

THE GIANT OF GREYFRIARS!

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



ONE-TWO-THREE! BILLY BUNTER'S BATH!

(An Exciting Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale in this Issue.)

MY READERS' PAGE

OUR COMPANION PAPERS:

"THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d., Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d., Every Wednesday. "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY. "THE PENNY POPULAR," 1d., Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," 1d., Every Saturday.

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 SCHOOLBOY FARMERS!"

By Frank Richards.

Those of our readers—and they are many—who prefer above all things a yarn in which humour is in the ascendant, will be delighted with next week's fine story. At the same time, there is no reason to suppose that the rest, whose taste is for the more serious type of story, will be disappointed. An advertisement in a local paper for schoolboys to help on a farm sends the Famous Five to Mr Quelch, and through the kindly offices of that gentleman not only Harry Wharton & Co., but also Lord Mauleverer, Billy Bunter, Skinner, and Snoop are allowed to go along and give their aid to Mr. Higgins, of Fernford Farm, for a week. Six of the nine go with full intention to work their hardest. Mr. Higgins finds that one of those six has rather peculiar notions of what hard work means; yet, after all, it is Mauleverer, the slacker of the Remove, who earns the most credit during the week, though it can scarcely be said that he earns it by strenuous labour. As for Bunter, as might be expected, his motive is the fleshpots; while Skinner and Snoop are simply out to shirk work at the farm. Not one of these three stays out the full week. But the other six do, and how they fare, and how it was that Bunter and the two black sheep went back as "returned empties," you can all read next week in

"THE SCHOOLBOY FARMERS!"

THE "BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. LIBRARY.

Some little time ago I answered in the "Boys' Friend" the complaint of a reader who objected to the republication of serials he had already read as numbers of the "Boys' Friend" 3d. Library. Now George E. T., writing from Woodstock, Cape Town, South Africa, makes the same complaint. I deduce that he is not a "Boys' Friend" reader, or he would have seen the reply referred to. But I wonder why he is not? He writes: "Now, dear Editor, why do you print secondhand stuff in the 'Boys' Friend' 3d. Library? Quite often when I have gone to get my three books, I have found that I have read one of them, and sometimes two. I do not think that this is right. When I buy a 'Boys' Realm,' and get a serial in it, I do not expect to get it dished up again to me in the 'Boys' Friend' 3d. Library."

This good reader of mine is making a mistake. He words his protest quite civilly, and I never mind anything of that sort when it is civil. But he is in error in supposing that the "Boys' Friend" 3d. Library is, or was ever, intended to be devoted entirely to new stories. If it were, it could not be sold at the very low price which is asked for it. Has it ever occurred to George E. T. how much he is getting for the modest sum of threepence? (As a matter of fact, being a resident in South Africa, he has to pay rather more than that for it; but 3d. is the standard price.) Some of the stories are new, and are distinctly stated on the covers to be so; if that statement does not appear, it may be taken for granted that the yarn—like the very great majority of stories brought out at prices varying from 3d. to 1s.—is a reprint. The series was really instituted for the purpose of republishing in handy book-form the more popular serials which have appeared in the "Boys' Friend" and its companion papers of a less mature age. (It should not be forgotten that the "Good Old Green 'Un," as so many readers affectionately call it, has weathered the storms of over twenty-one years, and is now going stronger than ever.) Thousands of those who have read the yarns as serials want them in book-form, as the many letters received prove. But, in any case, a higher price would have to be charged for each number in the series if each number were a new story—so, as the showman said, "What you lose on the swings you get back on the roundabouts."

THE "MAGNET" IN GERMAN (?) SOUTH-WEST AFRICA.

It is no longer "German" South-West Africa, of course, and I should say that nothing is much less likely than that it ever will be again. But it was still so when a soldier reader of mine introduced the "Magnet" to its sandy wastes. Pat Halferty, late of the Natal Carabineers, was one of those who shared in the campaign under General Botha, and he tells me that his mater sent him the "Magnet" regularly throughout. "As soon as the post was distributed," he adds, "you would hear the chaps say: 'Halferty, has the 'Magnet' come? If it has, just you buck up with it, for I want it next!' All the boys liked it." Quite a nice testimonial, that!

NOTICES.

For Correspondence, Etc.

H. Clifford, 126, Shakespeare Road, Stoke Newington, N., would be glad to hear from any reader who has a small hand-printing press for sale second-hand.

A. D. Whitehead, 45, Ringford Road, Wandsworth, S.W., would like to get into touch with readers anywhere, keen on collecting cards and fossils, with a view to forming a club.

Miss Anita Wainwright, 11, Seely Street, Bangor, N. Wales, would like to correspond with another girl reader.

J. A. Hart, 15, Broadwater Road, Lonslip Lane, Tottenham, N., is a violinist, and would be glad to hear from any fellow-reader (boy) in his neighbourhood who would accompany him on the piano at practice. Should be able to read music at sight, of course.

Cricket and Football.

Kennedy C.C. (average age 16) want matches after two o'clock Saturdays and after six o'clock week-nights, five-mile radius Clapham.—Hon. Sec., Jim Hooper, 1A, Elwell Road, Larkhall Lane, Clapham, S.W.

Everton Junior C.C. (average age 15½) want matches, three-mile radius Stanley Park.—Hon. Sec., Peter Graham, 12, Goshen Street, Everton, Liverpool.

H. S., 117, Campbell Road, Eastleigh, Hants, wants to arrange footer fixtures for his club (average age 11½), within seven-mile radius, for next season.

Hillside C.C. (average age 14½) want home and away matches, Saturday afternoons, four-mile radius.—Hon. Sec., J. S. Webster, 17, Candon Street, New Basford, Nottingham.

J. G. Pike, 60, Devas Street, Bromley-by-Bow, E., wants to arrange footer fixtures for his club (average age 15-16) for next season.

Jas. Needs, 32, Sonning Street, Roman Road, Barnsbury, N., is forming a footer club for next season, and will be happy to hear from any reader in his neighbourhood who would care to join.

Mortfield C.C. (average age 15½) want Saturday afternoon matches, home or away, four-mile radius.—Hon. Sec., W. Warburton, 37, Center Street, Brownlowfold, Belton.

Flowery Field Junior C.C. (average age 13) want matches, eight-mile radius.—Hon. Sec., F. Pyne, 5, Cannon Street, Hyde.

St. Hilda's C.C. (average age 14), want matches, Saturday afternoon, home or away, two-mile radius of Jesmond.—Hon. Sec., S. B. Smith, 15, Tavistock Road, West Jesmond, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Turbinia C.C. (average age 16) want Saturday afternoon matches, home or away, four-mile radius Newcastle.—Hon. Sec., E. Sandells, 3, Cleghorn Street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Whitchurch Juniors A.F.C. and C.C. want Saturday cricket matches five-mile radius Whitchurch; also to fix up footer fixtures for next season.—Hon. Sec., John Partridge, Penlan House, Melingriffith, Whitchurch, near Cardiff.

Your Editor

A Complete School-
Story Book, attrac-
tive to all readers.



The Editor will be
obliged if you will
hand this book,
when finished with,
to a friend. . . .

THE GIANT OF GREYFRIARS!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



The ball cannoned heavily against Wun Lung's shin, and the little Chinese gave a yell, and hopped about on one foot, clasping the damaged spot. (See Chapter 5.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Bunter's Baptism of Fire!

"IT'S a fact, I tell you!" Billy Bunter, the fat, ungainly porpoise of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, blinked in at the doorway of No. 1 Study, where, seated round a well-spread table, Harry Wharton & Co. were indulging in the cup that cheers, and sampling Mrs. Mimble's finest cream-buns.

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"I'm addressing you fellows!" continued Bunter, his glasses sliding down his fat little nose in his excitement. Bunter might have been addressing a brick wall for all the response he got. Bob Cherry was pitching into the cream-buns as if for a wager; Hurree Singh, the dusky junior, hailing from India's coral strand, was stripping a banana; and Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Johnay Bull went on chatting on the subject of the l.b.w. rule in cricket, as if blissfully unaware of the undesirable presence of the Owl of the Remove.

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July 15th 1918.



"It's a fact, I tell you!" reiterated Bunter, his voice rising almost to a scream.

Bob Cherry looked up.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That you, Bunt? Which exit do you prefer—the door or the window?"

Billy Bunter snorted, but backed discreetly to the door. He knew Bob Cherry's playful ways, and he knew also that it was preferable to leave a study voluntarily rather than be propelled into the passage by Bob's large boot.

"I'm ready to swear—" he began.

Nugent raised his hands aloft, with a pious expression on his face.

"Hush!" he said, in a tone of shocked reproach. "How dare you seek to pollute the atmosphere of this study by giving vent to bad language!"

"Fathead!" sniffed Bunter. "Look here! I know for an absolute fact that the governors have appointed a Games-master at Greyfriars, and that he's coming this afternoon."

The Famous Five became curious, in spite of themselves. They knew that Billy Bunter was a liar of the first magnitude, and that in his own particular line he could give points to such notorious whopper-mongers as Baron Munchausen and the Kaiser. But occasionally even Bunter managed to speak the truth; and if it were indeed a fact that Greyfriars was to be blessed with the addition of a Games-master, the affair would provide a crowning sensation, especially in the ranks of the Remove.

"If it's a fact, as you've told us about fifty times," said Harry Wharton, "how did you come by it?"

"Ahem! I happened to be passing Quelch's study, and he was jawing to the Head—or, rather, the Head was jawing to him. They were talking so loud that every word thundered in my ears like—like the booming of breakers. Of course, I would never deliberately play the part of an eavesdropper—"

"Of course not!" said Johnny Bull solemnly.

Harry Wharton began to look interested. He tossed a cream-bun to the Owl of the Remove, and requested him to proceed.

Bunter accordingly proceeded not with the narrative, but with the cream-bun. When it had disappeared into his capacious mouth, and slipped down his throat only half-chewed, the fat junior was good enough to enlighten his listeners further.

"I distinctly heard the Head tell Quelch that a Games-master had been appointed, that his name was Ransome, and that he was one of the strongest men in England."

"But why in thunder do we want a Games-master?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "There isn't much we can be taught about cricket and swimming and rowing."

"The governors seemed to think there was, according to the Head," said Bunter. "Colonel Ranter, who's on the committee, described the fellows here as a lot of milk-and-water weaklings!"

"Ranter again!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I should have thought he'd have kept off the grass, after that Sergeant Burrell affair, a few months back."

"What else is this josses going to do besides trying to teach us games?" asked Nugent.

"He'll have the same powers as Quelch and Prout and the other masters, I suppose. I tell you, we shall have a dog's life! Talk about Burrell. This new chap's a perfect Nero compared to him! He's the strongest man in the land," continued Bunter impressively. "And one of the biggest rotters who ever breathed!"

A sudden hush fell upon the Famous Five. Unseen by Bunter, a figure had suddenly appeared in the doorway—the figure of a huge, broad-shouldered, heavy-browed giant.

Bunter had his back to the open door, and, in blissful ignorance of the presence of the intruder, he went rambling on:

"I vote we bar this brute Ransome when he comes, you fellows! Chaps like me, who are athletic, and know everything there is to be known about games, don't want a silly scarecrow like Ransome trying to put us through our paces. I propose that we all rise up in a body and squash him!"

"Shush!" muttered Bob Cherry hastily.

"Shush be blowed!" said Bunter, warming to his subject. "Look here, are you fellows going to rally round, under my lead, and give the new beast beans? What are you wagging your finger at me for, Nugent? And why's Johnny Bull making a worse face than usual?"

The answer was soon forthcoming. The giant, who had stood as still as a statue throughout Bunter's oration, now took one stride forward, which brought him within arm's-length of Bunter.

"So you've been taking my name in vain—eh?" he said, in a rumbling voice.

Billy Bunter almost fell through the floor.

"Oh, I—I—Ahem! Is that you, Mr. Ransome?"

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"It is!" said the new-comer grimly. "And you, I take it, are Bunter—a boy who has been described to me as being the flabbiest piece of idleness and vice within the four walls of Greyfriars! So you're going to rise up in arms and slaughter me?"

"Nunno, sir!" said Bunter, writhing to escape from the iron hand which had descended on his shoulder.

"But I distinctly heard you say so!"

"Ahem! I—I was referring to someone else, sir," said Bunter feebly.

"You lying little toad!" shouted Mr. Ransome, who was evidently not given to mincing his expressions. "I heard you mention me by name!"

Bunter glanced wildly round the study, as if seeking for a means of escape. He felt that the toils were closing in upon him, and that there was no dodging the vials of Mr. Ransome's wrath.

"There—there's a chap in the school named Ransome!" stammered the Owl of the Remove. "He's rather a beast, you know, and I was talking about him—not you."

Mr. Ransome seemed to be lacking in that simple faith which is said to be so superior to Norman blood.

"I don't believe you!" he said, with delightful candour. "Come and point the boy out to me!"

"I—I don't happen to know which study he's in, sir!"

"Neither does anyone else," said Mr. Ransome grimly.

"I will proceed to show you that I have not come to this hot-bed of iniquity for the benefit of my health. The place has fallen into rank degeneracy, the governors tell me, and it is my fixed intention to make it up. I'll begin, I think, on you!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

The next moment it seemed as if No. 1 Study had been overwhelmed by an earthquake, with Billy Bunter at the centre of it. Mr. Ransome was possessed of prodigious strength, and he proceeded to utilise it, while the Famous Five sat in their seats and gasped. They had witnessed exhibitions by so-called strong men at circuses and travelling shows, but such displays paled into insignificance before that of Mr. Ransome.

The new master heaved Bunter up by the scruff of his neck, to begin with. Bunter could, by no stretch of the imagination, be termed a feather-weight. He turned the scale at a good twelve stone, and was harder to lift than a sack of coals.

But to Mr. Ransome he seemed to be a mere wisp of straw. The Games-master kept him suspended in mid-air, and with his disengaged hand commenced to pummel the fat junior as if he were a punching-ball, made for the express purpose of coming into contact with Mr. Ransome's left.

"Wow-ow-ow-ow!" bellowed Bunter at the top of his lungs.

"Help! Rescue! Wharton! Cherry! Inky! Dragimoff! He means murder! I can see it in his eye!"

Harry Wharton & Co. said nothing at first. The power of speech and action seemed to have forsaken them, and they witnessed the amazing spectacle like fellows in a dream.

But presently, when the Games-master's blows became harder and more terrific, the Famous Five could contain themselves no longer. They bore no superfluous affection for Bunter, but, as Bob Cherry remarked, "No. 1 Study wasn't a butcher's shop, and they weren't going to see pig-killing executed on the premises."

"Draw it mild!" exclaimed Bob indignantly. "'Nuff's as good as a feast!"

Mr. Ransome paused and swung round, still suspending the squirming Bunter.

"Were you speaking to me?" he thundered.

"Yes, I was. You might have been sent here to teach us games, but not games of this sort. This isn't a Home for Prize Bullies!"

The giant was plainly amazed and annoyed at Bob's plain speaking. He seemed to be a man accustomed to terrorising those weaker than himself—a living example of Shakespeare's statement that it is excellent to have a giant's strength, but tyrannous to use like a giant.

"Bob's quite right," said Harry Wharton, now thoroughly roused. "If you're coming to Greyfriars with the sole object of chucking your weight about, you'll find you've walked into a hornets' nest. Better moderate your transports!"

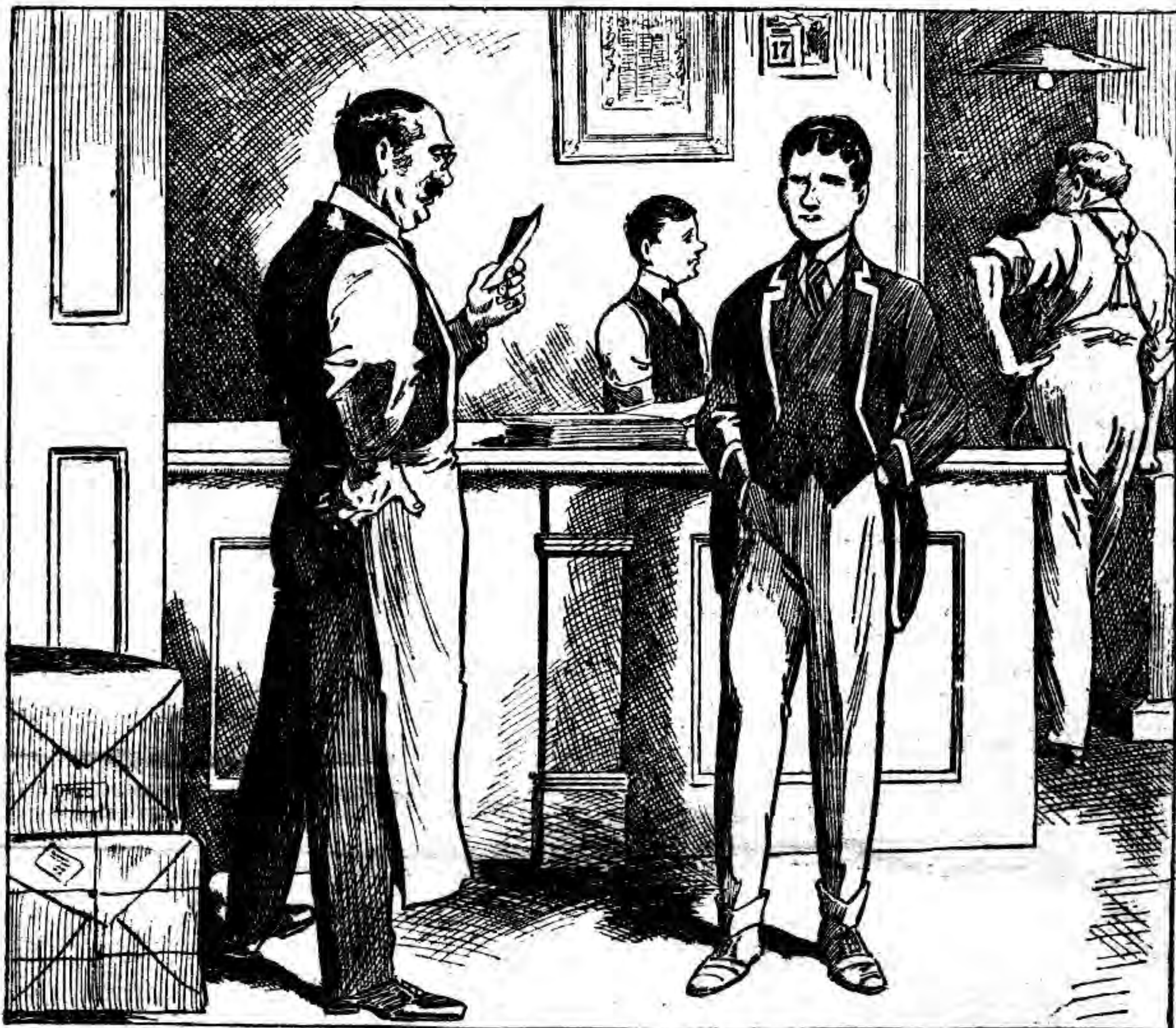
"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific! The beastful Bunter deserves the lickfulness, but we will not see him hungrily slaughtered!"

