

WOULD YOU LIKE A GRAND PICTURE—FREE? THE LAST CHANCE!
(See Page 15.)

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THE SILENT STRIKE!



LODER'S HASTY DEPARTURE FROM THE REMOVE DORMITORY!
(A Remarkable Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)



"MAULEVERER'S MISSION"

is the title of the grand long story of Greyfriars which appears in next Monday's issue of the MAGNET. It describes, in a wonderfully clever way, a series of remarkable hold-ups—not by professional highway robbers, however, though the outrages are carried out with astounding success. The final rounding-up of the lawless band is brought about in a most amazing fashion.

"MAULEVERER'S MISSION"

is a really fine story, which you must not miss. Order your copy of next Monday's MAGNET at once.

THE LONDONER'S HOLIDAY.

Perhaps the Londoner has the best pick. Anyhow, he thinks he has. He can plunge into Epping Forest, and revel in the new tints. If he thinks he has done Epping, he can choose Hainault. But I never yet knew anybody who really understood all the wonderful mysteries of Epping Forest. There is always something fresh to see, and it has its attractions in winter, too, if you care to see them. Rail fares are high, but there are wonder spots close to London which can be reached without referring to the iron road at all, or worrying your head about the absence of the dear old cheap fares and the presence of the extra fifty per cent. which reigns in these days.

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The country is worth a visit in the early spring, though the trees may be still destitute of leaves. Only a short distance from the Marble Arch—if you have a bicycle the journey is nothing—is

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READ A DOZEN TIMES.

That was the case with a story which appeared not so very long ago in one of the Companion Papers. I shall not give particulars, as there might be requests for copies, and there are not any. I rather fancy those that exist are treasured mightily. But a story to be read a dozen times, with possibly a thirteenth looming, must have been good—and the yarn in question was good, for it touched the heart of things. I have many different types of tales in the Companion Papers, and I find they all have the popularity they deserve; but, naturally, here and there a serious story is appreciated, and is not in the very least out of keeping, for there is not the slightest reason why you should not have laughable characters in the background of the saddest or the most moving yarn that was ever written. That is life—the blend, the mixed colouring, the eternal change.

MORE PLEASE!

It is the same old request—more Personal Recollections, and there is a

pleasant compliment underlying the demand. I take it there is really no limit to the possibilities of recollection, because new lights are thrown on various happenings, new interpretations come merrily along, and what had seemed old and of no account blossoms forth into something piquant, valuable, and interesting. The great thing in memory, and acting upon it, is to be resourceful, like the mariner who was not going to be deprived of his rights when shipwreck came.

As will be remembered, the old salt

"Left his body to the sea,

And made a shark his legatee."

Personal Recollections, of course, did not cover all the ground. There is more to follow—or, at least, more that might follow. I should like to trace out the career of each office-boy who ever graced the offices of the Companion Papers with his amiable and resilient presence, to show how one was carried to the most glittering pinnacles of fame, encouraged, as he had been, by a cheery word from Mr. Frank Richards.

There is the fascinating case of the office cat, Melchisedec, who recruited herself, as it were, and signed on for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, renewable at the discretion of either side, feeling, as she did, that even her former job on the staff of a well-furnished fish emporium was inferior to the new situation, wherein she had the privilege of seeing Mr. Martin Clifford come flying out of his thousand-horse-power car and dashing up the stairs to hand in a new yarn. Oh, there is a rare lot that might be set down of these epoch-making details!

Your Editor



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The Silent Strike!

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

BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER!

Billy Bunter Knows.

"I SAY, you chaps——"

Billy Bunter, the fat junior of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, poked his head into Study No. 1 of the Remove Form passage.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were in the study, and with them were Bob Cherry, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur, and Mark Linley.

Bob Cherry's reply to Billy Bunter's short remark was shorter:

"Scat!"

"Oh, really, you fellows——" began Billy Bunter.

"Bunk!"

"Buzz off!"

Billy Bunter looked hurt. He really could not understand why it was that every time he put his head into Study No. 1 he was given directions, in many ways, to depart.

"I've some news for you fellows," he said. "Of course, if you don't want to know that Dr. Locke and old Quelch are going away, I'm sure I'm not going to tell you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to laugh at!" said Billy Bunter indignantly.

He blinked through his spectacles at the laughing chums of the Remove. Billy Bunter was obtuse, to say the least, and he had not yet seen that he had already told Harry Wharton & Co. what he did not mean to tell them unless they asked to be informed.

But the news which Billy Bunter had brought was quite fresh to the juniors. They looked questioningly at the fat junior.

"Come inside, Billy!" said Harry Wharton, with a chuckle.

Billy Bunter opened the door wider—

he had to, in order to get inside the study. Bob Cherry had often remarked that it was a good job that the doors in the Remove passage were wide ones, or Billy Bunter would have had to stop out in the corridors for ever.

Although Billy Bunter was fat, he was not quite so bad as that!

He came into the study at Harry Wharton's invitation, and closed the door behind him. He looked round anxiously, for it was only just past tea-time—but Billy Bunter was hungry.

"Now, what's this about Dr. Locke and Quelch going away?" asked Harry Wharton.

Dr. Locke was the headmaster of Greyfriars, and Mr. Quelch, whom the juniors disrespectfully referred to as "Quelch," was the Remove Form master.

Billy Bunter sat down in a chair before he replied to Wharton's question.

"Just that they're going away, you fellows," he said.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"I suppose that means that you feel too tired to say any more about them?" he asked.

Billy Bunter looked surprised.

"Oh, really, Bob, old man——" began Billy.

"Brrrr! Cut it out!" growled Bob Cherry.

"As a matter of strict fact, I don't feel up to talking," went on Billy Bunter. "You see, I had tea in Hall to-day. I didn't get very much—only bread-and-butter, and some ham, and a few cakes and pastries. The biscuits were too few in number to count, as——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent. "Even that was enough for half a dozen juniors!"

"Oh, really, Nugent!" said Billy plaintively. "You fellows know that I've got a delicate constitution that——"

"Can only be kept up by constant

nourishment!" Bob Cherry finished up for him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I did not know that you knew so much about my state of health. I——"

"My hat! We know more about you, tubby, than all your family put together!" said Mark Linley.

"The knowfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh in his quaint English.

"So if you chaps have a few——" went on Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton's jaw set grimly.

"We haven't!" he said curtly. "If you think you're going to get a feed out of us before you tell us the news, Billy, you're making a big mistake!"

"What-ho!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"The mistakefulness of the esteemed and ludicrous fat chump is terrific!" said Hurree Singh emphatically. "I suggest—fully propose that Bunter be raisefully lifted and bumped upon the floor!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "That's a good idea, Inky!"

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter rose hastily to his feet, and made for the door of the study, but Bob Cherry was there first.

"Not so fast, my fat tulip!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "You really ought to tell us all about it—you've whetted our appetites, so to speak!"

"I—I—I've just remembered an important appointment——" stammered Billy Bunter.

"Crammer!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Oh, really, Bob Cherry!" said Bunter indignantly. "You know perfectly well that I don't tell lies! I think——"

"My hat!"

"Great pip!"

"Billy, you've just told a lie!" said Harry Wharton severely.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"And unless you impart what news you have in two seconds we'll jolly well bump you—and hard, too!"

Billy Bunter looked at the grim faces of the Removites, and grinned sheepishly.

"Of course, I meant to tell you chaps all along," he said lamely. "That's why I came to the study—"

"Crammer!" said Bob Cherry again. "You came to tell us—if we fed that delicate constitution of yours, Billy!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The hear, hearfulness is terrific, my worthy Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Bob Cherry—"

"Those two seconds are rapidly going, Billy!" said Harry Wharton warningly.

"Well, I was passing the Head's study a few minutes ago," said Billy Bunter, "when—when my shoelace—"

"Happened to come undone, I suppose?" said Harry Wharton.

Billy Bunter looked surprised.

"That's quite right, Wharton, though how you could know that beats me!" he said.

"We'll beat you in a minute—"

"Your bootlace always comes undone when you particularly want to know anything that's happening in a study, Billy!" snorted Mark Linley. "One of these days it will be your ear that comes undone!"

"Oh, really, Linley— Put that ruler down, Wharton!" said Billy Bunter hastily.

Harry Wharton balanced the ruler in his hand, and looked suggestively at the Owl of the Remove.

"Go on, Billy! What happened after that bootlace came undone?"

"I heard the Head say that they would have to be going to London to-day," said Billy Bunter, with one eye on the ruler in Wharton's hand. "Old Quelch wanted to know what for. So Dr. Locke said that they were required to sit on a board of examiners, owing—"

"What's he want to sit on a board of examiners for?" asked Bob Cherry in surprise. "Have they been getting into trouble?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Head meant, sit with a crowd of examining johnnies," explained Mark Linley. "When a crowd of learned chumps get together they call them a 'board.'"

"What do they want to call them that for?" asked Bob quickly. "Why don't they call 'em a barrel, or something like that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go on, Billy!"

"Two of the examiners are in America studying educational matters," resumed Billy Bunter. "That's why the Head and Mr. Quelch are wanted. They're going to-day!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Mark Linley. "Who's going to take charge of the school, then?"

"Mr. Hacker!" said Billy Bunter, with a sniff. "Of all the rotten headmasters, old Hacker'll be the rottenest!"

"Oh, my stars!"

The juniors looked at one another in dismay.

Mr. Hacker was not popular with the juniors at Greyfriars. He was master of the Shell, and believed in ruling the fellows at Greyfriars with a firm hand, not to say a rod of iron.

"Hacker as Head!" groaned Harry Wharton, sinking limply into his chair. "Oh, my hat! Then, I suppose, Capper will come in as second-in-command?"

"Yes."

"The rottenfulness of the esteemed

position is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "The workfulness during the absence of the revered and ludicrous Dr. Locke will also be terrific!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Bob Cherry turned to Billy Bunter.

"Are you sure, Billy?"

"Positive!" said Billy Bunter.

"You know what that means?" said Mark Linley grimly. "You'll be limited to twelve meals a day, Billy!"

"Oh, really, Linley!" said Billy Bunter. "I'm sure Mr. Hacker will increase the number of meals we have. Old Locke—"

"Eh?"

The juniors looked grim at once. The headmaster of Greyfriars was very popular amongst the juniors, and he was probably the only master at Greyfriars whom the juniors would not speak of in a disrespectful manner.

Billy Bunter corrected himself hastily.

"Dr. Locke, I mean," he said. "Dr. Locke always said that three meals a day were enough for any junior—"

"He's quite right, too!" snapped Harry Wharton. "But you're not an ordinary junior, Billy! You're a fat, gormandising little toad!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"And a prying worm!" added Bob Cherry.

"A silly ass is a mild way of describing you, Billy!" said Mark Linley.

"The assfulness of the unworthy Bunter is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"If Hacker stops any meals here I'll jolly well go and tick him off!" said Billy Bunter warmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We can see you doing that!"

"I shall!"

Billy Bunter was too thick-skinned to take any notice of the disparaging remarks of the juniors. He was far more concerned with the suggestion that Mr. Hacker might possibly reduce the number of meals at Greyfriars.

"If that beast Hacker thinks he's going to rule the giddy roost in the absence of the Head he's jolly well mistaken!" said Billy Bunter hotly. "We can stand lines, but when it comes to stopping our grub—"

"Billy Bunter can't stand that!" interposed Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Not me—I mean, us!" said Billy Bunter. "Of course, I shall tick him off for the benefit of the fellows generally, and—"

"He'll cane you for the benefit of the others!" said Harry Wharton, with a chuckle. "No, Billy, my fat tulip, if old Hacker does really take charge of the school, and stops the grub—well, he'll jolly well do it!"

"I sha'n't stand it!" roared Billy Bunter excitedly. "Look here, you fellows! You back me up, and—"

"Rats!" snorted Bob Cherry. "We'll jolly well kick you out! I've had enough of William George Bunter for one day! Seat, Billy!"

"Oh, really, Bob Cherry—"

"Scoot!"

Billy Bunter, after one glance at the grim faces of the Removites, scooted.

When he had gone—doubtless to spread the news round the whole of the studies—Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another in dismay.

"I suppose it's right?" said Harry Wharton doubtfully.

Mark Linley nodded.

"When Billy Bunter gets his ear to the keyhole he makes no mistake," he said. "If you ask me, Wharton, it's too jolly true!"

"Oh dear!"

"There'll be trouble!" said Bob Cherry

hotly. "You mark my words, you chaps, there'll be trouble!"

"Oh, rot, Bob!" said Harry Wharton. "Hacker is a beast of the first water, but he won't interfere with us!"

"You'll see!" said Bob Cherry grimly. "Come on, Marky!"

Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh left Study No. 1 to proceed to their own study, leaving Harry Wharton shaking his head doubtfully.

"I don't think Bob will prove right, Franky," he said slowly.

Frank Nugent shrugged his shoulders.

"We'll see!" he said.

And there the matter ended.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mr. Hacker—Headmaster!

"ROT!"

"Piffle!"

Billy Bunter shrugged his shoulders. He had proceeded straight to the Remove Common-room after leaving Harry Wharton's study, and had there broken the news of the going away of Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch.

But the Removites refused to believe it.

"Hacker as headmaster!" growled Bulstrode, the burly bully of the Form. "You're talking out of the back of your napper, you fat ass!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode!" said Billy Bunter indignantly. "You'll jolly well see for yourself before many hours are over!"

It was not a question of hours before Billy Bunter's news was confirmed. It was barely five minutes.

The assembly bell rang suddenly, and the juniors stared at one another.

"Can it be true?" demanded Micky Desmond.

"My hat! Don't say Bunter has told the truth for once!" sneered Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rats!" said Billy Bunter angrily. "You're only jealous because I happen to be in the know, Skinner!"

"In the know!" echoed Skinner. "My hat! If you hadn't such a beastly long ear for keyholes—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter snorted, and walked out of the Common-room before the rest of the juniors fully realised that the ringing of the bell was for the express purpose of summoning the whole school to the Big Hall.

But the incessant ringing of the great bell forced them to realise that something was going to happen. The bell was seldom rung for anything but of an important nature.

The juniors trooped out of the Common-room, and made their way to the Big Hall.

The seniors were already assembled. Harry Wharton & Co. took up their places, and waited for the Head to put in an appearance.

Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, was upon the raised dais at the end of the Hall, keeping a watchful eye on the juniors as they assembled.

His face bore a serious expression—a very serious expression.

"Old Wingate knows!" said Billy Bunter to Harry Wharton, who was standing by his side. "Look at his giddy face!"

Harry Wharton nodded, but did not speak.

"Look!" said Billy Bunter again. "Look at that beast Loder! He's as pleased as punch!"

Harry Wharton peered down the Hall towards the spot where the prefects were



"It's all right, Wun Lung!" said Harry Wharton, hastily. "Loder's captain for a few days only. Come with us, old chap!" "No Savvy!" said Wun Lung. "Me goee see Lodel!" Bob Cherry took a tight grasp of the Chinese junior's pigtail. (See Chapter 4.)

standing. Gerald Loder was there, a smile on his lips.

"He might know nothing about it!" snapped Harry Wharton. "Shut up, Billy!"

"Silence, please!" exclaimed Wingate. "The Head won't keep you waiting long!"

Dr. Locke put in an appearance at that moment, and with him was Mr. Quelch, master of the Remove Form.

The Head proceeded at once to the point.

"Boys!" he said sharply. "Mr. Quelch and myself have been called to London on important business. I am leaving Mr. Hacker in charge of Greyfriars—"

"Oh!"

