, the door of which was wide open.

Around the door stood a number of the Kielberg's officers, and, a little distance behind them, some of the petty officers.

At first they could see nothing of Derwent Hood and Dexter, but presently Burke whispered to Darrell:

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OUR COMPANION THE BOYS' FRIEND "THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Monday, Every Wednesday,

"I've got them! They're in hiding, too—just to the left of those chaps at the back!"

Darrell could just make out the two crouching forms. He could see inside the brightly-lighted cabin where Captain Diemster stood at his table.

In his hand he held a revolver, and by his side stood his chief officer, also revolver in hand.

Before them stood two or three other officers, and it was obvious that there were others on either side, hidden from the view of those who watched outside.

Darrell and Burke had apparently arrived during an interval in the shooting, for Captain Diemster seemed to be speaking very firmly to those about him. Few outside the cabin could hear his voice, but the manner in which his lips moved and the emphasis he made with his hand from time to time suggested that he was expressing very definite opinions.

He spoke at some length, and the quietness lulled the watchers. When the sound of a shot came to them, it was a shock, and they scarcely realised at first what had happened. Then, through the thin wisps of smoke which hung about the cabin, they saw Captain Diemster lurch forward, and fall heavily across his own table.

Instantly those outside the cabin rushed in. Darrell and Burke forgot that they had meant to keep in hiding, and followed the crowd.

At first they could see nothing. The cabin was simply packed, and it seemed to be a general struggle, everyone fighting for his own advantage.

An order was called out by someone in the far corner. Most of the crowd then began to struggle back to the deck again.

Darrell was wedged in the doorway, while Burke was struggling to keep near him. They stood at last comparatively free, and dared to turn and look at the scene inside the cabin.

Captain Diemster still lay where he had fallen; the second in command stood upright near him, but his right arm hung limply by his side. In his left hand he held his revolver, and it was pointed at the man who stood almost in the corner of the cabin.

Had the officer pulled the trigger just then, Baron Zelling would have paid for his scheming with his life.

There were several other officers in the room, but they appeared to be there in support of Zelling, and they did not see the two boys who stood in the doorway.

For ten seconds—though it seemed much longer—no one in the room moved. The men who had gone out had quietened down now, and they were watching the scene before them in silence again.

It looked almost as though the cabin was a portion of a waxwork show, so stiffly did the figures stand. Most of them were ready with some weapon or other for the first sign of movement, but until that came they remained as still and rigid as statues.

The signal came from Zelling. He, like the man who faced him, held his revolver aimed ready to fire at the first chance. His opponent, probably from the pain in his right arm, staggered a little, and his revolver almost slipped from his hand.

In that instant Zelling fired, and Captain Diemster's strongest supporter fell forward across his chief.

The place was a pandemonium again in a few seconds. Men rushed in, and Darrell saw Hood deliberately fire at Zelling. There followed a mad minute in which it was hopelessly impossible to distinguish what was happening.

Shouts and harsh commands were bellowed out, and again something approaching order was restored.

On the floor, with two officers struggling to secure him, was Derwent Hood. His revolver had gone, and he was fighting like a madman, though the odds were heavily against him.

Zelling stood near, not daring, apparently, to go into the fray himself. But he gave a command, and another officer went to the assistance of the two who were fighting with Hood.

A length of thin rope was produced from somewhere, and, despite his desperate endeavours to get free, Hood was eventually rendered powerless. His wrists and ankles were securely bound, and he lay back on the floor, helpless and beaten.

Dexter had seen practically nothing of this, for he had been carrying on a single combat with none other than Von Bohn. Just as Hood was made secure, the middy sent Von Bohn crashing to the floor, so violently that the German lay stunned.