Mr. Ransome's face grew livid, and his cheeks mottled.

"That's the tune, is it?" he roared. "I'll jolly soon show you how I deal with a pack of confounded whipper-snappers! Here goes!"

The Games-master hustled Bunter into the corner, and then, with a menacing gleam in his hard, grey eyes, he



The proprietor of the little printing-office stared as Coker stated his requirements. "You want three dozen copies of this—this ill-spelt piffle?" he exclaimed. (See Chapter 3.)

strode towards the Famous Five, who had lined up, shoulder to shoulder, determined to thwart Mr. Ransome, in reckless defiance of the consequences.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Loder's Little Lesson!

THE new master was in a royal rage. He had imagined that the Greyfriars juniors, when they saw what a Goliath he was, would mind their p's and q's, and kow-tow to him on every occasion. The discovery that Harry Wharton & Co. were made of sterner stuff did not please him.

Without wasting any more time in words, Mr. Ransome assumed the offensive. He cuffed the juniors right and left, and did great execution.

"Yaroooooh!" yelled Bob Cherry, as he staggered back into the fireplace. "Go for the brute, you fellows!"

It was a bad beginning, to lay hands on a new master, for it meant making a permanent enemy of him. But Harry Wharton & Co. possessed plenty of spirit, and had no intention of being tyrannised over. They caught up weapons—anything that came to hand—and got behind the table.

Mr. Ransome, however, was not to be baulked of his prey. With one deft movement of his powerful arms he swept the table aside, and all the crockery went clattering to the floor.

"Back!" panted Johnny Bull. "Stand back, or I'll not be responsible for what happens to you, you brute!"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SCHOOLBOY FARMERS!"

Johnny was flourishing a cricket-stump in the air, with a grim expression on his rugged face. Usually slow to anger, his temper was now fairly up.

But so was Mr. Ransome's. He little dreamt that Johnny Bull would put his threat into effect, and had the surprise of his life when the stump came crashing down upon his arm, catching him on the funny-bone, and causing him to dance up and down like a dervish.

"Well played, Johnny, old man!" shrilled Billy Bunter, sitting up and rubbing the back of his head, which had suffered a severe abrasion. "Give him another for me!"

But before Johnny could proceed to further deeds of assault and battery, the master had wrenched the stump away, and began hitting out with it indiscriminately. His eyes were bloodshot, and for a moment the juniors were seized with a terrific fear that he was not in his right mind. They dodged away from his hurricane blows like chaff before a cyclone.

The study door burst open, and Loder of the Sixth looked in. He almost fell down when he saw what was happening.

"Who—who's that madman?" he asked of Bunter.

"The new Games-master," was the reply. "He's letting Wharton & Co. have it hot."

A grin spread over Loder's face—a grin which grew broader as the chastisement proceeded. The black sheep of the Sixth was very much up against the Famous Five, and nothing ever pleased him better than to see them getting it in the neck.

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

Had the intruder been Wingate or Courtney, Mr. Ransome would certainly have been checked in his destructive career. But Loder simply stood in the doorway and smirked. He was even tempted to ask the new master to lay about them with greater gusto; but that would hardly have been discreet, so he kept his tongue in his cheek, and remained a silent spectator of the extraordinary scene, inwardly gloating at the punishment which was being meted out to the fellows he detested.

Frank Nugent and Hurree Singh managed to burst clear, and they dashed past Loder into the passage, where a score of juniors had congregated, wondering what all the commotion was about. With an angry bellow, Mr. Ransome followed, but he paused before the unpopular prefect, and sniffed.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"My name is Loder," answered the senior stiffly.

Mr. Ransome sniffed again.

"You have been smoking!"

The colour mounted to Loder's cheek.

"I don't see how that in any way concerns you!" he said rudely.

"Oh, don't you? I have been instructed by Dr. Locke to put down smoking and similar vices with a very firm hand! You admit your offence?"

"No; I deny it!"

"So you're a liar, as well as a dissipated, dissolute scoundrel!" rapped out Mr. Ransome. "I shall be well advised, I think, to make a public example of you!"

In great alarm, Loder turned to flee. But the master's strong grip fell upon his shoulder, and he was whirled back into the study.

The fellows in the passage nudged each other gleefully. It would be a treat to see Loder go through the mill, they told themselves, especially as he had made no movement to go to the rescue of the Famous Five.

There was no denying that Gerald Loder was a well-built, hefty fellow; but, for all his heftiness, he was helpless as a mouse in a cat's mouth. The burly giant of a Games-master swung him across the table, pinning him down with one hand; and then the cricket-stump came into play.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooooh!"

"Reminds you of carpet-beating, don't it?" grinned Bob Cherry, who forgot his own injuries in the excitement of seeing Loder come under the ban of Mr. Ransome's wrath.

"Stick it, sir! Never mind the dust!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Ransome fairly let himself go. The way he wielded that cricket-stump was, as Peter Todd said afterwards, a sight for gods and men and little fishes! He seemed to be utterly and entirely devoid of the quality of mercy, and in vain Loder kicked and squirmed and struggled. His yells of anguish floated discordantly along the passage.

Then came the sudden rustle of a gown, and the juniors outside the study scattered before the majestic approach of Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

An Assault-at-Arms!

MR. PROUT presented a most dangerous and menacing appearance. His Winchester repeater—that dreaded weapon which had inflicted many minor casualties since its owner had riddled buffaloes in the Rocky Mountains—was under Mr. Prout's arm, and he looked as if he would use it on very slight provocation. Perhaps that was why the juniors in the passage stampeded hastily to a safer spot.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded Mr. Prout, glaring into the study.

"Help, sir!" screamed Loder, who by this time was well-nigh distracted, for he had received the thrashing of his life. "This brute—this horrible ruffian, is murdering me!"

The words seemed to produce a galvanic effect upon Mr. Prout. For a moment the juniors who saw feared that he meant to fire his Winchester—in which event Mr. Ransome might have been in some danger, but others would have been in far greater jeopardy. For, as they all knew, whatever might have been the accuracy of Mr. Prout's aim in the far-off days when he played Nimrod in the Rockies, the one thing certain about it now was that he would not hit the object aimed at.

Harry Wharton sprang forward, with intent to wrest the weapon from the master's grasp.

"Look out, sir! You'll be killing somebody if you're not careful!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"Unfortunately—er—I mean, of course, fortunately—it is not loaded," puffed Mr. Prout. "Therefore—"

He swung the weapon by the barrel, and brought the butt

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crashing down upon the table close to the new master. Whether the blow had been intended for Mr. Ransome's head no one felt sure, except that gentleman himself, who, as he dodged with great agility, howled:

"Stop it, you dangerous lunatic! Stop it, I say!"

"Breaking up the happy home!" gurgled Peter Todd, in the passage. "Oh, my hat! I shall burst a boiler in a minute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Ransome was by this time seriously alarmed for his safety. He concluded, and not unnaturally, that Mr. Prout had suddenly taken leave of his senses, and had no wish to be despatched into the world to come through the clumsy antics of a bald-headed maniac. Accordingly, he sprang to the doorway, and forced an exit through the crowd of laughing juniors.

The wretched Loder slipped off the table, writhing and twisting himself into all sorts of shapes. He looked as if he had just emerged from a mangle.

"I am exceedingly sorry for you, my poor lad!" said Mr. Prout.

Loder felt like telling Mr. Prout to go to Jericho, and let his sorrow accompany him to that remote spot; but he restrained himself with a great effort, and slunk from the study, receiving scant sympathy from the turbulent crowd without.

"Wharton!" rapped out the Fifth-Form master.

"Yes, sir?"

"Did I understand you to say that that—that unprincipled hooligan was the new Games-master?"

"Yes, sir. He came to-day."

"Then his exit shall follow speedily upon the heels of his entry! I will not tolerate such bestial brutality!"

Mr. Prout swept out of the study, taking his gun with him, and leaving Harry Wharton & Co. to nurse their injuries, and breathe threatnings and slaughter against Little Tich, as Peter Todd, who was somewhat of a wag, persisted in nicknaming Mr. Ransome.

The master of the Fifth, his brows contracted, went direct to the Head's study. Dr. Locke was busying himself with some bills tendered by local tradesmen. He looked up a trifle irritably at Mr. Prout's entry.

"I am afraid I am too much occupied to attend to you now, Mr. Prout," he said testily.

"But I insist upon having an audience with you, sir! You are aware, I presume, that a person named Ransome has been appointed to the ridiculous and unnecessary post of Games-master at this school?"

"Well?" said the Head, pushing his bills aside and looking up.

"I must request the removal of the man at once!" said Mr. Prout. "Within a short time of his arrival he has aggressively maltreated a number of boys in the Remove Form, and assaulted—openly and wantonly assaulted—a prefect of your appointment!"

"Bless my soul!"

"In short," said Mr. Prout, "he is a most dangerous ruffian, whom it is monstrous to permit to be at large!"

The Head sighed.

"I fear I can do nothing in the matter," he said.

"Nothing!" roared Mr. Prout, flourishing his gun in such a reckless manner that the Head instantly bobbed back in his chair. "The fellow is almost a murderer, sir! His brutality knows no bounds!"

"Mr. Ransome was appointed to a mastership not at my instigation, but at the instigation of Colonel Ranter, at the last meeting of governors. The colonel seems to think that the school is in a very slack state, and that there is altogether too little discipline. I endeavoured to dissuade him from this view, but he is as stubborn as—as a mule! Mr. Ransome, therefore, has been entrusted with the task of rousing the school from its alleged state of degeneracy, and he was told not to spare the rod. I must caution him not to be too severe in his methods; but as to sending him away from Greyfriars, that is altogether beyond my power!"

"But I insist—"

"I am afraid your insistence carries little weight, Mr. Prout! What must be, must be! The governing body should know what is meet and proper for the school, and it is our united duty to support their wishes."

Mr. Prout fairly danced with rage.

"I consider it your duty, Dr. Locke, as headmaster of this school, to discharge such a villainous hooligan!"

The Head bristled up at this.

"I have no desire to be taught my duty by my subordinates!" he said, with asperity. "And you will oblige me, Mr. Prout, by refraining from carrying that—ahem!—dangerous weapon about the building. I fear that the lives of the boys may be jeopardised if masters resort to the free use of loaded firearms!"

"Dr. Locke," exclaimed Mr. Prout, "I have used a rifle from infancy, and know how to control one better than any man living! Why, when I was in the Rockies in '81—"

The Head cut his long-winded colleague short.

"You really must excuse me now, my dear Prout! These bills are pressing!"

"Then Ransome is to remain?"

"Of course! I will warn him not to exert his strength too much in future."

Mr. Prout gave one emphatic snort, and stamped out of the study with feelings too deep for words.

Thus ended the first skirmish with Mr. Ransome, alias Little Tich. The latter had retired to his study, which had formerly been tenanted by Larry Lascelles, the mathematics-master, who was nobly assisting to keep his country's end up in Flanders.

Mr. Ransome stood before the mantelpiece puffing furiously at a battered bulldog pipe.

"The kids here seem to have plenty of spirit," he muttered to himself, "but if I don't take it out of 'em in next to no time, and make the cheeky beggars toe the line, my name's not Dick Ransome!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Out-Buntered!

GREYFRIARS was wildly excited concerning the dramatic arrival of the new master. Details of his feud against Bunter and the Famous Five, and his summary castigation of Gerald Loder, spread through the school like a fire through gorse. Mr. Ransome had opened the innings in a manner which was not calculated to do him much subsequent good; and the prevailing opinion was that he was a hefty lump of brutality who wanted putting in his place at the first possible opportunity.

The juniors saw no more of Little Tich until dinner-time next day. Doubtless fearing the wrath of Mr. Prout, he had not ventured out of his room, and breakfast had been taken to him privately by Susan—Mr. Quelch's servant.

When the juniors filed into Hall for dinner they found Mr. Ransome presiding at the head of the Remove table, before a steaming-hot joint of mutton.

"Good!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "Let's hope he gives us generous helpings. I expect he will. There's so much of him that wants feeding that he'll imagine we want the same amount."

"Yep," said Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior. "I guess I've got an eighteen-carat, gilt-edged appetite—jest a few!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Ransome, in his sonorous tones. "Do you hear me, Herring?"

"I guess my name's Fish!" said the Yankee junior indignantly.

"Really! Then I guess you can write me two hundred lines!"

"What for?" gasped Fish blankly.

"For not addressing me as 'sir'!"

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!"

"Silence, I repeat! Now, each of you will pass up his plate in turn."

Billy Bunter's plate promptly whizzed up to the end of the table like a pip from a gooseberry. Unfortunately, it had too much impetus behind it, and disappeared over the edge like a motor vanishing over a cliff, to fall with a crash and a clatter on the hard floor of the Hall.

"Grunter! Stand up!" thundered Little Tich.

"My name's Bunter!" said the fat junior peevishly.

Mr. Ransome glared.

"Take fifty lines for impertinence, and another hundred for wilfully and maliciously smashing the school property! You will dine to-day off bread and water!"

"W-w-what!"

Billy Bunter was obliged to clutch at the nearest pillar for support. He could scarcely credit the evidence of his ears.

"You—you're joking, of course, sir?" he stuttered feebly.

"Indeed I am not! It is not my practice to jest! Here is a piece of bread, and you may help yourself freely to water from the jug yonder!"

With a groan Billy Bunter started on the very frugal fare.

"As a matter of fact, Bunter," said Mr. Ransome, "I am not sure that, in my capacity of Games-master, I ought to allow you to retain your lavish superfluity of flesh. You over-eat yourself habitually, you gluttonous little pig!"

At that Mr. Prout jumped up from his seat at the head of the Fifth-Form table, and strode up to the new master.

"Really," he said indignantly, "I refuse to tolerate such opprobrious expressions any longer! You are not dealing with servile dogs, but with boys!"

"Go hon!" said Mr. Ransome, quite at ease when he saw that Mr. Prout was unarmed. "I want no interference from you, Mr. Grouts!"

"What! What!"

The irate master of the Fifth pranced about like a cat on hot bricks, hurling heated recriminations at the head of Mr.

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EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

Ransome. Fellows at the other tables stood up and craned forward in order to derive the maximum of enjoyment from the scene; and the fun ruled fast and furious.

Mr. Prout, however, soon found that he was no match for the new Games-master in repartee, and withdrew sullenly to his seat after a most undignified exchange of expressions. Then Mr. Ransome proceeded to make merry in his own delightful way.

"Sit down, Bunter," he said, "and do not make a beast of yourself with the bread and water! You—you skinny scarecrow at the end—what's your name?"

"I'm not skinny!" hooted Peter Todd, to whom the remark was addressed.

"Don't you dare contradict me! Pass up your plate!"

Peter obeyed, and the Removites watched Mr. Ransome in wonderment.

With consummate care he carved off a quivering lump of fat, and deposited it in the centre of Peter Todd's plate; then he passed it back down the table without turning a hair.

"Here, what's the little game?" roared Peter, who was no respecter of persons, let alone persons of the Little Tich type.

"A regular course of fatty food," said Mr. Ransome sweetly, "will cause you to add to your scanty store of flesh. You and Bunter seem to be the two extremes in this Form. I am determined to reduce him, and to inflate you, so that you will be of medium size and weight, and properly qualified to play hard, gruelling games!"

"But I—I can't eat this!" faltered Peter, quite taken aback.

"You shall have no apple turnover until you do."

The leader of No. 7 Study gave a groan. He was very fond of apple turnover, and wouldn't have missed his share for worlds. So, with a heavy heart, he made an inroad into the horrid mass of greasy mutton fat.

"Now, Wharton!" said Mr. Ransome.

The captain of the Remove sent up his plate, and faced better than his predecessors, though the new master's notions as to quantity were very vague. He served Wharton with a dinner which Mrs. Kebble's cat would have mopped up inside two minutes.

"Next, please!" said Mr. Ransome.