It was a gasp of dismay that broke from the assembled school.

Mr. Hacker will take my place as head-master of Greyfriars," resumed the Head, with a frown. "I want it to be distinctly understood, by juniors and seniors, that Mr. Hacker has my full authority to do as he thinks right in any matter that may arise. And I rely upon all Greyfriars—the juniors especially—to see that no extra work is forced upon Mr. Hacker.

"If anybody thinks that because I am away he can behave in a manner forbidden in the rules and regulations of the

school, let me tell him that I shall deal very firmly indeed with all delinquents on my return. But I firmly believe that such a warning is entirely unnecessary."

"My hat!"

Billy Bunter's voice could be distinctly heard, and there was a slight chuckle from the rest of the juniors.

But the Head affected not to hear it, and after a few more words of advice he left the dais. Mr. Quelch paused a fraction of a second to glance sternly at Bunter, then he followed the Head.

The school was dismissed as soon as the Head had disappeared, and the fellows immediately broke up into groups to discuss the astonishing news.

But there was not a single junior who did not look upon the position with dismay. Mr. Hacker was a beast, as Bob Cherry said, and he was not even a just beast.

Bob Cherry had not repeated his opinion that there would be trouble. But he had not forgotten it.

His face was unusually solemn as he returned to Study No. 1 with Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"So Bunter was right!" said Harry Wharton, when the door was closed. "But I thought it unnecessary for the Head—"

"Which one?" asked Frank Nugent, with a chuckle.

"Dr. Locke, ass!" said Harry Wharton hastily. "I don't think there are many fellows who'll play the giddy goat because the cat's away—I mean, because Dr. Locke's going away!"

"Bet you my best footer-boots to your old pen-nib that Loder does!" said Bob Cherry promptly. "The rotter will be down at the Cross Keys every giddy night—"

"And might get caught!" said Harry Wharton. "Then the chopper would come down with a biff when Dr. Locke got back!"

"The downfulness of the esteemed chopper would be terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh.

Ten minutes later Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch departed to catch the night train to London. The juniors crowded round the gates to see them off.

"Good-bye, sir!" roared Harry Wharton & Co.

"Good-bye, my boys!" replied the Head kindly. "Good-bye!"

"Hurrah!"

The cab drove off to the accompaniment of many rounds of cheers, and Dr. Locke turned to Mr. Quelch with a smile.

"I think everything will be all right!" he said.

"I hope so, sir!" answered the Remove Form master grimly.

The Head opened his mouth as if to speak. But he closed it again, and stared thoughtfully out of the window.

Mr. Hacker, he knew, was not a popular master. It was a pity that Mr. Quelch could not have stayed to take charge of the school.

But even Dr. Locke did not know Mr. Hacker as Mr. Quelch did.

And Mr. Quelch was obviously doubtful of what would be the outcome of the change.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Hacker started making use of his increased authority long before Mr. Quelch thought—or perhaps feared—would be the case.

And had the two masters proceeding towards London heard the conversation that was held between Mr. Hacker and Mr. Capper, the master of the Upper Fourth, it was quite within the bounds of possibility that Dr. Locke would have returned forthwith to Greyfriars.

But they did not hear the conversation, and the masters continued their journey.

Mr. Hacker had taken possession of the Head's study almost before Dr. Locke was out of sight of the school; and within ten minutes of taking up his new quarters Mr. Hacker rang the bell and summoned Mr. Capper.

The Upper Fourth Form master appeared in a very few minutes.

"Ah, Capper!" said Mr. Hacker. "You are aware, of course, that I am temporary headmaster of Greyfriars?"

"I am!" said Mr. Capper shortly.

Mr. Hacker frowned. He had expected to be addressed in a more respectful manner. He was now in position that commanded respect even from masters.

"I have long considered, Mr. Capper," went on the new Head, "that Dr. Locke has been woefully ignorant of the correct way in which to run Greyfriars—"

"Indeed!" said Mr. Capper. "As a matter of fact, I have certain ideas on the subject myself!"

"Splendid! I hope they coincide with mine, my dear Capper!" said Mr. Hacker cordially. "For instance, this half-holiday business on a Wednesday is ridiculous!"

"Exactly!" said Mr. Capper eagerly.

"I propose stopping it!" said Mr. Hacker firmly. "That will be the first alteration in the school routine. The

juniors, especially, must not be allowed to miss work on Wednesday afternoons. I shall proceed to post a notice to that effect, Mr. Capper."

"Splendid!"

"Then the half-day work on Saturday must still remain in force!" resumed Mr. Hacker. "Another matter that has long needed alteration is the closing of the school tuckshop. It encourages the juniors to overeat, and to eat between meals. That is a most disastrous proceeding. It must inevitably lead to ill-health!"

"That is another thing which strongly recommends itself to me, Mr. Hacker!" said the Upper Fourth master complacently. "I think some recompense can be made to Mrs. Mumble!"

"Certainly!" assented Mr. Hacker. "Although I consider it quite possible that she has been profiteering to a great extent, and made quite a small fortune out of the bad habits of the juniors."

"That also strikes me as being quite possible!" said Mr. Capper. "However, the point I must raise is this. What will Dr. Locke say when he returns?"

Mr. Hacker's eyes gleamed.

"It is my firm belief, sir, that Dr. Locke is afraid to make these alterations."

"Afraid? I cannot—"

"'Afraid' is the word I used, Mr. Capper. I mean it, too. When Dr. Locke returns and finds the new routine working splendidly, I am sure that both you and I will be the recipients of warm congratulations."

"M'yes! But—"

"Mr. Quelch, unfortunately, is too easy-going with the juniors. That fat junior Bunter is a glaring example of the evils of the school tuckshop. He should be made to do more exercise and to eat far less. He would then doubtless be of some good in the school."

"I agree with you there. But—but—how do you think the juniors will take the new rules you propose, Mr. Hacker?"

Mr. Hacker frowned, and almost involuntarily clenched his hands.

"The time has not yet arrived, Mr. Capper, when juniors at a public school may be allowed to say how their school should be run!" he said half angrily. "I shall enforce the rules I propose making, and hope, Mr. Capper, that I can count upon your support!"

"Indeed you can, Mr. Hacker," said

the Upper Fourth master firmly. "It is my duty to support you in anything you think is right!"

Mr. Hacker did not quite like that. He would rather Mr. Capper had stated his willingness to support him purely on account of his belief in the proposed new routine being the right one.

"Thank you, Mr. Capper!" he said. "That is all, I think, for to-night."

Mr. Capper nodded, and left the study. Mr. Hacker, after a moment's thought, left his chair, and went to the Head's typewriter, then he proceeded to draw up the notices referring to the changing of the school routine.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Consternation!

"HAVE you seen it?"

Bob Cherry burst into Study No. 1 in the Remove passage immediately after breakfast the morning following the departure of Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch for London.

The junior's face was flaming, and Harry Wharton could read wrath, consternation, and incredulity in the fast-changing expression of the Removite's face.

"Have I seen what?" asked Harry Wharton quickly.

"The—the—the notice!" gasped Bob Cherry. "My stars! My hat! My only aunt!"

Harry Wharton grinned.

"Calm yourself down a bit, Bob," he said quietly. "I'm blessed if I know what you're talking about!"

"Nor I," said Frank Nugent, with a grin.

Before Bob Cherry could reply, Hurree Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur, dashed into the study.

He did not see Bob Cherry, with the result that he collided violently with the junior. They went to the floor with a bump.

"Ow!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yow! The hurtfulness of my worthy self is only greater than the sorrowfulness of my esteemed heart!" said Hurree Singh quickly.

He helped Bob Cherry to his feet as he rose himself. The dusky junior's eyes were gleaming with anger.

"What did you do that for?" demanded Bob Cherry wrathfully.

"The sorrowfulness is terrific, my esteemed chum!" purred Hurree Singh. "But I wishfully desire to know if you have seenfully observed the esteemed and ridiculous notice on the board?"

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Seen it!" he snapped. "I should think I have!"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent glanced at one another.

"What giddy notice are you fatheads talking about?" asked Nugent warmly. "You come bouncing into our study—Oh, my hat, here's another of them!"

There was the sound of rapid footsteps, and Billy Bunter burst into the study. His face was almost white, and his spectacles were at an angle which made it impossible for the short-sighted junior to see through them.

"H-h-have you seen it?" he panted. "My hat! Have you?"

"Oh, you asses!" roared Harry Wharton. "Have we seen what, you thundering chumps?"

"The—the—the notice!" almost shrieked Billy Bunter. "The tuckshop is closed!"

"What?"

"Closed for what?"

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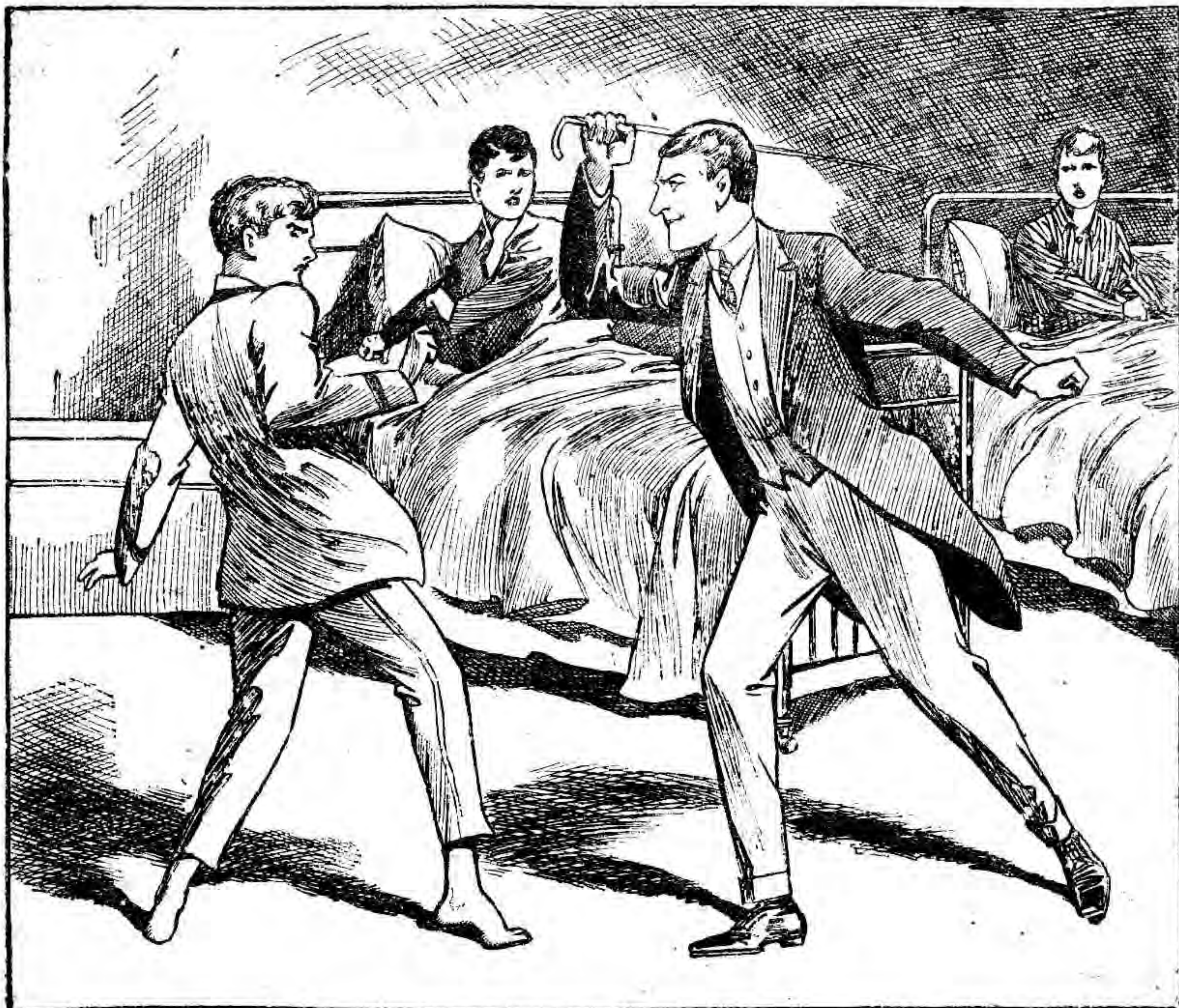
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Loder suddenly raised his cane, and brought it down with all his strength on Bob Cherry's shoulders. The Removite staggered back, and gasped with pain. Only his pyjama jacket covered his shoulders, and the cane almost cut through it. "Ow!" gasped Bob Cherry, and a sudden fierce anger swept over him. (See Chapter 5.)

"Closed for good!" said Billy Bunter frantically. "Hacker—the beast!—he's closed it for the good of the health of the Greyfriars pupils! Oh, my giddy aunt!"

Harry Wharton stared in amazement at the fat junior, and from him to Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh.

"Look here, Bob," he said, as calmly as he could, "will you explain what all this means?"

"Blessed if I know!" snorted Bob Cherry. "Here, come along to the school notice-board and see for yourself!"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent left the study without another word. They had not as yet grasped the meaning of the notice referred to by their chums.

There was a crowd round the notice-board—a crowd of juniors, and some of the remarks that were passed helped Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent towards realisation of the notice's import.

"Closed the giddy tuckshop, has he?"

"Hacker's a beast!"

"Not good for us!"

"My hat! The rotter!"

"Gangway!" roared Harry Wharton.

He forced his way through the crowd of juniors, using his elbows for the purpose.

It took him some time, however, before he could get near enough to read the notice pinned to the board.

He read it aloud:

"NOTICE!"

"Having duly considered the matter, I have come to the conclusion that the school tuckshop is entirely unnecessary. It encourages overfeeding, and is not good for the health of the pupils at Greyfriars. I have therefore decided that the shop shall be closed forthwith, and no supplies of food can, therefore, be purchased.

"(Signed) M. HACKER,
"Temp. Headmaster."

"M-m-m-my hat!" stammered Harry Wharton. "What does the beast think he's up to?"

"Blessed if I know!" snorted Bob Cherry. "It's the giddy limit!"

"The beast!"

"The cad!"

"The rotter!"

George Bulstrode forced his way through the juniors until he was by Wharton's side. The burly junior's eyes were flaming angrily.

"What are you going to do about it?" he demanded fiercely.

Harry Wharton looked surprised.

"Do about it?" he repeated. "What the dickens can I do?"

"You're captain of the Remove, aren't you?"

"Well?"

"Then it's up to you to go and tell old Hacker that he's talking, or writing, out of the back of his neck!"

"Hear, hear!"

Wharton grinned.

"Yes, I can see myself doing that!" he said lightly.

Billy Bunter's voice rose above the crowd.

"You jolly well ought to!" he shouted. "I'm blessed if I want to die of starvation!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You don't keep the tuckshop going, Billy!" growled Wharton.

"Yes, he does—on somebody else's money!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Desmond! I——"

Harry Wharton interrupted the fat junior.

"Shut up, Billy! Look here, you fellows," he said, "it's not a bit of good kicking. After all, you can get what tuck you want from the village."

Bulstrode glared.

"Who wants to go down to the village on a wet day?" he demanded. "I say that you, as captain of the Remove,

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should jolly well go and talk like a Dutch uncle to Hacker!"

"And I say that you, as an ass, should go and eat coke!" said Harry Wharton tartly. "That's that!"