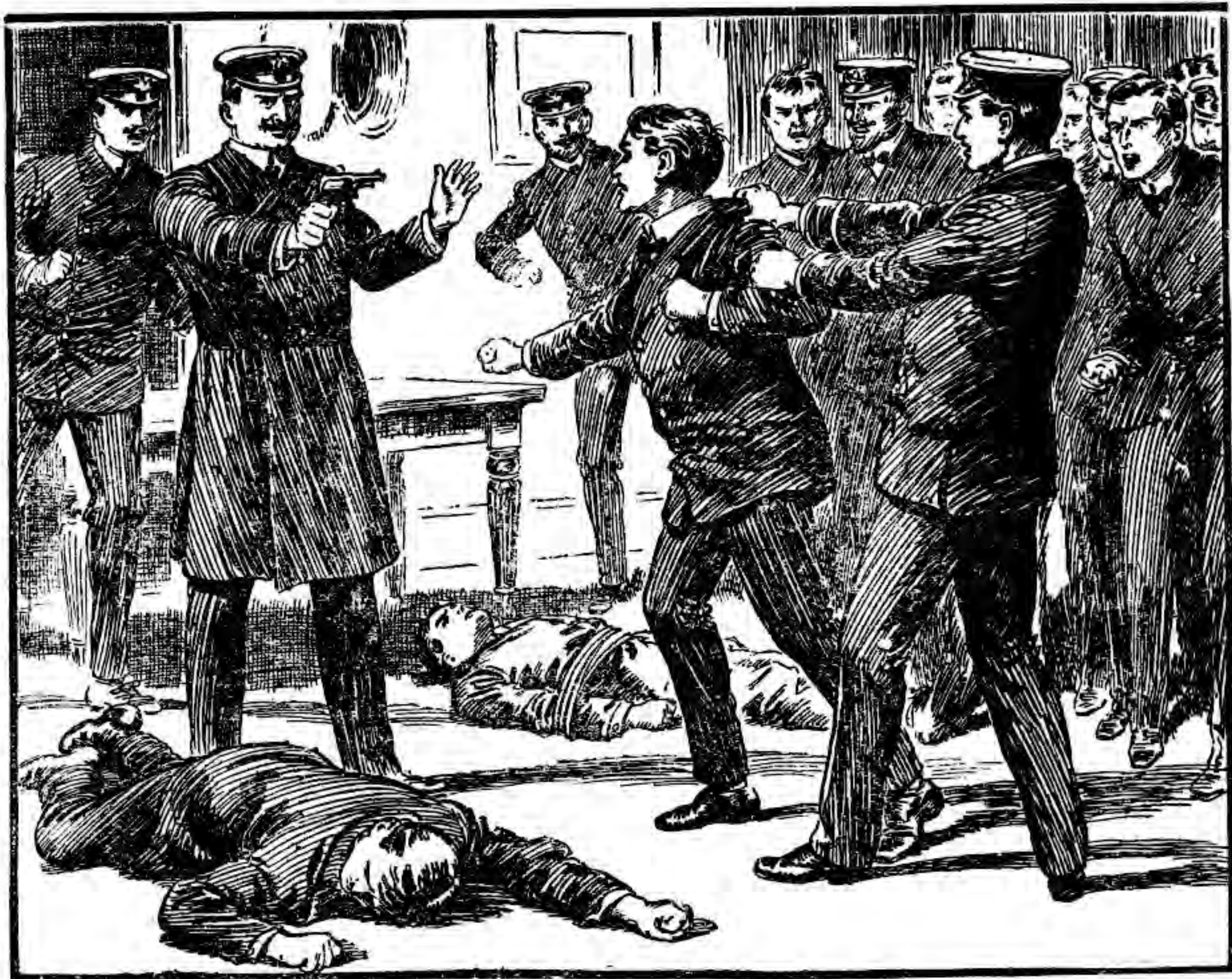
Dexter sprang back to the door where Zelling now was. The baron had dashed across, after giving his orders, to where the two boys stood. Teddy Burke, ever ready to join in any fighting, had tried to get to Hood's assistance the moment he saw what was happening.

"Look out, Jack!" And as Darrell realised the position he, too, had tried to jump into the fray. Zelling, springing

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Zelling, who had seen the movement, raised his revolver half playfully, and pointed it at Jack. There was a smile of grim, evil joy on the baron's face. "Ah, prince, you must not play tricks, you know," he sneered. "Have a care! I am in command now. (See be'ow.)"

forward to meet them, pushed Darrell back so that he fell against the wall of the cabin. Then he struck Burke a blow on the side of the head with the butt-end of his revolver.

Burke, taken utterly by surprise, simply fell to the floor. It was at this moment that Dexter sprung to them.

"Keep by me, Darrell!" he cried, as Jack pulled himself together and prepared for another rush past Zelling. "Get back to the wall!"

Darrell instinctively obeyed. Everything had happened so quickly and so wholly unexpectedly that it was impossible to grasp what really had taken place.

All that Darrell saw for the moment was the form of Teddy Burke stretched face downwards on the floor. A terrible, mad passion welled up within him, and the one great desire of his life at that moment was to kill Zelling.

He made a sudden move forward, but again Dexter pulled him back. Zelling, who had seen the movement, raised his revolver, half playfully, and pointed it at Jack. There was a smile of grim, evil joy on the baron's face.

"Ah, prince, you must not play tricks, you know," he sneered. "Have a care! I am in command now."

From somewhere near at hand came the sound of a whistle. Three short, sharp blasts there were, and they sounded like a frantic call for help.

Derwent Hood, bound though he was, raised himself the instant he heard the call.

"Cut, Dexter! Run for it!" he shouted. "And Darrell."

Dexter had seized Jack and pushed him out of the cabin almost as sharply as Hood yelled out.

"Come on! Don't be an ass!" he jerked out. "It's our only chance of saving them. Follow me and run for it!"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SUNDAY CRUSADERS!"

In the Night Watch.

The men on the deck outside the cabin were either too surprised or they did not understand what was happening, for they made no attempt to stop the two who dashed along the deck, down the steps and over the gangway.

Darrell followed the midshipman. They raced madly to the spot where the Chatswood motor-launch was. Stumbling and slipping in the darkness, it was a marvel how they managed to get there safely.

"Ahoy, Walters!" Dexter called, and from the shadows came an answering call. There came, too, the sound of splashing, and mixed with it the heavy breathing of men struggling.

"Here we are! Jump in, Darrell!" Dexter whispered the command, and then again called Walters.

"Here, sir! Look out! Ah, over you go, my son!" Another splash.

"I've got rid of 'em both now, sir," Walters called out softly. "Tried to throw me in, and now they're in it."

"Petrol?" asked Dexter. "We want to get away."

"All ready, sir," Walters answered. "Mr. Hood told me."

Dexter said nothing. He was feeling for the levers. From the ship there came many cries, and among them the sound of commands given sharply. There was no time to waste.

