

Every Schoolboy's Story Paper!

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THE FEUD WITH FRIARDALE!



THE PROCESSION OF THE VILLAGE LADS' VICTIMS!

(A Remarkable Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Grayfriars.)



For Next Monday.

"THE CIRCUS HERO!"

By Frank Richards.

Next Monday's story of Greyfriars deals most particularly with a character of whom we have heard very little just lately—namely, Oliver Kipps, the school-boy conjurer. The story is one of the most exciting and thrilling that has ever appeared in the MAGNET, and it tells in a splendid manner how Kipps came to be the Circus Hero.

Harry Wharton & Co. also play a great part in the story, and for once in a way Billy Bunter makes himself really useful.

"THE CIRCUS HERO!"

will appeal to every one of my readers, and will be voted a great yarn in every way. Order your copy of next Monday's MAGNET at once!

THE FASCINATION OF BUNTER.

Yes, it is so. I see the fact every day. Quite earnest-minded people write and ask me to furnish them full particulars about the Bunter family tree. I suppose there is one. You can see something of the kind in your mind's eye—our of these plagiary difficult diagrams with all the branches settling forth who married and who did not, who came over with the Conqueror, and so forth.

My correspondent wants to know who Bunter's father is? That is one detail. Well, judging from what we have heard of Bunter's father in the yarns, the old man is not of much account. I seem to remember that Mr. Bunter is something in the City—a vague, big-faced personage with an eye for the main chance. We will not blame the man for that peculiarity, but the attempt to foist himself on a wondering world as a man of title was not good. The scheme was very thin indeed. But, though we should not welcome the porpoise as an aristocrat, if you take him as he is you will find a lot of unexpected satisfaction in the spectacle he creates.

The fat individual has always romped home in the race for popularity. He may do mean things, but he is so amiable-looking, so round, he could not really have meant it. That is why "Bunter on the Boards" always succeeds. He has the right adipose to raise a laugh. Not as a villain—dear, no!—but as the soft-voiced lumbering who beams on everyone, and takes the best of everything for himself.

THE CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN.

It is not so bad, after all. From the Sunny South I hear that the results were
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most satisfactory. Of course, lots of advertisers never get answered. Then it is their turn to advertise. There always has been disappointment in these matters.

When Pompey wanted a new secretary or sword-bearer, and advertised in the "Roman Times," he selected a likely applicant, and pitched the rest of the answers into the ivory wastepaper-basket.

At least, that was most likely what happened. It is no use being chagrined because a reply does not come along. It is overlooking the natural laziness of humanity. Somebody gets suited with a correspondent, and does not trouble any more. I am not suggesting that this should be the case, but it is so.

WALLY IN GAY PAREE!

There is plenty of curiosity about Wally Bunter. As will be remembered, after the doughty cousin of Billy and Sammy gave up his successful bit of impersonation at Greyfriars, he hied him off to Paris on the Seine. He went on business, and, from all accounts, the smart fellow is doing wonderfully well. But heaps of readers want him back at one or other of the schools.

I shall not forget the matter. But it looks as though Wally, if he returns, will be talking French—parlavoing, and that kind of thing, just from force of habit. He would be able to teach his fat relative how to chat like the Gaul. He will be "Monsieur Buntaire," with a handsome cravat, and he will spell dinner with one "n"—sure to!

COMPETITIONS FOR OVERSEAS.

I hope readers in South Africa and the other big Dominions do not really imagine that it pleases me to shut them out of the competitions. It does not. I can assure them of that fact; but there is the question of time. The only way would be to have distinct competitions for readers abroad.

I am looking into the feasibility of this matter, and shall deal with it again. Of course, home tests cannot be held back until the mails come in. That, again, would not be fair. I am relying on the good nature and patience of my chums on the other side in this particular.

STENOGRAPHY.

Several times I have been asked to give articles on shorthand; but the idea, though attractive, has its drawbacks, since I cannot very well supply the signs. The shorthand for Billy Bunter—I am thinking of the Pitman System—is a neat and taking little symbol, far more graceful than Bunter.

The way to learn shorthand is to take in the Manual, soak in it, have it with you in the train, and by dint of much studying to get the signs into your head, so that you begin to associate the shorthand characters with the things they represent. But more another time.

A UNIVERSITY CAREER.

A chum in South Africa asked me the other day whether he should go in for business or enter the University. He has shown brilliancy at school, and he has a special aptitude for leadership. He did not say as much, but I happen to know the facts. I advised the University.

In days to come we shall be glad that we have preserved all the learning possible. It will help all the other departments of human activity. We do not want the new ideas to turn out all the old. Some of the latter require sticking to through thick and thin.

WHEN THE EDITOR'S HAIR TURNS WHITE.

I will tell you just when. It is a sad little story. This paragraph also refers to the "G. H.," to which bright and captivating weekly many photographs are sent in—and accepted. But directly after the photographs come letters asking the Editor why the pictures have not appeared. Well, the "Herald" is a paper which goes to press weeks in advance, not an express train, and the reproduction of photos takes time.

I hope my chums will take note of this and practise patience. They must do this, latter, and also recognise that pictures have to take their turn.

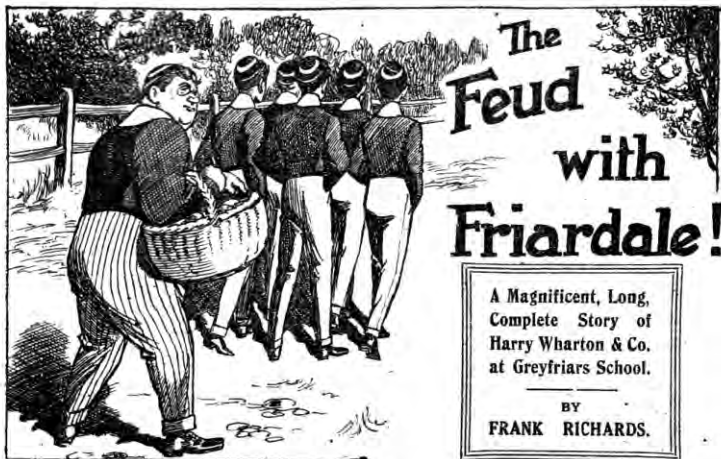
A LITTLE DIFFICULTY.

A friend at Ely asks me whether I will undertake to publish a book he and his staff want to bring out.

I am afraid this is impossible. I have quite enough on my hands as things are. I shall not give my chum's name, though it is that of a real hard worker, who is doing honour to the famous place where the monks merrily sang as Canute, the king, was passing by.

But I will tell this correspondent that his best course will be to bring out his book in the first instance just as hundreds of excellent amateur magazines are published, namely, in the form of a written-out publication, or by adopting one of the many manifold systems, if he sees his way to it.

Your Editor



The Feud with Friardale!

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

BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Fags Wanted!

"IT'S a ripping afternoon!" said Bob Cherry.

"Simply gorgeous!" said Harry Wharton. And the other members of the Famous Five heartily agreed.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and Harry Wharton & Co. were assembled in Study No. 1 to discuss what they should do with themselves.

There was no football match down for decision, and the juniors were not feeling in the mood for a scratch game. It was the tail-end of the season, and even football had begun to pall. There were some important senior matches still to take place; but so far as the juniors were concerned, most of the exciting fixtures had already been played off.

Harry Wharton glanced through the open window into the sunlit Close. An animated scene met his gaze.

Dozens of fellows—some in Etons and some in boating flannels, some pushing bicycles and others hugging cameras—were streaming out of gates.

So inviting was the spring sunshine that it was doubtful if anybody would remain indoors. The call of the open air was irresistible.

"Well," said Wharton, turning from the window, "what are we going to do? Any suggestions will receive my careful consideration."

"A bike-spin," said Frank Nugent, "would be ideal."

"Puzzle, find the bikes!" said Bob Cherry. "Mine's in dock for repairs, and so is Inky's. And Johnny's isn't fit for active service. It ought to have been chucked on the scrap-heap ages ago!"

"Look here," roared Johnny Bull wrathfully, "what's wrong with my jigger?"

"Nothing," said Bob Cherry. "Nothing at all, except that it's old-fashioned, and clumsy, and ugly—like its owner!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull clenched his hands, and would probably have smitten the playful Bob, had not Harry Wharton intervened.

"Dear children, you should never let your angry passions rise. Your hands weren't fashioned, don't forget, to tear each other's eyes!" said the captain of the Remove.

"He insulted me and my bike!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Shush! He only did it because he's jealous of your jigger!"

"Jealous of a chunk of old iron!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Well, I like that!"

"We're getting away from the subject," said Frank Nugent. "The burning question of the moment is, what are we going to do?"

"I propose to vote," said Hurree Singh, "that we go for an esteemed ramble along the shore."

"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "We haven't explored the merry old smugglers' cove for a long time!"

"Those in favour of Inky's suggestion, show their hands," said Wharton.

Every hand went up, including Wharton's.

"Good!" said the captain of the Remove. "Carried unanimously!"

The Famous Five were about to don their caps, when there was a tap on the door of the study.

"Come in, father!" said Bob Cherry. The "father" proved to be no less a personage than Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth.

Bob Cherry flushed crimson. But Mr. Prout had not heard—or, at any rate, he pretended not to have heard—Bob's remark.

"Pardon me, my boys," said Mr. Prout, in genial and unofficial tones, "I wish to ask a favour of you."

The Famous Five groaned inwardly, of course. They exchanged dismal glances, which seemed to say:

"This fairly puts the kybosh on our half-holiday!"

"The fact is," said Mr. Prout, "I am holding a little celebration in my study this afternoon, and I have invited the other masters to attend. A great deal of preparation will be necessary, and I had hoped to enlist the services of some of the Third Form boys. I find, however, that they have all gone out on pleasure bent. I wonder if you boys would be good enough to go down to the village and do some shopping for me?"

"According to the rules, sir," said Harry Wharton politely, "the Remove are exempt from fagging."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Prout. "I understand that perfectly, Wharton. I am not ordering you to go to the village. I merely ask you to do so as a personal favour. You have every right to decline if you wish."

But the juniors could not very well do that. They liked Mr. Prout. Although inclined to be eccentric at times, he was a real good sort. And to refuse his request would be shameful.

"All right, sir," said Wharton, after a momentary pause. "We'll give you a hand."

"Thank you, Wharton! I knew I should not ask in vain. Here is a list of the things I shall require. And you may tell the various tradesmen to send in their accounts to me."

"Very well, sir."

Little dreaming that he had robbed the juniors of a delightful ramble along the shore, the master of the Fifth withdrew.

When he had gone, the Famous Five exchanged rueful glances.

"That little ramble of ours will have to be postponed," said Wharton.

"Blow old Prout!" said Nugent. "He means well, but—"

"But he's a dashed nuisance!" said Bob Cherry.

"Exactly!"

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"Never mind!" said Wharton. "Let's make the best of it."

"Is there very much to get?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I should jolly well say so! Listen to Prout's shopping-list!"

And Wharton declaimed the various items.

"Two chickens, two veal-and-ham pies, a dozen eggs, two tins of sardines, as much butter and sugar as the grocer will let us have, and a basket of fruit."

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Looks as if Prout's laying-in for a siege!"

The Famous Five went out into the bright sunshine, and set off for the village.

Billy Bunter, who was hovering in the vicinity of the school tuckshop, watched them go, and his little round eyes glittered behind his spectacles.

"It's a feed!" he muttered. "A peck in the woods, most likely!"

Bunter's soul did not rise above eating and drinking; and he supposed that everybody else was similarly afflicted. Whenever he saw a party of fellows going out of gates he generally imagined that a feed was under way.

The Owl of the Remove set off steadily in the wake of the Famous Five. He did not think that they had observed him, but he was wrong.

"The purpose is following hard on this lot, you fellows," said Frank Nugent.

"Let's get the price on!"

The Famous Five went ahead with rapid strides, but Bunter was not to be shaken off. He too, quickened his pace, and his fat little legs were going like lead.