Some of the juniors agreed with Wharton, but some did not. It was obviously impossible for Harry Wharton to go to the new headmaster's study and tell him that the juniors considered he was talking out of the back of his neck.

It was also impossible to think that Wharton could inform Mr. Hacker that the order just posted on the board was strongly resented by the juniors.

But there was worse to come.

"Make way!"

The juniors turned quickly, to see Mr. Hacker, with another notice in his hand, forcing his way through the crowd.

A pathway was made, and the new Head walked quickly to the notice-board, and pinned the paper in his hand beside the one already there.

He left it there, without so much as a glance towards the juniors.

"What is it?"

"Read it out!"

"Get your fat head out of the way, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton struggled hard to prevent himself from being jammed against the wall as the juniors crowded round to see the latest notice.

"Stand back, and I'll read it out!" shouted Wharton.

After a moment the juniors stood back, and Wharton read the notice out:

"NOTICE!

"In future there will be no half-holiday on Wednesdays, as that involves an unnecessary waste of time. The time usually devoted to that holiday shall henceforth be devoted to geography and history.

"(Signed) M. HACKER,

"Temp. Headmaster."

Immediately there was a gasp of dismay from the juniors.

"Oh!"

"My hat!"

"The—the blessed tyrant!"

"Rats!"

Harry Wharton's heart beat quickly. The juniors were no longer resentful—they were thoroughly angry.

"Look here, you chaps!" said Wharton quickly.

"Rats! Bosh! A meeting!"

"That's it! A meeting! In the Common-room!"

The juniors, wildly excited, rushed for the Common-room. But Harry Wharton and Nugent, with Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, followed more slowly.

"This is getting stiff, Harry!" said Bob Cherry quietly.

Wharton nodded.

"There'll be trouble!" he said grimly.

"I can't keep the whole giddy Form under control on occasions such as this!"

"I said there would be trouble!" said Bob Cherry. "Didn't I?"

"You did, Bob!"

"The saidfulness was terrific, my worthy chum!" said Hurree Singh quietly.

When Harry Wharton & Co. reached the Common-room the juniors had already settled down. Bulstrode, on a chair, was addressing them.

"Gentlemen——"

"Hurrah!"

"The beast Hacker has shut the blessed tuckshop——"

"Oooooh!"

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"He's stopped our giddy half-holiday on Wednesdays——"

"Rotten! Oooooh!"

"What are we going to do about it?"

That was a point which no Removeite had as yet carefully thought out. The order as to the closing of the tuckshop would doubtless be carried out, and the juniors could not break into the shop.

The half-holiday on Wednesday was another matter. The juniors could refuse to go into lessons—in other words, they could openly rebel against the new headmaster.

But no junior cared to suggest that. Even Bulstrode, as spokesman of the Form, would not suggest that. It was too serious a matter.

"A round robin of protest!" said Desmond.

"Wouldn't do any good!" said Bulstrode. "Not unless there was a threat in it!"

"That's the ticket, Bulstrode," said Billy Bunter, excitedly, rising to his feet. "Tell him that we'll jolly well boil him in oil if he doesn't cancel the order about the tuckshop!"

"You never buy anything there, so the order doesn't affect you, Bunter!" said Bulstrode contemptuously. "As far as that goes, it means a saving, because you can't pinch any grub, and we sha'n't have to buy any more to replace what you have pinched!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode——"

"Brrrrr! Sit down!"

"But—— Ow!"

Billy Bunter sat down hurriedly. Micky Desmond had pulled him down to the seat with no little force, and Billy Bunter had slipped to the floor.

"Yow! My collar-bone's busted."

"We'll bust you altogether if you don't shut up!" said Bulstrode fiercely.

And Billy Bunter, knowing full well that the juniors would literally wipe the floor with him if he did not do as he was told, picked himself up, blinked indignantly around, and sat down again.

"Now, what are we going to do?" demanded Bulstrode. "As we have such a rotten captain——"

"Look here——" began Wharton hotly.

"We can't expect him to help us!" went on Bulstrode, unheeding the interruption. "We shall have to decide to do something amongst ourselves, that's certain!"

Harry Wharton bit his lips hard for a moment. Then he took a chair, and placed it opposite Bulstrode.

"Chaps——" he exclaimed quietly.

"Hurrah!"

"Now, what about it, Wharton?"

"Chaps, at present we can do nothing. We must wait and see what the seniors do——"

"Rats!"

"Rot!"

"If you like, I'll go and see Wingate, and see what he has to suggest!" went on Wharton calmly. "That, to my way of thinking, is the best plan."

The juniors hesitated. They saw that Wharton was right. Much depended on what the seniors were going to do about the new orders—if they were going to do anything at all.

Skinner, the cad of the Form, rose to his feet.

"I suppose you'll bow your napper if Wingate says we're not to kick—— Ow!"

Skinner broke off with a yell. Somebody had kicked him from behind. He swung round angrily—to face Bob Cherry.

"Nobody said we weren't to kick, Skinner!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"I've proved that I've plenty of kick left in me. Want some more proof?"

"Yow! No!"

"Then shut up ragging the giddy chairman!" said Bob Cherry warmly. "Anybody else want to interrupt?"

Nobody wanted to. Bob Cherry was the fighting-man of the Remove, and even George Bulstrode was not anxious to feel the weight of his fists.

"Then the best thing to do is to let Wharton go and see Wingate!" said Bob Cherry. "I'll go with him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific!"

With that suggestion, the juniors eventually agreed, and the fact that there was something being done about the matter was sufficient to quieten them down.

Bulstrode was not anxious for the matter to be taken out of his hands, but he inwardly realised that Harry Wharton & Co. would receive a more cordial welcome from Wingate than he would himself.

And Harry Wharton & Co., looking very grim and determined, made their way to Wingate's study.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Wingate is Sorry, but——

"COME in!"

George Wingate, captain of Greyfriars, called out sharply as there came a knock at his study door. The genial captain was looking perturbed and anxious.

The door opened, and Harry Wharton walked into the study, closely followed by Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Bob Cherry. Hurree Singh came in as Wharton was closing the door.

Wingate looked at them.

"A row?" he asked laconically.

"No; but there jolly soon will be, Wingate!" said Wharton.

Wingate nodded.

"I'm expecting it!" he said quietly.

"Mr. Hacker is asking for it!"

"What-ho!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Do you think, Wingate, that if I was to ask the beast—ahem!—Mr. Hacker to come into the gym and have the gloves on for a couple of minutes he——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't think he would, Cherry," said Wingate, with a smile. "He'd probably ask you to go into the Head's study and have a few rounds with a cane!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shouldn't mind," grinned Bob Cherry, "if the beast would let me have a cane, too!"

"You'd probably get all you wanted, Cherry!" said Wingate significantly. "However, that's getting away from the subject. I suppose you didn't want me to ask Hacker to go into the gym with you?"

"Rather not!" said Bob Cherry. "The fact is——"

"Yes, the fact is, Wingate——"

"The factfulness, my esteemed Wingate——"

Wingate waved his hand.

"One of you speak, please," he said. "It's rather difficult to understand half a dozen kids speaking at the same time. Go ahead, Wharton!"

"Well, the long and short of it is, Wingate," said Harry Wharton slowly, "what are you seniors going to do about it?"

Wingate frowned.

"As a matter of fact, in strict confidence, I'd like to lick him!" he said

frankly. "But you mustn't tell the other juniors that."

"No; honour bright!" said the juniors together.

"I'm sorry, but I can't get the tuckshop opened for you," went on Wingate. "You see, Mr. Hacker has given his orders direct to Mrs. Mimble. She wouldn't take any further orders from me."

"My hat! That's not the worst of it, Wingate!" said Harry Wharton quickly. "You've seen the second notice, haven't you?"

"What notice?"

Wingate looked surprised as he asked that question. He evidently had not, as Wharton supposed, seen the notice which Mr. Hacker had placed on the board long before the resentment at the first had subsided.

"Why, the order cancelling the half on Wednesdays!" said Bob Cherry quickly. "That's a jolly sight worse than closing the tuckshop—"

"My hat!" exclaimed Wingate. "You're not going to tell me that the half is cancelled?"

"We are, we have!" said Harry Wharton with emphasis.

Wingate stared at the juniors in amazement.

"You're not pulling my leg, I suppose?" he asked suspiciously.

The juniors looked shocked, as if the mere idea was too much for them.

"Oh, Wingate!"

"Asses!" said Wingate, with a chuckle. "Anybody would think you were incapable of pulling my leg, you young beggars! However, it's a fact Mr. Hacker has cancelled the half?"

"He has!" said the juniors.

Wingate frowned and bit his lips. "I think I'll go and see Mr. Hacker," he said quietly. "The silly ass—ahem!—I mean, he might be making a mistake."

"You'll let us know what he says?" asked Wharton.

"More or less, yes!" answered Wingate. "Buzz off, kids, and try and keep the firebrand spirits down!"

"M'yes. But it wants some doing!" said Bob Cherry.

The juniors left the captain's study. But they did not see how Mr. Hacker could have made a mistake.

The Removites were waiting for them in the Common-room, and as soon as they entered there broke out a hail of questions.

Harry Wharton held up his hand as he mounted a chair, but it was some moments before he could obtain silence. It was only when the Removites saw that Harry Wharton was not going to open his lips until there was silence that the noise ceased.

"I've seen Wingate," said Harry Wharton quietly. "He's sorry, but he can't—"

"What I told you!" sneered Skinner.

"Rats! Biff him if he opens that trap of his again, Bob!" said Wharton tersely.

"What-ho!"

Skinner, needless to say, did not speak again.

"Wingate's sorry, but he can't do anything yet," went on Wharton. "In fact, we had the pleasure—or, rather, unpleasant duty—of informing him that the half was cancelled. He did not know—"

"My hat! He must be blind!" said Bulstrode.

"More rats!" snapped Wharton. "However, he's gone to see Mr. Hacker now, and is going to let us know what happens."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Wingate!"

"Wingate's the boy for us!"

Those, and many other remarks of a similar nature, were passed when Wharton finished. The juniors were temporarily satisfied, and Harry Wharton & Co. repaired to Study No. 1 to await news from Wingate.

At the precise moment that they were entering their study Wingate was knocking upon the door of the Head's study.

"Come in!"

Wingate could not help noticing the difference in tone now that Mr. Hacker occupied the Head's chair. Dr. Locke was always courteous and kind when inviting his visitor in, but Mr. Hacker's tones could not be designated as either courteous or kind.

Wingate walked in and shut the door. Mr. Hacker glanced up and frowned.

"I'm rather busy, Wingate!" he said

No. 55.—RICHARD RAKE.



Commonly known as "Dick." Has a great deal of fun in him, and plenty of pluck and resolution. At one time inclined to kick against the Famous Five, but was never their real enemy, for it is not in him to be mean or spiteful. A thoroughly good all-round sportsman, and especially smart with his fists. (Study No. 6.)

quickly. "Please hurry with what you have to say."

Wingate flushed. As captain of the school he was entitled to a certain amount of respect even from a master.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you, sir," said Wingate curtly, "but I have rather a difficult question to ask you."

Mr. Hacker lifted his brows.

"Ask me, Wingate?" he exclaimed. "Indeed!"

"Yes, sir," said Wingate coldly. "I want to know, sir, if you consider that you are doing as the Head would wish in—"

"I am Head at present, Wingate!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "And I strongly object to a pupil asking questions of that nature. You will please go!"

Wingate did not move. His eyes gleamed angrily, but he kept cool.

"You'll excuse me, sir, but you'll understand, of course, that I am partly responsible for the behaviour of the juniors. I have the honour of being

captain of the school, sir, and in that capacity I desire to speak to you."

"I fail to see that your position gives you the right to speak to me like this, Wingate!" said Mr. Hacker angrily. "I am at present headmaster of Greyfriars, and shall do as I think fit, not as the captain of the school thinks!"

Wingate flushed.

"Then I have no option but to resign my position, sir, until Dr. Locke returns. I cannot associate myself with the orders you have drawn up—"

"Would you have said the same if Dr. Locke had issued the orders?"

"Dr. Locke would not have done so, sir!" said Wingate flatly. "The tuckshop has as much importance in the eyes of the school as the gymnasium!"

Mr. Hacker flushed with anger.

"Very well, Wingate!" he said hotly. "I accept your resignation, and shall appoint Loder in your place—"

"You can only do so temporarily, sir!" flashed Wingate. "The captaincy is given to a senior by virtue of the majority of votes from the whole school! In the meantime, I am content to give way to Loder!"

Wingate could have added that Gerald Loder was a far more suitable captain to work with the new Head. Loder was a cad of the first water, and should suit Mr. Hacker.

But Wingate did not stop to say any more. He walked out of the study, and closed the door quietly behind him. Mr. Hacker wanted Wingate to slam the door. It would give him an excuse to lecture him.

Wingate proceeded straight to Study No. 1 and knocked at the door.

"Come in, fathead!" said Bob Cherry.

Wingate walked in, and Bob Cherry gasped.

"S-s-sorry, old man!" he stuttered. "I didn't know it was you."

"You should be more careful," said Wingate coldly. "It might have been the Head instead of myself."

"Then I shouldn't have withdrawn my remark!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Hacker's a fathead every day!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate smiled.

"Look here, you chaps," he said. "I tried to reason with Mr. Hacker on the grounds that I was afraid he was not sure that the Head would approve of the alterations he had made in the school routine—"

"My hat! That's the stuff to give 'em!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"The stuffiness is of the rightful order!" added Hurree Singh.

"Shut up!" growled Wingate. "Anyhow, I got choked off, as you kids would put it. And Loder's captain of Greyfriars!"

Wingate went out and closed the door without saying more.

But he had said enough. The juniors stood speechless under this new blow. Loder, captain of Greyfriars!

"M-m-my hat!" stammered Bob Cherry at last. "M-m-my stars!"

"Gee-whiz!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"L-L-Loder captain!" stuttered Frank Nugent.

Hurree Singh was apparently still beyond speech. He stared in amazement at his chums without opening his lips.

Bob Cherry's eyes flashed suddenly.

"That's the limit!" he said fiercely. "Wingate's kicked out of the place we put him! My hat! I'm going to tell the fellows!"

Even Harry Wharton was thoroughly disgusted with the latest news. Wingate was probably the most popular fellow at Greyfriars.

He went with Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh; Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent followed.

They met Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, in the passage.

"Chelly!" he said, his little slant-eyes gleaming with hate. "Chelly!"

Bob Cherry stopped.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he cried. "What's the matter with you?"

"Is Lodel captain?" asked Wun Lung quietly.

It was wonderful how coolly Wun Lung could speak when he was literally bursting with rage. His eyes contained an expression of hatred that was unpleasant to see, but he was quite calm as he spoke.

"Yes—the rotter!" snapped Bob Cherry. "Why?"

"He kickee me," said Wun Lung quietly. "He say me no standee in captain's way. He kickee hard—Wun Lung velly angly!"

Bob Cherry started. Wun Lung was dangerous when he was in a mood like the present. The Chinese junior did not understand the laws of England, and was apt to think of the most shocking crimes as being quite in order.

"It's all right, Wun Lung!" said Harry Wharton hastily. "Loder's captain for a few days only. Come with us, old chap!"

"No savvy!" said Wun Lung. "Me go see Lodel!"

Bob Cherry took a tight grasp of the Chinese junior's pigtail.

"You hurtee, Bob Chelly!" said Wun Lung calmly. "You velly much hurtee poor Chineel! Lettee go!"

"When you come with us quietly!" said Bob Cherry firmly. "We don't want any dead Loders knocking about Greyfriars!"