"All right, Darrell? Everything clear, Walters?" Dexter had the boat moving.

The two men Walters had thrown overboard had apparently been successful in getting to the bank, but they made no attempt to carry on the fight. But there were other men from the ship itself hurrying to carry out their orders.

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

"Please Heaven we'll get clear!" Dexter whispered. "Ah, we're in the open now! Round you come, my beauty!"

The boat was turned down the river, and presently was skimming along at a fairly good speed.

For half an hour or more they ran on in silence. There was no sign or sound of anyone in pursuit, and at last Dexter turned to his companions.

"They don't seem to be after us," he said. "And it's risky running at night. I think we'll pull in under the trees and make ourselves comfortable for a few hours."

He slowed down, and gently turned his boat towards the bank. There were fewer overhanging branches here, and it was not a difficult task to get the boat safely moored.

Darrell understood quite clearly that it was the best course they had taken in getting clear of the Kielberg. But he knew, too, that Burke alone in the hands of Zelling would have a rough time.

The baron had never been even passably decent with Burke, and it was only because he had been to some extent anxious to keep Darrell in a good humour with him that he had not caused more trouble to Burke. And now, if his boast were true, Zelling was in command of the Kielberg crowd.

"Can you hear, sir?" Walters asked suddenly.

They stood in silence for a short time, straining their ears to catch the faintest sounds.

"Out with the light!" said Dexter. "Take the curtains down, Walters; they show up even in the darkness."

Darrell could now hear the chug-chug of a motor-boat. It came nearer and nearer.

"She goes well," whispered Dexter. "How many are there aboard? Can you make out, Walters?"

"Five, sir," came the low reply. "That's as far as I can tell."

"I think you're right," Dexter agreed. "They've not seen us, and that's something to be thankful for. Wonder how far they'll go before they give up the chase? I hope they'll go back as quickly as they came."

The boat had disappeared entirely now, and the three returned once again to the question of supper.

"You two had better try and get some sleep, I think," Dexter said, when they had finished. "I'll take first watch, Walters. I'll rouse you quick enough if anything happens. Make yourself as comfortable as you can, Darrell. It isn't exactly a spring mattress, but you'll need all the sleep you can get. And you'd better put this curtain over you in case any of those beastly flies want to chew you up. That's right. Good-night!"

"Good-night!" Jack answered and tried to compose himself. But it was hopeless. His mind was over-excited with the recent events, and somehow the loneliness and misery of it all seemed stronger and more overbearing than ever he had felt it before.

He wondered how Teddy Burke was faring, and when and how he would next see him.

Sometimes he glanced towards the other end of the boat where Grenville Dexter sat, just a broad shadow, a shade deeper than the darkness, with a faint suggestion of whiteness near the top.

He scarcely seemed to move, but sat there, hunched up, staring out over the river.

Presently the black shadow straightened itself and sat upright, alert.

Quite near at hand Jack heard a sound. Chug-chug-chug! it came, softer and slower than when he heard it before.

He raised himself to a sitting position and worked his way nearer Dexter.

"Sh—sh!" the midshipman whispered. "Keep down!"

He himself crept lower into the boat and watched over the side.

"See them?" he whispered to Jack. "They're very near. Coming very slowly, this side. And they've got one of those beastly little searchlights. Touch Walters. We'd better make ready."

Walters was quickly roused, and he grasped the situation at once.

"Cripps!" he muttered softly. "What rotten luck! They'll be on us in a minute. They can't miss us with that beastly light."

Slowly the narrow beam of white light drew nearer. They were evidently determined to search every inch of the river. From where he lay Jack watched the flashing of the beam, backwards and forwards, fascinated by its brightness.

"Are you ready, Walters?" Dexter asked. "You fit, Darrell? Do exactly as I tell you. Ah! Keep quite still!"

(Look out for next Monday's ins a'ment of this exciting yarn. Order your "MAGNET" early!)

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CHAMPION OF THE OPPRESSED!

(Continued from page 21.)

authority. But for the fact that you were deceived by Bunter, I should flog you Coker."

"Flog me?" stammered Coker. "Me? Flog me? My hat!"

"As it is, I shall administer a severe caning, and you will take a thousand lines, Coker. And if anything of this kind occurs, I shall order you a public flogging."

Coker blinked at the Head. He could not speak. He thought that he must be dreaming.

"Follow me, Coker!" said the Head majestically.

Coker followed him.

Potter and Greene looked queerly at their study-mate when he came into the study. Coker was still looking dazed. He was squeezing his hands, too, in a spasmodic sort of way. He sat down in the arm-chair, and blinked at Potter and Greene. They nobly suppressed their chuckles. Coker had been through it, and it was really no time for chuckling; but never had Potter and Greene felt so inclined to chuckle.

"Well?" said Potter.

"Licked?" said Greene.

Coker nodded.

"Yes—me, you know. Licked! Greyfriars is coming to something, I must say! I tried to make the Head understand. It was n. g.—he simply wouldn't listen. Serve him jolly well right if I left Greyfriars! Still, I won't do that."

"And what about championing the fags?" murmured Potter. "Still keeping that up, Coker, old man?"

Coker's face became quite ferocious.