"Bunks!" he muttered. "Wish they wouldn't walk so jolly fast! I'm a pretty good athlete, but I shan't be able to keep this up much longer!"

When Harry Wharton & Co. reached the village, Billy Bunter still had them in sight.

The perspiration was streaming down the fat junior's cheeks, and he had begun to mend.

Bob Cherry threw a cautious glance over his shoulder.

"The Bunter-bird is still on the trail," he murmured. "He looks pretty puffed, too!"

"He won't have a breath left in his body by the time we've finished with him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five went first of all to the grocer's.

Billy Bunter saw them go in, and a few moments later he saw them emerge, laden with goods.

"It's a feed, right enough!" murmured the fat junior.

Harry Wharton & Co.'s next visit was to the pastrycook's, and this confirmed Bunter's theory.

The fat junior crept up to the door of the establishment, and he heard Bob Cherry call for a couple of veal-and-ham pies.

Bunter's mouth watered. In his mind's eye he saw himself polishing off one of those pies.

When the Famous Five came out of the pastrycook's the number of packages had greatly increased. Each of the juniors had something to carry.

But the shopping was not finished yet, by any means.

Harry Wharton & Co. went from one establishment to another, and Billy Bunter dogged their footsteps all the time.

The fat junior was nearly exhausted, and only the prospect of having a share in the feed kept him going.

The last place to be visited was Burke's, the greengrocer's. Here the

Famous Five purchased a tremendous basket of fruit, the very sight of which made Billy Bunter's eyes chaste.

Laden with their purchases, the juniors started off for Greyfriars.

Although handicapped by the packages they carried, they went ahead with swinging strides, and Billy Bunter puffed and snorted in the rear.

But the Owl of the Remove could not maintain that terrific pace for long. The distance between him and the Famous Five was growing wider and wider.

At last, almost incapable of further exertion, Billy Bunter came to a halt. He shouted after the Famous Five.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as if he had only just become aware of Bunter's presence. "What do you want, porpoise?"

"If you fellows will wait for me, and promise to go slow," panted Bunter, "I'll give you a hand with those parcels!"

"Oh, good!" said Wharton.

"The jolly decent of you, Bunt!" said Nugent.

"Bunter's showing quite another side to his nature," said Johnny Bull. "I had no idea he was so generous!"

The Famous Five waited for the fat junior to catch up with them, and then they turned him into a beast of burden by making him carry the fruit.

The basket was weighted down with a large melon, and it was decidedly heavy.

Billy Bunter staggered along for twenty yards or more. Then he set the basket down in the roadway, and helped himself to a large William pear.

"No, you don't, my son!" said Bob Cherry. "Put that pear back!"

"O' really, Cherry, I want something to refresh me."

"My boot will refresh you if you don't do as you're told!"

Very reluctantly Billy Bunter replaced the pear, and lurches forward once more with the basket. He consoled himself with the reflection that when Greyfriars was reached he could refresh himself to his heart's content.

The fat junior was in a terrible state by this time, but he kept on keeping on, fondly anticipating a first-rate feed at the end of his journey.

Greyfriars was reached at last, and Billy Bunter almost sank down in the Close from sheer exhaustion. By a supreme effort, however, he pulled himself together and the party of juniors passed into the building.

To Bunter's surprise, the Famous Five did not proceed to the Remove passage. They headed in a totally different direction.

"I—I say, you fellows—"

There was no response.

"Where the thump do you think you're going?"

Harry Wharton & Co. went ahead in silence. They halted at length outside the door of Mr. Prout's study.

Billy Bunter set down the basket of fruit, and almost collapsed on top of it.

"Oh, dear!" he panted. "I'm whacked!"

"Poor old perspiring porpoise!" said Bob Cherry.

The Owl of the Remove mopped his face with a handkerchief.

"Look here, you fellows," he gasped, "what's the idea of carting all this tuck along to Prout's study?"

"Because it happens to be for Prout," said Harry Wharton.

"What!"

Bunter fairly shrieked the word.

"Thanks awfully for giving us a helping hand!" said Bob Cherry blandly.

"You saved us no end of trouble," added Nugent.

"The fruitful basket was the heaviest load of all," purred Hurrece Singh.

Billy Bunter glared furiously at the Famous Five. If looks could have killed, there would have been five fatalities there and then.

"You—you mean to say that that grub doesn't belong to you?" roared Bunter.

"Wish it did," said Johnny Bull.

"Unfortunately, it's Prout's."

"Sorry we can't offer you a bunch of grapes, Bunter," said Wharton.

"Or a veal-and-ham pie," said Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter flourished a fat fist in the faces of the grinning juniors.

"Yah! Beasts! Rotters! I'll never forgive you for playing this low-down trick on me—never!"

"You shouldn't have been such a Paul Pry, old chap," said Nugent.

"My hat! I—I'll jolly well—"

What Billy Bunter intended to do was never known, for at that moment Mr. Prout stepped out into the passage.

The Owl of the Remove darted a final glare at the Famous Five, and rolled away, with feelings too deep for words!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Profiters!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. worked hard during the next hour or so.

Mr. Prout's study resembled a beehive, so great was the activity displayed therein.

To entertain all the masters at Greyfriars was a tall order; and Mr. Prout would have bungled the business badly had not the Famous Five been at hand to help him.

"This is extremely good of you, boys," said the master of the Fifth. "You have sacrificed your half-holiday in order to render me a service, and I am most grateful to you for your assistance."

"It's a pleasure, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

"Absolutely, sir!" said the others, in chorus.

The table had been laid, and the good things were displayed to advantage.

The Famous Five worked like niggers. Indeed, they could not have worked harder had they been preparing for a celebration in Study No. 1.

"Everything's ready now, sir," said Wharton, at length.

Mr. Prout beamed.

"Thank you, Wharton! By the way, I think there is one cake too many. Will you do me the favour of disposing of the surplus one?"

"Certainly, sir!" said the captain of the Remove, with a grin.

And the Famous Five quitted the study with a huge plum cake as a reward for their labours.

At five o'clock the guests began to arrive.

Mr. Copper and Mr. Twigg were the first to put in an appearance. They nodded generally to Mr. Prout, and seated themselves on the sofa.

A few moments later Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, drifted in. Then came Larry Lascelles, the mathematics master; and last of all, Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

"I must apologise for my belated arrival, Prout," said Mr. Quelch. "The fact is, I have been at work on my 'History of Greyfriars,' and I did not notice the flight of time."

"Will that history of yours ever be finished, Quelch?" asked Mr. Prout, with a smile. "You have been working on it for eleven years without cessation. Surely it is time to wind up!"



Wharton threw open the door of the study, but he was too late. There was a sudden click, and the rays of a powerful electric torch lit up the passage. "Wingale!" muttered Nugent. "Now we're in for it!" groaned Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 4.)

"My dear Prout," said Mr. Quelch, "an exhaustive history of this school cannot be written in five minutes. I have yet another thirty chapters to write."

"Bless my soul!"
"And, of course, a great deal of revision will be necessary. I estimate that I shall be engaged upon it for many years yet."

"You will have qualified for the Old Age Pension before you have finished it, Quelch!" said Mr. Copper.

And there was a general laugh.
"Come!" said Mr. Prout, drawing his chair up to the table. "Let us 'pile in,' as the boys would say."

The celebration proved quite a success. True, Mr. Prout made a few blunders—as, for instance, when he put salt instead of sugar in everybody's tea. But on the whole the guests had nothing to complain of.

Cigars were handed round afterwards, and the masters pulled away contentedly. "This happy little function must have entailed a great deal of preparation," remarked Mr. Lascelles.

Mr. Prout smiled.
"Fortunately, I had the assistance of Wharton and his friends," he said. "They all did my shopping for me, and—Come in!"

Mr. Prout broke off suddenly, as a knock sounded on the door of the study.

Gosling, the school porter, shuffled in with a note, which he handed to the master of the Fifth.

"Any answer, sir?" he inquired.
"No, thank you, Gosling!" said Mr. Prout. And the porter withdrew.

"Bad news, Prout?" asked Mr. Quelch, noting the deep frown on his colleague's face.

To everyone's astonishment, Mr. Prout jumped to his feet.

"Really, this is too bad!" he exclaimed. "These people are nothing less than swindlers!"

"Which people?" ejaculated Mr. Twigg.

"Burke & Son, the greengrocers, in Friar-dale. I have just received their bill."

"They have lost no time in sending it in," said Mr. Quelch. "Why, it was only this afternoon that you had the goods!"

"I have no objection to their sending it in so soon," said Mr. Prout. "But what I do object to, most strongly, is an excessive charge of this kind. I am aware that we live in a time of high prices; but I have yet to learn that the market value of an apple is a shilling!"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Copper. "Do you mean to say, Prout,

that Burke has had the effrontery to charge you at the rate of a shilling per apple?"

Mr. Prout flourished the bill under Mr. Copper's nose.

"Look at it!" he said. And he indicated the offending item, which ran thus:

"1 doz. apples . . . 6s."

"This," said Mr. Copper, "is a glaring case of profiteering. The apples were not exceptional in size or quality, and to charge a shilling each for them is absurd."

"Absurd!" echoed Mr. Prout. "That is much too feeble a term to use, sir! It is not absurd—it is criminal!"

"What action do you propose to take?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"I shall bring the matter to the notice of the Courtfield Profiteering Act Committee," said Mr. Prout promptly.

Mr. Hacker, who had been silent hitherto, gave a snort.

"You will get precious little satisfaction by taking such a course," he said. "The Profiteering Committee in Courtfield is composed of a set of old fogies who do not know their business."

"Then I will endeavour to teach them!" said Mr. Prout, with asperity.

"This is monstrous—unheard of! That man Burke evidently thought I should

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sit down under the imposition; but I will show him that he cannot swindle me with impunity. These profiteers must be exterminated. They are a menace to the community!"

Mr. Prout spoke with unusual heat, and the majority of his guests were in complete agreement with him.

"The Profiteering Committee meets to-morrow evening," said the master of the Fifth. "I will bring my case before them then."

"And if Burke is heavily fined he will have only himself to blame," said Mr. Quelch. "I must say I quite approve of your action, Prout. I should do precisely the same if I were in your place."

Whilst this conversation was in progress Billy Bunter had been zealously listening at the keyhole.

The fat junior had recovered from his guarded ordeal of a few hours previously, and he was quite his normal self again.

When Mr. Prout had finished slanging the profiteers, Billy Bunter rolled away to the junior Common-room.

"I say, you fellows!" he exclaimed, bursting excitedly into the room. "Old Prout's been swindled!"

"How?" inquired Bob Cherry, looking up from his game of chess. "Have you succeeded in persuading him to cash a post-order in advance?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glared.

"Don't be a funny beast, Cherry!"

"Certainly not," said Bob. "I don't want to land on your preserves!"

And there was a fresh burst of laughter.

"Who has been swindling Prout?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"Burke & Son, the greengrocers," said Billy.

"They've just sent him in the bill for that basket of fruit you fellows bought this afternoon. And they've charged him a bob each for the apples!"

"Gee-whizz!" gasped Nugent. "That's pretty steep!"

"Prout's in an awful stew about it," said the Owl of the Remove.

"He's going to bring the matter before the Courtfield Profiteering Committee to-morrow night."

"My hat!" said Wharton. "We shall have to go along and see the fun."

"Yes, rather!"

"It will be better than a pantomime!" said Peter Todd.

"Are members of the public admitted?" asked Squiff.

"Of course!"

"Quite a number of fellows expressed their intention of going over to Courtfield the following evening, and it was the general opinion that the tradesman who had had the audacity to charge a shilling each for apples would get it 'in the neck.'"

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "if it hadn't been for me you wouldn't have known anything about this. I consider I'm entitled to a reward."

"Hear, hear!" said Bolsover major.

"Bump him!"

Billy Bunter backed away in alarm.

"Here, hold on—I mean, leggo!"

Dump!

The eavesdropper descended to the floor of the Common-room with a crash.

And before he had fully recovered from the shock he was bumped again.

"Yaroooooh!" he yelled.

"Have we rewarded you enough?" inquired Skinner.