Lord Mauleverer sat next to Harry Wharton, and the schoolboy earl did not stir. It was a warm day, and the atmosphere was conducive to drowsiness. His lordship's head was reclining on his chest, and he was breathing placidly.

"Good heavens!" gasped the Games-master. "Can it be possible? Can it be possible, I say, that that boy has composed himself to slumber?"

"Looks like it, sir, don't it?" grinned Skinner.

Mr. Ransome's method of restoring Mauly to animation was novel, but effective. He snatched up a burning-hot spoon, and dabbed it sharply on the sleeper's cheek.

What happened came like a flash. With a wild yell, Lord Mauleverer shot bolt upright, flinging out his arms as he did so, and knocking the contents of the gravy-tureen right up into Mr. Ransome's face.

The gravy was hot, as Mr. Ransome soon discovered. He leapt several inches from the floor, emitting a yell which rang from one end of the Hall to the other.

"Yaroooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer, in great distress. "What have I done?"

"The bravest deed of the war, my cherub!" answered Bob Cherry. "I shall be proud to mention your name in my next despatch!"

Mr. Ransome wrenched up a corner of the tablecloth, and mopped his gravy-covered face with it. Then he swung round on Lord Mauleverer.

"You—you clumsy young jackanape! What's your name?"

"Lord Mauleverer."

The reply had an instantaneous effect upon Mr. Ransome, who actually became respectful.

"Ah, I can quite see, Mauleverer, that your action was—ahem!—purely accidental. May I trouble you for another plate?"

Another being forthcoming, the new master proceeded to pile it up with a considerable quantity of mutton, potatoes, and greens. He could not add gravy, for the full complement of the tureen had gone into his face and down his coat.

The rest of the juniors were served without mishap. Their portions were so insignificant that Johnny Bull repeatedly urged somebody to close up the windows, lest the dinner should blow away.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SCHOOLBOY FARMERS!"

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

But in one way, at least, Mr. Ransome was liberal.

It was evident that he realised the necessity of good food, and plenty of it, in the case of a man of his weight and stature, and he carved for himself with so generous a hand that when he had heaped up his plate very little but the mutton-bone remained upon the dish.

Bunter regarded the lavish helping with eyes that fairly threatened to start out of his head. Peter Todd looked wistfully from it to his portion of nauseous fat, and then back again, finishing up with a sigh that amounted to nearly half a gale. And Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry said things under their breath.

With the apple turnovers he made equal play. They vanished like snow in May before his assault. When they were all finished he sent out to the kitchen for more, and, as the turnovers were exhausted, was supplied with a dish of mixed pastries which would have made a meal for any three boys in the Remove, Bunter excepted, of course.

The gaze of Billy Bunter never left him. With mingled awe and envy, Bunter saw a rival such as he had never seen before—not even in Fatty Wynn of St. Jim's. Bunter's mouth watered, and his eyes goggled. But Mr. Ransome never looked Bunter's way; he devoted the strictest attention to business.

The rest of the Remove looked on with something very like absolute disgust.

"Greedy hog!" growled Johnny Bull, under his breath.

"Greedy ain't the word for it!" said Bob Cherry. "Why, Bunter's a mere trifle compared with this blessed gormandiser! I wish to goodness Mrs. Kebble had poisoned the pastries!"

The other Forms filed out of Hall, but the Remove lingered, to await Mr. Ransome's pleasure. He ate quickly, it is true, but so vast was the quantity of the food he demolished that some considerable time had elapsed before he ultimately pushed the accumulation of plates and dishes away from him, and pulled out his bulldog pipe.

His dismissal of the juniors was curt and contemptuous, and had he postponed it much longer there would certainly have been a riot. The fellows were prepared to suffer to a certain extent, but Mr. Ransome had nearly applied the last straw that breaks the camel's back.

"What a Tartar!" said Vernon-Smith.

"What a pimply-faced Prussian pig!" said Johnny Bull. "I'm simply famished, and yet that beast ate enough for twenty, and made us watch him, so that we should feel it all the more!"

"It's certainly the limit," agreed Nugent. "I'm fed-up—not with grub, but with that rotter Ransome! The sooner he shakes the dust of Greyfriars from his elephant feet the better!"

But Little Tich had not the remotest intention of quitting Greyfriars.

It was a veritable land of plenty, so far as he was concerned. He was well-fed, well-paid, and given full scope for his bullying propensities; and it was agreed on every side that a state of war existed between all Greyfriars and Little Tich, and that the former would eventually emerge from the conflict with flying colours.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Cricket—Modern Style!

"WHAT'S the programme for this afternoon?" asked Harry Wharton. "It's a half-holiday, a glorious day, and no cricket on. Any suggestions?"

"A dip in the river," said Nugent promptly.

"Rats!" retorted Bob Cherry. "What's the matter with a first-class picnic? We're in funds, and might as well have a bit of a fling before the firm goes broke again!"

"Which is it to be?" said Wharton. "The dip or the picnic?"

"The dipfulness suits my esteemed fancy betterfully," said Harree Singh.

"No doubt," said Bob Cherry. "But I plump for the picnic. We've had such a mouldy dinner that I simply couldn't last out till tea-time!"

Then the practical Johnny Bull promptly found a solution to the problem.

"Have both!" he said.

"Good egg!"

"We can cart the grub down to the river in a tuck-basket, and gorge after we've been for a swim!"

But, just as the Famous Five had their plans for the afternoon cut and dried, Mr. Ransome's coarse voice could be heard in the corridor without.

"All boys in the Remove will assemble on the cricket-field at once!"

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Johnny Bull looked grim.

"I vote we kick," he said. "Hang it all, it's a half-holiday, and the beast has got no right to spoil it for us!"

"I don't think a rebellion would do much good," said Harry Wharton dolefully. "Not at present, at any rate. Prout could do nothing by going to the Head, so it stands to reason we should be in the same boat. Besides, if he's going to try and teach us cricket, as I suspect, it ought to be rather good fun!"

"That's so," said Nugent. "Let's go like lambs to the giddy slaughter!"

The study door was thrown open, and Little Tich himself appeared.

"Didn't you hear me shout just now?" he stormed. "Get on to the cricket-field at once!"

"Very well, sir," said Wharton meekly.

When the juniors reached the field they found nearly all the Remove assembled, most of them looking very mutinous. A long strip of cocoanut-matting had been overspread on the turf, and stumps were driven into the ground at a short distance—the length of the crease—from one end.

"He means to do things in style, anyway," observed Bob Cherry. "P'raps it won't be so dusty, after all!"

The Removites felt particularly annoyed and exasperated, because Coker & Co. of the Fifth, and Temple & Co. of the Fourth, would persist in standing round and cackling.

But the cacklers cleared off when they saw Mr. Ransome coming with his giant stride. They had no wish to run foul of the strongest man Greyfriars had ever seen.

"Now then," said Little Tich, "we will get to business. Bunter!"

"Ye-e-es, sir?" quavered the fat junior, his knees fairly knocking together.

"Here's a bat. You will take your stand before the stumps yonder, and remain there for ten minutes, irrespective of whether you get out or not. I am going to make Greyfriars head and shoulders above every other school in the country, so far as cricket is concerned."

"We can study the game on our own, without having it rammed down our throats!" said Johnny Bull, unable to control himself.

"Take five hundred lines, Bull, for impertinence! Now, Bunter!"

"Pip-pip-please, sir——"

"What is it?"

"I—I'm no great shakes at cricket, sir," stammered Bunter, making quite an unusual confession. "I think it is downright dangerous to let me play, as my heart's weak, and I've got varicose veins, sir, all the way up my back!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Ransome remained impervious to the fat junior's excuses and entreaties. He dragged Bunter by sheer force to the wicket, and there the porpoise of the Remove remained with his bat, which was several inches too long for him, trailing awkwardly on the ground.

Little Tich took a ball, and planted himself at the other end of the cocoanut-matting with an almost ferocious expression on his face.

"Play!" he shouted.

"P-p-please, sir, I kik-kik-can't!"

"Then I'll soon make you!"

And Mr. Ransome flashed the ball down to Bunter with a velocity which made the onlookers gasp.

Billy Bunter saw it not—but he felt it. It just happened to graze the unpadded shin, and he gave a wild whoop of anguish, dropped his bat, and rendered a sort of impromptu song-and-dance round it.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, you young coward!" bellowed Mr. Ransome. "I won't tolerate any shamming! Pick that bat up, and face the music, or, by thunder, I'll half-murder you!"

"Ow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter reluctantly obeyed the Games-master's command.

Again the ball whizzed down; but Billy Bunter was not facing the music this time. He hopped out of the way with all the agility of which he was capable—which wasn't much—and there was an ominous crash as his stumps revolved in the air.

"Bah!" snorted Mr. Ransome. "You're no Trumper, I can see! Stand up like a man! Don't wobble about like a jelly that isn't properly set! You've got to stay your ten minutes out, or I'll knock you into the middle of next week!"

Bunter cowered before this terrible threat, and had no option but to remain in front of the wicket. Mr. Ransome bowled to him assiduously, never relaxing his lightning speed; and at every other ball the wicket was wrecked. Luckily, all the deliveries had been fairly straight, or an ambulance would

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Mr. Ransome strode up to the pile, kicked away some of the clothes, and then the long, thin, terrified face of Fisher T. Fish was revealed. "So you're a funk—what?" said Little Tich grimly. (See Chapter 6.)

have been necessary to convey the Owl of the Remove to the sanatorium.

"Wharton next!" said Mr. Ransome.

Harry Wharton stepped forward fearlessly. He was not afraid of the fastest bowling. Indeed, he much preferred it to that slow and tricky order. Little Tich bowled with even greater force than when Bunter had been at the wicket, and Wharton had need of all his quickness of eye and agility of movement to keep his stumps intact; but he succeeded in doing so, amid the plaudits of his comrades.

Then the Games-master showed himself to be a man who gave credit where credit was due.

"Bravo!" he exclaimed. "You've the makings of a first-class player, Wharton! I thought you were all about Bunter's mark, and am glad to find I'm wrong. You shaped splendidly."

"Thank you, sir!" said Harry. He had not expected praise from such a tyrant and a Tartar as Little Tich undoubtedly was.

Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent were the next two batsmen in order, and they put up a very sound performance, though not approaching Wharton's, for each of them was bowled twice in the course of the allotted ten minutes. Then Mr. Ransome shouted:

"Wun Lung!"

The Chinese came forward with a rueful smile.

"Me muchee plefer not to battee," he said.

"I dare say you do, you pigtailed mahnikin!" roared Little Tich.

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Tich. "But I'm not going to encourage slacking in any shape or form. In you go!"

"Poor Wun Lung know velly little about clicket. He not know which endee of battee to handle!"

"Don't you, by Jove? I'll soon show you which end I handle, if you don't get a move on!"

Even Wun Lung, with all his Oriental craft, could think of no scheme whereby he might evade having to stand up against Mr. Ransome's lightning-flashes. He took up the bat very gingerly, and stood ready.

Whiz!

Down came the ball at such a high-speed that it was scarcely visible. A few yards from the wicket it lighted on a slight hump in the coconut-matting, and, swerving off at a tangent, cannoned heavily against Wun Lung's shin.

The little Chinese gave a yell, and hopped about on one foot, clasping the damaged spot.

"You velly bad man!" he exclaimed. "You tly to takes advantage of poor Chinese!"

"What!" gasped Mr. Ransome.

"Plussian pig!" said Wun Lung. "You hurt me velly muchee!"

"I'll hurt you a jolly sight more, you—you petticoated freak!" roared the angry Games-master, striding forward.

But Wun Lung had already sustained one casualty, and had no desire for an encore. He sped away like the whirlwind, his weird garments flapping in the breeze as he ran.

Mr. Ransome gave chase, but he soon saw that it was

hopeless, and that he was cutting a very undignified figure; so he came back to the pitch, and picked up the bat which Wan Lung had been compelled to drop.

"Is there anyone here who knows anything about bowling?" he asked.

"I've got a sort of faint idea that you've got to trundle the ball along the ground, or something of that sort, sir," said Bob Cherry innocently.

"Silence, Cherry! You and Wharton and the black brat can send me up a few balls.

Hurree Singh did not relish being classed as "the black brat," and he determined to take it out of Mr. Ransome at the first opportunity by bowling him all over his wicket.

But the nabob soon found that Little Tich was the finest batsman who had ever wielded the willow on the Greyfriars cricket-ground. He was simply unbeatable. For half an hour the juniors bowled to him; and their bowling was not milk-and-watery stuff, either. It was their very best; but Mr. Ransome rose to the occasion every time, opening his broad shoulders, and flogging almost every other ball over the fence.

"My hat!" exclaimed Wingate of the Sixth, who was watching the exhibition with his chum Courtney. "If only we could get that chap to play for the First Eleven, what a feather it would be in our cap!"

"Yes, rather!" agreed Courtney. "He's a Jessop and a Philip Mead rolled into one! It's the most masterly display of batting I've ever seen in my life!"

At length Mr. Ransome laid down his bat, and surveyed his pupils.

"There's some good stuff among you," he said. "It only wants bringing to the surface. We'll knock off now, and that'll enable those of you who want to go for a swim to do so."

The Removites dispersed with mixed feelings. That Little Tich was brutal they all knew; but that he was totally drained dry of the milk of human kindness Harry Wharton & Co. could not, and would not, believe.

But, whatever his faults, the Remove were agreed upon one point—namely, that the new Games-master, whom the governors had appointed, was the most wonderful cricketer ever seen on the historic ground of Greyfriars.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Little Tich Lets Himself Go!

GREYFRIARS seemed a different place with Little Tich on the scene. Never had there been such a profound sensation among seniors and juniors alike since the memorable occasion when Sergeant Burrell had attempted to rule the place by mailed-fist methods.

But there was this difference between Sergeant Burrell and Little Tich. The former was a brute pure and simple, and thoroughly ignorant at that; whilst Ransome, though he used his bullock-like strength to excess, yet possessed a certain amount of decency; and the Remove, the only Form with which he had come into direct contact, began to regard him in a slightly more favourable light.

But, twenty-four hours later, all their former animosity towards him was revived.

In the middle of afternoon lessons Little Tich shuffled into the Form-room, his bulldog pipe between his teeth, and a business-like gleam in his flinty grey eyes.

Mr. Quelch, who was presiding at his desk, looked up sharply.

"Really, Mr. Ransome," he said, somewhat testily, "I wish you would refrain from smoking before the boys, and especially in the Form-room. You seem to be consuming a particularly nauseous and disagreeable brand of tobacco, too, and the atmosphere is smoke-laden already. Wharton, pray open the window!"

The captain of the Remove obeyed, while Little Tich looked on and scowled.

"I shall conduct myself as I please, Quelch," he said. "If I choose to smoke, I shall do so. If I elect to fill my pipe with the foulest shag ever known, none shall say me nay. But that's neither here nor there. I have come to summon all the boys of your Form to wait upon me at once."

"Good egg!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Cricket again, I expect. We can stand any amount of that, especially if it means dodging mouldy Latin verbs."

Mr. Quelch started back in surprise.

"But we are only midway through the afternoon's work!" he demurred.

"I'm afraid I can't help that," said the Games-master. "There seems to be too much of this stuffy, class-room swotting, and not enough of the Spartan life. It is my

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intention to take these boys to the river, and put them through their paces at swimming."

"I cannot assent to such a proposal!" said Mr. Quelch majestically.

"I don't see that you have any choice in the matter. Dr. Locke has accorded me permission to instruct the Remove Form in the way I suggest."

Mr. Quelch looked dumbfounded.

"Dr. Locke has sanctioned this preposterous scheme?" he gasped.

"The scheme is in no way preposterous, Quelch! There's a lot too much of the puny infant about the average Greyfriars boy. He must learn how to give and take hard knocks, and to make his muscle proportionately powerful to his mind. An ounce of outdoor exercise is worth a ton of Latin verbs. The class will now dismiss!"

Mr. Quelch stood transfixed while his class filed out at Mr. Ransome's direction. The fellows welcomed the situation as a welcome relief from dull class-work, though it was doubtful if they would have relished it half as keenly had they known what was in store for them.

At the master's command they armed themselves with their bathing-costumes and towels, and proceeded to the shining waters of the Sark.

The prospect of a dip appealed to most of them, but there were a few who, unable to swim a stroke, felt serious qualms about the business. Bunter was one, of course, and Snoop and Stott and Alonzo Todd were quite helpless. So was Fisher T. Fish, for that matter. But Fishy had boasted so often of his brilliant swimming achievements "over there"—meaning the great United States—that he dared not confess to his Form-fellows that he would be helpless as a newborn babe when he entered the water.

The juniors hastily undressed, and then Bob Cherry, as was his custom, made a sudden rush to the water's edge, meaning to take a header. But Little Tich intercepted him.

"I am not going to have this indiscriminate plunging in," he said. "In order to test your respective merits, I intend to throw you all in, one at a time."

"Ow!" groaned Bunter, his fat knees fairly knocking together as he stood on the bank, garbed in a costume which looked as if it would burst like a penny balloon at a moment's notice.

"You first, Cherry!" said Little Tich.

And, to Bob's unbounded humiliation, he found himself being lifted bodily into the air and sent spinning into the swirling waters.

Splash!

Bob Cherry disappeared beneath the surface, but came up again almost instantly, and swam swiftly away to hide his confusion.

"Now, Wharton!"

"There's no need to chuck us in like that, sir," said Harry. "Most of us have been good swimmers for ages, and we resent it."

"Silence! You will do as I tell you!"