"The fags! I admit I have made a bit of a mistake there. On second thoughts, I can see quite clearly that the trouble is that they're not licked enough, especially Bunter. What the fags want, especially the Remove, are thrashings, and plenty of 'em! I see that quite clearly now. Jolly good thrashings, that's what they want—and plenty of 'em! Ow! My hands!"

Evidently Coker was to shine no longer in the role of Champion of the Oppressed!

But though the fags had lost one champion, they had gained another, as it happened. That evening George Wingate looked in on Loder, who was caressing alternately nose and eye. Loder greeted him with a scowl.

"Just a word, Loder," said Wingate quietly. "The Head's asked me to look into the matter and see whether there's anything in what Coker said of bullying going on. I've come to the conclusion that there's a good deal in it. It's got to stop!"

"Got to?" said Loder fiercely.

"Yes, got to!" said Wingate. "I shall be keeping my eye open after this, and the first time I catch you at it, look out!"

The captain of Greyfriars was not a fellow of many words, but his words carried weight. He left the study without saying more. Loder scowled after him, but he took the warning to heart.

Harry Wharton & Co. soon found there was a change. Loder of the Sixth made it a point to ignore their existence, and they cheerfully ignored him. Indeed, during the next few days their chief trouble was with Coker, who was endeavouring to carry out his new theory of thrashings. But, as Hurree Singh expressed it, the thrashfulness was a boot on the other leg, and Coker gave it up. And then once more in the Greyfriars remove all was calm and bright.

THE END.

(Next Monday's splendid long complete school tale is entitled: "THE SUNDAY CRUSADERS!" and deals with the further exciting adventures of Harry Wharton and Co., at Greyfriars. Please order your copy of "The Magnet" Library in advance, and tell your chums to do likewise.)

5,000 PRIZES! COMPETITION RESULT.

It is now possible to announce the result of the above competition.
The First Prize,

A MAGNIFICENT MOTOR BICYCLE,
has been awarded to

WILLIE JONES,
102, Weelsby Street, Grimsby,
who submitted a list of 8,634 names and addresses.

FIRST 50 PRIZE-WINNERS.

Not quite 5,000 readers entered the competition, and, therefore, everyone who took part will receive a prize. We have not space to give the names and addresses of all prizewinners, but below will be found those of the fifty competitors who submitted lists next in order of merit:

- R. Fallows, Dungiven House, Londonderry.
- F. Bennett, 16, Davey Road, Handsworth.
- C. Morgan, 156, Monks Road, Lincoln.
- J. H. Williams, 30, Eastbourne Grove, S. Shields.
- G. Lennon, 25, Station Street, Pennawr, Newbridge, Mon.
- J. E. Morgan, 453, Warrington Road, Goose Green, near Wigan, Lancs.
- W. Paton, 2, Melville Crescent, Motherwell, Scotland.
- P. Ellman, 400, Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester.
- G. Proctor, 107, South Frederick Street, S. Shields.
- J. Kay, 113, James's Street, Laurieston-by-Falkirk, Scotland.
- T. Soakell, 6, South View, Billingham, near Stockton-on-Tees.
- D. Jackson, 81, Herbert St., Hightown, Manchester.
- W. Harland, 48, North Street, Scarborough.
- S. R. Burley, 17, Bradiston Road, Maida Hill, W.
- L. W. Taylor, 97, Fernhead Road, Paddington, W.
- C. Lester, 40, Gratton Terrace, Cricklewood, N.W.
- W. C. Austin, 64, Brayards Road, Peckham, S.E.
- B. Wall, 148, Walmersley Road, Bury, Lancs.
- E. Ford, 18, Crispin Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
- I. Jaffe, 331, Govan Street, Glasgow.
- R. Hogarth, 33, Hardwicke Street, Monkwearmouth, Sunderland.
- E. D. Stedmond, 23, Wallace St., Stirling, Scotland.
- H. C. Williams, 1, Colum Place, Cardiff.
- R. Wilkins, 62, Hayward Road, Barton Hill, Bristol.
- R. Hayes, 43, Harper Street, Brooks Bar, Old Trafford, Manchester.
- M. Jones, 10, Poplar Street, Everton, Liverpool.
- J. Bendle, 6, Princes Road, Aylesbury, Bucks.
- T. G. Davies, 3, Hill Terrace, Penllergaer, near Gorseinon.
- J. Greenhalgh, 39, Cornwall Street, West Hartlepool.
- H. Smith, 50, Manchester Street, Grimsby.
- S. Trasler, 78, Seagrave Road, Sileby, near Loughborough, Leics.
- C. H. Barfoot, 31, Blackwell Road, Huthwaite, Notts.
- W. Evans, 51, School Lane, Didsbury, Manchester.
- G. F. Pardy, 1, Station Rd., Masbro', Rotherham.
- A. Grundy, 17, High Street, Bolsover, near Chesterfield, Derbyshire.
- H. Hebblethwaite, 21, Albert Street, Newark, Notts.
- E. L. Higgins, 79, Colum Road, Cardiff.
- G. Day, 31, Hawarden Grove, Herne Hill, S.E.
- G. Lynch, 95, Henry Street, Limerick.
- R. Bullfrey, 2, Windsor Road, Six Bells, Abertillery, Mon.
- A. E. Hancock, Infant Orphanage Asylum, Wanstead, Essex.
- J. J. McGurgan, 20, Campbell St., Bootle, Liverpool.
- B. Evans, 48, Llwydarth Rd., Maesteg, near Bridgend, Glam.
- J. McDiarmid, 9, Primrose Terrace, Middlesbrough.
- L. S. Chard, Thorneycroft, Pymore Road, Bridport, Dorset.
- A. A. Mercer, 60, Evering Road, Stoke Newington, N.
- P. Ahern, Maryville Cottage, Courtown, Govey, co. Wexford.
- W. C. Doyle, 8, Pellett Street, Cardiff.
- J. Jackson, 9, James Street, Harris Villa, Frizington, Cumb.
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No. 8.