"Me no savvy—"

"Kim on!"

Wun Lung had no choice about the matter. He was dragged to the Common-room, where a crowd of juniors was gathered.

"What is it?" demanded a score of voices instantly.

Harry Wharton got up to speak, whilst Bob Cherry kept a firm grip on Wun Lung's pigtail.

"Gentlemen!" said Harry Wharton quickly. "Loder—the rotter of rotters—the beast of beasts—the toad of toads—"

"The Bunter of Bunters—" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you chaps—"

"Loder!" went on Harry Wharton firmly. "The rotter has been made captain in Wingate's place by the new Head!"

"What!"

"It's a fact!" shouted Bob Cherry angrily. "Old Wingate—the best of the bestest—he's kicked out of the captaincy! Loder is captain of Greyfriars!"

"Oh!"

An excited babel of voices broke out. It was really a pity that Loder was not there to hear the things the Removites said about him. Cad though he was, they would have made him squirm.

The resentment of the juniors grew at the news which Harry Wharton had given them, and it was a very ugly Remove that went up to the dormitory that night.

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THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Momentous Decision!

"SHUT up!"

Loder poked his head into the Remove dormitory not more than five minutes after the juniors had retired to bed. The light was still burning, and Loder had evidently come to put them out.

From the far end of the dormitory, in tones that were obviously disguised, came the reply to Loder's impolite order:

"Rats to you, Loder!"

Loder came into the dormitory, his face red with anger.

"Look here, you rotters!" he said, with a sneer. "I'm captain of Greyfriars—"

"Only until the Head comes back!" retorted Harry Wharton fiercely.

Loder sneered.

"When the Head comes back he'll find there have been several rules altered!" he said. "One of them will be to the effect that future captains will be nominated by the Head—not by the fellows!"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry hotly. "That's a right that comes down to the fellows since Greyfriars was built! Ask old Quelchy—he's the giddy historian!"

Loder shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm not going to argue!" he said. "But if there's any noise in this dormitory I shall return with a cane! Understand that?"

From the far end of the dormitory came the reply:

"You'll go out on your neck if you come back here!"

Loder glared down the dormitory, but he could not see who it was that spoke. There was a chuckle from the juniors, and Loder turned upon his heel, turned out the lights, and left the dormitory, slamming the door behind him.

"Nice fellow to be captain of Greyfriars!" said Bob Cherry.

"The rottenfulness of the unworthy and ludicrous Loder is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh quietly. "If the chumpful ass was in my native home the chainfulness of the rotter would also be terrific!"

"Pity this is not India, then!" growled Johnny Bull.

The conversation was kept up for some time, until the juniors began to grow sleepy. One by one they dropped off to sleep, until there were only three juniors awake.

One of them was Harry Wharton. The captain of the Remove was feeling anxious. He could not say where the present trouble was going to stop. As captain of the Remove, too, a certain amount of responsibility fell upon his shoulders.

But he realised how impossible it would be for him to control the Remove if they broke loose—into open revolt. He would be backed up by his chums, but even such a powerful backing as that would be insufficient.

The second junior who was still awake was Bob Cherry. The fighting-man of the Remove was bitterly angry. He resented the fact that Wingate, the idol of the juniors, had been deposed from the captaincy, and a fellow of Loder's calibre installed in his stead.

The third junior who had not dropped off to sleep was Wun Lung, the Chinese. And it was perhaps very fortunate for Loder and Wun Lung that the other two juniors were awake.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry lifted their heads from the pillows as they heard a soft footfall on the floor of the dormitory.

"Who's that?" asked Bob Cherry sharply.

There was no answer.

"Who's that?" demanded Harry Wharton.

Still there was no answer.

Harry Wharton saw a dim figure pass the foot of his bed. He leapt out in a moment and sprang upon the figure.

"Got you, you rotter!" he said. "I suppose it's Skinner!"

"We'll jolly soon see!" said Bob Cherry grimly. "Hang on to him, Harry!"

Bob Cherry jumped out of his bed and turned on the light.

It was not Skinner whom Wharton held in his grasp. It was Wun Lung.

The Chinese junior's expression was perfectly stolid and emotionless.

"What are you up to, Wun Lung?" asked Harry Wharton sharply.

"Me no savvy!" said Wun Lung quietly.

"Bump him!" snorted Bob Cherry. "That's the only way to make the heathen savvy!"

Wun Lung looked alarmed.

"No bumpee!" he said hastily. "You velly good chappees. No bumpee poor Chineel!"

"We'll cut your blessed pigtail off if you don't tell us where you were going!" growled Harry Wharton. "Were you going out?"

Wun Lung shook his head.

"No," he said quietly.

"Then what were you up to?" demanded Bob Cherry.

Wun Lung hesitated, and looked from one junior to the other. The Removites who had fallen asleep began to wake up at the sound of the voices.

"Me killee Lodel!" said Wun Lung, and a light of hatred burned in his slant-like eyes.

The juniors gasped.

"Wh-wh-what?"

"Me killee Lodel!" said Wun Lung simply. "He kickee me—sayee me no gettee in captain's way. Me killee Lodel—velly much rotter die!"

"M-m-m-my hat!" stammered Bob Cherry. "You—you—you blessed heathen!"

"Me no savvy!"

"You Chinese— Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Let him go, you chaps!" snorted Bulstrode. "Loder won't be missed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And how do you propose killing off the beast?" asked Frank Nugent, with a grin.

Wun Lung made a suggestive movement with his hands, and the juniors shuddered. There was not the slightest doubt but that Loder would have had a very rough time had not Wharton and Cherry been awake.

"You—you heathen terror!" cried Harry Wharton. "Blessed if I don't think you'd have done it, too!"

"Me velly angly!" said Wun Lung calmly. "Me no likee Lodel—he velly big beast!"

Harry Wharton chuckled.

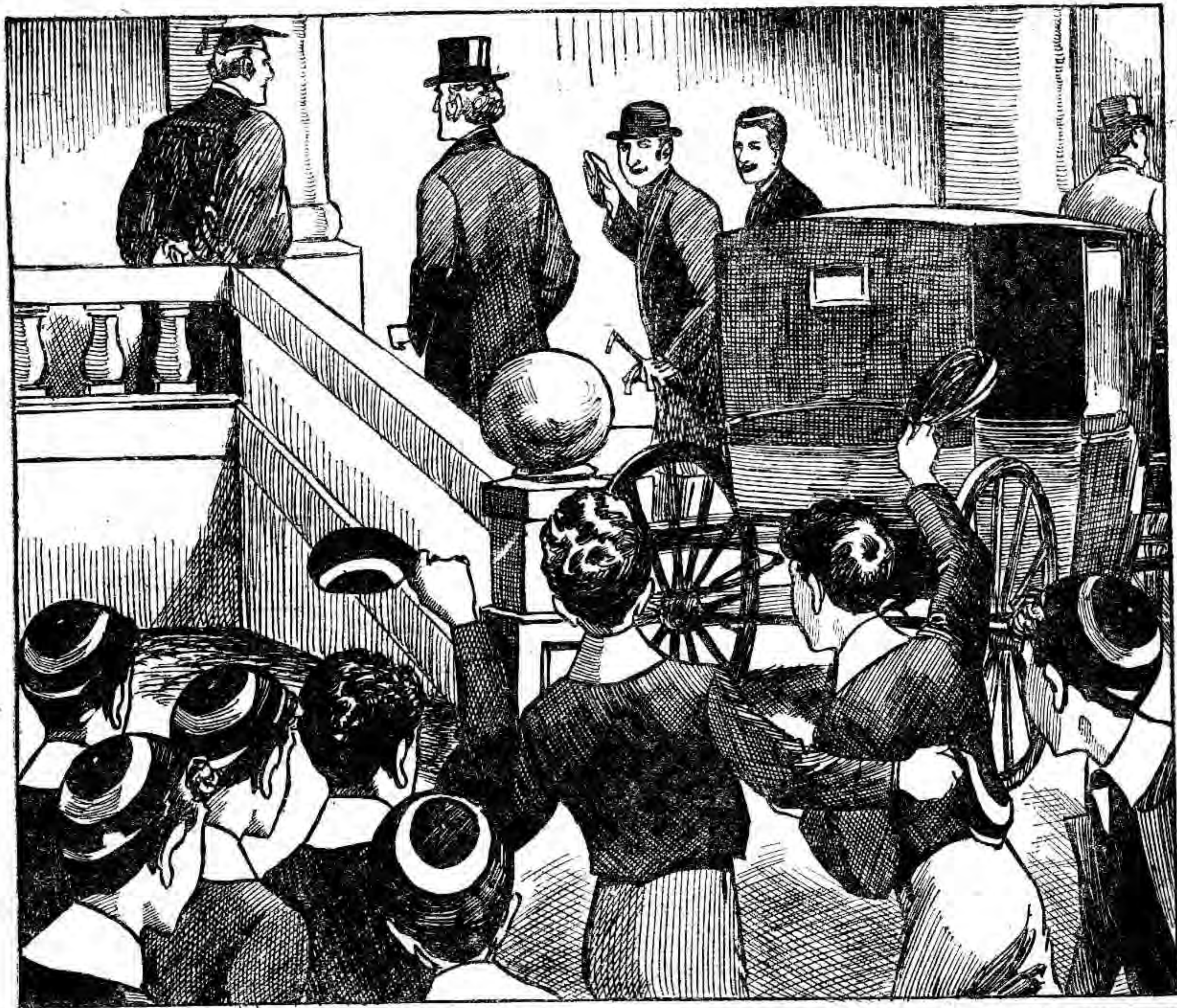
"We don't like him, either!" he said. "But we don't want anything like that to happen, Wun Lung! Hop off to bed!"

"Me no savvy!"

Bob Cherry stepped up to the Chinese junior and brandished his fist before his eyes.

"You savvy this!" said Cherry angrily. "If you move out of this dormitory to-night we'll cut your pigtail off and send it to China! Then they'll laugh at you—a Chinese without a pigtail!"

Wun Lung shivered slightly. To lose his pigtail would be the greatest disgrace that could come to him. And he knew



Dr. Locke, followed by Wingate and Mr. Quelch, went into the house, and up to his study. "Hurrah! Good old Wingate!" shouted the Removites. (See Chapter 7).

perfectly well that Bob Cherry would carry out his threat—at least, as far as the cutting process.

He shrugged his shoulders and turned towards his bed.

"Me leavee it!" he said solemnly. "Me no wantee losee pigtail! Me wantee Lodel losce headee velly much, though!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We want to lose our blessed Head, too!" growled Bob Cherry. "But we can't do it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get to bed, Bob——" began Harry Wharton.

But he did not finish his sentence. The door of the dormitory was suddenly flung open and Loder appeared. He carried a cane in his hand, and his face was grim and angry.

"Caught you, Cherry!" he said, with a grim chuckle. "Come here!"

Bob Cherry was already on the way towards the door, and after a second's hesitation he moved towards Loder.

"What were you doing out of bed?" asked Loder.

Bob Cherry did not reply. He could hardly tell Loder that he and Wharton stopped Wun Lung from leaving the dormitory, or that Wun Lung's object was to attempt to kill Loder.

He did not reply.

"I'm waiting!" snapped Loder.

Still Bob Cherry refused to reply.

Then occurred that which set fire to the smouldering resentment of the juniors.

Loder suddenly raised his cane, and brought it down with all his strength on Bob Cherry's shoulders. The Removite staggered back, and gasped with pain.

Only his pyjama-jacket covered his shoulders, and the cane almost cut through it.

"Ow!" gasped Bob Cherry, and a sudden fierce anger swept over him.

He leapt at the temporary captain like a mad bull and lashed out, straight from the shoulder, with his right fist.

The blow caught Loder full on the point of the jaw, and he collapsed to the floor of the dormitory with a howl of pain and wrath.

"Ow! Yow! You—you——"

Almost stuttering with rage, Loder leapt to his feet. Bob Cherry's eyes were flaming with anger, and he met the captain's onslaught with a left which put Loder down on the floor again.

Loder did not speak. He was past speech. He leapt to his feet and attacked Bob Cherry with the cane.

Bob Cherry could not get out of the prefect's reach. The cane was too long—he could not get at Loder whilst he wielded that.

"Ow! Yow!" gasped Bob Cherry, leaping from side to side in an attempt to

avoid the stinging cuts. "Rescue, Remove!"

The juniors did not hesitate. They leapt out of bed like one man. Even Skinner and Stott, cowards though they were, were angry.

In a moment Loder was collared and borne to the ground. He struggled and fumed with rage, but the Removites held on to him.

"Where's Billy Bunter" panted Harry Wharton.

"I'm here, Wharton!" replied Bunter.

He was at the back of the crowd of attacking juniors. Bunter did not believe in getting too near Loder when he was in a mad temper as at present. Loder was capable of anything. He would use his teeth, nails and boots if only he could inflict pain on the juniors.

"Sit on his head, Billy!" said Harry Wharton, as he struggled to keep the prefect's kicking legs down to the floor.

Billy Bunter glanced quickly down at the fallen captain. It looked safe enough. Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh had one of Loder's arms in their grasp, and Frank Nugent and Bulstrode held the other.

Micky Desmond and Wharton were keeping his legs to the floor, although it was taxing all their strength to do so.

Billy Bunter, therefore, saw no reason

why harm should come to him, and he sat on Loder's head.

"Grooogh!" panted Loder. "Gerroff, you fat beast!"

"Oh, really, Loder," chuckled Billy Bunter. "You should not come here and—Ow! Yow!"

Billy Bunter broke off his remark and yelled. Loder had bitten him.

Billy Bunter leapt from Loder's head as if he had been red-hot, and danced about the dormitory with his hand rubbing his injured leg.

"Ow! Yow! I'm bitten!" howled Billy Bunter. "Ow! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll get rabies!" exclaimed Skinner with a chuckle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But to Billy Bunter it was not a laughing matter. He had been bitten—and bitten hard.

"Lemme get at him!" he roared. "Gerraway, you chaps!"

And Billy Bunter, before the juniors knew what was happening, ran towards the prostrate Loder, and fell, rather than sat, upon his chest.

It was Loder's turn to gasp with pain. Billy Bunter was not a light-weight to have on one's chest.

"Oooooooooow!" panted Loder. "Take him off! He's busting my chest!"

"Do you good, you beast!" growled Billy Bunter. "I'm quite comfortable, and you can't bite again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton grinned. Loder ceased to struggle under the weight on his chest. He could not continue, for his arms and legs were also tightly held.

"We'll chuck him out!" said Wharton grimly. "Out on his giddy neck! And, look here, Loder! Every time you come here you'll get chucked out on your giddy neck! Got me?"

"I'll fetch Hacker!" howled Loder. "My hat! I'll make you juniors squirm for this!"

"Will you—"

"Half a jiff, Wharton!" said Bob Cherry.

The sturdy Removite's face was still twisted with pain, and he held Loder's cane in his hand.

"You're not going to—" began Harry Wharton anxiously.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"No!" he said contemptuously. "I wouldn't mind fighting the beast, but I'm not going to lash into him whilst he is down on his back, although it would serve him jolly well right! I'm just going to cut this cane into splinters, and stick it in his hair!"

"My hat!"

"Then we'll tie his hands behind his back, and chuck him out on his giddy neck!" went on Bob Cherry. "He'll have to get one of his own pals to cut him loose before he can get the bits of cane out of his hair—and I'm sure he'll enjoy that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder writhed on the floor in the grip of the juniors, and under Billy Bunter's weight. But he might as well have tried to disappear through the floor for all the success he met with.