Harry reluctantly submitted to the process of being thrown in. Frank Nugent followed, then Johnny Ball, then Hurree Singh. None of them gave any trouble, but they felt the situation acutely.

"Bunter!" thundered Mr. Ransome.

"Grooh! I—excuse me, sir—I d-d-don't feel well!" gasped the terrified Owl of the Remove. "I believe it's the sun, sir. I'm frightfully feverish."

"Then the cold water will act as a reviver," said Mr. Ransome drily.

Billy Bunter's ponderous form was lifted in the air. He kicked and struggled wildly, but the Games-master had him in a grip of iron.

"One—two—three!" he exclaimed; and on the last word Bunter went soaring over the river, to alight with a sickening splash in mid-stream.

"Hellup!" he roared. "Oh! Yah! Grooooh! I can't swim! I'm drowning! Wharton! Bob, old chap, save me!"

And then the fat junior sank like a stone.

He came to the surface again very soon, however, his fat face working convulsively. It was easy to see that he had swallowed more pints of Sark water than was good for him.

"Ow, you rotter!" he spluttered, blinking at Little Tich. "When my corpse is fished out you'll be charged with murder!"

Then Bunter went under again.

"I say!" gasped Harry Wharton, treading water beside Bob Cherry. "This is a bit too thick! If he goes under the third time he won't come up again! I vote we do the rescue bizney."

"What-ho!" said Bob.

But Little Tich divined their intentions, and waved them back.

"Bunter's all right," he said. "He's merely shamming."

"Rot! He can't swim, and you know it!" said Wharton fiercely. "There won't be much sham about it if you let him drown!"

For answer, Mr. Ransome picked up a stout coil of rope which lay at his feet, and threw it out to Bunter. The fat junior hugged the end of it with a gurgling gasp of relief, and held on like a limpet.

Then Little Tich commenced running along the bank, pulling the rope with him as he did so.

"Kick out with your feet!" he shouted. "We'll make a swimmer of you yet. Fancy a great lump of blubber like you not being able to do a stroke! Kick out, I tell you!"

Billy Bunter obeyed. His fat legs thrashed the water wildly, churning it into foam.

Little Tich persevered in his operations for several moments, and then hauled Bunter in to the bank. The Owl of the Remove lay at full length in the grass, making a noise like a tyre deflating.

"Todd next," said Little Tich. "Alonzo Todd, I mean!"

Peter Todd came forward grimly.

"Go easy with my cousin, sir!" he said. "He's not exactly in the pink of condition, and a ducking like Bunter had might lead to something unpleasant."

Mr. Ransome swung round angrily.

"I refuse to be dictated to in this manner!" he stormed. "I am here to teach you boys how to swim, and I mean to do it!"

He picked up the gentle Alonzo with as much ease and unconcern as if he were an empty matchbox. Then the junior shot into space, and, with a fearful yell, was precipitated into the swiftly-running water.

"Ow-ow-ow!" he screamed, almost choking. "Mum-my dear, sir, pray do not be so very violent! My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked, nay, disgusted, at such a—"

Splosh!

Alonzo Todd dropped like a stone. When he came up a moment later, white-faced and unable even to shout, it was too much for Peter Todd. He strode up to Little Tich with clenched hands.

"Let my cousin come out!" he exclaimed, in ringing tones. "Let him come out, or I won't be responsible for what happens!"

"How dare you talk to me like this?" demanded the new master hoarsely.

"You'll find I can not only talk, but act!" said Peter. "Either Alonzo is brought out of the water this minute, before you do him a mischief, or else we'll jolly well mob you!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bravo, Toddy!"

Feeling ran high among the assembled juniors, and Mr. Ransome, who was a coward at heart, and did not feel like essaying a stand-up fight against forty fellows, acceded to Peter's request.

But if Alonzo Todd got off comparatively lightly, there was one person who didn't. And that was Fisher T. Fish.

Little Tich looked round for him, but he was nowhere to be seen. What had happened to him was a mystery.

Then, his eyes fixed upon a huge pile of clothes stacked up on the bank, Mr. Ransome detected that something moved. Accordingly he strode up to the pile, kicked away some of the boots and collars and ties, and wrenched at the jackets and trousers; and then the long, thin, terrified face of Fisher T. Fish was revealed. He had hidden beneath the clothes for the express purpose of avoiding a ducking.

"So that's the little game, is it?" said Little Tich grimly. "You're a funk—what? A white-livered, Yankee non-combatant—hey?"

"Nope! I guess—"

But what Fisher Tarleton Fish guessed at that precise moment was never known. Mr. Ransome proceeded to roll him like a barrel to the water's edge; then he gave him a shove which sent him sprawling in.

Fishy was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. He howled and yelled and kicked and struggled, but the instructor allowed him to go completely under twice in succession before giving him the friendly assistance of the rope.

And Fisher T. Fish, when he crawled out of the water ten minutes later, more dead than alive, felt that the world was a very poor place—the eastern hemisphere, at any rate.

The chucking-in process continued until every single fellow had sampled the waters of the Sark.

Whilst Mr. Ransome was busy in this way, Coker & Co. came strolling on the scene, and laughed loud and long at the expense of the Remove till the blood tingled in Harry Wharton's cheeks, and he felt like tracking Little Tich

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to some secluded spot and sprinkling the earth with his gore.

"Oh, my hat!" said the great Coker, rolling convulsively from side to side. "Chucked in like a lot of squalling infants, by Jove! I strike me we've got a jolly useful ally in Ransome."

"Rather!" said Potter. "He'll keep the cheeky Remove fags in their places, and teach 'em to love, honour, and obey their betters in the Fifth. And a jolly good thing for Greyfriars, too!"

To which Greene, with his nose in the air, impressively added:

"Hear, hear! It seems to be a giddy fight between Ransome and the Remove, and Ransome's winning—winning all along the line!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Slave-Driver!

IF Harry Wharton & Co. imagined that the indignity of being thrown bodily into the river was the last they would suffer at the hands of Little Tich they were soon to know better. When the juniors were dressed, Mr. Ransome called them together.

"Now we're going for a nice, long, cross-country run!" he said, with cruel geniality.

"Grooh!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Cross-country running on a day like this! We shall melt away!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Ransome.

He strode into the boathouse, and took up a long cane which stood in the corner.

"Just to touch you up in case of any further insubordination," he explained sweetly.

"Oh, you brute!" muttered Harry Wharton.

"Brute's not the word!" growled Johnny Bull. "The rotter wants faying alive, or boiling in oil; it wouldn't matter which!"

Swish!

The cane swept down upon the speaker's shoulders, and Little Tich towered over Johnny Bull, his eyes glinting with wrath.

"I'll stand no cheek from a confounded whippersnapper like you!" he thundered. "You think it's infernally funny to slang a master behind his back, do you? Take that—and that!"

The cane came down twice again across Johnny's broad shoulders, and the burly junior gave a gasp of pain in spite of himself.

"There!" panted Little Tich. "You will oblige me by behaving yourself in future, Bull! Now, then, we're going to run through Friardale into Courtfield, then strike off towards Wapshot Camp, and back towards Greyfriars."

"But that's ever so many miles, sir!" protested Vernon-Smith.

"I wouldn't care if it was from John-o'-Groats to Land's End," said Mr. Ransome callously. "Get a move on!"

For a moment the Removites seemed on the verge of open rebellion. But no one gave them the lead, and after a brief hesitation they trotted away, Little Tich coming along behind them with his giant stride, swinging the formidable-looking cane in the air.

"Put the pace on!" he shouted. "Put it on, or, by jiminy, I'll give some of you the hiding of your lives!"

The Removites were fully dressed in their Etons, and were minus running-shoes. The going was difficult, and the heat of the summer sun simply scorching. Little Tich was making enemies that day with a vengeance.

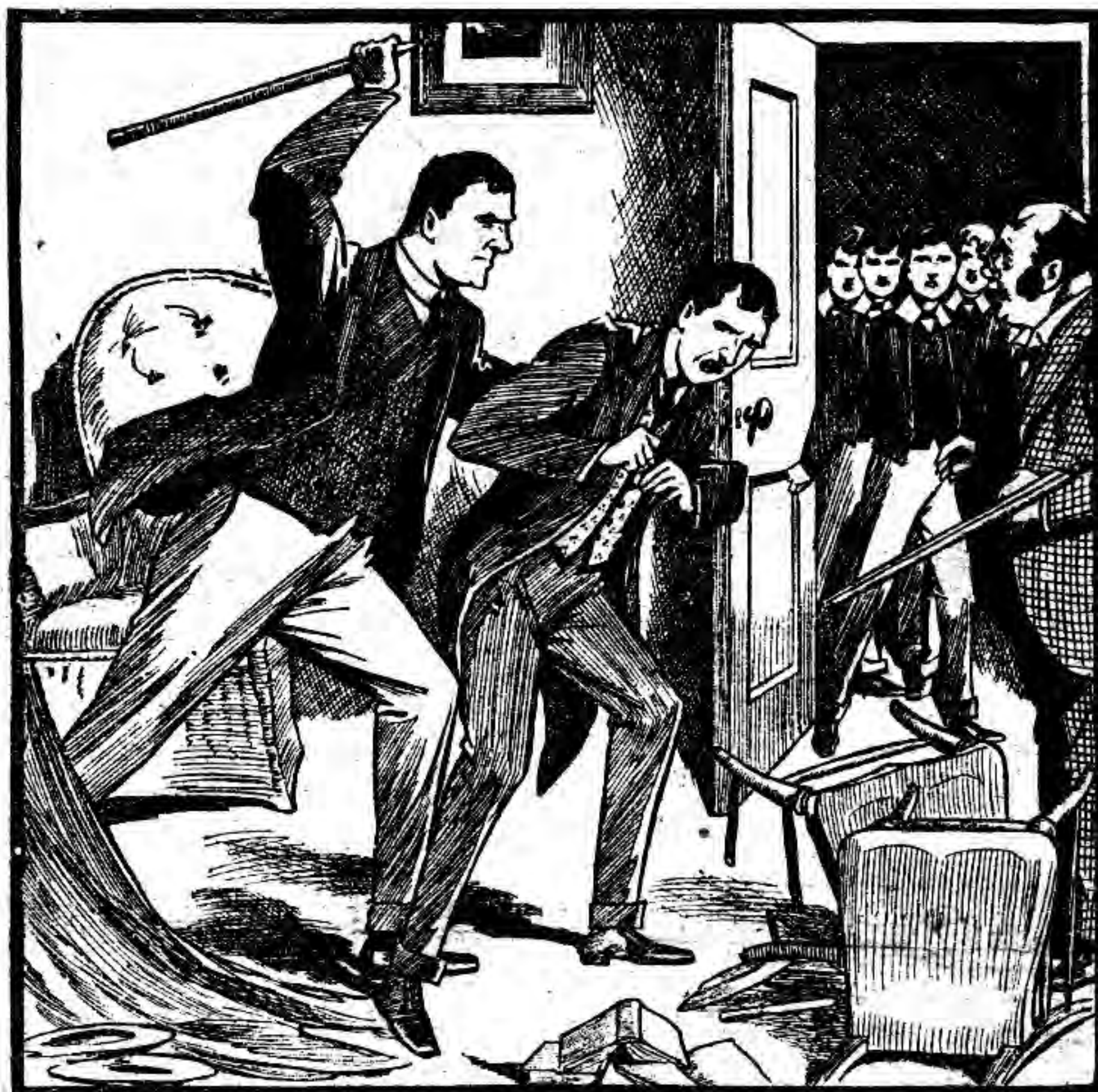
"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Billy Bunter, as the perspiring throng of juniors plodded along the dust-laden road in the direction of Friardale. "I'm whacked, you fellows!"

"You'll be whacked in another way if you drop out, Bunt!" panted Bob Cherry. "Here! Let's take hold of your arm!"

Bob's kind heart was touched at the sight of the Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter was puffing and blowing like a grampus, his hair was dishevelled, and he seemed on the verge of collapse. Bob Cherry took one of his fat arms, and Frank Nugent the other, and in this way they propelled him along the road.

But Little Tich seemed to be all eyes that afternoon. He

ANSWERS



Mr. Ransome fairly let himself go. The way he wielded that cricket-stump was a sight to wonder at. Then came the sudden rustle of a gown, and Mr. Prout arrived on the scene. (See Chapter 2.)

saw what was afoot, and, dashing up, dealt out a couple of stinging outs to Bob Cherry and Nugent. They dropped Bunter as if he were red-hot, and the Owl of the Remove flopped down in the roadway.

"Don't lie shamming there!" roared Little Tich. "Get up, you—you confounded lump of blubber!"

"I—I kik-kik-can't, sir!"

"Then I'll soon make you!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Ow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter leapt to his feet like a jack-in-the-box, and scuttled away as fast as his fat limbs could carry him, till he caught up with the others.

Little Tich had no mercy. He lashed the laggards again and again, and some of the weaker fellows experienced a terrible time.

"I sha'n't be able to stick this much longer!" muttered Harry Wharton. "It makes a fellow's blood boil!"

"Rather!" agreed Vernon-Smith. "We'll turn round and rend the brute if he's not careful! Oh, my hat! All the population of Kent seems to have turned out to squint at us!"

The streets of Friardale were thronged by a gaping, wondering crowd, who doubtless regarded the strange scene as in the nature of Bedlam let loose.

The runners passed through the village with their ears burning. Ponsonby and his fellow-nuts of Highcliffe had seen them toiling through the High Street, driven before Mr. Ransome's ready cane like cattle being hustled to market. The humiliation of the thing was almost unendurable.

When Courtfield was reached, several of the juniors attempted to dash into Uncle Clegg's little shop, with a view to refreshing themselves with lemonade.

But Little Tich saw the movement, and rounded them up again with a few cutting lashes.

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By the time Wapshot Camp came in sight most of the fellows were dead-beat, even the best runners among them.

Little Tich continued to make merry with his cane, and deep groans re-echoed along the roadway.

Then, just as Harry Wharton & Co. felt that they could stand it no longer, and were about to turn upon their aggressor, a party of Tommies sprang out, apparently from nowhere, and viewed the scene with open-eyed astonishment.

"What the merry dickens—" began a strapping sergeant.

"There's a prize bully for you, mate!" said another, indicating Little Tich. "The bloke must imagine he's in Prussia!"

"Come on!" shouted a third. "Give him socks!"

Little Tich had the shock of his life the next moment. He was caught in a raging maelstrom of arms and legs, and bumped down into the roadway.

"You brute!" roared the irate sergeant. "Makin' them kids run like that, indeed! You ought to be downright ashamed of yerself!"

Little Tich sat up, spluttering with fury.

"I—I—" he muttered chokingly. "You shall pay for this!"

"I'm quite ready!" was the prompt rejoinder.

And the stalwart sergeant doubled up his huge fists.

Little Tich regained his feet, and the next moment a fierce fistic affray was in progress.

The Greyfriars juniors, glad enough to get an opportunity of recovering their wind, dropped down on the bank, and watched the scene with rare zest. They were not at all averse from seeing their tormentor made shavings of by a wearer of the King's khaki.

"Go it, sergeant!" roared Bob Cherry. "Wipe up the ground with him, my cherub!"

Little Tich was a most formidable giant, but he had met his match on this occasion. The sergeant fought coolly and well; and at length, when he saw he had his adversary well beaten, he rushed in with terrific impetus, and laid Ransome low with a straight drive between the eyes. It was a terrible, relentless blow, delivered with all the force of the sergeant's left arm, and Little Tich rolled over, with a gasp, and lay prone.

The victor then turned to the enthusiastic throng of juniors.

"Better hop it," he said, "before this brute finds his sea-legs again, and makes things warm for you!"

Harry Wharton rose from the bank, and put out his hand impulsively.

"You're a brick, sergeant!" he exclaimed.

"A gilt-edged, top-notch, double-barrelled brick!" supplemented Bob Cherry heartily.

The sergeant grinned.

"Wouldn't have missed a scrap like that for worlds!" he said. "Good-bye, young gentlemen!"

"So-long, sergeant!"

The rest of the Tommies nodded farewell to the Removites, and those worthies, feeling considerably refreshed by the knowledge that Little Tich had met with his just deserts, ambled off at a leisurely pace for Greyfriars.

THE 5th CHAPTER.
For Private Circulation.

"I'll do it now!"
Thus Horace Coker, the luminous light of the Fifth Form, as he sat at tea in his study with Potter and Greene.

"You'll 'do what?'" asked Potter, looking up from his well-loaded plate. "Send young Tubb along to the tuck-shop for a cherry-cake?"
"Blow young Tubb! And blow cherry-cake! I've got a wheeze to work off in connection with those Remove fags."

"Oh, good!" mumbled Greene, nibbling at a huge stick of celery.

"Trot it out, old man!" said Potter.

The great Coker was always endeavouring—though seldom successfully—to make capital at the expense of the Greyfriars Remove. He had formed all sorts of weird and wonderful devices in order to make them sing small, as he expressed it; but Harry Wharton & Co. had usually contrived to turn the tables. This time, Coker flattered himself, they would be powerless.

"Look here," began Coker, "you all know that I'm inspired at times—"

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Potter. "I know what's coming. You're going to try and manufacture some more silly doggerel which you palm off as poetry. I can tell by the wild look in your eyes."

"Eh? What's that?" said Coker tremendously. "I don't allow people to sneer at my poetry, so look out, George Potter!"

"All I've got to say is this," said Potter firmly. "If you're bent on making a first-class fool of yourself, you stand alone. Greene and myself wash our hands of it!"