Arise, Colonial chums, and cheer
The hero from Australia;
A schoolboy sunny and sincere,
And quite unused to failure.
A ripping sportsman, great and fine,
And valiant defender,
This star will never cease to shine
In all his dazzling splendour!

When scraps with rivals come along,
He fights as for a wager,
Supported well by quaint Mont Blong,
And Monk, and Wootton major.
His cheery voice is often heard:
"A row on? Right you are, boys!"
And all his blows are less preferred
To Wootton mi's or Carboy's.

In sporting lore he stands supreme,
A paragon of fitness!
His drives are a delightful dream,
And quite a treat to witness.
While on the footer-field he proves
A most efficient scorer;
A captain tried and true, who moves
The hearts of each adorer.

With skill that's never on the wane,
And tons of fighting knowledge,
He leads the grim and great campaign
Against St. James's College.
In warfare fierce the foes take part,
Rejoicing every minute;
And when the rowdy rivals start,
Hill Sixty isn't in it!

Disguising in a false attire
Is Gay's great recreation;
He finds it easy to acquire
The gift of imitation.
Each wheeze is relished to the full,
And any boy or master
Who dares defy the Grammar School
Meets swift and sure disaster!

Hats off, then, boys, to Gordon Gay!
What sportsman could be sounder?
And may he always win the day
Against each cad and bounder!
His actions, noble as they are,
All loyal readers nourish;
For, like a bright and beaming star,
They will for ever flourish!

Next Monday:
COKER & CO.
No. 9 of this grand new series.

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The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

For Next Monday:

"THE SUNDAY CRUSADERS!"

By Frank Richards.

Quite a new departure is next Monday's grand, long, complete story of Greyfriars School. Skinner of the Remove incites a large number of his schoolfellows to rebel against Sunday church-going, and to level numerous attacks upon the Christian Faith. But Harry Wharton & Co. stand shoulder to shoulder against the black sheep of the Form, and the latter find themselves "up against it" in everything they undertake. At length Skinner and Bolsover major, while attempting a practical joke in the school chapel, meet with an alarming accident, and it is at this point that Skinner's best qualities assert themselves. To save his chum, he makes a supreme and touching sacrifice, and the campaign of

"THE SUNDAY CRUSADERS!"

comes to a dramatic conclusion in consequence.

Mr. Frank Richards is equally famous as a writer of humorous stories and those of the dramatic order. In next Monday's stirring tale he has blended both humour and drama, and the seriousness of the subject is relieved throughout by delightfully amusing side-issues.

Of those "Magnet" stories which prominently stand out from the rest

"THE SUNDAY CRUSADERS!"

is one. Make sure, therefore, of obtaining your copy of this grand story by ordering it NOW!

THE WELCOME "YES"!

"The Greyfriars Herald" (1d.) to be Published!

My appeal for votes in connection with portended publication of "The Greyfriars Herald" (1d.) has not been in vain. The response was slow at first, but at the eleventh hour my chums seemed to wake up, and shoals of approving post-cards made their way to my sanctum. They still continue to pour in, and up to the time of dictating this Chat to my sub-editor the voting is as follows:

FOR "The Greyfriars Herald"	105,726
AGAINST "The Greyfriars Herald"	4

I rather fancy that the "Fors" have carried the day. From November, therefore, the papers supervised by your Editor will be:

THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY.

Every Monday. One Penny.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND."

Every Monday. One Penny.

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD."

Every Monday. One Halfpenny.

THE "GEM" LIBRARY.

Every Wednesday. One Penny.

"TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

Every Wednesday. One Halfpenny.

"THE PENNY POPULAR."

Every Friday. One Penny.

"CHUCKLES."

Every Saturday. One Halfpenny.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" THREEPENNY LIBRARY,

The First Friday in Each Month.



My readers may take it from me that the two grand little schoolboy journals which will shortly appear on the market are great value for the money. Indeed, it would not have been presumptuous to have charged a penny for them; but bearing in mind the fact that it is war-time, and that the pocket-money of a good many boys and girls is very limited in consequence, I have decided that the only decent and patriotic thing to be done under the circumstances is to make the cost of our new companion papers a halfpenny each. I feel sure that my loyal chums will see that my efforts are appreciated by making the new venture a roaring success.

And now let me thank the vast army of friends who have written to me on this all-important topic. Their approval was most emphatic and universal; and the four solitary grumblers who asked me not to publish "The Greyfriars Herald" deserve to be completely ignored, for not one of them put forward any sound reason in opposition to the scheme.

So now we can go merrily ahead, and the publishing date of

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" (No. 1)

will be announced on this page in due course

NOW, YOU BUDDING AUTHORS!