Bob Cherry hurried to his coat and took out a penknife. It took him less than three minutes to cut the cane into strips six inches long.

These strips were pushed into Loder's hair, and he was allowed to get up. The juniors kept a tight hold of his hands until they were tied.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Porcupine of Greyfriars!" chuckled Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The strips of cane stuck up in Loder's

hair like the quills on a porcupine's back. But Loder looked far more fierce than a porcupine could ever look.

"You wait!" he said between his teeth.

"Just you wait!"

"We're stopping!" chuckled Harry Wharton. "Which is more than you are going to do! Collar him, you chaps!"

Willing hands grasped the burly prefect, and he was swept off his feet and carried towards the door. Billy Bunter opened it, a smile of pleasure on his fat face. Anything like that pleased Billy Bunter.

"On the word three," panted Harry Wharton, "out he goes!"

"Hurrah!"

The whole dormitory chanted the seconds, and the noise they made successfully drowned the sound of approaching footsteps.

"One—two—three—go!"

Loder was set swinging in the grasp of the juniors, and on the last word they shot him out of the open door.

Loder whirled through the air, and caught a tall figure that was about to enter. Loder and the unfortunate person crashed to the floor of the passage to the accompaniment of cheers from the Removites.

"Hurrah!"

"Good-night, Loder!"

But the hilarity of the juniors was brought to a sudden end as the person with whom Loder had forcibly collided dragged himself slowly and painfully to his feet.

A gasp of dismay broke from the juniors.

It was Mr. Hacker!

It was probably the first time in the history of Greyfriars that a headmaster had been knocked down after lights-out by a prefect thrown out by the juniors.

Mr. Hacker's face was white with rage as he glared at the juniors.

"How dare you!" he panted. "How dare you!"

"S-s-sorry, sir!" stammered Harry Wharton, feeling as if he ought to say something.

"Sorry!" repeated Mr. Hacker furiously. "I'll make you more sorry yet! Loder!"

Loder had picked himself up from the floor, and Mr. Hacker gasped afresh as he saw the strips of cane in the captain's hair.

"Loder!" he stammered. "What does this mean?"

"Mean?" said Loder bitterly. "It means that these young whelps have thrown me out of the dormitory because I came to stop a row! Look at me, sir, and see how a captain of Greyfriars is treated by the juniors!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Hacker angrily. "Every junior here will take five hundred lines! You will not be allowed out of the House until they are done! Do you understand?"

"Aren't you going to cane them, sir?" demanded Loder furiously.

"Mind your own business, Loder!" snapped the Head. "I am dealing with this matter! Wharton!"

"Yes, sir?"

Wharton's tones were sullen.

"You are to see that the lines are done!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "Five hundred—not one less! Understand?"

Wharton nodded, but did not speak.

Mr. Hacker, after one furious glare round the dormitory, turned upon his heel and stalked out. Loder followed him down the passage.

"Sir," he said, "would you mind releasing my hands?"

Mr. Hacker paused, took from his pocket a small knife, and cut the string which bound the prefect's hands. He

did not speak, but the smile on his lips at the ludicrous spectacle Loder provided brought a fresh wave of bitter hatred to Loder's heart.

Master and prefect parted, one smiling, the other almost speechless with rage.

But in the dormitory there was a different kind of anger. It was fierce, rebellious anger that filled the breast of every Removite.

They sat by their beds looking at one another. Nobody knew what to say. Loder and Mr. Hacker had departed without turning out the lights, and practically every Removite was on his bed, waiting for someone to speak.

It was Harry Wharton who broke the silence.

"Chaps," he said seriously, "I'm blessed if we can stick this! Something will have to be done!"

"Yes, but what?"

A dozen voices asked the question.

Harry Wharton jumped on to his bed, his lips set grimly.

"Look here, you fellows! We can protest without breaking into revolt!" he said warmly. "The rotters ought to be scragged—"

"Hear, hear!"

"But we won't do that, as Dr. Locke is away. But I vote we go on silent strike!"

"Silent whatter?" gasped the juniors.

"A silent strike!" repeated Harry Wharton firmly. "That is, nobody must speak—everybody must remain perfectly silent. Only behind the doors of your studies must you utter a word, and then only in whispers. How's that?"

"A bull!" said Bulstrode eagerly. "My hat! Wharton, I don't often agree with you, but I must say you've put the right proposition forward!"

"All those in favour please hold up your fists!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Like one man the Removites raised their hands in the air. Even Billy Bunter, the greatest chatterbox at Greyfriars, raised his hand.

"Carried unanimously!" said Wharton quietly. "No classes, of course! When spoken to, be very polite. That will save a lot of extra trouble when Dr. Locke comes to investigate. Billy Bunter, of all juniors, must keep his mouth closed."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You can be heard all over the school when you open your mouth, Billy!" said Wharton. "Don't forget, you chaps, from now—absolute silence!"

The Remove had come to a momentous decision. They realised that Harry Wharton's plan was for the best. It had to come to something—a silent strike was better than a barring-out.

It remained to be seen how the rest of the school took the silent strike. If the Fourth and Shell followed, so much the better. The Lower Forms would most certainly follow the example of the Removites.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Silent Strike.

CLANG, clang, clang!

The rising-bell rang at Greyfriars, and the juniors tumbled out of bed. Only Billy Bunter forgot the momentous decision arrived at after Mr. Hacker and Loder had departed the night before.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

Nobody as much as glanced towards him. Absolute silence, save for the slight sound made by the juniors as they dressed, greeted Billy Bunter's remark.

Billy looked about him indignantly.

"Lost your tongues?" he demanded.

"I say, Bulstrode—"

Bulstrode glared at the fat Removite. "You chaps might speak to a fellow!" said Billy Bunter plaintively. "I'm not in Coventry!"

The juniors glared at the speaker, and Billy Bunter suddenly realised what he had done. The silent strike was in progress—and he had spoken.

He closed his mouth with a sound that was distinctly audible, and some of the juniors grinned. But Billy Bunter did not speak again.

The news that the Remove had gone on silent strike spread like wildfire, and before breakfast had commenced the Upper Fourth and Shell had followed the Remove's example, and the whole of the Upper School at Greyfriars became silent.

The Lower Forms were more slow in adopting the strike, but before the bell rang for classes they, too, were absolutely silent.

Mr. Hacker could feel that there was something wrong. There was not a sound to be heard. It appeared to him as if a great tragedy had swept over the school.

Silence—a grim silence—reigned everywhere!

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Hacker, as he sat in the Head's study. "Is the whole school asleep, I wonder?"

There was the sound of rapid footfalls, and Mr. Capper burst into the study. His eyes were almost starting from his head.

"Wh-wh-what's the matter, Capper?" asked Mr. Hacker quickly.

"Matter!" echoed Mr. Capper wildly. "Only that the whole of Greyfriars is on strike!"

"Strike!" gasped Mr. Hacker. "Mr. Capper! Surely—I've heard nothing!"

Mr. Capper nodded bitterly.

"That's so, sir!" he said. "It is a silent strike! There is not a sound to be heard! The juniors are walking about as if every one of them has suffered a personal bereavement!"

"G-g-goodness gracious me!"

Mr. Hacker stepped quickly to the window, and peered out into the quadrangle.

Several groups of juniors could be seen, and more than one of seniors. But the fellows were not gossiping. They were looking about in silence.

There was not a fellow to be seen talking.

Mr. Hacker turned to his subordinate. "Who—who started this—business?" he asked furiously.

"The Remove, I believe," replied Mr. Capper. "The thing is, what are you going to do about it?"

"Do!" repeated Mr. Hacker. "Goodness me, Mr. Capper, I'll soon put a stop to this!"

The infuriated Head stepped from the study, and swept down the passage to the Remove studies.

He burst in No. 1 of the Remove passage like a tornado.

Harry Wharton, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were there, and Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, Johnny Bull, and Frank Nugent followed the Head into the study. Nugent had evidently been to fetch the other juniors.

For one moment master and juniors stared at one another.

"What does this mean?" demanded Mr. Hacker. "Did you not hear the bell?"

"Yes, sir!" said Harry Wharton politely.

"Then get to the class-rooms at once!" snapped Mr. Hacker.

The juniors did not move.

"Do you hear me?"

Mr. Hacker could be heard in all the

studies in the Remove passage. There was no doubt Harry Wharton & Co. heard him.

"Yes, sir!" said Wharton again.

"Then move!" shouted Mr. Hacker.

But the juniors did not move. They stayed where they were, motionless.

"Do you defy me?" almost shrieked Mr. Hacker.

"Yes, sir!" said Harry Wharton, and his eyes flashed. "Greyfriars is on silent strike, sir! There will be nothing done or said until the new orders—made without Dr. Locke's sanction—are removed!"

Mr. Hacker stuttered with rage.

"Wharton," he gasped, "you shall be expelled! You shall be flogged! You are the instigator of this business!"

The juniors did not reply.

Mr. Hacker, after one furious glance

No. 56.—ROBERT FORIESCUE SMITH.



Smith minor. Has a major in the Fifth, Edward William, and a minimus in the Second, Harry. Rather younger than most of the juniors of the Remove, and not a character of great note. Not very strong-willed, and might be led by either decent fellows or cads. Has Study No. 8 in the Remove to himself.

round, swept out of the study, his hands clenched and his face white with rage.

A moment later he was heard shouting orders to other Removites. But there was not a sound in response, and Mr. Hacker returned to the Head's study with something more than anger in his heart.

He was beginning to feel nervous. The whole of Greyfriars was silent, and the silence was getting on his nerves, although it had not lasted an hour.

Mr. Capper was waiting for the Head. "Well?" he asked.

Mr. Hacker fell, rather than sat, in his chair.

"They defy me!" he said fiercely. "There is not a sound, Mr. Capper. I spoke to several of the juniors—they were most polite—but they flatly refused to obey my commands to proceed to the class-rooms!"

"Perhaps Wingate can persuade them!" said Mr. Capper hopefully.

"He has a wonderful influence over the juniors!"

"I'll send for him!"

But the page returned from his errand to announce that Master Wingate was not to be found.

"I heard from Gosling as 'ow Master Wingate had left after breakfast, sir," said the page. "He says he was a-goin' to Lunnon!"

"Very well!" said Mr. Hacker, with an effort to remain calm.

But as soon as the door had closed behind the page the Head looked uneasily at the Upper Fourth master.

"Do you think Wingate has gone to Dr. Locke?" he asked quickly.

"Doubtless!" said Mr. Capper. "I'm afraid, sir, that the congratulations we hoped to receive from Dr. Locke will not be very cordial!"

A bitter light shone in Mr. Hacker's eyes.

"Perhaps they'll give in!" he said hopefully. "I shall give orders that no dinner is to be served——"

"Bless my soul! You'll have the juniors breaking loose!"

"They won't!" said Mr. Hacker, with far more confidence in his tones than he felt. "Come! We will walk round Greyfriars, and see if we can persuade the boys to go into the class-rooms!"

The two masters left the study, and walked quickly down the passage. At the top of the stairs they met Mr. Lawrence Lascelles, the mathematics master.

"My Form has not gone into the class-room, sir," said Mr. Lascelles quietly.

"They have politely refused——"

"Have you tried persuading them with a cane, Mr. Lascelles?" asked Mr. Hacker sourly.

"Yes, sir," replied the Form-master. "I caned one junior before the rest. He took the punishment without a sound, and joined his companions again. They are absolutely silent!"

"Goodness gracious!"

"If I might presume to offer a little advice, I would suggest you revoke the orders, Mr. Hacker. They were, no doubt, made in all good faith, but I am convinced Dr. Locke would not agree with curtailing the school's liberty and privileges!"

"Thank you; but I shall do nothing of the sort, Mr. Lascelles!" retorted Mr. Hacker sourly.

Mr. Lascelles shrugged his shoulders, and walked away.

Mr. Hacker and Mr. Capper continued their journey. They passed several groups of fellows, both senior and junior, but there was not a word to be heard. Every face was solemn, not a smile was seen on the whole tour round the school.

The temporary Head returned to his study bitterly angry, but more than a little uneasy. Wingate had not been seen. Gosling, the school porter, was probably right in the information he had given Trotter.

Throughout the morning there was everywhere the same grim silence. Only in the studies was a whisper to be heard.

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, who was in his study with a host of Removites. "Did you ever hear anything like it?"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Hear anything? There's nothing to be heard!" he said, in a low voice. "Talk about the dead of night! It's not so grim as Greyfriars now!"

"It's rotten!" said Billy Bunter. "Blessed if I like it!"

"No; you want to talk about other people's affairs, don't you, Billy?" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

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"Brrrr! It's a treat not to hear you speak, my old owl!"

"Look here, Nugent——"

"The silent strikefulness is being brokenfully performed by my worthy fat chum!" said Hurree Singh.

"Oh, really, Inky——"

"The punchfulness of the fat chump's nose will be terrific if he persistently calls me Inky!" went on Hurree Singh warningly.

Billy Bunter thereupon became silent. He had no wish to have his nose punched, but he looked very much aggrieved.

Dinner-time came, and still the same grim silence prevailed. Mr. Hacker, perhaps fortunately for the good name of Greyfriars, had not carried out his threat and stopped the meal from being served.

The juniors would have taken that in a far from kind spirit, and it was quite likely that silent strike would have developed into a particularly noisy one.

"I think I'll go and see Wingate," said Harry Wharton. "He might have some information for us. Besides, I want to know what he thinks about it!"

And he went.

But he returned in a few minutes with the information that Wingate had not been seen since before breakfast, and it was believed he had gone to London.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "He's gone for Dr. Locke!"

"That's about it!" agreed Wharton.

"My stars! What a giddy bust-up there'll be when the Head comes back! Get ready for a couple of thousand cuts, Billy!"

Locke will cane us all, do you, Wharton?" said Billy Bunter hastily. "M-m-my hat! I'm glad I didn't suggest the silent strike! You won't half get a licking, Wharton!"

"Nothing to the licking you'll get if you let it out that it was my suggestion, you fat chump!" said Harry Wharton grimly. "I shall take you into the gym, and knock you into little pieces!"

"Ow! Of course I'd never split, Wharton!" said Billy Bunter anxiously. "You know me better than that. I'd never sneak on an old pal!"

"Brrrr!" said Wharton.

Which seemed to indicate that Harry Wharton was not overjoyed to know that he was Billy Bunter's chum!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The End of the Strike.

"BLESS my soul!"

It was Dr. Locke, headmaster of Greyfriars, who uttered that ejaculation. He was on the platform of the London terminus, waiting for the train which was to take Mr. Quelch and himself back to Greyfriars.

As was often the case, the morning train from Friardale ran into the station, disgorged its passengers, and waited to be taken back along the same route.

The train came in, and from one of the carriages stepped a well-known figure. It was Wingate!

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head again. "Wingate!"

Wingate started, and turned quickly. Mr. Quelch was no less amazed, for he had not seen the captain of Greyfriars step from the train.

"By Jove, sir!" ejaculated Wingate, as he hurried forward. "I was coming to see you, sir!"

"To see me!" said the Head, lifting his eyebrows slightly. "I trust, Wingate—I trust there's not been an accident at Greyfriars!"

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"Worse than that, unfortunately, sir!" said Wingate grimly.

"Indeed!"

Mr. Quelch interrupted the conversation.

"Excuse me, sir!" he said quickly. "It is advisable that we take our seats in the train!"

"Certainly, Mr. Quelch, certainly!" said the Head.