"Yes, rather!" said Greene hastily. He knew Coker's poetry of old, and was aware that in nine cases out of ten the perpetrations of the high and mighty Horace spelt danger to the Fifth Form at large.

Coker snorted.

"You're a pair of dunderheaded dummies!" he growled. "Still, I'd much rather you stayed out, come to that. I want my name to stand out prominently as being the author of the poem. If your names were added, it would take a lot of the limelight away from me."

"But what are you going to do with the muck when it's written?" sniffed Greene. "I tell you candidly that if you stick it up on the notice-board, where everybody can see it, it'll cause roars of laughter—not the poem, but the spelling."

"I sha'n't put it on the notice-board," said Coker loftily. "Some fathead of a fellow, who doesn't appreciate art for art's sake, might tear it down. Oh, no, I shall get the thing printed!"

"Printed!" gasped Potter.

"Pip-pip-printed!" stuttered Greene.

"Certainly! Two or three dozen copies, you know, in the form of leaflets, for private distribution."

"Well," said Potter, after a long pause, "the spelling will be all right, that's one blessing!"

"I shall give the printer instructions on that score," said

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"I wish to see a selection of clay pipes—the cheapest you have," said Mr. Ransome. "Certainly, sir!" The tradesman bustled about, and presently produced a handful of common-looking clays, dirty and befouled, the very sight of which would have revolted the heaviest of smokers. (See Chapter 10.)

Coker. "The majority of composers haven't a grain of sense, and they'd go and spell cat with a 'c.'"

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Greene. "How would you spell it, then?"

"With a 'k,' of course!" said Coker scornfully. "I always thank my lucky stars that I was well-grounded in spelling when I was a kid. I'm only too pleased to make allowances for the crass ignorance of others!"

"Why, you—you—" stuttered Potter, looking daggers at his chief.

But Horace Coker remained quite impassive, blissfully unconscious that he had done anything by word or deed to wound the feelings of his cronies. He swept his plate and cup away from him, and started to scribble away industriously on a sheet of foolscap. Occasionally he ran his fingers through his hair, or stared hard at the ceiling in search of inspiration.

Potter and Greene went ahead with their tea. They would willingly have told Coker to go to Jericho, and take his poetry with him, but for the fact that they would miss his sumptuous study spreads and lavish generosity.

"There!" said Coker, at last, blotting his ink-bespattered manuscript and casting his eye down it. "Let me read it out to you fellows."

"Mercy!" moaned Potter.

"Remember our youth and innocence!" panted Greene. "We couldn't stand it, not for a pension, Horace, old chap! That's flat."

But Coker was not to be denied. He considered himself a first-rate reciter, and, leaning forward, with his elbow embedded in the dish of strawberry jam, he warbled forth:

"Who washed the squalling, grubby fags,
And laid his cane across their bags?
Who smokes the very worst of shags?
Why, Ransome!"

"That's merely the first verse," explained Coker. "My poetry gathers power as it goes along, and I shouldn't be a bit surprised if I went and bagged the laureateship one of these days. I'll carry on, and read you the next. Why, my hat! They've gone!"

They had. Potter and Greene had found Coker's poetry more than flesh and blood could reasonably be expected to stand. So whilst the great Horace had been waxing eloquent they had slipped out of the study, leaving their chief's effusion to waste its sweetness on the desert air, so to speak.

Coker snorted, not once, not twice, but three times. He went to the door and glanced up and down the corridor, but, like Moses of old, he beheld no man.

"Confound the rotters!" he muttered. "I don't believe those chaps will ever develop an appreciation of real art. They don't possess souls that rise above eating and drinking. Never mind! They'll see the poem when it comes out in print. I'll run down to Friardale at once on my jigger with the manuscript."

So saying, Coker wended his way to the bicycle-shed, and set off in the cool of the evening to the village.

The proprietor of the little printing-office stared as Coker stated his requirements.

"You want three dozen copies of this—this ill-spelt piffle?" he exclaimed.

Coker flushed angrily.

"Don't you dare tamper with the spelling!" he said. "I know what you fellows are. You often change the words and spell 'em in a glaringly ridiculous manner. My name's Coker—Coker of the Fifth. Let me have the three dozen copies in the morning. I'll leave the original."

"He's right in calling it original," grinned the man, as Coker passed out. "And I mustn't interfere with the spelling, but leave it as it stands! Well, I'm jiggered! Ho, ho, ho!"

The bumptious Coker proceeded on his way, chuckling as he thought of the sensation his latest poetical flight would create.

Next morning Harry Wharton & Co. were considerably surprised, on entering Hall for breakfast, to discover printed pamphlets under their plates.

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

"It's poetry," said Nugent, "or an apology for it, at any rate. Why, my hat! It's got Coker's name underneath, and the spelling could only be Coker's."

The juniors read the poem amid a perfect storm of laughter. In vain Little Tich, who had no less than six new-laid eggs in front of him ready for consumption, called for silence. The merriment grew in volume until at last the new master, unable to tolerate it any longer, jumped to his feet and brought his open palm with a sharp report across Skinner's face—a most unjust proceeding, for Skinner, not being in possession of a copy of Coker's poem, hadn't the faintest notion what the joke was about.

"What is that paper you've got there, Wharton?" demanded Mr. Ransome.

He snatched the copy from the hand of the captain of the

Remove as he spoke. It was headed, "The Downfall of the Fags. A Poem for Private Circulation. By Horace Coker Vth Form."

Little Tich gasped as he looked at it, but his gasp was repeated with greater emphasis as he went on, till he seemed to be emulating a fish out of water.

"Who washed the skwalling, grubby faggs,
And layed his cain across there baggs?
Who smoakes the very wurst of shaggs?
Why, Ransome!"

"Who took the norty boys at erikit,
And stood for hours befour the wikit,
Untill the urchins couldn't stick it?
Why, Ransome!"

"Who's over six foot in his sox?
Who gave old Prout the wurst of shox?
Who has a face like Jerman clox?
Why Ransome!"

There was a great deal more of it, but those three verses were enough for Little Tich. He spun round where he stood, and bellowed in a voice that boomed like a siren through Hall: "Coker, come here!"

The fellows at the other tables stared at the Games-master in surprise. Coker, in his place at the Fifth Form table, sat tight.

Mr. Prout jumped up, his florid face pinker than ever.

"Coker is in my Form, Mr. Ransome," he said, with asperity, "and he is not going to become a slave at your beck and call. If you wish to speak to him, I suggest that you wait until the meal is over!"

"But he has subjected me to unparalleled impertinence!" hooted Mr. Ransome. "Says I've got a face like a German alarm-clock, or something of the sort!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence in Hall!" thundered Mr. Prout.

Harry Wharton leaned back in his seat, nudged the irate Little Tich, and whispered in his ear:

"Leave Coker to us, sir, if you don't mind. We'll make him sit up after brekker."

Mr. Ransome grunted, and sat down. He was rather afraid lest Mr. Prout should suddenly produce his fearful blunder-buss, with a view to blowing out the Games-master's brains—always assuming that he had any.

After breakfast Harry Wharton held a hasty council of war in No. 1 Study.

"We must collar Coker at all costs, and make him sorry for his sins," he said. "Gather up the clans and have the brute brought here! Potter and Greene, too, if they can be found."

There were plenty of willing hands for the work. Mark Linley and Vernon-Smith, Russell and Penfold, Squiff and Micky Desmond all rallied round the banner, and a few moments later they were at grips with the Fifth-Formers in the Close.

Coker & Co. fought desperately, but the odds were overwhelming, and after a fierce assault-at-arms they were conveyed in triumph to No. 1 Study.

"Now," said Harry Wharton grimly, "truss 'em up!"

A good length of cord did the trick, and Coker & Co.,

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laughing and fuming, lay bound in the hands of their captors. Bob Cherry then produced a pile of leaflets—about half a dozen in all—and laid them on the table.

"Am I right in saying that these were intended for private circulation?" he inquired.

"Yes," growled Coker.

"That's good! We'll now proceed to circulate 'em!"

And the humorous Bob crumpled up one of the pamphlets into a compact ball and thrust it into Coker's capacious mouth.

"Geroooooogh!" spluttered the hapless poet.

"Chew it up!" commanded Bob tersely. "You must regard it as a sort of after-brekker dessert."

Ha, ha, ha!"

The wretched Coker found himself forced to obey. With a wry face, he started on the unpleasant task of masticating his own effusions. Potter and Greene were served in like manner, and for the next few moments an intermittent sound of choking and spluttering was heard in the study.

Bob Cherry had a huge spoonful of treacle poised in the air, and each time one of the victims showed signs of slacking he allowed a few sticky drops to descend upon their hair and faces, making them splutter and gurgle more than ever.

At last the mastication was over, and Coker looked quite ill. It was obvious that paper as an article of diet didn't agree with him.

"Now that we've circulated some of the precious leaflets," said Wharton, "we'll let you go. In the meantime, some kindly-disposed person ought to look out for a padded cell to accommodate Coker. He's as mad as a hatter and a March hare combined!"

"You shall pay for this!" muttered Coker, as he staggered out of the study with Potter and Greene after being released from his bonds.

"Bow-wow!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Good-bye, Virginia!"

Out in the passage, Potter and Greene, moved by the same uncontrollable impulse, hurled themselves at Coker. Without wasting any time in words, they bore him to the floor, and banged his head on it till he howled for mercy.

"The next time you perpetrate any of your confounded piffle," hissed Potter, "we'll publicly pulverise you!"

"Ow, ow, ow! Oh, my napper!"

Potter and Greene wiped their respective feet on Coker's prostrate form, and strode on, leaving the luckless versifier vainly trying to convince himself of the fact that his name was Coker, and that he was still on the earth.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for Skinner!

HAROLD SKINNER, the black sheep of the Remove, was in a royal rage. His face had tingled and smarted for some time as a result of the blow Little Tich had given him, without any provocation whatever, at breakfast.

"Ransome's the beastliest beast that ever was!" he confided to Snoop and Stott in the Close after dinner. "He ought to be kicked out of Greyfriars on his neck, and I only wish it was in our power to do it!"

"Not half!" said Stott.

"I don't know anything fishy about him—worse luck!" said Skinner dolefully. "He's a brute, but he doesn't seem to be criminally inclined, or anything of that sort. If only we could catch him burgling the Head's safe, or something like that! It would be a dream!"

"No such luck!" said Stott.

Skinner drew a mysterious packet from the inside pocket of his coat, and chuckled.

"A new brand of fags," he explained, in answer to the questioning glances of his cronies. "They're gold-tipped, and scented at that. Coming in the wood-shed to sample some?"

"All serene!"

And the rascals of the Remove proceeded to the ancient building where Gosling, the porter, kept his tools and gardening implements.

There was a movement within, and Skinner drew back in alarm. But he was reassured the next moment, as the familiar voice of Fisher T. Fish exclaimed:

"Come in, you jays!"

Skinner and his satellites entered, to find Fish and Trevor indulging in the same gentle pursuit which they had been meditating. Fish was sucking at an odorous cheroot, and looked as if he would turn all the colours of the rainbow in time, for that cheroot was of the cheap-and-nasty brand, and very few fully-grown men would have cared to court its charms.

Trevor was tackling a cigarette, and tackling it very gingerly, too.

"Chuck that idiotic roll of paper away," said Skinner, "and have one of the genuine articles."

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And he extended the packet containing the gold-tipped cigarettes.

Trevor abstracted one, and lit up afresh. Then the three new-comers helped themselves, and in a few moments the place reeked with pungent fumes, as if it had been a tap-room rather than a wood-shed.

The smokers had not taken the precaution of closing and bolting the door. Visitors to the wood-shed were few and far between, and only on very rare occasions had any master or prefect entered the dingy little place.

But they were not destined to remain long undetected on this occasion. There was a heavy footstep without, and Skinner turned quite pale.

"Chuck the fags away!" he hissed warningly.

The others obeyed, but they were much too late.

"Caught!" said the triumphant voice of Little Tich. "Caught in the very act! What have you got to say for yourselves, you young rascals?"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Skinner.

The cad of the Remove would sooner have been confronted by Mr. Quelch or the Head himself at that moment. He was aware that Mr. Ransome had a special down on smoking, and that he had chastised Loder without mercy because he had suspected the prefect of smoking cigarettes on the sly. And if Little Tich went so far as to chastise a prefect, there could be little hope for Skinner & Co.

"I—I—" stammered Skinner, in dismay. "We were only having a bit of a lark, sir!"

"Indeed! If there is anything I abominate in a boy it's smoking. When your constitutions are properly developed there can be no harm in an occasional pipe"—Little Tich pulled out his bulldog briar as he spoke—"but smoking at the age of fifteen is detrimental to your wind and condition. The governors have appointed me as Games-master so that I may take in hand weedy specimens like you, Skinner, and develop you into sturdy, manly, and hardy fellows. Yet what do I find? Why, that five of you, who ought to be practising at the nets or bathing in the river, are making yourselves sick with messy concoctions which are an apology for cigarettes! You will turn out your pockets at once, each of you!"

The wretched juniors obeyed. Fisher T. Fish produced a packet of cheroots, and Skinner contributed his newly-bought cigarettes. None of the others had anything smokable in their possession, but Mr. Ransome relieved Trevor of his catapult, and dispossessed Stott of his pea-shooter.

Little Tich pocketed the loot with a grim smile. He was doubtless reflecting that he would not need to buy any cigarettes for quite a long time to come.

The culprits waited patiently for Little Tich to convey them with due solemnity to the Head, but to their unbounded relief he did nothing of the kind. Instead, he remarked:

"I will punish you myself for this affair. The five of you will come to my study at seven o'clock this evening. You understand?"

"Yes, sir," said Skinner, in jubilant tones.

He was aware that he and his cronies would probably get a licking from Little Tich; but, providing it was only on the hands, and with the orthodox cane, it would be infinitely preferable to a public birching in Big Hall.

The routine of the afternoon was exactly similar to that of the previous day. At three o'clock Little Tich entered the Form-room, with his bulldog pipe sending up wreaths of suffocating smoke, and demanded of Mr. Quelch the surrender of his pupils.

Mr. Quelch obeyed without a question this time, but he felt greatly exasperated, and wondered if the governors of the school in appointing such a man as Little Tich had not taken leave of their senses.

Harry Wharton & Co. again submitted to the indignity of being thrown into the river, but the sparks of rebellion were smouldering in their breasts, and Little Tich, though he was far from suspecting the fact, was booked for a warm time.

After tea Skinner was fortunate enough to obtain a supply of resinous substance wherewith to daub his own hands and those of his comrades in crime, and thus allay the pain of the forthcoming licking. To make assurance doubly sure, the rascals of the Remove supplemented their nether garments with towels, so that whichever method of corporal punishment was adopted by Little Tich they would not suffer to the extent he intended they should.

But when, at seven o'clock precisely, they entered the Games-master's study, they saw no sign of a cane. Little Tich stood smoking placidly before the mantelpiece, and surveyed the delinquents with a smile—a smile so curious, however, that it might have been a frown for all they could make of it.

"Ah!" he said. "Skinner, I take it you are the ring-leader in these dark doings. You are aware, I presume, of the enormity of your offence?"

"Yes, sir," said the cad of the Remove penitently. "We—we won't do it again, sir!"

"I can quite believe you," said Little Tich grimly. "You will feel precious little like smoking by the time I've finished with you!"

"I guess we should be grateful, sir, if you'd put us out of our misery," said Fisher T. Fish.

"That's so, sir," said Skinner. "We own we did wrong, and we are quite willing to be caned!"

Skinner hoped, by this apparently frank confession, to alleviate the wrath to come.

"I have no intention of caning you," said Mr. Ransome.

"Oh, good!"

The five juniors almost hugged one another in their relief. "Instead, you will put on your caps and accompany me into Friardale!"

Greatly wondering, Skinner & Co. filed out of the study.

"What's the little game?" asked Snoop, in amazement.

"Give it up," said Trevor. "Little Tich is a funny card. You never know what he's going to do next."

"P'raps he wants us to do some shopping for him?" suggested Stott.

"That isn't likely," said Skinner. "I've got a vague sort of idea that we're going to get it in the neck, after all, though I don't quite see how."

A few moments later the black sheep of the Remove passed through the gates of Greyfriars in the custody of the amazing Mr. Ransome, wondering what that gentleman had up his sleeve, and whether they were destined to escape scot-free, or run up against a punishment the nature of which was without parallel in the wide and extensive history of Greyfriars.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Straw!

"HERE we are!"

Little Tich stopped outside the tobacconist's shop—the identical shop at which Skinner had purchased his forbidden weeds.

The cad of the Remove gave a start. He thought he divined Mr. Ransome's motive at last. He was going to ask the proprietor of the shop whether it was a habit of Greyfriars juniors to patronise the place often; and Skinner knew, moreover, that the tobacconist, who wanted to retain the custom of the masters, would state the facts.

But Little Tich asked no questions of the man relative to the juniors. He nodded amiably, and said:

"I wish to see a selection of clay pipes—the cheapest you have."

"Certainly, sir!"

The tradesman bustled about, and presently produced a handful of common-looking clays, dirty and befouled, the very sight of which would have revolted the heaviest of smokers.

"Good!" said Little Tich, rubbing his hands. "I'll take five of these. And now for some shag."

"Gentlemen of your stamp usually smokes somethin' superior to shag," said the shopman, hoping, by means of a little gentle flattery to humour his customer. "I've got some good smoking mixtures in stock, sir, well blended an' pleasin' to the palate. Mr. Lascelles used to derive much enjoyment from it, sir."