"Ow! Yes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was not the first time that day that Billy Bunter had been in the wars. But it was universally agreed that he had got no more than he deserved.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Before the Committee!

WINGATE of the Sixth had a very busy time the following evening issuing late passes to members of the Remove Form and many others.

It was now common knowledge that Mr. Prout was bringing a charge of profiteering against a local tradesman, and Greyfriars would be strongly represented in the public hall at Courtfield.

Harry Wharton & Co. had obtained passes, of course, and they tramped over to Courtfield in high spirits, anticipating plenty of fun.

"Don't forget, you fellows, that we've got to back Prout up, if necessary," said Wharton.

"If the committee don't give him justice," said Bob Cherry, "we'll bombard the boundaries with our pen-shooters!"

"Hear, hear!"

There was a gallery in the public hall, and it speedily became packed with Greyfriars fellows.

"Anybody would think that a bull-fight was coming off—or a boxing-match, at least," said Vernon-Smith.

"Where are the members of the committee?" asked Peter Todd, poking his head over the rail and looking down into the deserted body of the hall.

"Oh, they'll take their time about turning up!" said Bob Cherry. "These old jossers never hurry themselves. I don't suppose we shall hear them approaching in their bath-chairs for half an hour or more."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's old Prout!" said Johnny Bull suddenly.

The master of the Fifth advanced down the centre of the hall, and seated himself on a chair close to the committee's table.

There was a business-like air on Mr. Prout's florid face. He looked like a man who had a grievance, and was determined to get that grievance redressed.

From the gallery came one or two sympathetic remarks.

"Good luck, sir!"

"Hope you squash the profiteers all right!"

Mr. Prout gave an upward glance, and saw that he was well supported. He smiled at the throng of Greyfriars fellows.

The next moment two more individuals came in. One was a man of middle age, the other was a hefty, defiant-looking youth, who roared at the audience in the gallery.

"The committee's beginning to roll up," remarked Squiff.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"Those two aren't on the committee," he said. "One is Burke, the greengrocer, and the other bright-looking beauty is his son Paddy."

Mr. Prout glared at the man who was alleged to have swindled him in the matter of the apples, and doubtless a heated dispute would have ensued had not the members of the Profiteering Committee turned up at that moment.

Mr. Hacker had described the members of the committee as a set of old fogies, and he was not far from the truth.

The chairman possessed a flowing beard, a grouty foot, and other indications that he had long since left his youth behind him. The other gentlemen were also on the wrong side of sixty, and they puffed and snorted as they sat down at the table.

There was a cheer from the gallery.

"Hurrah!"

"They're here at last!"

"Pile in, Methusalem!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The aged and venerable chairman tottered to his feet.

"Silence in the gallery!" he exclaimed. "If you young gentlemen cannot preserve due order and decorum I shall have to ask you to retire."

"Rats!" growled Bolsover major.

But he was immediately silenced by a prod in the ribs from Harry Wharton.

"Dry up!" muttered the captain of the Remove. "This chipping's gone far enough. Give the chairman a chance!"

Order having been restored, the chairman got to business.

"I understand, Mr. Prout," he said, turning to the Greyfriars master, "that you wish to lodge a complaint against Mr. Burke, of Friarfield?"

"That is so, sir," said Mr. Prout.

"Very well. Will you kindly state your case, and be as brief as possible?"

I have an appointment to dine with the Mayor of Courtfield this evening, and I do not wish to be late."

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Loder glanced upwards, and as he did so a tremendous deluge of soot descended upon him. The prefect sprang to one side, but he could not evade the soot, which enveloped him like a garment. "Geroosogh!" spluttered Loder.

(See Chapter 8.)

There was a chuckle from the gallery. Mr. Prout lost no time in plunging into his subject.

"I have been swindled, gentlemen!" he exclaimed. "Grossly and deliberately swindled! This man"—the speaker levelled an accusing forefinger at Mr. Burke—"had the brazen effrontery to charge me six shillings for six apples. If you are equal to working out a simple mathematical problem, gentlemen, you will see that each apple cost me a shilling!"

Mr. Prout's sarcasm, although it failed to penetrate the hides of the

committee-men, caused a ripple of laughter from the audience.

"I submit, gentlemen," continued the master of the Fifth, "that this is a most glaring case of profiteering! Some people take it lying down, but that is not my way. I have come to this hall this evening to demand redress!"

"Have you Mr. Burke's account?" asked the chairman.

"I have, sir. Here it is."

The chairman and his fellow-greys pondered over the account, and a good deal of muttering and head-shaking ensued.

Finally, the chairman turned to Mr. Burke.

"We have no hesitation in saying, Mr. Burke, that you are guilty of an offence under the Profiteering Act. A charge of six shillings for six apples is certainly exorbitant."

"I'm aware of that, sir," replied Mr. Burke. "Mr. Prout is quite justified in bringing this case forward. Unfortunately, the whole thing was a mistake. My son, in making out the bill, charged for six pounds of apples instead of six

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single ones. I can assure you that we had no intention of profiteering."

The chairman nodded, and after a brief discussion with his colleagues he announced:

"This committee finds that the price charged for the apples was excessive. We do not regard it, however, as a wilful case of profiteering. The whole thing was, as Mr. Burke asserts, a mistake on the part of his son. Instead of paying six shillings for the apples, Mr. Prout will pay for them at their market value, which we assess at two shillings. We would advise Mr. Burke's son to be more careful in future. Mistakes such as this give rise to a good deal of annoyance and inconvenience. The case is now closed."

"And I hope the old buffer is satisfied," growled Paddy Burke, referring to Mr. Prout.

"Really?" protested the master of the Fifth. "I would not be insulted like this! You must learn to keep your tongue in your cheek, young man!"

Paddy Burke was the leader of the large louts, and he had caused a good deal of mischief in the past.

There was an ugly expression on Paddy's face from beautiful face. He felt that he had been made a fool of in the eyes of the Greyfriars fellows, and he was determined to get even with Mr. Prout.

"The fellows in the gallery were laughing at Paddy's disfigurement, and he heard the major make a sneering remark about a fellow being unable to distinguish between six apples and six pounds of apples."

The greengrocer's son clenched his fists.

"They're not the laugh of me now," he muttered. "But I'll make 'em sit for this!"

Paddy Burke had plenty of pals in the school, and he meant to enlist them as his henchmen, and to declare war on the school.

Turning to Mr. Prout, he said insolently:

"Are there complaints?"

Mr. Burke nudged his son's arm.

"That's enough, Paddy!" he muttered.

"We shall lose the school's custom if we keep on saucing the gentlemen."

"But—"

"You've said quite enough. Come along."

And the greengrocer half-dragged his son from the hall.

A number of taunting epithets were flung after them as they went, for most of the Greyfriars fellows were of the opinion—contrary to that expressed by the chairman—that the Burkes had definitely intended to profiteer at Mr. Prout's expense.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, rising to his feet with a yawn, "it wasn't nearly so funny as I expected it to be."

"In fact, it was quite tame," said Wharton. "But I see trouble ahead."

"How so, O king?"

"Did you twig the nasty look on the younger Burke's boot-like visage? He didn't like being shown up, and he means to have revenge."

"Bah!" said Johnny Bull. "What do we care for a lout like that?"

"Nothing at all," said Wharton. "But we shall have to keep a wary eye open, that's all. Burke's the sort of fellow who doesn't scruple to hit below the belt."

"And he's got bags of supporters, too," said Nugent. "However, a little feud with the village won't come amiss. It'll give things up a bit."

The juniors clattered down from the gallery, and emerged into the street.

The meeting had not lasted long, and most of the shops in the High Street were still open.

"What do you say to taking some grub back with us, and having a midnight feast in the dorm?" said Peter Todd.

"It's a ripping idea, if funds will run to it," said Bob Cherry. "Personally, I've only got fourpence-halfpenny in my old oak chest at the moment."

The others, however, were more fortunate.

Both Wharton and Hurree Singh had received remittances that day, and they contributed liberally to the expenses.

Half an hour later the Famous Five returned to Greyfriars carrying a huge hamper between them. They were followed by an enthusiastic crowd.

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "this will be a feast of the gods!"

It will be a feast of the prize porkers if you have a hand in it!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

On reaching Greyfriars the juniors found it impossible to convey the hamper direct to the Remove dormitory. Loder of the Sixth was the prefect on duty, and he would not have failed to "spot" the hamper, and confiscate it.

"We'll stow it away in the study for the time being," said Wharton, "and come down and fetch it at midnight."

"That's the idea!"

The hamper was accordingly deposited in Study No. 1, and shortly afterwards the juniors, in a state of suppressed excitement, went up to bed.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Discovery!

"ALL correct here!" Loder of the Sixth rapped out the question as he stepped into the Remove dormitory to see lights out.

"Yes, please, Loder," answered Bob Cherry meekly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's enough of your cheek, Cherry!" said the prefect, with a scowl.

"What are you up to, Field?"

Squiff was sitting up in bed, with a writing-pad on his knees, and he was scribbling away as if for a wager. He looked up when Loder addressed him.

"I'm writing a short story for 'The Greyfriars Herald,'" he said, "and I wanted to get it finished before you put out the lights."

"What sort of silly nonsense are you scribbling now?" sneered Loder.

"It isn't silly nonsense!" said Squiff indignantly. "It's rattling good stuff."

"It's about a Sixth Form fellow who breaks bounds at night, and all that sort of thing. I'm calling it 'Percy the Perfect Prefect.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take a hundred lines, Field!" snarled Loder. "And put that writing-pad away at once!"

Squiff tucked the writing-pad under his pillow, and gave a sigh.

"That's the worst of being a great novelist," he murmured. "One never gets the recognition that one deserves!"

"Dry up," growled Loder, "and go to sleep!"

And the prefect extinguished the lights and withdrew.

Instead of settling down to sleep, Squiff propped himself up on the pillows, and resolved to stay awake until midnight.

But, although the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak, and by the time the school clock struck eleven he had dropped into a deep

At half-past eleven only three fellows in the dormitory were awake. They were Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Frank Nugent.

Shortly afterwards both Bob and Frank succumbed, and when the midnight chimes rang out only Wharton was awake to hear them.

The captain of the Remove slipped out of bed, and roused the other members of the Remove Five.

"Put a jerk into it!" he said. "It's time to go down and fetch the grub."

"Yaw-aw-aw!" murmured Bob Cherry drowsily. "Can't you fetch it yourself, Harry!"

"Ass! If it took five of us to cart the beastly hamper over from Courtfield, how do you suppose I'm going to manage it on my own? I'm not a champion weight-lifter!"

After some delay Wharton's chums turned out, and the party stole noiselessly from the dormitory and down the stairs.

The great building was dark and still, and not one of the juniors would have cared to be alone.

As soon as the Remove passage was reached footstep became audible.

"Somebody on the prowl!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Quick!" rapped out Wharton.

And he sped along to Study No. 1, with his chums at his heels. The juniors realised only too well what it would mean if they were discovered out of bed by a master or a prefect.

Wharton threw open the door of the study, but he was too late.

There was a sudden click, and the rays of a powerful electric torch lit up the passage.

"Wingate!" muttered Nugent.

"Now we're in for it!" groaned Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five, realising that their identity was known, halted in the doorway of the study.

"What are you kids doing here at this time of night?" demanded Wingate.

"Abon!" stuttered Wharton.

"Why are you absent from your dormitory?"

"We—we came along to the study to fetch something, Wingate," said the captain of the Remove.

Greatly to the juniors' surprise, this lame explanation seemed to satisfy Wingate.

The captain of Greyfriars was looking unusually grave, but it was not on account of the discovery he had just made.

"I'm feeling rather alarmed, you kids!" said Wingate.

The Famous Five stared. It was they who had cause for alarm, not Wingate. Why the stalwart Sixth-Former should be alarmed was a puzzle to them.

"Anything wrong?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Something is very much wrong. Mr. Prout has not yet come in."

"My hat!"