It was obvious that he was greatly perturbed, and very anxious to hear what Wingate had got to say.

They took seats in a first-class compartment, and the Head turned to Wingate at once.

"Now, please, Wingate, you might explain," said the Head quickly.

Mr. Quelch did not open the paper in his hand. He had a slight smile at the corners of his lips, as if he half expected what was to follow.

"The row—I mean, the business started through Mr. Hacker making several alterations in the school routine, sir," said Wingate quietly. "One of them was the closing of the tuckshop——"

"Dear me! How ridiculous! Ahem! Go on, Wingate!"

"After the closing of the tuckshop, which Mr. Hacker said was derogatory to the health of the juniors, sir," resumed Wingate. "Mr. Hacker stopped the Wednesday half-holiday——"

"Bless my soul!"

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"The juniors, probably more than the seniors, strongly resented the alteration of the routine, sir. I ventured to ask Mr. Hacker if he considered you would have given your approval, and I was rather abruptly ticked-off—I mean, reprimanded! I had no option but to resign my position as captain of Greyfriars——"

Wingate hesitated as the train began to move out of the station. He took one fleeting glance at Dr. Locke's face, and read there the consternation the kind-hearted Head was feeling.

"And then, Wingate?" said the Head slowly.

"Then Loder was appointed in my stead, sir," went on Wingate. "The result was seen when he attempted to bully the Remove. The next day—that is to say, this morning—the Remove commenced a silent strike——"

"Goodness gracious me!" exclaimed the Head. "What is that, Wingate?"

"Absolute silence, sir, throughout the school. There was not a sound to be heard in any part of Greyfriars. I venture to say, sir, that I think a great deal of credit should go to the Remove for adopting a silent strike instead of more violent methods of protesting against the new orders!"

Dr. Locke frowned.

"There is no credit to be given for such an action," he said quietly. "But, I should think, there might possibly have been some provocation——"

"I feared, Dr. Locke, that something of the kind would happen," said Mr. Quelch suddenly. "Mr. Hacker has ideas of his own as to how Greyfriars should be run. He believes in all study and little play—a most harmful policy, sir."

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Quelch," said Dr. Locke quickly. "But, Wingate, is that why you came for me?"

"I came for you, sir, in case the fellows should be goaded into more violent action," said Wingate. "You remember the barring-out at Greyfriars? We don't want a repetition of that, sir. But the juniors, especially, were growing more and more resentful of the restriction of their liberty."

Dr. Locke nodded, and remained silent.

He was greatly distressed that such a disaster should have befallen the school since he and Mr. Quelch had left.

He did not speak again until they were within sight of Greyfriars.

They had chartered a cab at Friardale Station, and it was soon seen by the crowd of fellows who were in the quadrangle.

"The Head!" shouted Harry Wharton as the cab drove in at the gates.

"Hurrah!"

There was a rush for the gates, and the cab-driver had to pull up to avoid running over any of the enthusiastically shouting fellows.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Wingate!"

Wingate smiled slightly.

"The fellows are in good spirits, sir," he remarked.

The Head nodded, and opened the door of the cab as it stopped. The cheers broke out afresh as the Head was followed by Mr. Quelch into the quadrangle.

Dr. Locke held up his hand for silence.

"Boys," he cried, in tones that were audible to everybody in the quadrangle. "Wingate has informed me of the——"

"Good old Wingate!"

"Hurrah!"

Harry Wharton stepped hastily forward, cap in hand.

"Excuse me, sir," he said quickly. "The order has been cancelled. The strike business has finished!"

"Ah! Then I will say no more for the present."

And Dr. Locke, followed by Wingate and Mr. Quelch, went into the house, and up to Dr. Locke's study.

Mr. Hacker was there when they entered, and the master was not looking very pleased with himself.

He vacated the chair in which the Head was wont to sit, and attempted to make light of matters by smiling a cordial welcome to Dr. Locke.

"I am pleased to see you back so soon, sir," he said warmly. "Very pleased indeed, sir!"

The Head nodded, as much as to say that he—the Head—had no doubt about the truth of what the Shell-master said.

"Do you want me again, sir?" asked Wingate tactfully.

"No, thank you, Wingate!" answered Dr. Locke. "I may send for you in a few minutes."

"Very good, sir."

And George Wingate left the Head's study without so much as a glance towards Mr. Hacker. But the Shell-master glanced at Wingate—a glance that was full of bitterness.

"Now, Mr. Hacker, it seems to me that there has been a great deal of unpleasantness since I left Greyfriars in your charge," said the Head, and his tones were cold.

Mr. Hacker flushed.

"Ahem! I—I tried a new routine, sir, it is true," he said nervously. "It was a routine that has always appealed to me——"

"Really, Mr. Hacker," interposed the Head stiffly. "I should have been glad to discuss the matter with you at any time."

"Ahem!" said Mr. Hacker, with a cough. "I thought, perhaps—ahem!—it would be better to try the routine before I spoke to you about it. Your absence in London gave me the chance that I wanted. Needless to say, sir, I regret the trouble that arose immediately the orders were issued."

"No more than I do myself," said the

Head coldly. "I really think you took too much upon yourself, Mr. Hacker!"

"Indeed, sir!" said Mr. Hacker mildly. "I really thought it was for the best—"

"I don't doubt that at all, Mr. Hacker," interrupted the Head quickly. "I do not think we can improve matters by discussing the rights and wrongs of the routine you suggested. I should be obliged if you would send a message for Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Bunter!"

With a nod, Mr. Hacker acknowledged the dismissal, and left the study, feeling considerably crestfallen. His short reign as headmaster at Greyfriars had not been a success.

"A most extraordinary effort to alter the school routine, Mr. Quelch," observed the Head, when the door had closed behind the Shell-master. "It was, apparently, very fortunate the two examiners returned from America and relieved us. Wingate, of course, will be offered reinstatement."

"That is only right, sir," remarked Mr. Quelch. "Loder, in my opinion is—"

The Head did not hear Mr. Quelch's opinion of Loder, for at that moment the door opened, and Harry Wharton & Co. entered the study.

Of the juniors, Billy Bunter looked the most nervous. The other juniors looked more grim—as if they were prepared for trouble, and meant to take it philosophically.

"Ah, Wharton!" said the Head. "I want to ask you a few questions."

"Yes, sir?" said Harry Wharton meekly.

"I want to know who, in the first instance, suggested the silent strike which has just terminated," said Dr. Locke grimly.

"I did, sir!" said Harry Wharton frankly.

"Then you may be held responsible for the affair?"

Harry Wharton hesitated a second.

"Yes, sir," he said slowly. "The suggestion was made by myself, so I suppose I am more or less to blame."

"You were the leader?"

Again a slight hesitation on Wharton's part.

"Yes, sir," he said slowly.

Bob Cherry clenched his fists. He was not going to let Harry Wharton take the blame for the strike on his shoulders. But before Bob Cherry could speak there came an interruption from a quarter that surprised Mr. Quelch and Dr. Locke as much as it did the juniors.

"Oh, really, sir!" said Billy Bunter quickly. "We were all in it, sir—honour bright! You see, sir, if Wharton had not suggested the silent biz—I mean, strike, sir—we should have mopped up the giddy floor with Mr. Hacker!"

Bob Cherry and the Removites gasped. They looked at Billy Bunter as if he were a ghost.

"M-m-my hat!" stammered Nugent. "Of all the nerve!"

"Silence!" snapped the Head. "I do not appreciate the manner in which you speak, Bunter; but I am glad to see you are frank about the matter. I hardly thought you capable of acknowledging that—"

"Oh, really, sir! I'm always honest, sir—" began Bunter.

There was an audible chuckle from the Removites, and Mr. Quelch raised his hand to cover a smile.

"Good old Bunter!" murmured Bob.

The Head rapped on his desk imperatively.

"Silence! Your contention is, Bunter, that if Wharton had not suggested a silent strike the school would have broken into open revolt?"

Billy Bunter nodded firmly.

"Yes, sir. We'd have busted—ahem!—I mean, broken out like—like a lot of heathens, sir," said Bunter. "There'd have been an awful shindy, sir!"

"Do not make use of such ridiculous words, Bunter!" said the Head sternly. "What, pray, do you mean by 'shindy'?"

"A row, sir—a noise. In fact, row doesn't describe the word. A bust-up is better!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors could not restrain their laughter. When Billy Bunter began an explanation it was generally far from being lucid.

"Silence!" said the Head severely.

(Continued on Page 19.)



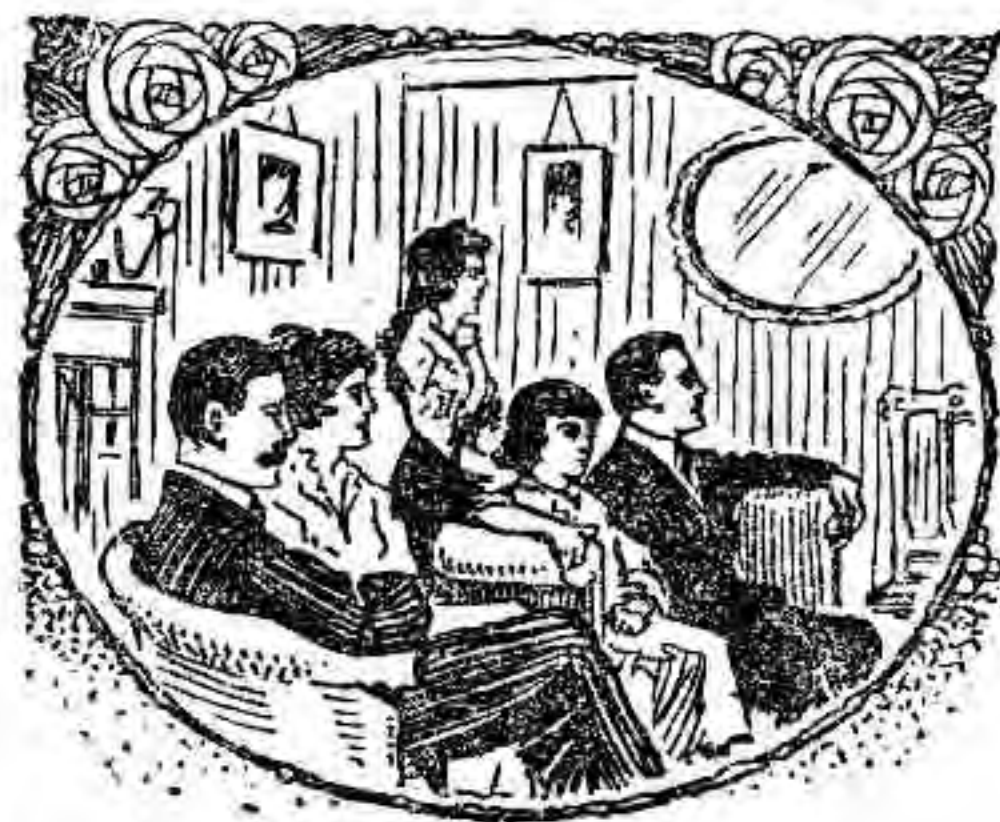
This is a small line drawing of the Plate to be Given Free. Actual size of Plate with engraving is 7½ inches by 10 inches. The title of the picture is "Boy, 1st Class, JOHN TRAVERS CORNWELL, V.C. The Battle of Jutland, May 31st—June 1st, 1916. From the Picture by F. O. Salisbury, painted for the Admiralty on board H.M.S. Chester." The closing date of this offer will be published in this paper in a week or so. No application will be accepted after that date.

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SAFE SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS.

AMUSING TRICKS WITH SIMPLE APPARATUS.



A STRIKING SIPHON EXPERIMENT.

A very pretty experiment with the siphon may be performed by making use of the following simple apparatus: An ordinary glass; a little water, coloured, say, with aniline; a piece of rubber tubing about an inch long, one end of which is cut obliquely, as shown in the diagram; together with a piece

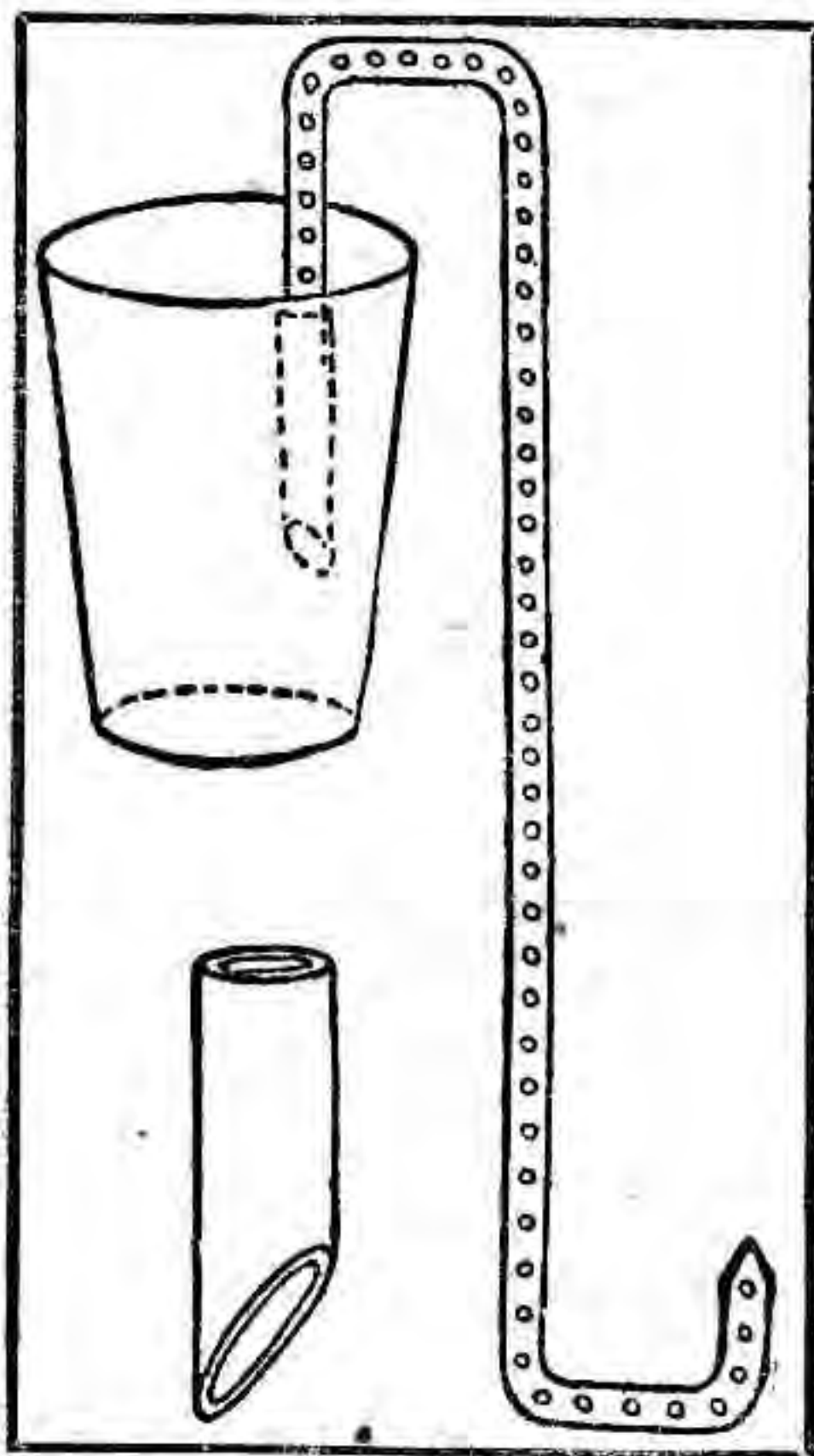


Fig. 1.—A Siphon Experiment.

of glass tubing from four to five feet long.