"Never mind, Mr. Lascelles," said Little Tich gruffly. "and don't wander from the point, my man. When I say shag, I mean shag—the commonest and strongest kind obtainable!"

"But I orter tell you, sir, in fairness to a customer, that you won't get no pleasure out of it. In fact, sir," he added,

lowering his voice confidentially, "it's 'orrible stuff to smoke, sir—downright 'orrible!"

Mr. Ransome made a gesture of annoyance, and the tobacconist saw that he was in sober earnest.

"Here you are, then, sir," he said, bringing to light a poisonous-looking dark-brown preparation. "Fourpence an ounce, it is. How much will you take, sir?"

"Half a pound, please."

The shopkeeper was flabbergasted, and his face showed it.

Greyfriars masters were fairly frequent visitors to his little shop, but never within his range of recollection had any of them purchased shag, to say nothing of cheap clay pipes, the very look of which was enough to make a man feel ill.

He tied the things up in a brown-paper parcel, and handed them to Little Tich.

"Three-and-two-pence, please, sir!"

The Games-master turned to Skinner & Co., who had been watching him make his purchases in wide-eyed astonishment.

"You had better have a whip-round among yourselves for the money," he said, "as the goods are for your benefit."

"Our b-b-benefit, sir?" stammered Skinner.

"Certainly! Look sharp!"

Skinner produced a shilling, and Trevor and Stott sixpence each. After a long search in the recesses of his pockets, Snoop brought to light a number of coppers. Fisher T. Fish's contribution to the total was nil; but Fish was a fellow who wouldn't willingly part with money.

Mr. Ransome handed the cash to the tradesman, bade him a curt good-night, and retired from the shop with the juniors. They walked back to Greyfriars in ominous silence. Even Skinner, sharp-witted and shrewd as he was, could not see what the little game was.

"Follow me!" said Little Tich sternly, when they were inside the school building.

He led the way upstairs, and halted outside a small, disused lumber-room on the landing. It was a stuffy, dirty place, and had been in a state of rank decay for years. Spiders made merry on the walls and ceiling, and a long, skinny rat scuttled across the floor as the little party entered. The juniors shuddered.

But they shuddered still more when Little Tich lit a candle, for on the rickety chair which stood in the corner lay a large, formidable-looking birch rod.

Skinner could have cried aloud, but his tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of his mouth. This, then, was the explanation. Mr. Ransome had not wished to thrash the culprits in a place where their yells of anguish might be heard, and had selected this wretched hole to carry out his brutal designs.

It would be useless for the juniors to show fight, even had they been good fighting-men of the Bob Cherry type. Little Tich was such a colossal giant that it would take overwhelming numbers to vanquish him. It was no good, Skinner reflected, with chattering teeth. They were caught like rats in a trap, and there was no way of escape.

Click!

The key grated in the lock, and Mr. Ransome turned to survey the unhappy quintette.

"I'm going to cure your craving for smoking once and for all!" he said, in a rasping voice. "You are now at my mercy, and I shall not spare you. Skinner, untie that parcel!"

With trembling fingers the cad of the Remove obeyed.

"Now," said Little Tich, "you will each take one of these pipes, load it with shag, and proceed to smoke. Every time you stop puffing I'll give you a taste of this birch. You understand?"

"Don't, sir!" pleaded Skinner, white to the lips. "I—I couldn't smoke one of these beastly things, sir! It would kill me right out!"

"Same here!" groaned Snoop.

"I—I guess I feel bad already!" moaned Fish.

But Little Tich was not to be turned from his purpose. He compelled the prisoners to load and light their pipes, and a moment later the atmosphere was simply appalling.

To say that the shag was vile was to put it mildly. It sent up thick, black smoke which could almost have been cut with a knife.

"Puff away, there!" said the Games-master, taking a tight grip of the birch rod. "The least sign of slacking, and I shall come down heavy! Don't you dare remove that pipe from your mouth, Stott, or, by thunder, I'll cut you to shreds!"

There was an almost demoniacal expression on the speaker's face, and the juniors began to think he was really mad. They wanted to shout aloud for help in their awful plight.

As if anticipating their thoughts, Little Tich said:

"If any of you yell out, I'll lay into the lot!"

That threat had the desired effect. Skinner & Co. smoked away, never once daring to relax their puffing, lest the cruel birch should lash across their backs.

Was it their captor's intention to keep them there all night,

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cut off from the rest of Greyfriars, and compelled to suck at the nauseous clay pipes without abatement? No! How could any man be so utterly cruel and inhuman as to go to such lengths? Besides, Little Tich himself would soon become fed-up with the unbearable atmosphere, and pack them off to the Remove dormitory.

That was how Skinner & Co. looked at it, for "Hope springs eternal in the human breast."

But they did not know Little Tich!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Famous Five to the Fore!

"**W**HERE'S Skinner?"

"And Snoop and Stott?"

"And Fish and Trevor?"

The Removites asked one another these questions over and over again after "lights out" that evening. Loder had seen them into bed, and, eager to get back to his study, had not troubled to ascertain if there were any absentees.

"I saw the five of 'em going out of gates with Little Tich soon after seven," said Dick Russell.

"And haven't they come back?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Goodness knows!"

"But what were they going out with Little Tich for?" asked Peter Todd, in astonishment. "He wasn't taking 'em to a theatre, was he?"

"It looked to me more like being taken to a funeral," said Russell.

"I expect they've gone to help him do some shopping or something of that sort," said Bob Cherry. "In that case, we needn't concern ourselves with the precious set of outsiders. Are you fellows ready for Coker & Co.?"

"We is—we are!" said Squiff.

The Removites were expecting a raid. Not an air-raid, although the Zepps not infrequently passed over the district. They were anticipating a raid by the Fifth, whom they had annihilated a week previously in a strenuous pillow-fight.

Billy Bunter had issued the warning. On stopping outside Coker's study to tie his bootlace—that was Bunter's version—he had overheard—quite accidentally, of course!—a conversation held jointly by Coker, Potter, and Greene, to the effect that it was up to the warriors of the Fifth to exact a terrible vengeance for the licking they had sustained.

The juniors were on their guard, and, with few exceptions, everyone had his pillow or bolster ready for the intrepid invaders.

Half an hour passed, during which Billy Bunter sank into the arms of Morpheus, and snored like a steam in full blast. Lord Mauleverer went to sleep also; but the rest of the fellows remained awake, listening intently for any suspicious sound.

Then, just as they were deciding that Coker & Co. intended giving them a miss that night, the handle of the door was turned softly, and a pyjama-clad figure entered.

Silence, still as the grave, brooded over the dormitory.

"All serene, you fellows!" came Coker's voice. "Sock it into 'em!"

Then, as a number of Fifth-Formers swarmed into the dormitory, Harry Wharton shouted in ringing tones:

"Rally round, Remove!"

Instantly the fellows leapt from their beds, and caught up their weapons. Completely taken aback, the invading party hesitated, and their hesitation cost them dear.

Biff! Thud! Biff! Thud!

The pillows of the Removites did tremendous execution, even in the first minute. Coker reeled from a terrific swipe of Johnny Bull's, and while he swayed in uncertainty, Bob Cherry sailed in to the slaughter, felling the burly Horace like an ox with a hard drive in the chest.

"Buck up, Fifth!" gasped Blundell. "Give the cheeky fags—Ow! Yaroooooh!"

That was not exactly what Blundell intended to say; but he said it, all the same. Frank Nugent, perched on a bed near by, had brought his pillow down with tremendous force on Blundell's devoted head.

Despite the fact that they were superior in height and weight, the invaders speedily began to get the worst of the argument.

They fought desperately, but unavailingly, for ten minutes; then panic broke out in their ranks, and they were forced to turn and flee.

The Famous Five sped hot-foot after them, driving the last nail into their coffin; while the rest of the Removites, with many chuckles at the discomfiture of the enemy, went back to bed.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed their adversaries up, driving them into their own dormitory with unrelenting vigour. Coker and his satellites, with many casualties in the shape of bumps and bruises, were only too glad to hide their diminished heads.

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NEXT MONDAY—**"THE SCHOOLBOY FARMERS!"**

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ONE
PENNY.

As the Famous Five were returning to their own quarters, greatly elated at their success, they fancied they heard a cry, and stopped short on the stairs.

"Did you fellows hear anything?" asked Wharton.

"Yes," said Nugent. "Somebody yelled!"

"It was a cry for the esteemed helpfulness," said Hurree Singh.

"Where did it seem to come from?"

"The first landing," said Johnny Bull. "Listen! There it is again! What the merry dickens—"

The juniors hastened to the first landing, and there was now no further room for doubt. The cry rose again, and they could distinguish its significance in an instant.

"Help! Rescue, Remove! Help!"

"Some of our chaps getting scragged," said Bob Cherry. "They're in the lumber-room! Kim on!"

Harry Wharton wrenched at the door-handle, but the door refused to budge.

"Good heavens!" he muttered. "They're locked in!"

"My hat!"

"It means smashing the door down," said Nugent.

Wharton nodded.

"When I say 'Charge,'" he said, "pitch into it for all you're worth!"

"What ho!"

The captain of the Remove gave the order, and immediately the Famous Five hurled themselves upon the door of the lumber-room. It was not a stout piece of woodwork, and yielded at once under the heavy strain upon it.

Wharton rushed in first, but drew back, choking. A fearful odour issued from the place, and spread over the entire landing.

"The place is on fire, or something!" panted Nugent.

"What a frightful stench!"

Then the voice of Harold Skinner was heard, raised in wild appeal.

"Is that you, Wharton? Help us, for goodness' sake!"

Harry needed no second bidding. He dashed into the lumber-room again, and could dimly distinguish what was afoot.

Little Tich swung round upon him savagely.

"What are you doing here?" he shouted. "Get back to beds at once, all of you!"

"We want to know what's going on before we do that," answered Wharton coolly.

"Lush!"

The heavy birch rod came swishing through the air, and stung the senior's back. His blood fairly up, Harry hit out, straight from the shoulder.

Little Tich started back with a gasp of pain. The claret was streaming from his nose, and before he could recover himself the rest of the Famous Five were upon him like tigers.

"It's neck or nothing now!" said Wharton. "I've hit the brute once, so we may as well make a thorough job of it!"

"Hear, hear!"

The juniors attacked the giant fiercely. They knew with whom they had to contend. Under ordinary circumstances Little Tich might have got the better of them, but he had been inhaling smoke-fumes all the evening, and was not in a condition for warfare. Accordingly, the Famous Five simply made hay of him.

They swarmed over the Games-master like ants, and within five minutes of their arrival on the scene he was overpowered, and trussed up in a corner with a length of stout rope.

Then Harry Wharton, glancing round the room, gave a gasp of horrified surprise. Skinner and Snoop and Stott, their faces ghastly, were leaning against the wall. Fisher T. Fish was moaning and groaning on the floor, and Trevor lay motionless and inert. He had fainted.

"What has the brute been doing?" exclaimed Wharton, aghast.

Skinner pointed to the foul clay pipes and the poisonous-looking slag.

"He caught us smoking in the wood-shed to-day," he explained, "and to-night he made us go into the village with him to buy these. We've had to smoke at the beastly things ever since eight o'clock, and when we've stopped to get our breath he's laid into us with the birch!"

"The brute!" growled Johnny Bull. "My hat! If this isn't enough to make a fellow's blood boil, I should like to know what is!"

"Untie me at once!" booted Little Tich, his face working convulsively, as he struggled in vain to free himself. "I shall report your outrageous conduct to Dr. Locke in the morning, and suggest that he expels you forthwith from the school!"

"And I," said Wharton grimly, "shall report to Dr. Locke

now; and if there's such a thing in the world as justice, it's you that'll go out of Greyfriars on your neck! Keep an eye on him, you fellows, and attend to Trevor, while I go and fetch the Head!"

"Come back!" shouted Little Tich, in a frenzy.

But Wharton was gone. His blood was fairly up, and he was determined that the new master's rank brutality should not pass unpunished.

Late though the hour was, the Head was still at work in his study.

"Wharton!" exclaimed the Head, starting to his feet. "How dare you come into my presence in that state!"

Harry turned crimson. In his excitement of the past hour he had quite forgotten that he was still in his pyjamas.

"I've come on an urgent matter, sir," he said. "I don't relish the idea of telling tales, but it's necessary sometimes!"

"Yes, yes! Proceed!"

"I don't know what you think of Mr. Ransome, sir," said Wharton, "but ever since he came here he's been bullying us right and left. I shouldn't have bothered you about it if he'd merely made it warm for my chums and myself. We should know how to take it. But when it comes to locking five fellows up in a stuffy little room, and forcing them to smoke vile pipes and vile tobacco, I reckon it's the limit!"

"Bless my soul, Wharton!" gasped the Head. "Are you romancing, or sleepwalking, that you should come to me with such a wild cock-and-bull story?"

"Come and see for yourself, sir!" said Harry.

And he led the way out of the study. The Head followed, in a state of great bewilderment.

Trevor had come round when they reached the lumber-room, and he and his fellow-victims were out on the landing, where the atmosphere, though oppressive, was certainly much purer than within.

Dr. Locke spluttered and choked, and, drawing out his handkerchief, applied it to his nose.

"What," he gasped—"what is the meaning of this—this nauseous odour?"

"Mr. Ransome will tell you, sir," said Harry quietly. "There he is. We were compelled to tie him up!"

"I have been assaulted, Dr. Locke!" shouted Little Tich. "Grievously and barbarously assaulted by these young demons!"

The Head stared hard at him through the smoke.

"Wharton tells me, Mr. Ransome," he said, "that you imprisoned five boys in this room, and forced them to smoke offensive pipes! Is that correct?"

"It is!" growled Little Tich.

"Then I require an explanation of the affair at once!"

"There's nothing much to tell. I caught the young rascals smoking in secret in the wood-shed, and introduced what I considered to be an effective cure!"

"It was your place to report them to me!" said the Head austere. "I should then have administered to them the flogging they deserved!"

"I've saved you the trouble," said the Games-master, indicating the birch rod.

"Good heavens! You have chastised them, in addition to keeping them in confinement?"

"It was necessary, or they would not have obeyed me. Make these young hooligans release me from my bonds at once!"

Dr. Locke frowned portentously.

"I am not accustomed to be addressed in that imperative tone, Mr. Ransome!" he said stiffly. "If you will make your request for liberation in more suitable terms I will pay heed to it!"

"Very well, then," said Little Tich, with an effort. "Please instruct Wharton to untie this cord."

The Head beckoned to the captain of the Remove, who came forward and did what was necessary. Little Tich looked positively ferocious as he stretched his cramped limbs, and but for the presence of the Head would most certainly have hurled himself upon his captors.

"Do I understand, Wharton, that you and your companions wantonly assaulted Mr. Ransome?"

"We had plenty of provocation, sir," said Harry, with a glance at Skinner & Co., who looked as if they would not recover from the effects of their Black Hole of Calcutta for quite a long time.

"I cannot overlook your offence, however great the provocation," said the Head. "You will hold out your hands in turn!"

Dr. Locke picked up the birch rod, and gave the Famous Five four stinging cuts each. They were laid on well, and it required plenty of fortitude on the part of the recipients to endure them without flinching.

"There!" panted the Head, desisting at last. "I trust

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that will be a lesson to you. As for you, Skinner, and your wretched companions, you will pass the remainder of the night in the sanatorium. You have been punished enough."

"Thank you, sir!" said Skinner.

And he staggered away, followed by the rest of Little Tich's victims.

With burning cheeks and tingling palms the Famous Five returned to the Remove dormitory; and then the Head turned to Mr. Ransome.

"I really cannot allow you to resort to such extreme measures," he said. "Discipline is one thing, brutality is another. Unless you can change your methods of dealing with refractory boys, Mr. Ransome, I shall feel compelled to ask you for your resignation."

The great giant clenched his hands hard, and looked as if he even meditated wiping up the floor with the reverend Head of Greyfriars. But something in Dr. Locke's expression cowed him. Without a word he turned on his heel and strode away down the stairs.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Rank Rebellion!

EARLY next morning, long before the rising-bell was due to ring out, Harry Wharton, fully dressed, entered the Remove dormitory.

He was heavily laden, and might have been the Crown Prince, from the quantity of loot he carried. Loaves of currant-bread, tarts and pastries, with several bottles of ginger-beer, almost bore him down with their weight; but he staggered stoically to his bed, and dumped the mass of provender down thereon. As he did so one of the bottles rolled off the counterpane on to the floor, with a bang which caused Bob Cherry to stir restlessly in his bed and open his eyes.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he murmured. "That you, Harry?"

"Yes."

"What's the little game?"

"I'm laying in for a siege," said Wharton, with a chuckle.

"What?"

Bob Cherry sat bolt upright, and stared in astonishment at the good things scattered in wild confusion on his chum's bed.

"My only Aunt Sempronia!" he exclaimed solemnly.

"Who—what—why—"

"I suppose you wonder what I'm doing with a miniature tuckshop on my bed at five o'clock in the morning?" laughed Harry. "Well, I'll explain. We're fed-up with Ransome, ain't we?"

"I should say so!"

"Then what do you say to holding a barring-out here, in this dorm, and refusing to budge until the Head has kicked Little Tich out on his beastly neck?"

Bob's eyes sparkled. He leapt out of bed, and fairly hugged his daring leader.

"Of course," said Harry, breaking away with an effort. "we shall have to get the consent of all the fellows; but I don't think there'll be much difficulty about that, especially as all the chicken-hearted ones are in the sanny, except Bunter—and we can make him knuckle under all serene."