"I can't make it out!" Wingate went on. "Mr. Prout arranged to come straight back to the school as soon as the meeting of the Profiteering Committee was over. He had an appointment with Mr. Lascelles in the masters' billiard-room. The appointment was for nine o'clock, and it's now past midnight."

The juniors understood now why Wingate was uneasy.

Mr. Prout's absence, in view of the fact that he had promised to return direct to the school, was unaccountable. Had any harm befallen the master of the Fifth?

"If he doesn't turn up during the next half-hour," said Wingate, "I shall

consult Mr. Quelch as to the advisability of sending out search-parties.

The Famous Five looked up eagerly.

"Any chance for us to take part in the search, Wingate?" asked Nugent.

"I don't know. Get back to your dormitory at once, and if Mr. Quelch is willing for you to join the search-party I'll look in and let you know."

"Thanks awfully, Wingate!"

The juniors returned to the Remove dormitory minus the hamper.

A drowsy voice—the voice of Peter Todd—called out:

"What about that feed, you fellows?"

"It will have to stand over," said Wharton.

"Wingate may look in in half an hour or so, and we don't want him to catch us in the middle of an orgy."

Peter Todd's drowsiness vanished. He sat bolt upright in bed.

"What the thumb?" he exclaimed.

Wharton explained the position, and Peter Todd shared the Famous Five's excitement.

"My hat! It will be simply ripping if they allow us to search for old Prout!" he said. "Shall we wake the other fellows?"

Wharton shook his head.

"It's not necessary," he said. "The whole Form won't be able to go."

The Famous Five removed some of their clothes, and got back into bed, where they eagerly awaited developments.

Barely half an hour had elapsed when Wingate came in.

"Turn out, you kids!" he said.

"Oh, good!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"May I come, too, Wingate?" inquired Peter Todd.

After some hesitation the captain of Greyfriars agreed.

In a very short time the six juniors were fully dressed, and they accompanied Wingate down the stairs and out into the Close.

Half a dozen seniors, who had already been detailed to take part in the search for Mr. Prout, were waiting near the school gates.

"Faith, an' why does Prout want to stay out all night?" grumbled Gwynne.

"He's robbed us of our beauty-sleep," growled Faulkner, "and I shall tell him of it when I see him!"

"When!" ejaculated Walker. "We might have to tramp about all night and then not find him! He's tumbled into a ditch, I expect, and we can't very well explore every ditch in the district."

The seniors were not at all keen on the expedition. The names they called Mr. Prout were the reverse of complimentary, and they were annoyed at having been dragged from their warm beds.

Not so Harry Wharton & Co., who were brimming over with keenness.

"Well, it's no use cooling our heels here!" said Wingate. "You kids will search between here and Courtfield, and we'll take the opposite direction."

"And what do we get as a reward if we find Prout?" asked Bob Cherry jocularly.

"Set your minds at rest," said Wingate. "You'll never find him."

"We shall see," said Wharton.

"Come on, you fellows!"

And the Famous Five and Peter Todd set off along the Courtfield road.

The night was intensely dark, but at least three members of the junior party were armed with electric torches.

"We've a much better chance of finding Prout than the others have," said Johnny Bull.

"If he came to grief anywhere, it would be between the school and Courtfield."

"That's so," said Nugent. "It will be ripping if we score over the Sixth!"

The juniors made a thorough investigation as they tramped along.

Bob Cherry and Peter Todd walked on the two extremes, and they repeatedly flashed their torches upon the hedges and ditches beside them.

Progress was slow, and in half-an-hour only a mile had been traversed.

"Seems pretty hopeless," remarked Bob Cherry at length.

"It is like hunting for a needle in the still waters that run deep, as your English proverb has it," said Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were discouraged, but they had no intention of throwing up the sponge.

"Listen!" said Wharton suddenly.

The party stopped short.

No. 63.—OLIVER KIPPS.



An outstanding character of the Remove through his great ability as a conjurer. Apart from this, not particularly distinguished, though he can hold his own in the playing-fields. A thoroughly decent sort of fellow in every way, and quite popular with his Form-mates. Shares Study No. 5 with Dick Hilary, the two being the best of chums.

From the distance came a faint cry.

"Help!"

The juniors exchanged glances.

"Somebody in trouble," muttered Nugent.

"Help! Help!"

"The sound seems to come from that copse," said Wharton, indicating a clump of trees close at hand. "Come on!"

The captain of the Remove led the way, the others keeping close behind him in the darkness.

The juniors did not suppose that the cries for help had any connection with Mr. Prout. They were therefore dumbfounded to find, on reaching the heart of the copse, the person for whom they had been searching.

Mr. Prout was identified by his boots and trousers—not by his face, which happened to be invisible.

The head and shoulders of the master of the Fifth were covered with a sack, in which ventilation-holes had been made. And Mr. Prout had been

secured, by means of a stout rope, to the trunk of a tree.

"No fear, aunt!" gasped Bob Cherry, staring at the strange spectacle.

"Tied up in a sack, by Jove!" murmured Peter Todd. "No wonder his cries for help sounded so faint and muffled!"

The victim of the outrage writhed and twisted impatiently.

"Boys," he gurgled, "pray release me from this unhappy plight!"

"All serene, sir," said Johnny Bull, taking out his clasp-knife.

And, stepping forward, he severed the cord which bound the unfortunate master to the tree.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry tugged at the sack which encompassed Mr. Prout's head and shoulders, and the next moment the Form-master was free.

He looked very grimy and dishevelled in the light of Peter Todd's torch, and his breath came and went in great gasps.

"Dear me!" he spluttered. "I have had a very painful experience, my boys—an experience of which I do not desire a repetition!"

"What's happened, sir?" asked Harry Wharton.

"On my way back from Courtfield," said Mr. Prout, "I was attacked and maltreated by a gang of village rousers."

"My hat!"

"I did not yield without a struggle," continued the master of the Fifth. "If only my Winchester repeater had been in my possession the scoundrels would have been repulsed. As it was, they overcame me after a time, and bound me to this tree."

"Shame!" said Johnny Bull, in tones of indignation. "Did you recognise any of the cads, sir?"

"Burke—the younger Burke—was at the bottom of the whole business," he said.

The juniors clenched their hands, and mutually resolved that Paddy Burke should be made to suffer for this outrage.

It was totally unprecedented for a master of Greyfriars—and a senior master at that—to be attacked and bound to a tree.

"Are you much hurt, sir?" asked Wharton.

"No, Wharton. I am thankful to say that my assailants did not carry their villainy too far. Had they resorted to violence, I should have taken legal proceedings against the ringleader."

"Won't you take proceedings as it is, sir?" said Nugent.

Mr. Prout shook his head.

"I shall merely acquaint Burke's father with what has happened, and request him to keep a tight rein on his unruly son in future."

The Form-master stretched his cramped limbs.

"I am indeed grateful, my boys, that you have found me. I was getting decidedly uncomfortable, and had I remained there all night—"

Mr. Prout shuddered.

"May I give you the supportful aid of my arm, honoured sahib?" inquired Hurree Singh.

"Thank you, my boy, but I think I can manage."

The party walked back to Greyfriars in silence.

Harry Wharton & Co. were furious with Paddy Burke and the members of his gang.

Even Pensonby & Co., of Highcliffe, would not have been so addled enough to attack a defenceless master, and the contempt and loathing which the juniors felt towards the village rousers almost defied expression.

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As the party neared the gates of Greyfriars a murmur of voices came to their ears.

"Afraid we must give it up," Wingate was saying. "It's past one o'clock, and there's no sign of Prout."

"Perhaps Wharton's party have had some luck," suggested Faulmer.

"Not they!" said Wingate. "They're hardly likely to succeed where we failed!"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry. Wingate spun round with a start.

"Who—what?" he ejaculated.

"We've found Mr. Prout!" said Harry Wharton triumphantly.

"My hat!"

"And you must admit, Wingate," said Nugent, "that the Remove are not quite such hopeless duds as you seemed to imagine!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Are you all right, sir?" asked Wingate anxiously.

"The answer, I am happy to say, is in the affirmative," said Mr. Prout.

"Though, had I remained in captivity all night, I am afraid the answer would have been a decided negative!"

The two search-parties passed into the building with Mr. Prout. That gentleman's misadventures were explained to the astonished Sixth-Formers by Harry Wharton & Co.

Mr. Prout bade good-night to his rescuers and to the seniors, and retired to his own quarters.

The Sixth-Formers also dispersed; and Harry Wharton & Co. were about to retire to their dormitory when Bob Cherry suddenly remembered the hamper in Study No. 1.

"It's rather late for a midnight feast, my fellows," said Bob. "But I'm jolly peckish!"

"Same here!" said Johnny Bull.

The night air had sharpened the juniors' appetites.

They waited until the footposts of the Sixth-Formers had died away, after which they collected the hamper and carried it up to the dormitory.

The other fellows were awakened, rattle-ends were lighted, and presently a number of pyjama-clad figures sat in a group on the floor to discuss the good things, and to discuss also the exciting events of that memorable night.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for the Remove!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were very drowsy in class next morning. But Mr. Quelch, who knew the reason for their drowsiness, dealt leniently with them.

Even when Bob Cherry dozed over his history book the Remove-master did nothing more than restore him to an animated condition.

As the day advanced, however, the juniors' drowsiness vanished, and they became keenly alert, and alive to the necessity of dealing with Paddy Burke.

When afternoon lessons were over Harry Wharton called an emergency meeting of Removeites.

In addition to the Famous Five, Peter Todd, Mark Linley, Vernon-Smith, and Squiff were present.

"Gentlemen," said the captain of the Remove, "I will endeavour to be as brief as possible."

"Thank goodness!" said Squiff fervently.

"Order, please! Any person who interrupts will be promptly ejected!"

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"On the neckful portion of his anatomy!" said Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton continued his oration. "Last night, as everybody knows, poor old Prout was set upon by Burke and his crowd. That boulder Burke has got to be squashed!"

"Hear, hear!"

"It's really a matter for the Fifth, as Prout's their Form-master," Wharton went on. "But Coker & Co. are indifferent about it, so I consider it's up to us to deal with Burke."

"Yes, rather!"

"The question is—what action shall we take against him?"

"Mob him!"

"Polverise him!"

"Flay him alive!"

Harry Wharton's audience seemed to be out for scalps.

"I'm afraid we can't go so far as that," said the captain of the Remove, with a grin. "We don't want to have to answer to a charge of manslaughter."

"No; but we can, at least, give the boulder a jolly good hiding!" said Vernon-Smith.

"I vote we march into his shop, ask him what the dickens he meant by ill-treating Prout, and then wade in and slaughter him!" said Bob Cherry.

"But what about his father?" said Nugent.

"Much as I dislike kicking a fellow under the nose of his fond parent, I'm afraid it will have to be done," replied Bob.

"Hear, hear!" said Peter Todd. "It fairly makes my blood boil when I think of the rough handling Prout had last night."

After further discussion, the juniors agreed to go down to the village and tackle Paddy Burke in his own lair.

It was arranged that Bob Cherry should endeavour to lick the leader of the village louts; and if Bob failed, each of the others would take on Paddy Burke in turn until the greengrocer's son was vanquished.

"Come along, you fellows!" said Wharton.

And the Removeites set out on the war-path.

It did not take them long to reach the village, and Harry Wharton called a halt outside the greengrocer's shop.

There was no sign of Mr. Burke senior. But Mr. Burke junior was inside the shop, seated on a sack of potatoes, and complacently smoking a cigarette.

"Now!" said Wharton grimly.

And the Greyfriars juniors swarmed into the shop.

Paddy Burke rose to his feet with mock politeness.

"What can I get for you young gents?" he inquired. "Any cauliflowers, or spring onions? Or perhaps you'd like some apples?"

"Not at a bob each!" said Wharton curtly.

Burke growled and assumed a threatening attitude.

"What do you want here?" he demanded.

Bob Cherry stepped forward.

"We've come to teach you a lesson!" he exclaimed. "You clobbered one of our masters last night and tied him to a tree. Do you deny it?"

"Of course not!" said Burke insolently.

"Why should I?"