Can you write a "Magnet" story? The proposition will doubtless take your breath away. Nevertheless, I am convinced that lots of fellows could write quite a readable story of Harry Wharton & Co. if they were offered a sufficient incentive to do so. Dr. Johnson once said that anyone could write a book if he went about it doggedly enough, and I suppose the same remark applies to "Magnet" stories. Anyway, to encourage aspiring authors, I am going to offer

AN AWARD OF FIFTEEN POUNDS

to the reader who sends in what I consider to be the best 30,000-word story dealing with school life at Greyfriars; and if the winning effort is of a sufficiently high standard it shall be published.

The story may be humorous, dramatic, solemn, or adventurous, or all the lot rolled into one. Typewritten manuscripts are preferred, but ordinary handwriting is permissible, provided only one side of the paper is used.

Every single boy or girl who competes for this magnificent award, even if he or she be unsuccessful, will receive a suitable gift from the Editor, and a detailed criticism of the story submitted.

I am convinced that there are many promising authors in the ranks of "Magnet" readers, who are only waiting for someone to take an interest in their work, and to give them a footing on the first rung of the ladder of fame.

The winning effort will be selected by the Editor, in consultation with Mr. Frank Richards.

The Editor can accept no responsibility for the loss or non-delivery of any manuscript submitted; but he will make every effort to safeguard against such loss.

Envelopes should be addressed to—

THE EDITOR,

The "Magnet" Library,

The Fleetway House,

Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

and the words "Story Competition" should appear on the top left-hand corner of the envelope.

The closing date will be November 30th which gives competitors plenty of time for the writing and perfecting of their stories.

Should the response be of a very satisfactory nature, the Editor may award consolation prizes in cash at his own discretion.

(Continued on page lii of cover.)

TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.

A very joyful surprise is in course of preparation for my Magnetite chums—a surprise which will be warmly welcomed when it comes about, and at the nature of which I am only allowed to hint.

When I say that Mr. Frank Richards, the popular "Magnet" author, is largely concerned in the matter, perhaps you will guess what is in store for you.

Watch this page very carefully during the next few weeks.

SARCASM WHICH MISSED FIRE.

"Evil-Wisher," having read the apology tendered me by a reader whose initials are A. P. H., writes as follows:

"This silly, idiotic person wishes to apologise, does he? It would look better if he joined my Anti-Magnet League, and remained your bitter enemy. He must be a lunatic to have changed his tone because of your 'Straight Reply to Your Critics.' I am certain funkng will ever be the occupation of A. P. H., and am enclosing a white feather, which you may present to him with my compliments."

I should like to point out to "Evil-Wisher" that as A. P. H. is only thirteen years of age, he can hardly be expected to take a hand in the trenches; while as to funkng, he has already been twice complimented by the Royal Life-Saving Society, and has received a medal from the Royal Humane Society for a deed which "Evil-Wisher," in my opinion, would shrink from attempting. Therefore, my satanic friend, your brilliant wit and attempted sarcasm falls hopelessly and completely flat. Perhaps you will "dry up" after this.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

K. G. O. (Wimbledon).—Many thanks for your splendid letter of encouragement.

"A Never-miss-one-week Reader" (Alnwick).—Thanks for your letter. I will get Mr. Richards to write a story on the lines you suggest.

L. P. (Clapham).—Rally round "The Greyfriars Herald"—when it comes! With regard to your postscript, you are quite correct. I made an unfortunate error.

Frank Clayton (Salfybridge).—Thanks for your long and interesting letter. I should say that the best and worst scholars in the Remove were Mark Linley and Billy Bunter respectively. The best and worst fighting-men are assuredly Bob Cherry and Sidney Snoop. Some startling revelations will come to light shortly concerning Mr. Quelch's "History of Greyfriars." Very best wishes.

"Magnet Chums" (London, N.).—You won't beat Gamage's for the article you mention.

W. J. Smith (Northampton).—I am not at all offended at your question: "Which has the larger circulation—the 'Magnet' or 'Gem'?" In reply, I should say they are about level.

Some weeks the "Magnet" knocks the "Gem" into a cocked hat, and other weeks the situation is reversed. When a particularly rousing story appears in one of the papers, it is not unusual to find that particular paper well in advance of the other for weeks together. It would be unfair to compare the circulation of "The Boys' Friend" with that of the "Magnet" and "Gem." The "Friend" is a totally different paper, read by a different public. The type of the papers is set up by hand in a composing-room.

"A Loyal Liverpool Reader."—Good old Liverpool! I don't need telling that I have hundreds of keen, enthusiastic chums in that famous town. Thanks very much for the loyal letter you sent me.

Len Wells (Tongah).—I am afraid a competition confined solely to Australian readers would not prove a success, for several reasons. I see no reason why "The Penny Popular" shouldn't live up to its name in Australia. Rally round, there, you chaps "down under."

F. W. B. (Bournemouth).—Harry Wharton and Tom Merry are both excellent swimmers, but I prefer the former.

Victor W. Dolman (Chippenham).—Thanks for your letter and suggestion. Kipps, the schoolboy conjurer, plays a prominent part in a "Magnet" story coming along shortly.

P. Kerwood (Southampton).—"The Dreadnought" shut up shop owing to lack of support. The market is so overcrowded nowadays that unless a paper receives the unanimous support of thousands, it fails. See to it that your favourite paper does not share the same sad fate!