"It's a stunning wheeze!" said Bob Cherry jubilantly. "There's safety in numbers, so that even if we come off second best the Head won't be able to sack the lot of us."

"Quite so," said Harry. "Now I'm going to have a snooze for half an hour. No need to rouse the other fellows yet."

When the other fellows were roused, half an hour later, they entered into the scheme with tremendous zest. They were fed-up with Little Tich, every man jack of them. He was too coarse and tyrannical for their liking; and whilst his services might have been appreciated in Prussia, they were emphatically not wanted at Greyfriars. His harsh and altogether inhuman treatment of Skinner & Co. stirred the indignation of the Removites as nothing else could have done.

"Bung some beds up against the door," said Peter Todd. "We mustn't leave any loopholes."

Billy Bunter demurred at first to the whole plan of campaign, but the sight of the tuck mollified him, and he decided to remain and devour the lion's share.

Great was the excitement at Greyfriars that morning when not a single, solitary Removite responded to the loud and vigorous clanging of the rising-bell.

Little Tich was one of the first to learn of their extraordinary act of defiance, and he endeavoured to force an entry into the Remove dormitory, but without success.

"Let me in!" he bellowed through the keyhole.

But the only reply was in the form of that ancient and classic monosyllable:

"Rats!"

The Remove were desperately in earnest, and even when the Head demanded admission, later in the morning, they remained obdurate.

"Wharton!" thundered Dr. Locke.

"Sir?"

"What nonsense is this, pray?"

"We're staying here, sir," said Harry, quietly but firmly, "until that rankest of rank outsiders, Ransome, is sacked from the school! We don't mean to be disrespectful to you, sir, but we really can't put up with him any longer."

The Head, on the other side of the door, gave a gasp.

"Do you imagine for one moment that I shall accede to your impudent request, Wharton?"

"I hope so, sir."

"Then you are vastly mistaken! I will take steps to bring you to your senses!"

The Head kept his word, and took steps—or, rather, ladders. He ordered Gosling and Mr. Mumble, the school gardener, to ascend and remonstrate with the delinquents, using violence if necessary. But neither Gosling nor Mr. Mumble was able to get very far. The Removites shelled them with their peashooters and bombarded them with bread-crusts until they were compelled to make an ignominious retreat.

As the day wore on the Head began to grow very worried. Had the culprits been one or two in number he would have known how to deal with them; but the bringing of forty rebellious juniors to heel was no light matter. Wherefore the good gentleman grew gravely alarmed, and began to wonder whether it would not be the wisest policy to get rid of Mr. Ransome, and face the wrath of the governing body afterwards.

The more he thought about the matter the more forcibly it occurred to him that Ransome ought to go. Unrest and discord would be prevalent so long as he remained in the capacity of Games-master at Greyfriars. He was an arch-bully, and the sooner he shook the dust of Greyfriars from his feet the better it would be for all concerned.

After dinner the Head sought out Mr. Prout, and conferred with him on the subject of the barring-out.

"I have come round to your way of thinking, Prout," he observed. "Ever since Ransome came to take up his duties the school has been in a ferment."

Mr. Prout nodded.

"I quite agree with you," he said. "Unless Ransome is sent about his business without delay we shall have nothing but trouble. My sympathies, I must confess, are heart and soul with the rebels. They have right on their side, and it would be a gross miscarriage of justice if their—ahem!—little uprising was not allowed to pass unpunished."

The Head rose to his feet. His mind was fully made up. He would sack the objectionable Games-master, and stand by the consequences of his action.

He went out into the Close, and bade Tubb of the Third request Mr. Ransome to step across to his study.

A few minutes later Little Tich appeared. He looked first at the Head, then at Mr. Prout, who could not repress a malicious grin of triumph; then he said:

"You sent for me, sir?"

"Yes, Mr. Ransome," said the Head. "In view of what took place last night, and the unpleasant results which have accrued therefrom, I must request you to accept a term's salary in lieu of notice, and leave this school to-day."

"But why—what—" exclaimed Ransome, in bewilderment.

"Your ways are not our ways," said the Head, his tone becoming more kindly. "We do not see eye to eye on the question of discipline. I maintain that the majority of boys can be ruled by kindness. You seem to consider that nothing short of brute force will answer the purpose. I am sorry—sincerely sorry—but I feel that unless you leave without delay there will be a serious upheaval amongst the boys—even more serious than at present; and things are bad enough now, goodness knows!"

Little Tich said nothing for some moments. He seemed to be thinking deeply. He frowned at first—then the frown was gradually supplanted by an amiable smile, like the sun bursting through dark clouds.

"Very well, sir," he said resignedly. "I must accept the inevitable. But I should like to ask you one favour before I go."

The Head nodded.

"If it is within my power to grant it, I will readily do so," he said.

"Then, may I play for the First Eleven in their match against the regimental team from Wapshot this afternoon?"

The Head smiled.

"By all means!" he said. "I do not think Wingate will object."

Wingate didn't. When he heard what had transpired, he

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SCHOOLBOY FARMERS!"

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ONE
PENNY.

jumped for very joy. The team from Wapshot was particularly hot stuff, including several ex-county players in its ranks. And, with the aid of such a mighty Trojan as Little Tich, it was more than probable that their reception would be of a warm, almost tropical, nature.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Little Tich Leaves His Landmark!

"SISTER ANNE, Sister Anne! Do you see anyone coming?"

Thus Bob Cherry, as, standing in the Remove dormitory, he glanced up at Harry Wharton, who was perched on the window-sill, peering down into the Close.

"Yes," said Harry breathlessly. "It's the Head!"

"An ultimatum, I expect," said Vernon-Smith. "Talk to him like a Dutch uncle, Wharton!"

"We're still holding out, sir!" said Harry grimly, on the Head's approach.

"There is no need to, my boy," was the quiet reply.

"I—I beg your pardon, sir!"

"Let that folly cease, and come down at once!"

"But, Mr. Ransome—"

"Mr. Ransome is leaving Greyfriars to-day," said Dr. Locke. "I have fallen in with your request, and shall not, moreover, punish you for this breach of discipline."

Harry Wharton could scarcely believe his ears. It was incredible—amazing!

But it must be true, since the Head said it.

The captain of the Remove communicated the news to the rest of the fellows.

There was a moment of profound silence; then a mighty volume of cheering arose.

Dr. Locke smiled, and went back to his study. The barring-out, which had not been such a dreadful affair after all, was over within a few hours of its inauguration, and harmony was restored once more to the old school.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Who ever would have thought it? We're rid of Ransome at last; the Head's let us off scot-free; and everything in the garden is lovely!"

Greatly elated in spirits, the merry throng of Removites trooped down into the Close in the glorious summer sunshine.

The news that Little Tich was to play his first and last match at Greyfriars aroused a considerable sensation. Everyone longed to see how he would shape against the military team.

The soldiers arrived by brake, looking very fit and confident. They were big, strapping fellows for the most part—cricketers every inch of them.

The crowd which foregathered round the ground at the appointed time was something in the way of a record. The Cliff House girls—Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara Trevelyn, and Phyllis Howell—came over; and the Head himself had a seat reserved for him in front of the pavilion.

The Tommies won the toss, and a great ovation greeted Corporal Jimmy Travers as he stepped out to open the innings with a portly sergeant.

Jimmy Travers was quite an old favourite. Harry Wharton & Co. remembered to have played football against him on the never-to-be-forgotten occasion when they had made a tour of the Southern Counties. He accorded them a cheery smile as he strode past with his bat tucked under his arm.

Wingate and Walker shared the bowling, and they had need of all their skill and resource.

Corporal Travers, particularly, was in great form. He flogged the ball to all parts of the field, and looked like remaining at the wickets until the sun went down. Then Little Tich, who was in the long-field, suddenly leapt at the leather when it was in mid-air and brought off a magnificent catch.

"Hurrah!"

"Well held, sir!"

Jimmy Travers retired to the pavilion looking somewhat crestfallen. He had entertained high hopes of scoring a century, and his expectations had been ruthlessly shattered at an early stage by that hulking giant in the long-field.

"I'll remember that fellow," muttered Jimmy. "If he happens to be in while I'm bowling, I'll send his bails to kingdom come!"

The soldiers continued to bat steadily; but after a time Little Tich went on to bowl, and caused a startling collapse. The tail of the military side wagged but feebly, and they were all out for exactly 100, though the score had at one period been 75 for three wickets.

Greyfriars responded gallantly in their first venture, though,

to the vast disappointment of many. Little Tich failed to "come off." Through a misunderstanding with Courtney, his partner, he was run out before he had been able to treat the spectators to a sample of that hurricane batting for which, even in the short time he had been at Greyfriars, he had become famous.

The Friars were eventually dismissed for 85—fifteen runs behind their opponents' total. The prospects of a close finish seemed, at that time, distinctly promising.

"I hope Little Tich astonishes the natives in the second innings," remarked Frank Nugent.

"Yes, rather!" rejoined Bob Cherry. "It would be too rotten if he bagged a pair of spectacles after we've been telling the girls what a Trojan he is!"

When the soldiers took up the running again they made the fur fly with a vengeance. The runs piled up at a rate which was truly alarming, and gradually the hearts of the Greyfriars spectators sank into their boots.

Corporal Jimmy Travers had learnt a valuable lesson in the first innings—namely, never to put up the ball within a dozen yards of the spot where Little Tich was fielding. Profiting by his previous blunder, the corporal remained at the wicket, hitting out at anything and everything that came his way, but always keeping the ball low.

Bowler after bowler was tried, but with no marked measure of success; and Wingate ran his fingers through his thick brown hair in desperation.

Even Little Tich failed to impress the batsmen on this occasion with his lightning deliveries. They were usually snicked through the slips, and as often as not the velocity with which the ball whizzed along the turf sent it to the boundary.

"All over, bar shouting!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Seventy without a giddy wicket! Carry me home to die, somebody!"

But all good things come to an end, and the soldiers, playing with the recklessness which was part and parcel of their very nature, fell into pitfalls. Clever catches at point followed smart throws-in, and the wickets began to fall slowly but none the less surely.

The military team compiled 134 in their second venture, leaving the Friars to get 150 to win—a heavy task, especially as stumps were to be drawn at six. The outlook seemed black for Wingate's eleven.

"Hit out!" said the captain of Greyfriars tersely. "It's our only game!"

The speaker went in first with Courtney, and straightway began to practise what he preached. He leapt out of his crease again and again, and the ball went soaring away to the boundary.

Courtney backed up his chum loyally, and between them they amassed 30 for the first wicket.

Courtney, cleverly caught at cover-point, was succeeded by Walker, who stayed with Wingate sufficiently long to take the score to 50.

Then black misfortune descended like a pall upon the Greyfriars team.

They lost three good men and true within as many minutes.

"All's up!" said Bob Cherry dolefully.

"But your tame giant hasn't batted yet, Bob!" said Phyllis Howell.

"Who, Ransome? No, he's only just going in; but it's too late for anybody to save the game now."

"I'm not so sure," said Phyllis sagely. "Your Goliath looks as if he's going on a window-smashing campaign!"

Little Tich was desperately in earnest. In his heart he revelled in a situation of this sort, where victory seemed remote and impossible, and many runs were required to pull the game out of the fire.

"Play!" said Corporal Jimmy Travers, gripping the ball hard.

And he sent down the very best delivery of which he was capable.

Little Tich smiled grimly, squared his great shoulders, and the next instant the ball landed with a crash and a clatter on the roof of the pavilion.

"Good man!" said Wingate, who still held the fort at the other end. "Keep it up!"

The hour that followed was one of the most tensely-exciting periods ever known at Greyfriars.

Words failed to do adequate justice to the display of Little Tich. He gained complete mastery over the bowling, and everything came alike to him.

His hits were simply prodigious. Every other one was a boundary. He realised that he was fighting against time, and that if runs were to be got, they must be got speedily.

Fired by the heroic display of his partner, Wingate shaped splendidly, and had forty runs to his credit when Corporal Travers caught and held a hot return from his bat.

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"Bravo, Wingate!" roared the crowd, thoroughly roused now from its lethargy. "Well played indeed, sir!"

The batsmen who followed failed to settle down. They were obviously not at home with the military bowlers, and had to leave the lion's share of the run-getting to Little Tich.

But that gentleman didn't seem to mind a jot. He continued to hit out strongly and fearlessly until, when the last man in walked down the pavilion steps, five minutes before the drawing of stumps, only eight runs were required for the Friars to win.

Amid a profound silence the batsman survived the rest of the over.

And now all eyes were glued on Little Tich. Would he continue his glorious, refreshing display, or would he, in the excitement of the moment, lose his head, and cause calamity to descend upon Greyfriars at the eleventh hour?

The onlookers were speedily reassured.

The first ball was pulled to square-leg for two. The batsmen could have made three of it with comparative ease, had they chosen to do so, but Little Tich realised how essential it was that he should have the bowling.

The next ball was a beauty—from the batsman's point of view. It pitched short, and Little Tich rose to the occasion, as it were. His great body moved forward, his bat went back, and the next thing the watchers saw was a little red speck soaring away high in the air—higher and higher—till it suddenly flashed downwards and landed, with a reverberating echo, on the roof of the main school-building. It was six—and victory!

Then the fellows seemed to suddenly take leave of their senses. They forgot, in that delirious moment of triumph, that Little Tich had made their lives well-nigh unbearable, and that he was a tyrant of the first water. His past seemed to be blotted out, merged into oblivion, before the great deed of valour just performed; and the crowd, surging round Dick Ransome, bore him in frenzied triumph to the pavilion.

"That was great, sir!" said Harry Wharton radiantly. "We've never seen anything quite like it in our lives!"

Then he added, half hesitatingly:

"Will you do us the honour of coming to tea, sir, before you go?"

Little Tich nodded. He could not trust himself to speak just then. All his brutal tendencies seemed to evaporate in the face of that loyal, whole-hearted demonstration; and Dick Ransome felt that he had never come nearer to making a fool of himself than at that supreme moment.

The Famous Five, who knew that Little Tich's appetite was, to say the least of it, abnormal, laid in sufficient tuck that afternoon to provision an army corps. They knew that their guest would be hungry after his great and glorious innings; and he found himself under compulsion to eat, drink, and be merry. Harry Wharton & Co. waited upon him hand and foot, and the Cliff House damsels had a kindly word of congratulation for him.

The Famous Five partook of a little of everything, and were uproariously jolly. Little Tich partook of a great deal of everything, and he, too, became as happy as a sandboy, albeit he was on the verge of closing the chapter of his brief Greyfriars career. His spirited stand on behalf of the old school would ever be remembered in its annals, serving to stamp out the fact that he had been a bully and a Tartar; and his memory would be kept green at the old school for many a term to come.

And on that quiet and serene summer evening, when the countryside was hushed as if in silent sympathy, Harry Wharton & Co. took their leave of Little Tich, and felt, as they gripped his big hand, and looked into his grey eyes, now strangely softened and shining with a new light, that he wasn't such a bad fellow after all. We are all imperfect, and some have more faults than others. A man should make large allowance for his fellows, and set much store by what is good in them.

And ever afterwards the Greyfriars juniors entertained the most lively recollections of their thrilling skirmishes with Little Tich, the Greyfriars Giant.

THE END.

(Do not miss "THE SCHOOLBOY FARMERS!"—next Monday's Grand Story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 12

Our Magnificent Adventure Serial Story.

START TO-DAY!



PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS BRIEFLY TOLD.

Hal Mackenzie receives a mysterious message urging him to come out to the Southern Andes and learn the secret of the Tower of the Golden Star. He sets out upon the voyage accompanied by his chums, Jim Holdsworth, Bob Sigsbee, and Pat O'Hara.

After exciting experiences in the hands of a treacherous captain, they arrive at Buenos Ayres.

They proceed upon their journey, and having penetrated some twenty miles into the mountains, come upon a ruined estancia, which they decide to make their quarters. During the night a party of brigands arrive with a prisoner, Aymara, the daughter of a native chief. The four chums succeed in disarming them and rescuing the girl. The brigands are locked up, but later make their escape, taking with them the mules belonging to the adventurers. They pursue them on foot, eventually arriving at the bank of a swiftly-running stream. By paddling swiftly with the current, in a canoe the property of Aymara, they overtake the ruffians, who, being unarmed, flee for their lives, leaving the mules behind.

The chums continue their journey, arriving after two days at the pillar of rock where Aymara had told them they would see her again. A terrific storm bursts over them, and they are about to take shelter in a cave, when they are alarmed by the sight of a huge fireball balanced on the edge of a crag above their heads. Even as they gaze, awestruck, it totters and begins to fall towards them.

(Now read on.)

The Cave of the Kings.

Now that it was so much closer to them they could distinctly hear a hissing and crackling noise, such as powerful electric currents make under certain conditions.

But it didn't roll into the cavern. It hung suspended in the air opposite the entrance for several minutes, and then it dropped into the silent lake.

The instant it touched the surface there was a loud explosion and a great flash of blinding light. The water was flung up in giant waves fifty feet in height, and in the midst of all this turbulence a strange and terrible thing happened.

Out of the water there appeared the head and shoulders of a man. The face was livid-hued, the skin shrunken, the eyes sightless. It was like a horrible mask. For a full minute it showed, as though it had risen from the unknown depths, and then it sank out of sight again.

"What in the name of thunder was it?" exclaimed Sigsbee. "Something that is better down at the bottom of that lake than at the top," replied Hal. "The evil spirit of the storm, perhaps, for now we're going to get it!"