"You're going to get it in the neck for being such a beastly hoodlum!" said Bob Cherry, preparing to take off his coat.

Burke gave a sneering laugh.

"I don't fight with infants!" he said.

"That may be. But you're jolly well

going to fight with me, or take a good hiding!"

"He'll get the good hiding in any case!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, rather!"

Paddy Burke saw that the juniors meant business. But he was in no wise disconcerted. Nor had he any cause to be. He was bigger, broader, and longer in the reach than Bob Cherry, and he looked—and felt—as if he could easily dispose of the sturdy Removeite.

"Ready?" asked Bob.

For answer Burke swung out his right. It was a care-free blow, and Bob Cherry had no difficulty in dodging it.

Then, rushing in, Bob beat a tattoo on his opponent's ribs, and Burke gasped, instinctively backing away. He was not prepared for an attack of this sort.

"Follow up, Bob!" said Mark Linley.

Bob Cherry obeyed. He peened the greengrocer's son in a corner, and hit out vigorously.

Burke managed to ward off some of the blows, but the majority landed home with terrific force on his face and chest.

Despite his inferior height and weight, the Greyfriars fellow seemed to be carrying everything before him.

Some desperate fighting followed, in the course of which Burke managed to get in a couple of blows.

But the village youth could make little headway. The hurricane attacks of Bob Cherry threw him completely off his balance.

Bob's schoolfellows were delighted with the splendid performance he was putting up.

"Stick to it, Bob!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Polish the brute off!" added Johnny Bull.

Paddy Burke was in a sorry plight by this time. Although strong and hefty, he had been smoking too heavily to be in the pink of condition, and this gave Bob Cherry a tremendous advantage.

Bob was doing all the attacking now. He drove his opponent round and round the shop, and the watching juniors skipped out of the way.

At length, realising that he had no chance of victory, Paddy Burke lurched towards the counter and pressed a bell which communicated with a room at the back of the shop.

The result of Burke's action was astounding.

There was a tramping of feet; the door adjoining the shop was thrown open, and about a dozen village louts—all friends of Burke—rushed in.

"What's up, Paddy?" inquired one of them.

Burke indicated the Greyfriars juniors with a wave of the hand.

"Collar these kids!" he panted.

And then a battle royal began.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not submit tamely, though they had to submit in the long run. They fought like tigers for the space of five minutes, at the end of which period they were overpowered.

Paddy Burke was grinning now.

"Sit on them!" he commanded.

And the hefty village youths obeyed.

"Now, what shall we do with these beauties?" asked Burke.

"Duck 'em in the 'orse-pond!" suggested one amiable gentleman.

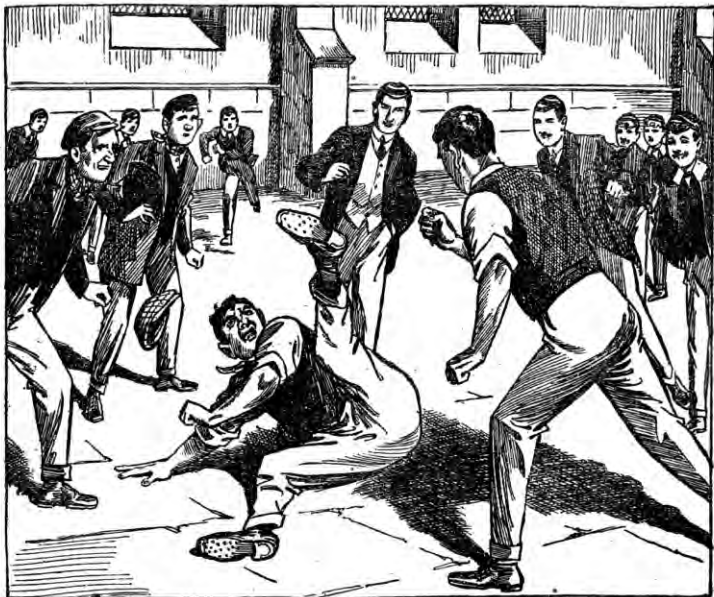
"Wallop 'em with thick sticks!" said another, who would have made a fitting henchman to the Emperor Nero.

"Let's put sacks over their heads, same as we did to their kind teacher!" said a third.

"Then we can string 'em to gether in a bunch with a length of cord, and send 'em back to their school!"

"Good!" said Burke. "That's a first-rate idea of yours, Jim Hollis!"

There were plenty of sacks in the shop,



Within three minutes of the start, Wigate shot out his left with terrific vigour, and the leader of the village louts went to the flagstones with a crash. "Buck up, Paddy!" shouted Burke's supporters. But Burke was "whacked." He made no effort to rise. (See Chapter 8.)

and they were promptly requisitioned by those of the villagers who were not engaged in sitting on the Greyfriars juniors.

Harry Wharton & Co. struggled and protested, but in vain. They were the under-dogs, and the villagers had them at their mercy.

Holes were made in the sacks, in order that the juniors might see and breathe; then they were thrust over the victims' heads and shoulders, and drawn tight by means of a cord.

This done, the villagers linked the juniors together and hustled them off the premises.

"Bright set of beauties they look, don't they?" grinned Burke.

"Ho, ho, ho!"

The yodels pressed their hands to their sides and roared with laughter as Harry Wharton & Co. tottered in single file down the street.

"You cads!" gurgled Bob Cherry, trying to wriggle out of his unfortunate predicament. "You'll be sorry for this!"

A raucous burst of laughter was the response.

"Come on, you chaps!" said Harry Wharton, in muffled tones. "No use arguing with the rotters. We must get back to the school, and trust to luck

that somebody comes along and unties us!"

In a dismal and grotesque procession the juniors lurched along the street. All sorts of uncomplimentary remarks were hurled at them by the youth of Friar-dale; and Paddy Burke ran after them and affixed a placard to the back of Johnny Bull, who was in the rear.

The placard was brief but expressive:

"NOT WANTED IN FRIARDALE!"

Johnny Bull struggled desperately to get his arms free, but they were pinned to his sides by the cord, and he was powerless.

The journey through the High Street was a nightmare.

The village urchins, not content with hurling epithets at the Greyfriars juniors, started to hurl lumps of mud and other missiles.

"Ow! Put the pace on, Harry!" muttered Frank Nugent.

"I'm going quickly as I can!" growled the captain of the Remove.

The juniors were greatly relieved when they left Friar-dale behind. And through the peepholes in the sacks they looked eagerly for someone who would liberate them. They did not wish to enter the gates of Greyfriars with their heads and shoulders encased in sacks.

As they were noising the school,

Harry Wharton sighted a familiar figure.

"Loder!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, good!" said Peter Todd. "He'll let us loose!"

The prefect stared in astonishment at the strange procession which lurched towards him. He did not know that they were Greyfriars fellows until Harry Wharton spoke.

"Buck up and untie us, Loder, there's a good chap!" said the captain of the Remove.

Loder's hands were in his pockets, and he kept them there.

"Wharton!" he ejaculated. "Great Scott!"

"Untie us—quick!" gurgled Bob Cherry.

Loder chuckled, and the chuckle developed into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Precious set of guys you look, and no mistake! What's the idea of putting on sackcloth? Are you mourning for somebody?"

"Let us loose!" hoated Johnny Bull. Loder shook his head.

"You've got yourselves into this fix, and it's up to you to get out of it," he said. "By Jove! You'll make quite a sensation when you stagger in at the school gates!"

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"You cad!" howled Wharton. "You beastly outsider!"

"Be careful!" warned Loder. "I'll roll the whole lot of you in the ditch if you sling those fancy names at me."

The Removites were furious. Had their arms been free, they would certainly have attacked the grinning prefect. But their arms were not free, and there was nothing for it but to continue their nightmare journey in the hope of meeting somebody else—somebody who was more obliging than Loder of the Sixth.

But their luck was out. From that point the road was deserted, and Harry Wharton & Co. turned up at Greyfriars in the same sorry condition as when they had set out from Friarsdale.

The Close was alive with fellows, and there was a rush of feet as the Removites came in.

"Faith, an' what's all this?" exclaimed Micky Desmond.

"Looks like a walking menagerie!" said Bulstrode.

"What do they want at Greyfriars, I wonder?" said Bolsover major. "Haden't we better chuck 'em out?"

"Fathead!" shouted Harry Wharton. Bolsover nearly fell down.

"My only aunt! It's Wharton and the others!"

"They've evidently been japed by the lads of the village!" said Skinner. "And a priceless set of beauties they look! He, ha, ha!"

"Stop cackling, and let us loose!" spluttered Nugent.

After some delay Dick Russell stepped forward and slashed with his penknife at the cord which bound the victims to each other.

The cord which had been tied round the sacks was then severed, and the sacks themselves were wrenched off, revealing a group of furious-faced fellows. Their hair was tousled, and they looked as if they had not washed for a considerable period.

"Tell us all about it, Wharton!" said Ogilvy. "How did it all happen?"

But the captain of the Removs was not in a confiding mood. He strode away to the nearest bath-room; and his fellow-victims, looking very sheepish, followed.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Not Nice for Loder!

AFTER refusing to help Harry Wharton & Co. out of their unfortunate predicament, Loder of the Sixth strode on towards the village.

His destination was the Cross Keys, to which resort he was a frequent visitor.

Mr. Jolliffe, the landlord, greeted the prefect effusively.

"Afternoon, sir!" he said. "It's werry good of you to look in an' pay your account so nice and prompt!"

"Ahem! I haven't come here for that!" stammered Loder.

"You 'aven't!" exclaimed the landlord, his manner changing. "Then could best look sharp an' do it. You owe me a matter of fifty bob!"

"I'm quite aware of that," said the prefect. "And I've got a suggestion to make."

"Fire away!"

"I'll play you a game of billiards on the following terms. If you win, I hand over a fiver; and if you lose, I'm absolved from my debt."

Mr. Jolliffe clinched with this offer at once. He had practically nothing to

lose, and on the other hand, he possessed an excellent chance of winning five pounds.

"Done!" he said. "This way, sir!" And he led the way to the billiard-room.

"We're going to play a hundred up, I take it!" said Loder.

"Just as you like, sir."

Loder was trembling a little as he chalked his cue.

If he won, all would be well. But there was always the possibility that he might lose, in which event he would be unable to pay the fiver, as agreed.

Loder was in a shocking state of nerves, and he played wretchedly at the outset.

Fortunately for the prefect, however, Mr. Jolliffe played little better. It seemed to be a case of dud meeting dud.

As the game advanced Loder gained confidence, and a couple of good breaks secured him quite a useful lead.

Mr. Jolliffe lost his temper, which is the right way to lose a game.

The more ruffled the landlord grew the more wretched his strokes became, and the Greyfriars prefect eventually won, with plenty to spare.

Loder gave a sigh of relief as he replaced his cue on the rack.

"That wipes off my little debt," he remarked.

"It was a fluke!" sneered the landlord.

"Fluke or not, I won the game!" said Loder.

And, donning his cap, he went out, taking good care that nobody saw him in the act of quitting the Cross Keys.

"That was a brilliant brain-wave of mine, to challenge Jolliffe to a game of billiards," murmured the prefect.

"Goodness knows when I should have been able to pay him that fifty bob!"

Loder felt very pleased with himself as he strode along. He had successfully got out of a tight corner, and all was well.

But there was a shock in store for the rascally prefect. As he was passing Burke's, he heard a chuckle from one of the upper windows.

Loder glanced upwards, and as he did so a tremendous deluge of soot descended upon him.

The prefect sprang to one side, but he could not evade the soot, which enveloped him like a garment.

"Gerooooooh!" spluttered Loder.

And from the regions above came a roar of laughter.

"Ho, ho, ho!"

Loder frantically gouged the soot out of his eyes and mouth, and shook his fist at the grinning face of Paddy Burke. It was Paddy Burke who had tilted the soot out of a pail on Loder's devoted head.

"You—your villain!" snarled Loder.

"H. ha, ho, ho!"