This tubing may be obtained from almost any chemist, the usual price being 6d. per quarter pound.

Prepare for your experiment by taking the length of tubing, and, with a gas-flame, drawing one end out to a point.

Having done this, bend the tube twice, as shown in Fig 1, particular care being taken to avoid any sharp angles. The bending of the tube is easily done by holding it in a gas or spirit lamp flame until the flame is coloured yellow. The glass is then soft enough to be gently bent to the required angle.

Over the end which is not pointed, slip the piece of indiarubber tubing, and then place this end in the coloured water.

By applying suction to the pointed end of the tube with your mouth the siphon may be set in motion.

If now you so arrange the tube that the oval opening is partly out of water, the flowing liquid will draw in bubbles of air, which, passing alternately down the tube with the drops of coloured water, produce a very pretty result.

The shape and size of the air-bubbles may be altered at any time by raising

or lowering the tube, and this will add to the effect of the experiment.

The experiment may be again varied by removing the tube from the liquid, and, before lowering it again, allowing 10ins. or 12ins. of air to enter. This long bubble will be seen to pass slowly down the tube until it arrives at the small opening, when it will be expelled at a great rate. The liquid following this bubble acquires the same velocity, and, arriving at the point, is ejected with such force that it will rise to a height of 6ft. or 7ft.

AN ELECTRIC FOUNTAIN.

Most of you would like to make an electric fountain, especially when you learn how simple and easily arranged is this striking experiment. Your apparatus consists solely of a glass, a long indiarubber tube, with two small glass tubes, and a piece of sealing-wax—a stick of sulphur or a piece of vulcanite will do just as well.

Make a small nozzle by drawing out a length of bent-glass tubing, and, by means of a long piece of indiarubber piping, fix it to another piece of bent-glass tubing. Place the first piece of tubing, bent at two right angles, over the side of a glass filled with water, taking care that the reservoir thus formed is from 3ft. to 4ft. above the nozzle. (Fig. 2.)

When the fountain is playing, the issuing jet of water will be inclined to one side.

Now to electrify the fountain. Take the piece of sealing-wax, vulcanite, or

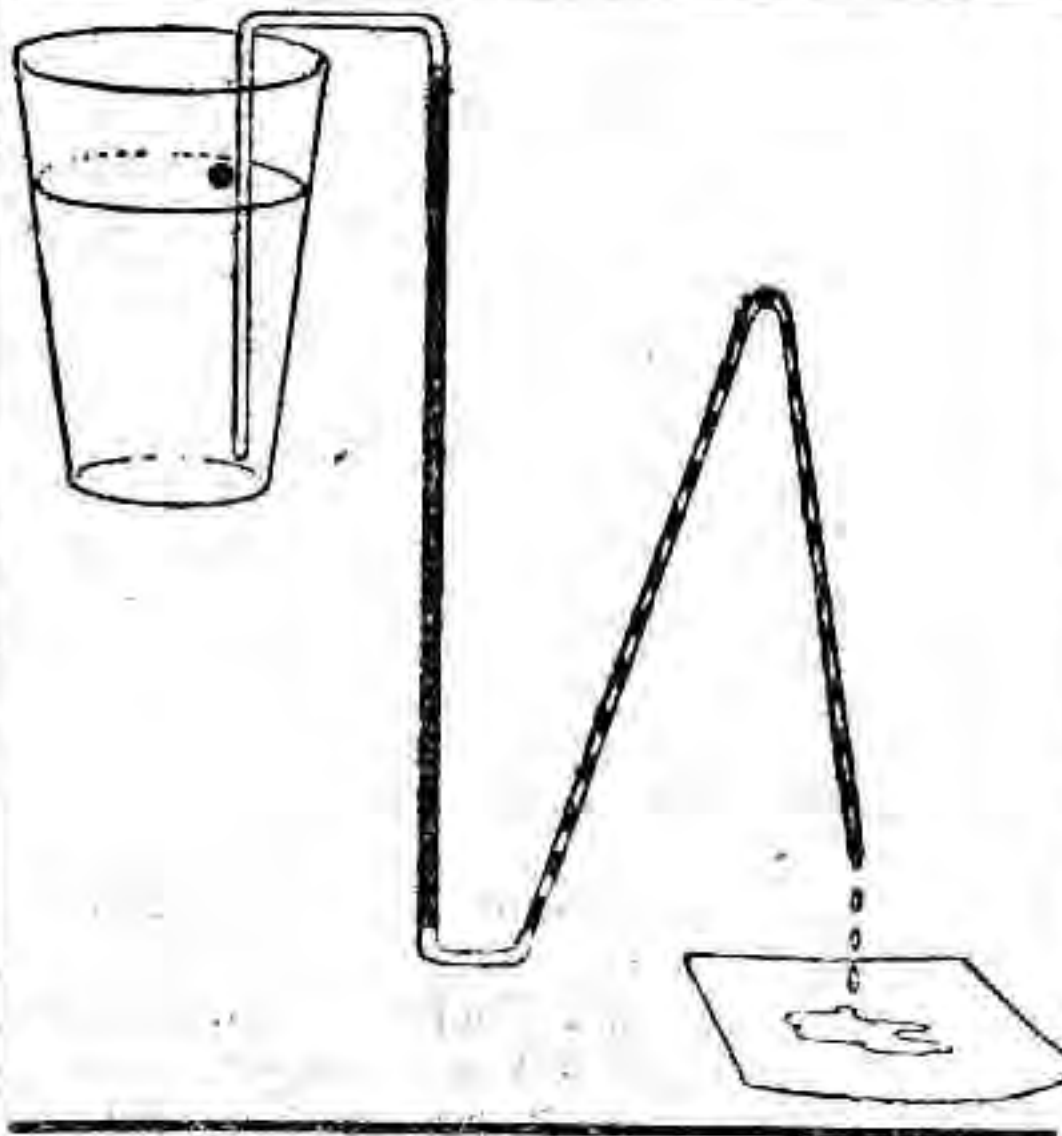


Fig. 2.—An Electric Fountain.

sulphur, and, after seeing that both your hand and the material you hold are perfectly dry, rub the sealing-wax on the sleeve of your coat.

If now you hold the sealing-wax opposite the stream of water, at a distance of a few feet, a remarkable change will come over the cascades. Instead of the water falling in scattering drops, these latter will at once unite and descend in a solid stream, whilst, directly the sealing-wax is removed, the jet of water

returns to its original form. If the water be allowed to fall on a piece of stiff paper, a difference in sound will be noticed according as the water falls in a stream or in drops.

THE BOTTLE CANNON.

Doubtless you would like to have at home the experience of firing a cannon, of hearing a report loud enough to frighten nervous persons, to see the shell fly as quick as lightning, and then to witness the recoil of your home-made piece of artillery.

Your apparatus will be quite simple, for you must first take a strong bottle,

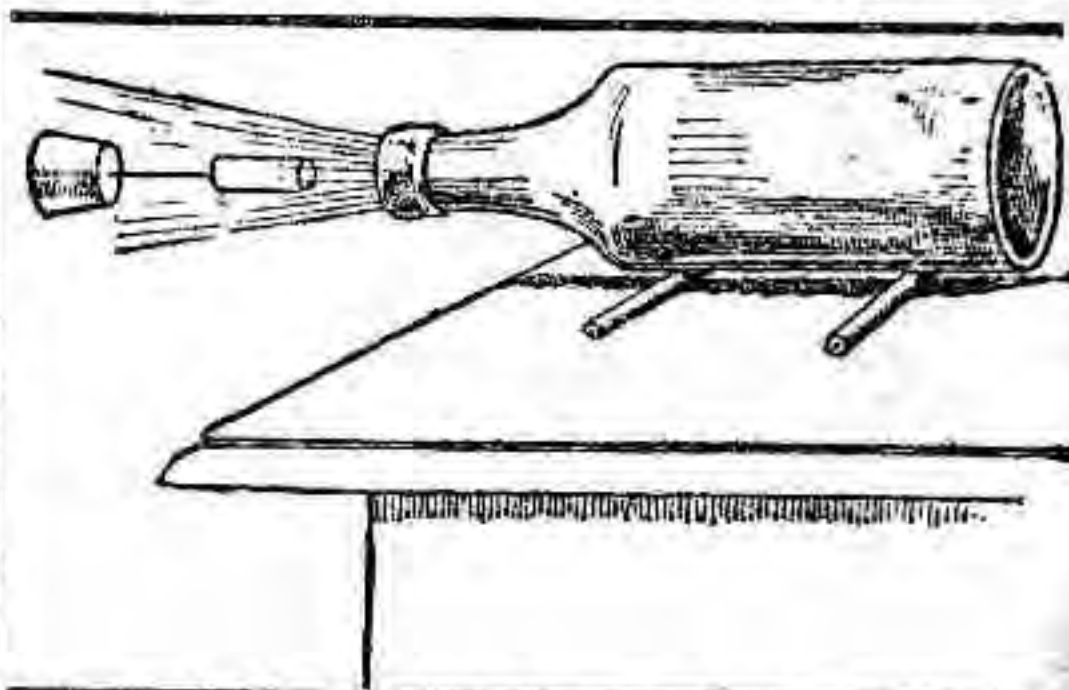


Fig. 3.—The Bottle Cannon.

such as a vinegar, or, better still, a champagne bottle, and fill it a third full with water.

Next, take a little carbonate of soda, and also some tartaric acid, both of which may be obtained at any chemist's, taking care to wrap them in packets which will not be confused one with the other.

Dissolve the carbonate of soda in the water contained in the bottle, at the same time placing the tartaric acid in a playing-card rolled in the form of a cylinder, one end of which should be filled with a plug of blotting-paper.

Having accomplished this much to your satisfaction, suspend the cartridge just made from the cork of the bottle by sticking in it a pin, to which is attached a thread, particular care being taken that the bottle is standing upright on the table, and that the open end of the tube is the upper one.

After having regulated the length of the thread so that the bottom of the tube does not touch the liquid in the bottle, tightly fit the cork in.

You now have your cannon charged, and all that remains to be done is to fire it.

This is done by laying the bottle horizontally on two pencils placed parallel to one another, thus forming a gun-carriage. Immediately the bottle is so placed the water penetrates the tube, and dissolves the tartaric acid. The carbonic acid gas which is immediately produced blows out the cork with a violent explosion, whilst, at the same time, owing to the reaction, the bottle rolls back on the two pencils, in exact imitation of the recoil of a piece of artillery. (Fig. 3.)

THE SECRET OF THE SILENT CITY.

Our Grand New Serial.

By DAGNEY HAYWARD.



Just as Tubby was free of the water and swung in mid-air, the ugly snout of a crocodile, with its great, gleaming teeth, clashed, missing the fat man's legs by an inch. (See page 18.)

READ THIS FIRST.

Mr. Sherwell, producer of the Southern Film Company, accompanied by his staff, set out in search of the Silent City, which is situated in the wilds of South America.

The staff includes Tom Rackett, the operator; Tubby Bouncer, a comedian; Dick Grainger, Mike Rafferty, and Larry, three boy chums; two servants, Tung Wu, a Chinaman, and Quambo, a nigger; also three animals, Augustus, an elephant, Wonga, a chimpanzee, and Boris, a boarhound.

Mr. Sherwell's chart is incomplete, and he has only a vague idea as to the position of the Silent City.

Tom Rackett obtains many wonderful and interesting films en route. Later it is discovered through Wonga, the chimpanzee, that a rival film company is making for the Silent City.

Proceeding along the river, Wonga lassoes a crocodile, and is only just saved from being dragged into the water among the reptiles by Dick, who cuts the rope in the nick of time.

(Now read on.)

Mysterious Happenings.

WONGA looked at Dick for a moment in some bewilderment. Then the chimpanzee solemnly shook his rescuer by the hand, leapt on ahead again, this time keeping well away from the river's edge.

"You stupid young ass!" yelled Dick after Wonga. "Another second and you'd have been a meal for the crocodiles! Now we'll have to get you another rope."

This was soon forthcoming and fixed round Wonga, who showed great gratification at wearing something new. Then, as if for safety, he linked arms with Dick, and kept near him for a considerable distance.

Augustus, with Quambo on his head

and Rackett on his back, now headed the expedition, for the undergrowth was getting denser, and the entwining branches and tendrils of the tropical vegetation greatly impeded progress, but Augustus was able by his splendid strength and intelligence to trample down these obstacles.

The somewhat deep gloom of the jungle made an impression on the boys. Mr. Sherwell told them that so dense were some of the South American forests that the sun never shone into them, and that the gloomy interior was almost as dark as night, and that among the deep and mysterious depths of these primeval jungles there might lurk enormous reptiles, descendants of prehistoric times.

"I wish we could come across one of them," said Dick.

"So do I!" cried Larry.

"Sure and bedad," echoed Mike, "I should like to see a craythur too big for his size!"

Just at that moment they rounded a bend of the river.

"Hallo!" shouted Dick. "Just look at that!" He pointed to a rough, native bridge, which swung across the water, suspended from one low tree-branch to another on the opposite bank. It was a somewhat flimsy-looking affair, made of twisted fibre and bamboo, only just wide enough for two men to walk abreast.

"It's of native workmanship, evidently," said Mr. Sherwell; "though what natives are round about here I don't know."

Then Mr. Sherwell and the boys saw Augustus halt, and Quambo and Tom Rackett slide down his trunk.

Rackett shouted and waved, and then came running towards them.

"That bridge," he said, as he approached his leader, "is the very thing I want for a rattling good point of vantage from which to take a film of these crocodiles, and I'm bent on obtaining a real stunt film of them. What do you think, Mr. Sherwell?"

"Certainly!" replied his leader. "You make the necessary arrangements, and do exactly as you like. It seems to me that such an opportunity shouldn't be missed."

It did not take long for the boys, Tung Wu, Rackett, and Tubby Bouncer, to get Rackett's apparatus on to the bridge.

The lowest part of the bridge was not more than five feet from the water, and Rackett soon had everything ready for operating.

Dick, Larry, and Mike were keenly interested in watching the performance; while Tung Wu, on the alert to render all the assistance he could, was next to Tubby Bouncer, who was perspiring freely from his exertions of carrying part of Rackett's equipment.

"I say," said Rackett, eyeing Tubby Bouncer, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, "don't you begin swaying about too much on this bridge, or you'll have us all over! By the way," he added, with a laugh, "I want these crocodiles to get on the move. I suppose you won't oblige me by falling in and rousing them up a bit, eh, Tubby?"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Tubby, turning pale beneath his red, heated face. "I didn't come out here to be eaten alive by crocodiles!"

"If you were to fall in, Tubby," cried Larry, "you'd cause a tidal wave, and we should all be swamped!"

Just at that moment Mike, who was standing next to Tung Wu, turned round, and, catching his foot in one of the bamboo supports, fell against the Chinaman, who in turn lurched heavily against Tubby.

No one knew exactly how it happened, but the next instant there was a mighty splash, and Tubby Bouncer disappeared beneath the water.

"My eye!" shrieked Dick, in an ecstasy of merriment. "Tubby's gone in!"

"Oh crumbs!" chortled Larry. "What a lark!"

Then Tubby's head and face appeared above the surface. He was gasping and spluttering and making such a face that the boys burst out into renewed laughter.