C. J. Thompson (Malton).—It was very patriotic of you to send on your spare copies to Driver Brackley.

Private P. H. (Liverpool).—Great men have disagreed as to the way in which Ypres is pronounced, so it would be presumptuous of me to lay down a hard-and-fast rule on the subject. Personally, I always call it "E-pray." Fancy being wounded at fifteen! You have my sympathy, and best wishes for a speedy recovery.

B. W. (Liverpool).—Thanks very much for your unwavering loyalty to the old paper.

Amie B. and Donald M. (Christchurch, N.Z.).—You will readily realise how impossible it is to give all the characters in the "Magnet" a chance to distinguish themselves. Don't

get distressed about poor Tom Brown, the only New Zealand representative at Greyfriars, taking a back seat. He will come into prominence in a short time, and then I expect Australian readers will exclaim, with one voice: "What's become of Squiff?"

G. Quinn (Plumstead).—The best phrenologist of my acquaintance is Mr. H. Stacpoole, Ludgate Circus, London, E.C.

Bertie McMaster (Glasgow).—There are no such persons and places as those you name; at least, not to my knowledge. You are hardly complimented when people call you Bunter the Second.

Jack R. Thomas (Somerset).—Excuse my plain language, Jack, but the people who tell you I never reply to my correspondents are downright ignorant fools. Show them this reply, and see what they have to say about it. As Mr. Lascelles's task of teaching mathematics was not a heavy one, no difficulty was found in getting a substitute for him when he joined the colours.

Arthur M. (King's Lynn).—Watch the Chat Page of the "Magnet," and you will find plenty of names of soldiers on active service who are in need of spare copies.

D. B. (Sydney).—Don't blame poor old Field for his long and formidable string of names. His parents were responsible at the font. In reply to Question 2, it doesn't follow that because, once upon a time, Peter Todd knocked Bob Cherry out, he is necessarily the better boxer. As to your third remark, I fail to see how you can class Wharton and his chums as "Eric's." They are as full of fun and mischief as the average schoolboy.

R. L. A. N. (Norton).—There's nothing like the "Magnet" when it rains. Glad you and your chum appreciate that fact.

E. H. (Hungerford).—We don't run an "Exchange and Mart" in connection with the "Magnet" Library.

"As You Like It" (Auckland).—A ripping suggestion, chum! Where ever do you New Zealanders get your brains from? You'll be producing another Frank Richards soon.

"Two Faithful Chums" (North Finchley).—That's the way! Go on getting new readers for the old paper. It's good work, and you have the satisfaction of knowing that your efforts are highly appreciated at this office.

G. I. (Maida Vale).—I'm going to give you amateur authors a chance to prove your worth. Watch the Chat Page.

"Kangaroo" (Victoria).—Adolphe Meunier left Greyfriars years ago. Marjorie and Clara are each fifteen years of age, and the great Coker is seventeen. No, Bunter's father doesn't keep a publichouse. That is only Bob Cherry's witticism.

THE FIELD-SERVICE KIT OF THE BRITISH INFANTRYMAN Some Interesting Particulars.

KNAP-SACK

CONTAINS

OVERCOAT WATERPROOF
SHEET, MESS TINGS
2 PAIRS OF SOCKS
KNIFE FORK
& SPOON
HOUSEWIFE
HANK BRUSH
B-COMB
TOOTH BRUSH
SOAP & TOWEL
SHIRT RAZOR
& SHAVING BRUSH
ENTRENCHING
TOOL
WATER BOTTLE

HANDLE FOR
ENTRENCHING
TOOL



The marching weight of the kit amounts to about fifty pounds, including rifle and about 150 rounds of ammunition and a light entrenching tool—pick or shovel—for rapidly digging a shelter trench in action. The explanatory outline shows various components of the equipment, and how all items are adapted for carrying with as little inconvenience as possible. The rifle is a Lee-Metford.

The Editor

YOU SIMPLY MUST READ THIS PAGE!



CHAPTER I.

Introduces Joe and Teddy Bevan.

Joe Bevan put his arm about his little brother's neck.

Teddy was seated on the broken-backed kitchen chair at the bare table, on which Joe had placed the last crust that was left in the cupboard. His curly head was on his arms, and he was sobbing bitterly.

"It had been a hard day for both the boys, for that afternoon they had seen their gentle, uncomplaining mother laid to rest in a pauper's grave."

Teddy had borne up bravely until they had come back to the empty attic, which was all they could call home. But he had broken down when Joe had gone to the cupboard and had taken from it the one dry crust that was left there.

"It's no good, Joe!" he cried. "I can't eat! It'd choke me! I want mother—I want mother to come back to us!"

Joe's heart seemed to turn to stone at his brother's cry. A lump rose in his throat that nearly choked him. Their mother's death had come as a stunning blow to both the boys, but Joe, up to now, had not shed a tear.

Almost the last words that his mother had spoken to him were those which were ringing in his head now, causing him to crush down the tears that were rising behind his eyes and to set his square-cut, determined jaw till his white face looked rather that of a man than that of a boy of fifteen.