"I—I'll pulverise you for this!" But when Loder caught sight of a whole crowd of grinning faces at the window, he changed his mind about the pulverising. He could not very well overcome a horde of village louts.

"Ta-ta!" said Paddy Burke, waving his hand. "Hope you get back safely to your kind teachers!"

And there was a fresh outburst of laughter from above.

Loder clenched his soot-begrimed hands and strode away. He had only to look at his reflection in the shop-windows to see what a terrible spectacle he presented. His face, his hands, his clothes, his boots—all were plastered with soot. He had, as Paddy Burke grinningly observed to his followers, been "soot-ably" decorated.

"Hang them!" muttered the prefect, savagely. "They've ruined my togs,

and they've turned me into a confounded Christy Minstrel!"

Loder's appearance soon arrested the attention of the selfsame village urchins who had made things warm for Harry Wharton & Co. earlier in the afternoon.

Solid chunks of mud, bad eggs, and fruit which was in a state of decomposition, were hurled at Loder as he strode along.

All the village seemed to have turned out to take part in the bombardment.

Loder quickened his pace, but he could not escape that shower of missiles. All sorts of objects—some hard, some soft—smote him in divers parts of his anatomy as he went along. And the village street rang with laughter.

"Oh dear!" gasped the prefect. "I must get out of this!"

And he broke into an undignified canter.

Missiles still pursued him, and it was not until he had left the village behind that the bombardment ceased.

Loder hoped and prayed that when he reached Greyfriars the Close would be deserted. He would then be able to sink into the building unobserved.

But Loder's luck, like that of Harry Wharton & Co. a short time previously, was dead out.

The Close was thronged with Removites, who were engaged in punting a football.

The game was suspended as Loder entered the school gateway, and the players stared in blank amazement at the blackened apparition.

"Who—what is it?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"A nigger, by Jove!" said Peter Todd. "He's coming here for his education, I suppose."

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Johnny Bull. "We've already got a Yank; and a Coloured, and a heathen Chinese. And now they're palming a nigger on to us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Quite a crowd surged down to the school gates, and Gosling, the porter, came out of his lodge.

Gosling was the only person who did not seem surprised.

"Ah, 'ere you are!" he said to Loder. "It's about time, too! The chimney's in a shockin' state. Which they ain't been swept for months!"

Gosling was evidently under the impression that Loder was the chimney-sweep.

The prefect tried to correct that impression, but he could not speak. He could only splutter.

"This way, my man!" said Gosling, in a commanding voice. "The 'Ead's chimney 'as got to be done first!"

Loder looked as if he would dash his fist into the porter's face.

"You—you—!" he spluttered.

"Great jumping crockers!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It's Loder!"

"Loder of the Sixth!"

"What a guy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A yell of laughter went up at Loder's expense.

The only person who did not join in the merriment was Gosling, who looked completely thunderstruck.

"My hey!" he exclaimed. "Sich goings on! Which I feels in duty bound to report yer, Master Loder!"

The prefect strode through the throng of hilarious juniors, and made hurried tracks for the bath-room.

"Somebody's played a fine old jape on Loder!" said Nugent.

"The villagers, most likely," said Harry Wharton.

"Serves him jolly well right!" said Bob Cherry. "He refused to help us

this afternoon, and he cackled at us like a laughing hyena. It's our turn to laugh now!"

"Yes, rather!"

And the juniors did laugh—with great vigour and heartiness, thus justifying the wisdom of the old saying that he who laughs last laughs longest!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Battle Royal!

"I'M in rather a fix," said Wingate. "Trot out your troubles, Brother George!" said Faulkner, who was at tea with the captain of Greyfriars. "Doubtless I shall be able to give you the benefit of my advice." "The very doubtful benefit!" grunted Wingate. "The fact is, we're due to play the village at footer on Saturday."

"Well?"

"And the match—if it comes off—will be played on the village ground. The question is, ought it to come off, or not?"

"My dear fellow," said Faulkner, "you're not thinking of cancelling the fixture, are you?"

"Under the circumstances, I think we ought to."

"Under what circumstances?"

"Well, there's a lot of feeling just now between the school and the village—"

"Oh, that's nothing! It will blow over by Saturday."

"I'm not so sure," said Wingate.

"Better consult the other fellows," said Faulkner, "and see what they think."

Wingate nodded.

A meeting of the First Eleven took place that evening in the senior Common-room, and, after a good deal of discussion, the majority voted in favour of playing the match.

Harry Wharton & Co. were very pleased when they heard of the seniors' decision.

"I'm glad they're going to play," said Bob Cherry. "If they backed out it would look as if they were showing the white feather."

"We'll turn up in full force on the village ground," said Wharton, "and then we can protect the First Eleven if there's any trouble."

"Hear, hear!"

The juniors rather fancied themselves as the protectors of the high and mighty Sixth-Formers.

"One thing is certain," said Frank Nugent. "It will be a good, clean game. Not a single member of Paddy Burke's gang is in the village team. Otherwise, there would be some broken heads, I'm thinking."

"Yes, rather!"

As the day of the match drew near the excitement at Greyfriars rose to concert-pitch.

School versus Village was always a tight tussle. Hooligans of the Burke type were barred from the village team, which consisted of smart, enterprising fellows, and jolly good sportsmen into the bargain.

Saturday came at last, and practically all Greyfriars wended its way to the village ground.

But the Greyfriars fellows were by no means in the majority.

Paddy Burke and his followers were present in full force, and they were reinforced by scores of louts from the surrounding villages—roughs who had come to the match for the express purpose of making mischief.

Wingate looked uneasy.

"Those hounders are up to no good," he remarked. "If they should get out of hand—"

"Hope they do!" said Gwynne. "Faith, an' I'm simply spoilin' for a fight!"

The referee arrived at this juncture. He was a dapper little man, who kept a music-shop in Courtfield.

"I'm afraid there's trouble brewing," he said, as he lined the teams up. "Never mind! We won't be intimidated by a crowd of yokels."

"That's the spirit, ref!" said Faulkner. As the players took up their positions, there arose a strange mingling of cheering and jeering.

The Greyfriars section of the crowd supplied the cheering, and Paddy Burke and his followers were responsible for the jeering.

"Play up, Friars!"

"Doo-oo!"

"Good old Wingate!"

"Yah! Go home!"

There was a great deal of shouting and

thing to his cronies. The Greyfriars juniors did not catch what he said.

The village team again attacked, but this time they were checkmated by a sturdy and resolute defence.

And now the Friars came into the picture, making headway by means of a series of short, swift passes.

One of the village backs miskicked, and Wingate was through, and only the goalie to beat.

"Now! Wingate!"

"Drive it in!"

The captain of Greyfriars steadied himself to shoot, and the next instant the ball was reposing in the net.

"Goal!"

It was the turn of the Friars to be elated. They cheered Wingate's equalling goal to the echo.

Stimulated by their success, the Friars attacked boldly. And presently they scored again—from the foot of Faulkner this time.

"Hurrah!"

The Greyfriars fellows cheered lustily. As for Paddy Burke and his army of hooligans, they remained ominously silent.

The villagers played up desperately.

Phillips put in a fine individual run, and he looked a certain scorer, when Gwynne loomed up and grassed him with a heavy but perfectly fair shoulder charge.

The ball was easily cleared by the Friars goalie, and then a veritable uproar arose.

"Foul!" shouted Paddy Burke.

"Foul!" echoed Burke's followers.

"Chuck him off the field, ref!"

But the referee was satisfied that Gwynne's charge had been legitimate, and he allowed the game to proceed.

The uproar grew in volume, and presently a lump of turf whizzed through the air, and struck the referee on the shoulder.

The official at once blew his whistle for the game to be suspended. Then he stepped across to where the crowd was thickest.

"That's enough!" he exclaimed sharply. "If there is any further disorder I shall abandon the match! I—"

The referee got no further.

A perfect swarm of missiles came hurtling through the air. Most of them were fairly harmless; but one cowardly hooligan threw a stone.

The referee staggered back, and his hand went to his forehead. When he withdrew it blood was seen to be trickling from a nasty gash in the temple.

The Greyfriars fellows—players and spectators alike—were roused to a high pitch of indignation when they saw what had happened.

"The cuds!" muttered Harry Wharton. "The cowardly ruds!"

"Rush them!"

"Mob them!"

Football was completely forgotten the next moment, and a very different form of activity was indulged in.

Paddy Burke signalled to his followers, who lined up in a solid mass to resist the Greyfriars attack.

The resistance was successful, for the Friars were hopelessly outnumbered.

Wingate saw that the crisis which he had feared had come to pass. But the captain of Greyfriars had no intention of retreating. He rallied his scattered forces, and a further attack was launched against the village louts.

After five minutes of fierce hand-to-hand fighting the Friars were again repulsed.

The fellows in the senior Formers had

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No. 64.—CEDRIC HILTON.



A member of the Fifth Form. Not prominent at present, though he is well liked by the rest of the Form. An even-tempered, good-natured fellow, who picks on steadily at his work and is not often associated with the japes and plots engineered by others of the Fifth. Shares Study No. 4 with Thomas Trotter Tomlinson.

eat-calling, supplemented by the noise of rattles and tin-whistles.

"Things are warming up!" remarked Bob Cherry, who stood behind the Greyfriars goal with the other members of the Famous Five.

"Burke seems to have persuaded all the riff-raff of the county to come to the match," said Wharton.

At that moment the referee blew his whistle, and the ball was set in motion.

Right from the kick-off the village team was strongly in evidence. Their forwards swept down the field in line, and Phillips, the captain of the side, found the net with a smashing drive.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!" chortled Paddy Burke, twirling his cap in the air. "How do you like that, you school kids?"

"We don't mind it a little bit, old hatchet-face!" retorted Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Burke scowled, and muttered some-

"piled in" like Trojans; but the juniors and the fags were, naturally, no match for the hefty hooligans who were supporting Burke.

The members of the village team had taken no part in the hostilities. But at this stage Phillips, their skipper, came up to Wingate.

"I'm ever so sorry this has happened," he said. "I hope you don't think that any of our players are concerned in it."

"No need to tell me that," answered Wingate breathlessly. "It's Burke who has engineered this business. I'm afraid the match is hopelessly mucked up."

Phillips nodded.

"Look here!" he said. "Take my advice, and beat a retreat. I'll try and pacify the mob, and while I'm doing that you can get clear."

"Thanks!" said Wingate. "But we're not chucking up the sponge just yet."

Once again the plucky Friars returned to the attack. But on this occasion they were gradually driven from the field by the Burkes, who employed very doubtful tactics.

"If only the rotters would fight fairly," growled Harry Wharton, "we might stand a chance!"

The Famous Five had been in the thick of the battle, of course, and they had fared badly. Wharton's nose presented a very bulbous appearance, and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull had each been given a black eye. Frank Nugent was limping, and Hurree Singh was also in the wars.

Shortly afterwards the Friars were in full retreat. They had fought gamely against overwhelming odds, but matters had now reached a stage where to fight on would have been sheer folly.

Wingate realised this, and, mustering his men as best he could, he gave orders for their immediate return to the school.

It was a very dismal and war-weary procession that streamed in at the gates of Greysfriars half an hour later.

The damaged faces and muddy clothing of the fellows did not escape the notice of the authorities. Inquiries were made, and by the evening full details of the affair with the villagers had filtered through to Dr. Locke.

After a brief consultation with the masters, the Head decided to place the village out of bounds until further notice, and an announcement to this effect was posted on the school notice-board shortly before bed-time.

"These are stirring times," observed Bob Cherry, as he accompanied his chums to the Remove dormitory. "I've had enough scrapping in one afternoon to last me for a month!"

"Same here!" groaned Johnny Bull. "I believe I shall be permanently blind in one of my optics!"

"And just look at my nose!" said Harry Wharton. "It seems to have got round to my left ear!"

The juniors nursed their injuries at the same time discussing the events of the afternoon.

"The Head had no alternative but to put the village out of bounds," said Vernon-Smith. "All the same, I don't think we've seen the last of Paddy Burke. He's bound to turn up again in the near future."