And so it seemed, for the next minute the storm broke in

all its fury. Lightning played in incessant vivid flashes, and the crashes of thunder, echoing a hundred times from crags and peaks, were enough to split the ear-drums. Never was there such a terrific din.

"'Tis the end av the world at long last!" muttered O'Hara.

The cavern was of immense height, and it was impossible to say how far it extended back, as the far end of it was shrouded in impenetrable gloom. They led the frightened mules in for about fifty yards, and then tethered them to some projections of rock.

"Here we can wait till things quieten down a bit!" shouted Hal. He had to shout to make himself heard. "If there was any wood in the cave we might start a fire and cook some food, for I'm getting precious hungry; but there don't seem to be a scrap."

"Not a piece large enough to make a toothpick!" Jim declared.

He, too, was hungry, and had been searching about for wood with the idea of making a fire and starting cooking operations.

Storms in the mountains are usually short, but as bad as they can be while they last. This one proved no exception to the rule. In two hours it was over, and the sun shone out once more.

They all made a move towards the mouth of the cavern, and then stopped short, for a figure had suddenly appeared at the entrance.

"Why, it's Aymara!" cried Jim.

It was that dainty Indian maiden, sure enough, and they ran forward to greet her. She was as delighted to see them again as they were to see her.

"I knew that you had taken refuge in the Cave of the Kings," she said, "while the storm was raging. And until it was over I could not join you."

"The Cave of the Kings!" echoed Hal. "Is that what it's called?"

"Yes," replied Aymara. "It is in there that many of the Inca kings are buried. But tell me what happened after you left the estancia. You must have overtaken those bad men, for I see you have recovered your mules."

Hal gave her an account of their adventures on the river, and how they had shot the falls.

"But we had to leave your canoe," he added, "which, I am sorry to say, was a bit damaged. We couldn't bring it back to the place we had taken it from while the river was in flood."

"It is no matter," the girl assured him. "I seldom used it. And it is easy for me to get another canoe when I need one."

She glanced round at the Silent Lake, and gave a slight shudder.

"I do not like this place," she continued, "when there is

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SCHOOLBOY FARMERS!"

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

a storm and the fire drops down from the skies. Strange things happen if the fire enters the water."

"We saw one strange thing," put in Sigsbee, "which I ain't bustin' to see again."

The girl nodded.

"I know what you saw," she replied. "It was the chief, Parahua, who in a great fight with the Spaniards, when they first came to the land, was defeated. In despair, he sprang into the lake, and sank. But sometimes, when the waters are disturbed, he rises to the surface to gaze again upon the mountains which were his home. It is said that fortune will smile upon those who see him."

"That's a comfort!" said Hal, smiling. "We can always do with a bit of luck. But if he has been in the lake at that time—centuries—"

"Nothing perishes that lies in the depths of the lake," Aymara hastened to explain. "The waters are very bitter, and were sometimes used, I believe, for embalming the dead kings whose tombs are in the cave."

"Have a sort of petrifying property, I suppose?" said Hal. "Well, we seem to have got into a cheerful sort of neighbourhood!"

"It isn't a spot to choose for a picnic," said Jim; "but that's no reason why we should neglect lunch, or dinner, or whatever our next meal may be. There's plenty of dry wood by those trees yonder, and I'll have a fire going in two shakes of a duck's tail, if you chaps will unpack the larder. And perhaps you can persuade Aymara to—eh?—accept an invitation to dinner."

And he went off to gather the wood, whistling cheerfully. Aymara looked after him, and smiled.

"It is good to see one who is always happy," she said.

"Thruo for ye, miss!" Pat O'Hara heartily agreed. "'Tis good for the digestion."

A statement which Aymara didn't seem clearly to understand, made as it was partly in Irish brogue and partly in Spanish—of sorts.

The girl accepted their invitation to dinner—they decided eventually to call the meal dinner—and they spread themselves out to make it worthy of their charming guests. They had still a fairly good stock of provisions, and all the best were unearthed.

"The eatables couldn't be eaten, of their kind," declared Pat O'Hara; "but 'tis the drinkables what troubles. Whether—cold or hot, as you please. An' we must be after gettin' it from a spring—not out av the lake, seein' what's in it."

However, they finished off the repast with some excellent coffee, which corrected the "coldness" of the spring water; so altogether it was a decided success.

A good deal of laughter was caused by the attempts of Jim and O'Hara to "keep their ends up" in the conversation—which, of course, was carried on in Spanish. They both determined to tackle the language seriously, with the help of Hal and Sigsbee.

"What we'll have to do," advised Sigsbee, "is to talk in Spanish most all the time. You'll middlin' soon get a hold of it then."

It was when they were all seated round the camp-fire, sipping their coffee—for there was a cold wind blowing from the snow-clad peaks in the north—that Hal reminded Aymara of her parting words at the estancia: "I may have something to tell you when we meet again which it is as well you should hear."

"I have not forgotten," replied the girl. She paused for a few moments, and then continued. "Am I right in supposing that you have come into the mountains, where few white men ever penetrate, to try and reach the Tower of the Golden Star?"

"You are quite right," replied Hal. "That is the main object of our journey."

"Yet it is folly," declared Aymara.

"One of our countrymen has reached it," said Hal.

"Only to meet with death," returned Aymara. "For that is the penalty of those who learn the secret of the Golden Star. Not even the half-breeds, who guard the tower, know that secret."

"Are you sure that my countryman who learnt the secret is dead?" asked Hal.

"It is long since he has been heard of," replied the girl. "What else, unless it is something worse than death, can have happened to him? Did you hope to rescue him?"

"He is my friend," said Hal.

And that was sufficient answer.

A Temple of the Incas.

"Ah, you belong to that strong race who live across the seas!" said Aymara. "They who are never beaten—Los Ingleses. It is a great thing to belong to such a nation."

"Well, I'm an American," interposed Sigsbee. "And I guess we take a bit of beating, too!"

"It is because most of the Americans are of the same blood as Los Ingleses," replied the girl.

"I allow that is so," admitted Sigsbee. "You know something, Aymara! I guess you've got all your wits on the top of the basket."

"It is no use trying to persuade you to turn back," continued Aymara. "Yet"—she glanced at Hal and Jim—"you two are so young to brave dangers which many men would shrink from. You are no older than I am."

"Oh, we'll grow out of that in the course of time," said Jim, laughing. "Seems a pity, because we can't grow young again when once we get old. However, we've got two very staid and respectable comrades"—he waved his hand towards Sigsbee and O'Hara—"who try to keep us youngsters out of trouble by—eh?—getting into it themselves."

"Sure, 'tis meself an' Sigsbee wouldn't take on the job av kaping ye out av mischief!" retorted the Irishman, grinning. "We wouldn't have any time for our diversions."

When this little interchange of chaff was over, Aymara went on with what she had started to tell them.

"The half-breeds," she said, "are cruel and savage, but cowardly in the way they fight. They will lay traps for you rather than meet a foe in the open. They have all the worst qualities of Spaniards and Indians, but none of the good qualities of either."

"Breeds are mostly like that," Sigsbee interjected.

"But it is of their leader you must beware in particular," continued Aymara—"a man who calls himself Captain Garotte, after an old instrument of torture which he possesses, and uses on his captives. He gives himself the airs of a Spanish don. He smiles, and bows, and speaks pleasantly, with a smile on his face even while he is considering the most cruel form of torture to put you to if you are a captive in his hands."

"A cheerful sort of scoundrel!" said Hal. "But we shall know exactly how far to trust him when we meet him."

"You have far to go, and many dangers to encounter, before you will meet the breeds," said Aymara. "But there is one danger—the Pass of the Snakes—which you can avoid if you will be guided by me."

"We are glad to accept your guidance," Hal assured her, "for you know the mountains, and we do not. But this Pass of the Snakes—do you mean there are a number of those reptiles in it?"

"It is only a short and very narrow pass, with high rocks on both sides," explained the girl, "and the ground looks to be for ever moving, so thickly are the snakes crawling over it. Even if you could escape by climbing, your mules could not. They would be bitten to death in a few minutes."

"Certainly a place to be avoided," said Hal. "And you can show us another road, so that we need not attempt this pass?"

"I will do so. There is indeed the road used by the muleteers, but that is many days' journey from here, and you don't wish to cross the mountains. You desire to get into the heart of the range, where"—she hesitated, and then added—"it is madness to penetrate."

"I guess we've done mad things before," commented Sigsbee, "and we've found they're mostly worth doing."

"I suppose we're not going any further to-day?" said Jim. "It's getting well on in the afternoon now, and mountain-climbing in the dark doesn't appeal to me over much. You're apt to scrape too much skin off yourself, and the parts of you where the skin's left on would likely be black, blue, and yellow with bruises."

"As Aymara is to guide us, we must leave it to her," replied Hal. And he explained what Jim had said to the girl.

"We will start in the morning," said Aymara, "though the darkness does not matter, for our way will lie through the Cave of the Kings. Now I must leave you. An hour before the sun rises I will be with you again."

She was away before they realised that she meant to go at once. As lightly as a young fawn she leaped from rock to rock until she reached a projecting crag. Here she paused to wave her hand to them. The next moment she had disappeared.

"Bedad, she's loike a fairy!" exclaimed O'Hara.

"More like a bird," grumbled Jim. "An early bird. An hour before sunrise! That's the worst of these expeditions; we're always getting up at unseasonable hours, before the world's properly aired."

"Well, we shall only have to walk to the other end of our bed-room," said Hal, pointing to the gloomy interior of the cave, "though how far that is, goodness only knows."

"I hope the hole at the other end is big enough to push
(Continued on page iv of cover.)



HAROLD OWEN,
Nantwich.



FRANK GARNER,
Nantwich.



T. H. B.,
Glasgow.



DONALD HEATH,
Nantwich.



R. BONNEY,
Warebridge.



HERBERT GEE,
Swindon.



ARTHUR PEARSON,
Melbourne.



A LOYAL WELSH
MAGNETITE.



FRANK WHITE,
A keen reader.



F. R. MOSTON,
Manchester.



FRED DAVIES,
Llanelly.



J. CLAYTON,
Accrington.



H. J. MARTIN, Port
Adelaide, Sth Australia.



TOM THOMPSON,
A Loyal Friend.



NEIL HEANEY,
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Nantwich.



A. JACKSON,
Stepney.



P. THORNBOROUGH,
Keighley.



JACK CHESWORTH,
Nantwich.

ADVENTURERS FOUR.

(Continued from page 20.)

"The mules through!" exclaimed Jim. He, too, peered into the gloom. "We shall want torches," he added. "I'd better have a look round for some dry pine branches that'll make a good flare."

He strolled off, and returned half an hour later with some suitable material, which could be trimmed into a convenient size for carrying.

When night fell they built up the fire afresh, about twenty yards inside the cave, had tea, and soon afterwards stretched themselves out for a night's rest.

"Tis the first time I've slept in company wid kings," said O'Hara, as he made himself comfortable in his blanket. "though, be the same token, those in this cave are dead wans. Meself hopes they'll slape aisy in their coffins."

The kings evidently slept easy, for the adventurers were not disturbed during the night. In the morning they were up before daybreak, and had hot coffee and biscuits ready by the time Aymara put in an appearance.

Then they saddled up the mules, lit the torches, and made a start.

For half a mile the floor of the cavern ran straight and level, and then they came to a wide and lofty chamber, with a number of stone coffins, wonderfully carved, ranged round the sides. There were twenty-one in all. This was the tomb of the Inca kings, and a right royal mausoleum it was. Hal wondered whether the fabulous treasure of the Incas was hidden anywhere in this chamber, but he didn't ask Aymara any questions about it. Indeed, the girl didn't seem inclined to linger in the place, but hurried through without stopping. The outlet at the other side was nothing more than a tunnel, just wide enough to allow each one to walk by the side of the mule he was leading.

The passage now led upwards all the time, sometimes at a steep angle, at others in a gentle slope, and it no longer went straight. The turns and twists it made were bewildering, and there were many branch passages in which they would surely have gone astray had Aymara not been there to guide them.

For seven hours, with only one short rest for a hasty meal, they tramped on through this amazing tunnel, and the torches were all used up before they reached the end. But Aymara could find her way in the dark, though progress was a trifle slower.

Then at last they emerged into the welcome daylight once more, out on to a broad plateau high up on the mountain-side. And right opposite to them was a building with a massive tower at one end, and a slender minaret at the other. A strange contrast. There was an entrance-gate in the tower, the great wooden doors of which were closed.

"What is this place, Aymara?" asked Hal.

"It is an Inca temple," was the reply.

"Does anybody live in it? Are there any priests?"

The girl shook her head.

"I know not," she replied. "Sometimes I think, from what I have seen, there must be. But I have never entered it. I am not one who is easily made afraid, yet I fear to enter that temple."

"Well, there's no sign of life about the place now, at all events," said Hal.

Aymara now bade them farewell, nor could their most urgent entreaties induce her to remain, even for a short rest. Of course, they knew it was quite impossible that she could accompany them any further on their adventurous journey.

"I have done that which I promised," she said, "and I must return."

"What, alone—back through that tunnel!" exclaimed Jim.

"It is nothing," replied Aymara. "I have gone through it many times alone. I will not say 'Good-bye,' because I believe we shall meet again. I dreamed that we should. And if the dream comes true it will be a strange meeting."

Hal Disappears.

A clasp of the hand with each, and she was gone.

"I don't count much on dreams," said Bob Sigsbee, "but I sure hope hers will pan out all right."

"Faith, she ought to be a princess—wid me as the prince!" exclaimed O'Hara. "But what gurrl wud look at a big, red-headed Irishman loike meself? Let's have something to ate. 'Tis the mountain air what always laves me hungry."

"Love doesn't take away your appetite, Pat," said Jim, winking at the others.

"Why would it?" replied O'Hara. "Bedad, there's no use in anything that spoils your dinner!"

They decided to camp on the plateau, as it was well

sheltered, and the mountain-side was thickly timbered, so there was plenty of wood for a fire.

When they had settled themselves they had a look round the outside of the temple, but there appeared to be only the one entrance, and as the heavy doors were secured they were unable to get a glimpse of the interior.

About an hour after sunset Jim came staggering up to the camp-fire with a big load of wood, which he flung on to the ground.

"Where's Hal?" he asked.

Sigsbee was repairing one of the saddles, and O'Hara had just finished grooming the mules. They had all been so busy at various jobs that they hadn't noticed the absence of their comrade until Jim spoke.

"I don't know where he is," replied Sigsbee. "And now you come to ask, I don't think he's been around here for an hour or more. Have you seen him, Pat?"

"Sorra wan av me has," said O'Hara; "not since I started grooming the kicking bastes, an' that's more than an hour ago. But he'll be somewhere."

"I suppose he is somewhere," replied Jim. "But where?" He shouted for him; they all shouted, but they got no answer, save the echo from the rocks: "Hal! Hal!" It sounded rather weird.

"This gits me!" Sigsbee growled. "He'd sure have heard our yells if he's anywhere within a mile of us."

"Thru for ye," agree O'Hara. "But maybe we wouldn't hear him if he answered. He's only got wan vor—against our three."

It was a queer way of putting it, but it stated the case exactly. Naturally their three voices, when they were all shouting together, would carry much further than Hal's single voice. Therefore, although he might have heard them, it was quite possible they could not hear him.

They accepted this explanation as being the most likely one, for the chances were that Hal wanted to explore their surroundings a bit, so as to hit the best trail on the following day.

But when another hour passed and he still failed to put in an appearance, the matter began to wear a more serious aspect.

"We must go and search for him," declared Jim. "Something must have happened, or he would have been back before now. He may have fallen—"

"Hark! What's that?"

The interruption came from Sigsbee. He was staring towards the temple.

"Did you hear anything?" he asked sharply. "There, again!"

It sounded like a human voice raised in a cry, or a shout; but whether it was Hal's voice or not they couldn't say.

Then there was the clang of a bell; one stroke only, and after that a deathlike silence.

"There's someone in the temple," said Jim.

"It'll be the cap'n," declared Sigsbee. He often referred to Hal as the captain. "He's got into that blamed temple somehow, I'll bet a hatful of dollars, and it seems to me he's got into a trap at the same time."

"What sort av thrap?" asked O'Hara.

"Not knowing, can't say," replied Sigsbee. "But there may be some galoots who don't show themselves in the light of day hidin' in that heathen meetin'-house."

"Some of our mysterious enemies may have got ahead of us," said Jim. "They seem to turn up in the most unexpected places. And they'd go for Hal first, the same as they did at Buenos Ayres, knowing him to be the leader of the expedition."

"Well, if he's in there, in a bad kind of fix," replied Sigsbee, "it's up to us to get him out of it."

"You bet!" agreed Jim.

Their plan of action was simple and direct, and therefore likely to be effective. In Buenos Ayres they had purchased a dozen sticks of dynamite "for emergencies," and had brought them along with them, carefully packed. As they could see the temple gates were still closed, and as they knew them to be secured, they decided to utilise one of those sticks of dynamite to open them.

It didn't take them many minutes to fix it, light a fuse, and then draw back out of the way.

The explosion fetched a hundred echoes from the mountain gorges, and the massive gates, eight inches in thickness, were splintered and cracked from top to bottom. But they still hung on their hinges, and one of them swung open a little. They pushed it wide, and entered a small courtyard.

To their right was a small door which gave access to the tower, but they didn't bother about that. They made their way into the main part of the temple, Jim carrying a flaring torch of pinewood, which threw a lurid light on their surroundings.

(There will be another grand instalment of this exciting story in next Monday's issue of THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY. Order your copy in advance.)