"That's right, Tubby, swim for it! Swim to the bottom if you can't do anything else!" yelled Mike.

"My eye!" cried Rackett. "Just look!"

For a moment the boys had not realised Tubby's danger. But at Rackett's shout they saw the water near the banks lashed into sudden foam.

The crocodiles were coming for the fat and now desperate Tubby.

"Splash, man—splash, and kick your legs out as hard as you can!" yelled Rackett. And then, half to himself, he added: "Great Scott, what a film!"

The boys then heard the clicking of his camera.

It was Tung Wu who first regained presence of mind.

Like lightning the Chinaman grabbed at Wonga, who stood near Dick, tore off the rope from the monkey's shoulders, and, with unerring aim, hurled the end towards Tubby, who caught at it desperately.

"Pullee, haullee, heavee, altogether!" yelled Tung Wu, as the boys caught at the spare end of the rope.

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Everyone pulled with all his strength; and Tubby, hanging on like grim death, was torn through the water.

The whole river seemed to be swarming with crocodiles, and their dark, horrid forms seemed to literally cluster round the frantic Tubby.

"Altogether, pullee for life!" cried the Chinaman.

There was one frantic pull. But only in the nick of time, for just as Tubby was free of the water and swung in mid-air, the ugly snout of a crocodile, with its great, gleaming teeth, clashed, missing the fat man's legs by an inch.

The next instant Tubby was safe and sound on the bridge, shaking hands with everyone all round, and he had a special word of thanks for the Chinaman, whose promptness had averted serious disaster.

"Well, Tubby, old man," said Rackett, "please don't do that kind of thing more than you can help, for it's given us all a nasty turn. But, by gum," he added, "I've filmed the whole thing, and I guess they'll all sit up at home when they see that episode on the screen!"

Then Mr. Sherwell came hurrying up, and congratulated Tubby on his escape. Soon they were all on the bank again, and, as it wanted only an hour or so before sunset, Mr. Sherwell decided on camping a little higher up the river for the night.

So, scarcely a quarter of a mile farther on, they halted, and made preparations to spend the night there.

Very soon Augustus was busy stacking things up for the camp. Tung Wu began to prepare for a meal, while Rackett, in the seclusion of a specially prepared tent, began to develop some of his films.

Boris and Wonga, who were very good friends, were tied up close together, and every now and then the chimpanzee jumped on to the dog's back and pulled his ears, to which Boris responded by frequently jerking him from his seat. These two were firm friends.

Dick, Larry, and Mike, after they had helped in the general work of making the camp, sat together talking, wondering if any boys had ever before had such wonderful adventures.

"Let's go and have a look round, boys!" said Larry, when the preparations for the camp were fairly under way.

"Right-ho!" answered Dick. "If we follow this path, it looks as though it might lead to a village or some huts."

The three boys followed the narrow path for about a quarter of a mile. It wound in and out amongst the dense undergrowth, and they were thinking of retracing their steps, when a sudden turn in the path brought them in sight of something which took their breath away.

On a little patch of cleared ground stood an immense image. It was the figure of a man sitting with his hands on his knees. The idol was some twenty feet high, but what immediately attracted their attention was a magnificent blue stone which was set in its forehead, and sparkled in a thousand gorgeous rays as the sunlight caught it.

"By gum!" cried Mike. "There's a fine stone, bedad! Sure, and if I had that I would buy Ould Oireland right out!"

"I wonder who put it there?" said Dick. "There does not seem to be anybody about. It is quite deserted."

But there he made a mistake. The three boys had been so intent on gazing at the wonderful stone, that they had not seen five or six dark figures crawling

amongst the trees and steadily approaching them under cover of the undergrowth.

Suddenly they darted out. Silently, with never a shriek nor a howl, they leaped on Dick, Mike, and Larry, and hurled them to the ground. Before the boys could utter a sound, gags were stuffed into their mouths, and they were bound tightly hand and foot.

At this moment a strange figure appeared from behind the idol and stalked up to them as they lay on the ground.

It was a man dressed in glaring colours and painted in nightmare fashion.

With the exception of his fingers, the hands were orange. The fingers were of a brilliant blue. His feet were scarlet, the toes being picked out in green. His face was hidden beneath a hideous black mask, which was relieved by white circles round the eyes and mouth.

With grim, gaunt strides, this figure approached the helpless lads and looked at them closely. He was evidently a man of great power amongst the natives, for they stood back in awe of him and awaited his commands in humble silence.

He spoke never a word. With an imperious gesture he pointed to a small hut close by, and the next moment the three boys were lifted high on native shoulders, carried thither, and hurled into the darkness.

It was an awful experience, and for a long while they lay there helpless and motionless. Larry had chanced to fall on his side, whilst Dick and Mike were on their faces, so he was the only one who could see anything in that hut of horrors.

Suddenly he noticed several little dots of light moving about in pairs. These pairs darted hither and thither swiftly, and some of them were getting closer to him every moment.

Larry could not make out what they were. At first he thought of rats, but then he realised that if they had been rats they would have made some noise, however slight. Then the door, which had been merely closed, opened a crack, and a shaft of sunshine entered the hut. The sight which revealed itself to Larry made his very flesh creep.

They were spiders! Great, bloated spiders with shimmering eyes which glinted hungrily at the sight of the helpless figures lying on the floor.

The sight gave him the strength of a madman. With one wild effort he burst the grass rope which bound him, tore out the gag from his mouth, and uttered a terrifying yell. Instantly the hut was filled with native guards, who raised their spears and would have killed their captives outright had not the strange, painted man suddenly made his appearance. He uttered a few words in a voice of authority, waved his hand towards the spiders, and stalked out.

"Help! Help!" cried Larry, but the next moment he was gagged and bound again, and the native spearsmen took up their place in the hut. They had evidently received orders to guard their captives closely.

Meanwhile, away back in the camp, Mr. Sherwell was beginning to feel anxious about the boys. Evening had fallen and there was no sign of them.

"Tom," he said at last, "I am going to look for those lads. Bring your revolver and come along, too! We will take Boris with us. He will soon pick up their trail."

"Ay, ay!" answered Tom Rackett. "He is a smart hound. I hope the young beggars have not got into trouble."

Mr. Sherwell was right. Boris sniffed

about for a moment or two, and then set off without a shadow of doubt along the path the boys had travelled earlier. His instinct was unerring, and in a short while they were standing before the huge idol which had awakened the boys' curiosity.

The tropical night had fallen with its usual suddenness, and the place was lighted up by a brilliant moon which reflected in a thousand quivers of light the wondrous stone in the idol's forehead.

"Look!" gasped Tom. "Just look at that jewel, boss! I reckon that would pay for our whole outfit twice over!"

"It is indeed wonderful," said the other. "But what is Boris growling at?"

Boris had stopped. He crouched at the feet of Tom Rackett and sniffed the air angrily. Then he growled a low, deep growl which meant trouble.

From between the feet of the moonlit idol a white figure was approaching. Its arms were outstretched, and the face looked horrible and ghastly in the pale moonlight. Both Tom and Mr. Sherwell gripped their revolvers tightly and waited as it came nearer and nearer.

"What is it?" asked Tom Rackett in a low voice, as he stooped to hold Boris back. "Lie down, Boris, my lad! If there is any shooting to be done we don't want you in the way."

"I can't imagine," said Sherwell. "All the same, I feel convinced that it has something to do with the boys' disappearance!"

The figure was now a few yards from them, and its hands were still outstretched in a menacing attitude.

Unable to stand the tension any longer, Mr. Sherwell leaped forward and grappled with it furiously.

"Where are my boys?" he cried. "What have you done with them, you witch-doctor?"

But he had met his match. Even as he closed with him the mysterious figure caught him with a trick grip and sent him spinning to the ground.

"Shoot, Tom!" cried Mr. Sherwell.

Tom raised his revolver and covered the white figure.

"Shoot!" cried Mr. Sherwell again.

"Stop!" said the figure in white, in perfect English. "If you fire a shot or make another sound you and your whole party will be skinned alive!"

Tom Rackett, who had raised his revolver at Mr. Sherwell's cry, dropped his arm to his side.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"Never mind who I am!" was the reply. "If you fire a single shot you and your friend, not to mention three boys you know of, will be dead before morning!"

Mr. Sherwell pricked up his ears at the mention of the boys.

"Where are they?" he asked. "If they have come to any harm it will be the worse for you!"

"They have come to no harm," answered the mysterious man. "If it had not been for me they would have been killed by now. Come, and I will show you!"

Full of mistrust, but anxious for the boys' lives, Mr. Sherwell and Tom followed the stranger to the little hut where Dick, Mike, and Larry were lying. Tom kept his hand on his revolver, ready to shoot at the first sign of any trickery. He had no faith in this gaudily-painted man of mystery.

(There will be another instalment of this grand adventure serial next week. Order you copy EARLY.)

THE SILENT STRIKE!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Continued from page 15.)

"Bunter, you are really a most obtuse youth!"

"Oh, really, sir!" said Billy Bunter indignantly. "I—"

"But I've heard quite enough to know that Wharton acted for the best," interposed the Head grimly. "I will inform you of my decision as to what steps I shall take to settle the matter later on. In the meantime, Wharton, there will be no classes this afternoon."

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton.

The juniors left the study in high spirits. It was obvious that they had heard the last of the matter.

Once the door had closed behind them the juniors broke into chuckles of glee.

"Finis!" said Bob Cherry delightedly.

"Yes, rather, you chaps!" said Billy Bunter. "Always rely on me to get you out of an awkward scrape! You—"

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in surprise. "Bunty, you're a fat—"

"The correctfulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific!" said Hurree Singh quickly. "He tactfully informed the Head of the true statefulness of the worthy affairs. I thinkfully consider that Bunter has done well!"

Billy Bunter beamed.

"Oh, really, Inky!" he said warmly. "I'm glad you've got sense enough to realise it, anyway. These chaps are a bit potty!"

"What?"

Billy Bunter backed away hastily before the menacing attitude of the Removites.

"Nunno! I mean, we ought to have a feed to celebrate our victory over Hacker," he said quickly. "I'm willing to do all the shopping!"

"Trust our fat tulip to think of that!"

chuckled Bob Cherry. "But Billy seems to have found some brains somewhere. Perhaps the silent strike has done him good!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"It's all right, Billy!" said Harry Wharton. "We'll have that feed!"

"What-ho!" said Billy Bunter, with emphasis.

And the feed was duly held. The victory of Greyfriars over the Shell-master had been complete.

Billy Bunter came in for a great deal of glory when Harry Wharton told the festive gathering how he had told the Head what would have happened if there had not been a silent strike.

Billy Bunter was distinctly sleepy, and not the slightest bit hungry, as he rose to make reply to Wharton's speech.

"It's all right, you fellows," he said drowsily. "Always rely on me to get you out of an awkward scrape!"

THE END.

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1. A free bottle of "Harlene," the most invigorating food and tonic for hair and scalp.

2. A free packet of "Cremex" Shampoo Powder, a delightfully refreshing and cleansing preparation that prepares the hair for "Hair-Drill."

3. A free bottle of "Uzon" Brilliantine that gives a final polish and lustre to the "Harlene" drilled hair.

4. A Free Copy of the new "Harlene Hair-Drill" Manual, giving complete instructions.

This Trial Outfit does not cost you a single penny—the only small expense to which you are put being the outlay of 4d. in stamps to defray cost of postage and packing.

HAIR THAT IS WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD.

No man or woman to-day can afford to neglect his or her hair. Thick, lustrous and beautiful hair has a definite cash value to everyone. It adds to your personal appearance, and a good appearance opens all doors to you. A woman has no charms to equal long, silken and radiant tresses of beautiful hair, the



It costs you nothing to acquire a full Seven Days' Trial Outfit of the universally popular "Harlene Hair-Drill." You will be pleasantly surprised with the results of even a short course of this delightful "two minutes a day" toilet exercise. (Send the Free Coupon to-day.)

inspiration of a thousand poems. To a man healthy and well-conditioned hair gives dignity and crispness.

ENRICH YOUR HAIR TO-DAY.

There is no excuse to-day for any man or woman having thin, brittle, weak, or falling hair. "Harlene Hair-Drill" overcomes every kind of hair trouble, no matter from what cause it springs. It preserves the hair in health and it restores sickly hair back to health and beauty once more. Let "Harlene Hair-Drill" enrich your hair and increase its value to you. Simply send 4d. stamps for postage, and a Free Harlene Outfit will be sent to your address.

After a Free Trial you will be able to obtain further supplies of "Harlene" at 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 4s. 9d. per bottle; "Uzon" Brilliantine at 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. per bottle; and "Cremex" Shampoo Powders at 1s. 1½d. per box of seven shampoos (single packets 2d. each), from all Chemists and Stores, or direct from Edwards' Harlene, Ltd., 20, 22, 24, and 26, Lamb's Conduit Street, London, W.C. 1.

"HARLENE HAIR-DRILL" GIFT OUTFIT COUPON.

Detach and post to EDWARDS' HARLENE, Ltd., 20, 22, 24, and 26, Lamb's Conduit St., London, W.C.1.

Dear Sirs,—Please send me your Free "Harlene" Four-Fold Hair-Growing Outfit as described. I enclose 4d. in stamps for postage and packing of parcel to my address.

MAGNET, 16-3-20.

NOTE TO READER.

Write your full name and address clearly on a plain piece of paper, pin this coupon to it, and post as directed above. (Mark envelope "Sample Dept.")

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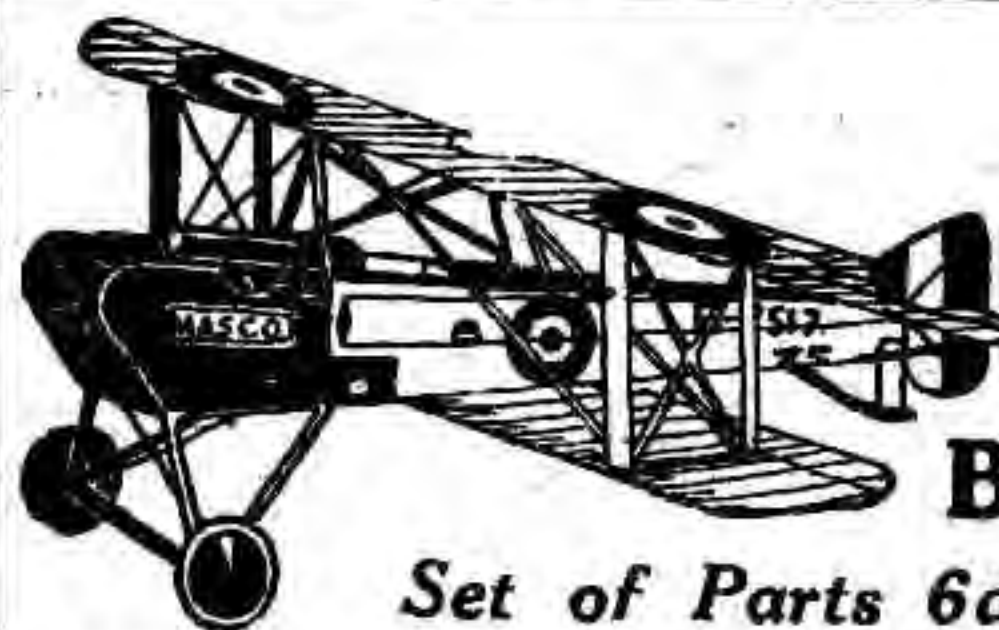


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