"And when he does turn up I hope we shall succeed in making him feel heavily sorry for himself!" said Mark Loney.

"Hear, hear!"

Wingate came in and extinguished the lights shortly afterwards, and the battered warriors settled down to sleep.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Last of Paddy Burke!

IN defiance of the Head's recent order, two fellows broke bounds next day and visited the village.

The culprits were Skinner and Bolsover major. Those bright specimens of boyhood went to Friarsdale for the purpose of transacting business of a private nature. But it was never transacted, for shortly after they set foot in the village they were observed by Mr. Quelch.

"Bolsover! Skinner!" rapped out the master of the Remove. "How dare you transgress in this way! You know perfectly well that the village has been placed out of bounds!"

The two juniors stopped short, looking very sheepish.

"Ahem! We—we thought—" stammered Skinner.

"It is refreshing to know that you are capable of thought, Skinner!" said Mr. Quelch, with crushing sarcasm.

"We thought the order didn't apply to the outskirts of the village, sir," said Bolsover.

"Nonsense, Bolsover! It applies to the whole of Friarsdale and to the district immediately surrounding it. I look upon this as a most serious offence, and I shall report both of you to Dr. Locke. You will return to the school at once!"

"Oh crumbs!"

That same afternoon Skinner and Bolsover were summoned to appear before the Head, who after lecturing them on the subject of disobedience, administered a pretty stiff caning to both of them.

It was generally anticipated that the sad fate of Skinner and Bolsover would serve as an effective warning to other would-be law-breakers. But such was not the case.

Later in the day three other fellows ventured down to Friarsdale. They were Coker, Potter, and Greene, of the Fifth.

Coker & Co. evidently imagined that Fifth-Formers were privileged persons, and that they could break bounds with impunity. They were swiftly disillusioned.

On this occasion it was Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, who was on the war-path.

Mr. Hacker swooped down upon Coker & Co. as they emerged from the bush.

"You three boys are out of bounds!" said the master sternly.

"Are we, sir?" exclaimed Coker, in tones of surprise.

"You are!" roared Mr. Hacker. "You are guilty of flagrant disobedience and defiance of orders! Only last evening Dr. Locke announced that the village of Friarsdale was out of bounds!"

"Yes, sir. But surely that order doesn't apply to us? I took it that it referred only to the fags—"

"It applies to the whole school," said Mr. Hacker tartly. "Coker, Potter, and Greene, I shall report this breach of the rules to Dr. Locke!"

And Mr. Hacker kept his word, with the result that Coker & Co. spent a very painful five minutes in the Head's study.

Moreover, the Head decided that—for the time being at any rate—the whole school should be kept within gates.

The previous announcement on the school notice-board was cancelled, and the following appeared in its place:

"NOTICE!

"Owing to the fact that my previous order has been disregarded, the whole school will be confined within gates until further notice.

"Severe disciplinary action will be taken against any boy who fails to comply with this order.

"(Signed) HERBERT H. LOCKE, "Headmaster."

The Famous Five were amongst the first to read the latest order, and they exchanged dismayed glances.

"This is too thick!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"I didn't dream that the Head could be such a high-handed old tyrant!" said Harry Wharton.

"It's all Coker's fault!" said Nugent savagely. "Trust Coker to put his foot in it, and make things unpleasant for everybody!"

"They'll be putting the Close out of bounds next!" growled Johnny Bull.

"We can still play football," said Wharton. "That's one consolation. Let's come and have a kick now to relieve our feelings."

And the Famous Five went out into the Close, collecting a football from Study No. 1 on route.

The Close was crowded with fellows, who were forbidden to take their exercise farther afield.

Hurry Wharton & Co. started punting the ball to each other; and Coker & Co. and Temple & Co. joined in without invitation.

Stormy scenes might have ensued had not an interruption occurred at that moment.

"Village cads!" said Nugent suddenly, pointing towards the school gates.

Out in the roadway, grinning at the captive schoolboys, were the louts of the village—headed, as usual, by Paddy Burke.

The gates were closed and locked; and from their position of safety on the other side of the barrier the villagers flung humorous taunts at the Greysfriars fellows.

"The cowardly rotters!" said Harry Wharton indignantly. "Let's play on, you fellows, and take no notice of them."

"That's the idea!" said Johnny Bull. "They'll get fed up after a bit, and clear off!"

But the villagers showed no signs of departing. They continued to fling taunts, and as these had no effect they started to fling other things besides.

The Greysfriars fellows were getting used to bombardments by this time, but this did not increase their liking for them, and when a shower of pebbles pattered in their midst they became highly indignant.

"Oh, the cads!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, clenching his hands. "They know we're not allowed out of gates, and they're taking advantage of it."

"I vote we break the rule, and shut over the wall," said Bob Cherry.

"But the Head will come down like a thousand of bricks—" protested Wharton.

"Let him! There's safety in numbers, you know."

A further shower of pebbles scattered amongst the Greysfriars fellows.

Nobody was hurt; but the Friars had no intention of submitting tamely to the attack. Another minute and they would have been over the school wall and grappling with the villagers. But at this juncture Wingate of the Sixth came standing on the scene.

The captain of Greysfriars was very angry. It simply rained pebbles as he advanced towards the school gates; but he did not falter.

"That's enough!" he shouted to the mob outside. "Clear off!"

"We'll stay where we are, thanks!" retorted Paddy Burke.

"You said! Why can't you fight fairly?"

The scorn and contempt in Wingate's words did not fail to pierce the thick hide of Paddy Burke.

"I can fight as fairly as anybody!" he said sullenly.

"Then I'll give you a chance to prove it. I'll deal with you myself, if you'll shin over the gate. And I promise that our fellows won't interfere."

Burke accepted the challenge at once. He clambered over the gate, dropped down into the Close, and confronted Wingate.

"Now!" he said grimly. "I'll teach you your place, Mister High-and-Mighty!"

There was a rush of feet to the spot. All Greyfriars was wildly excited.

"Stand back, everybody," said Wingate, "and give us elbow-room!"

When a space had been cleared, the fight began, without a referee or a pair of seconds being appointed.

In the first minute Paddy Burke shone. Twice in succession he landed a powerful punch to Wingate's jaw.

The villagers in the roadway shouted with delight; but they became suddenly silent as Wingate retaliated, and hammered at Burke's leering face.

"Good old Wingate!"

"Give him beane!"

After his opening attack Paddy Burke collapsed like a pricked bladder. He was big and hefty, but he was out of condition; and physical fitness gained the supremacy.

Within three minutes of the start Wingate shot out his left with terrific vigour, and the leader of the village louts went to the flagstones with a crash.

"Buck up, Paddy!" shouted Burke's supporters.

"Get on your feet, man!"

But Burke was "whacked." He made no effort to rise, and cheer after cheer burst from the lips of the elated friars.

As soon as Burke had sufficiently recovered, Wingate and Gwynne and Faulkner assisted him over the gate, on the other side of which he was received by his crestfallen followers.

Barely had Paddy Burke set foot in the roadway when the portly form of P.-c. Tozer, the village constable, loomed up.

"What does old Tozey want, I wonder?" murmured Johnny Bull.

The question was soon answered.

Turning to Paddy Burke, the constable exclaimed impressively:

"I harrest you in the name of the lor! An I should advise you to come quiet."

Burke's face turned deathly pale.

"Dashed if I know what you mean!" he said. "This must be a mistake!"

"There's no mistake about it," said Mr. Tozer grimly. "Which I've 'ad

horders to harrest you on a charge of breakin' an' enterin' certain 'ouses in Courtfield."

"My only aunt!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Then it's Burke who is responsible for those burglaries that we read about in the local paper."

"Looks like it," said Wharton.

Paddy Burke turned to his followers, to request their assistance in dealing with Mr. Tozer. But the village louts melted away like mists before the morning sun. They were but fair-weather pals at best, and they had no desire to be implicated in any way with Burke now that the law was on his track.

The greengrocer's son gave a wild glance round, as if contemplating flight. But the handcuffs clicked upon his wrists, and he was helpless.

"Come hon!" said Mr. Tozer.

And Paddy Burke, with a final vindictive glare at the Greyfriars fellows, turned, and stumbled away with his escort.

It transpired next morning that Burke, in spite of the handcuffs, had made good his escape. Rumour had it that he had run away to sea. At all events, the Greyfriars fellows never saw him again.

After Burke's departure, the feud between school and village collapsed completely.

Without their leader the village louts seemed impotent. They showed no desire to resume hostilities, and Friar-dale was placed within bounds again.

The match with the village was re-played—this time without any interruptions on the part of the spectators; and Greyfriars gained a well-deserved victory by three goals to two.

Harry Wharton & Co. returned to the school in high spirits; and, to quote Bob Cherry, everything in the garden was lovely!

THE END.

Another grand long story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled
"THE CIRCUS HERO!"
 Order your copy EARLY!

READERS' NOTICES.

BACK NUMBERS WANTED, ETC.

I. Michael, 9, Clarence Mews, Regent's Park, N.W., wants "Magnets" and "Gems," Nos. 616 and 617. 14d. each offered.

P. B. Charles, 7, Weibian Road, Worthing, Sussex, offers reasonable prices for back numbers of the Companion Papers.

E. B. Wathen, 268, Shirland Road, Maids Hill, W. 9, offers good price for "The Boy Without a Name."

Miss R. Le Cross, 10, Grosvenor Gardens, St. Leonards, Sussex, wants 200 to 300 of the "Magnet." Good price offered.

R. Rowell, 23, Geraldine Road, Chiswick, W. 4, will exchange a volume of the "Boys Friend" (January to June, 1914) for "Holiday Annual."

I. J. Colman, 38, Highgate Street, Juppstown, Johannesburg, South Africa, wants "Schoolboys Never Shall be Slaves," "The Honour of a Jew," "The Boy without a Name," "School and Sport," "Bunter's Postal Order," and any stories about Coker.

W. Critchley, 66, Park Road North, Birkenhead, wants "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," "Schoolboys Never Shall be Slaves!" and "After Lights Out" 2d. each offered. Write first.

F. H. Turtan, 21, Furrar Road, Abbeydale, Sheffield, will exchange 100 copies of the Companion Papers for a football. Miss D. O'Callaghan, 121, Duke Street, Sheffield, wants "Kildare for Ireland" and "Kildare for St. James" 1s. each offered.

G. Humphreys, 106, Mill Street, Tonypet, Glam., wants members for his club, football competitions, quarterly magazine.

R. Clarke, 44, Dunkeld Road, Goodmayes, Essex, with readers living in Canada or Australia.

M. McPherson, c/o Duncan, 28, Mar-dale Crescent, Edinburgh, with readers anywhere.

R. Hutson, 19, Elgin Street, Dunfermline, Scotland, wants members for his Empire Correspondence Club.

James Perry, 94, Killoven Street, Woodstock Road, Belfast, Ireland, with readers interested in amateur magazines.

W. Bray, Seamen's Institute, Tilbury Docks, with readers anywhere. All letters answered.

J. Morgan, 89, St. Pancras, Chichester, Sussex, with readers anywhere.

L. Couper, 119, Buckstones Road, Shaw, near Oldham, Lancs, with Colonial readers.

Miss A. Brown, Highfield Hospital, Hylton Road, Sunderland, with readers anywhere, age 25 or upwards.

J. Taylor, 73, Borrowdale Road, Lancaster, with correspondent who will write to him in France.

L. S. Gibson, P.O. Box 110, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, with readers anywhere, age 16-20.

John Wegger, Queen Street, Oudtshoorn, Cape Province, South Africa, with readers anywhere, age 16-17.

H. Crisp, 44, Dunkeld Road, Goodmayes, Essex, with readers living in Canada or Australia.

A. Mellor, 71, Broad Street, Sheffield, has for sale "Gems," Nos. 553-516, 517, 582-592, 594-605: "Penny Populars," 1-34 (new series), and 269, 272 (old series).

A Prince of Sportsmen

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 By JOHN GABRIEL



The finest sporting romance the famous author of "The Last of the Corinthians" has ever written. A big thrill in every chapter. Begin reading it TO-DAY in

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INTERESTING EXPERIMENTS.