"Joe, my brave boy," his dying mother had said, taking his face into her wasted hands, "I am going a long, long journey, and I am leaving Teddy to your care. You have always been a good, brave, honest boy, and I have no fear for you. You will do well in the world, but Teddy is smaller and weaker than you are, and I want you always to look after him, and to put him first; and, above all, Joe, do not grieve for me when I am gone, and when you meet daddy, away in America, tell him that I died easy and happy in my mind."

Joe had promised his mother that he would always protect his young brother, and he meant to keep his word, for Joe was one of those boys whose word was as good as his bond.

Now that his mother was gone, he realised that he had to play the man, and this game was a harder one than he had dreamed of.

He would have given the world to sit down there and then beside his little brother and to have wept his heart out. But he clenched his teeth, straightened his back, and ran his arm about Teddy's heaving shoulders.

"Cheer up, Teddy!" said he. "Mother said that we must not grieve for her, and that we must

look forward, and not backward. She was expecting every day to hear from dad, and soon a letter may come from him, sending us the money to go out and join him in the West. That's beyond the sunset. Ted—where mother has gone. Now, come on, old chap! Maybe Mrs. Daniels will let us have a kettle of hot water, and there's a pinch of tea left in the caddy."

"Why didn't daddy come home?" wept Teddy. "Perhaps mother wouldn't have died then!"

"America's a rare long way off, Ted," replied Joe patiently, "and dad has gone right away in the wild parts, looking for gold. He didn't have any luck in the cities, you see, or he'd have sent for us long ago. And he'd left mother enough money for us to go out there when he had found a home for us. But, of course, all that went whilst she was ill. But I expect we shall hear from dad soon, and maybe he'll send us the money to get out there again. Listen, Teddy, to the gramophone in the other street; it's singing about the West! That's a sort of sign for us!"

Teddy had dried his tears. He was only a child, after all, and Joe's words had heartened him up. Joe had often talked to him about the wonderful land of the West and its wonders. Joe had heard all about it from his father, who was an old mining man.

James Bevan, his father, had been a Cornish lad, brought up to his trade of miner in the tin mines of Cornwall. Then tin mines had fallen upon evil days. Great deposits of the ore had been found abroad, and Cornwall had suffered. With many another Cornish lad, his father had left the Old Country—first for Australia, then he had travelled along with the mining men to the new silver mines of Nevada.

Here he had made a fortune, and, returning to England, had settled down and married their mother. For a long time they had been rich. Joe could remember, when he was a child, a large house and carriages. He had his own nurse and governess. But when he was eleven or twelve years old there had come a smash.

Joe did not understand much about it, even in these days. But he had realised from what his mother had told him that the attraction of the mines had been too much for his father. Like all miners, he was something of a gambler, and the London Stock Exchange had attracted him as it has attracted many a mining man to his doom. He had lost every penny.

They had been obliged to move to a small house, then to a smaller house. His father had tried to get

work as a consulting engineer, but without success.

So at last he had shaken the dust of London from his feet, and had gone to America to try his luck again on the trail and the desert. He had taken only enough to pay his passage, and had left all the small remnant of his money with Mrs. Bevan, who had set up as a dressmaker in a small way, hoping to get a living for herself and the boys till her husband should strike a bit of miner's luck.

But the luck had never come, although she had waited two long years. Unaccustomed to hard work and poor living, she had gradually failed, and, after a long illness, during which the carefully-boarded passage-money had all been spent, she had died, still waiting and hoping for the good news from the West which never came.

Joe cut up their last crust into thin slices. Then he tipped the last spoonful of tea from the caddy into their little brown earthenware teapot.

He put most of the bread on Teddy's plate, keeping only a small bit of crust for himself. He was empty and starving, for he had had no food all day.

He turned to the door with the teapot in his hand. He would ask the landlady of the squalid house where they lived to oblige them with a drop of boiling water.

But before he could open the door it was flung open, and their landlady appeared. She was a red-faced, ill-tempered woman, who had showed no kindness to their sick mother, and Joe hated her.

Behind her into the room peered the faces of a man and a woman—foreign Jews, who had just landed from a steamer in the docks.

"Here you are, you Jews!" said Mrs. Daniels, unceremoniously. "Here's the room I've got to let, and I bet it's good enough for the likes of you! Rent is seven-and-six. There's this room an' the little one that opens out of it. There's a nice bed here!"

"What do you mean?" asked Joe hastily. "The bed is ours! It was mother's!"

"It ain't mother's now!" replied Mrs. Daniels roughly. "It's mine, and it won't pay for the rent that's owing, nor will any of the miserable things that's in the room!"

"The rent was paid up till last Saturday!" urged Joe.

"Where's your receipts, then?" demanded the woman. "I tell you there's five weeks' rent owing!"

Joe knew that this was a lie. The woman wanted to get rid of them there and then.

"Do you mean to put us out in the street?" he demanded.

"I'm a poor woman," snivelled Mrs. Daniels suddenly, "and I don't want to be hard on you boys; but the money I've lost over you an' your mother I'll never get back! And here I've got some good tenants that want the rooms at once!"

(Of course poor Joe and Teddy have to leave their little home. Joe makes up his mind to go out to his father. The two boys have adventure after adventure. "The Boys' Friend," one penny, out to-day, contains the first 9,000-word instalment of this amazing story. You must get a copy from your newsagent at once. Buck up, or he will be sold out. Ask him for "The Boys' Friend" out to-day.)