AMUSING TRICKS WITH SIMPLE APPARATUS.



THE REFRACTORY CORK.

A very interesting and amusing experiment may be performed with a bottle and a cork.

Take a cork of a diameter less than the internal diameter of the neck of the bottle you propose using, and ask a friend to make it enter the bottle by blowing upon it.

At first sight this seems a very easy task, and your friend at once proceeds to blow strongly upon the cork. This, however, instead of making the cork enter the bottle, causes it to fly out. Again your friend tries to overcome the refractory cork, on the next occasion by blowing very gently, but again it flies out. (Fig. 1.)

The explanation of this is as follows: In blowing upon the cork a certain amount of air at the same time enters the bottle, the air in which becomes so compressed that it rapidly ejects the cork. There are, however, three ways in which the refractory cork may be overcome.

Since you know that by blowing on the cork it is at once ejected, try to achieve success by performing the contrary action—that is, by withdrawing some of the air from the bottle.

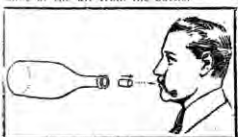


Fig. 1.—The Refractory Cork.

Indeed, the experiment will prove to you that by so doing you create in the bottle a partial vacuum, and as soon as your mouth leaves the neck of the bottle air enters it owing to atmospheric pressure. The incoming current of air pulls with it the cork, which at once slides into the aperture.

The same result may also be achieved by first warming the bottle, when, owing to the expansion of the air, a part of it is expelled. Directly the air inside the bottle cools, a vacuum is created, and a current of air from without enters. If you add to this current of air by blowing air from your mouth, you will find this quite sufficient to cause the cork to enter the bottle. Then, again, having a straw or pipe-stem handy, all you have to do is to blow through the tube, directing the air exactly on the base of the cork, which will once again enter the aperture.

Whichever of these means is adopted, you must always take the precaution of seeing that the bottle is perfectly dry. It should be wiped every time. The moisture formed in the neck is sufficient to prevent the cork from sliding along the glass.

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THE FLYING COIN.

You may be inclined to think that special apparatus is necessary to make a coin fly from the bottom of a glass, but here is shown a very simple method by which the trick may be performed at any moment in your home.



Fig. 2.—The Flying Coin.

First procure a liqueur-glass of conical shape, having in its largest part a diameter not much greater than that of a five-shilling piece. At the bottom of this glass place a halfpenny, and above it, near the top of the glass, a five-shilling piece, the latter forming a kind of cover. (A, Fig. 2.) Now declare to your friends that, without touching the five-shilling piece, you will make the halfpenny jump from the glass.

This at first seems to them an impossibility, but all you have to do is to blow very strongly on the edge of the five-shilling piece. This will make the larger coin turn about on its own diameter into a vertical position, whilst the compressed air under the halfpenny causes the latter to fly out of the glass, after which the five-shilling piece returns to its horizontal position.

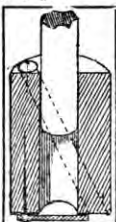


Fig. 3.—The Self-smoking Cigarette.

CIGARETTE-SMOKING LAMP-GLASS.

This is a very striking experiment, and is quite easy to perform. The apparatus is also quite simple, and may be easily obtained. It consists of a lamp-glass, a cork, a cigarette, together with two little valves.

Tightly cork up one end of the lamp-glass with a large cork, thus hermetically sealing it. In this cork bore two holes, one following the line of the cork's axis and having exactly the same diameter as the cigarette; the other being oblique with respect to this

axis, and having a much smaller diameter. (Fig. 3.)

It is now necessary to make the valves. This is done by cutting from a glove two round pieces of the skin or leather, which, by means of pins, may be fixed over the holes, one being above the little hole on the top of the cork, the other over the large hole on the under side of the cork.

The first valve allows the smoke to escape, at the same time preventing the

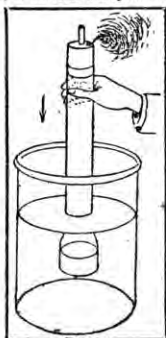


Fig. 4.—The Self-smoking Cigarette.

entrance of any external air, whilst the lower valve allows the smoke from the cigarette to enter the glass tube, but will not allow it to escape by the same hole.

Having thus made the valves, next plunge the tube in the water as far as the cork, and place the cigarette in the hole made for it. After having lit it, proceed to make the glass-lamp smoke it.

In order that it may inhale the smoke, slowly raise the glass. By so doing a vacuum is produced between the surface of the water and the bottom of the cork. To destroy this vacuum, air must enter from without, and the only means of its entrance is through the cigarette, as the valve on the top of the cork remains tightly closed. In passing through the cigarette this current of air greatly assists combustion, and the smoke formed will pass with the air into the lamp-glass.

If now the glass be lowered again, the air which is compressed by so doing closes the central valve, whilst that above the oblique tube is opened. From this valve smoke will ascend in clouds. (Fig. 4.)

In this way the glass may be made to smoke the whole cigarette.

THE SECRET OF THE SILENT CITY.

Our Grand New Serial.

By DAGNEY HAYWARD.



Tubby was helplessly caught in the grip of some thick tendrils of a stout tree. These slim branches seemed to have wrapped round him—about his legs, his waist, and his neck. (See page 18.)

Deceiving the American.

GILEAD SMICK took up one coat, went through all the pockets, but evidently did not find what he was looking for, as he replaced the next coat was Mr. Sherwell's, and in turn all the pockets were emptied.

Suddenly Smick seemed to find what he sought. Mr. Wu watched him take a larger paper than the rest, unfold it, crawl to the opening of the tent where the fire threw a red glow of light, and scrutinise it carefully. Then he folded it up again, and slipped it into his own pocket. The remaining papers he replaced in Mr. Sherwell's coat. Having done this, he crept back to his own couch and lay down.

As softly as a mouse, Tung Wu made off and hurried to the tent where the boys were sleeping with Tom Rackett. Stealing in gently, he touched Dick on the shoulder and awoke him.

"Yankee man velvee wicked!" he whispered. "He steal papers from boss—savvy?"

Dick was awake in an instant. "What papers, Tung Wu?" he asked. "Me no savvy; but him muchee bad man!"

"Tom—Tom," said Dick, waking up the operator hurriedly, "that man Smick is stealing Mr. Sherwell's maps!"

Tom was off his couch in an instant. He listened to Tung Wu's story, and then hastily slipped on his breeches.

"Come along, lads!" he said. "There's foul play in the air. Let's see what is doing!"

In a moment they had reached the other tent. Revolver in hand, Tom

strode to the American and awoke him with a kick.

"Up you get!" he cried. "And hold up your hands, or I'll shoot!"

By this time the boys had awakened the other two, and Tung Wu had lighted the lamp.

"What's all this palaver?" blustered

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 Boyce, a crowder; Dick Granger, Mike Rafferty, and Larry, three boy chums; two servants, Tung Wu, a Chinaman, and Quambo, a nigger; also three animals, Angustus, an elephant, Wongo, a chimpanzee, and Butte, a doghound.

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 Wongo, the chimpanzee, that a rival film company is making for the Silent City. Later Dr. Harland, an Englishman, who has been wandering among a savage tribe as a "savage-man," joins the party.

One night Angustus stampeded with the three boys, Quambo and Wongo on his back. Whilst endeavouring to find their way back to the party they discover an injured American, Gilead P. Smick, of the rival film company. He is brought to the camp, and Tung Wu detects the American in the act of rifling Mr. Sherwell's pockets.

(Now read on.)

Smick. "I guess you folk have a funny way of amusing your guests. What's the stunt?"

"Keep your hands up!" commanded Tom. "Now then, Mike, turn out his pockets!"

Mike obeyed, and in silence the whole party watched as paper after paper was opened in the light of the lamp. Meanwhile, Mr. Sherwell went through his own pockets.

"It's true," he said. "I won't say who has taken it, but a valuable map was in my coat when I went to bed, and it is not here now!"

"Quit all this fooling!" drawled Smick. "Say, Old Ireland, is that paper they're all gassing about on me?"

"Faith, and we'll soon see!" answered Mike. "Here they are, Mr. Sherwell!"

He handed the producer every paper from the American's pocket. Mr. Sherwell went through them one by one with an ever-increasing frown.

Presently he turned to the others with dismay written on his face.

"We shall never reach the Silent City now!" he said gloomily. "All our work is wasted. That enormous treasure will never be ours—never—never!"

"Why?" asked everyone. "What has happened?"

"Our map is gone, and the secret is lost!"

The boys gazed at Mr. Sherwell in consternation. Their map gone? The whole expedition doomed to failure? It was impossible!

"It is a mystery to me!" said the producer. "I went to bed with the map in my pocket; it has gone now, and the only person likely to take it has been searched. I am sorry, Mr. Smick, to put you to any inconvenience, but for the remainder of the night you will be watched by us, and as soon as day breaks we will try and restore you to your friends!"

"I guess I need not worry you about that, boss," he said. "I will sling my own hook as soon as I get a chance. You folk are a sight too suspicious for me!"

Mr. Sherwell shrugged his shoulder and turned away. No one attempted to go to sleep that night, and as soon as the dawn appeared Tom Rackett took Smick by the arm.

"There are two niggers waiting to carry you, Mr. Gilead P. Smick," he said. "The sooner we meet your friends and see the last of you the better pleased I shall be, for one!"

Tom Rackett was spared the trouble of a journey. The words had hardly left his mouth when they heard a loud coo-coo echoing through the forest. In a few moments two white men and three or four natives appeared, and waved their arms excitedly.

"I guess that's my outfit!" said Smick. "I see my friend Cyrus Turner, and I will bid you all good-day!"

Very coolly, without a word of thanks for the shelter they had given him, and without even waiting to introduce his friends, the American limped towards them, and, after a few words with them, turned away and disappeared into the trees.

"Upon my word!" said Dr. Harland. "Considering we saved that man from starvation and death, considering we are the only white folk in this part of the world, considering that even now we might run after him and make the whole lot of them prisoners, Mr. Gilead P. Smick carries it off with some cheek."

"I wish I could get my own back on him," grumbled Tom. "The bouncer has got that map on him somewhere, I'm sure."

Mr. Sherwell broke out into a hearty

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laugh, in which Dr. Harland joined. Everyone turned to them in astonishment, for there seemed little to laugh at in the wreck of the whole expedition.

"Don't be so miserable," said Mr. Sherwell. "I guessed Mr. Smick would be up to a trick of this sort, and took care to thwart his plans. The map he stole—for he did steal it, and I will tell you how in a minute—was not our map at all. It was a fake map I had already made."

"A fake map?" cried Mike. "Sure, and it will show him the way to somewhere that doesn't exist."

"Precisely!" said Mr. Sherwell. "That map he has got is no good at all, and that is why I pretended to be so upset, and why I talked about treasure, because I knew it would make him all the keener to get away with it. If they follow that map they will go far off our route, and leave us in peace."

"What about our own map, sir?" asked Dick. "You have never really told us about that."

"Our own map is quite safe," smiled the producer, slapping his pocket. "What specially concerns us is, how to piece together the native plan of which we have one half. Look at it!"

He spread before them a soiled and crumpled piece of paper on which was roughly plotted out a chart. Up the centre was a river, and crossing the map in an irregular line was a series of dots which terminated abruptly.

"That river is the Guiray," he said. "We ought to strike it very shortly now. This dotted line is the track we must follow to reach the Silent City. As you see, when we strike the river we shall have to follow it for an eight days' journey. There the map stops suddenly, and there, unless I am hopelessly mistaken, we shall have to pick up the remainder of the chart on the back of the chief of the tribe who lives thereabouts."

"As you know, this chief will have a chart roughly tattooed on his back."

Dr. Harland shook his head ominously. "I know these native folk," he said. "I am afraid you will not find it so easy to make head or tail of his part of the chart. I expect the tradition has been handed down loosely, and has been altered from time to time. But we will have a good try!"

"Right!" said Dick. "We won't come all this way without finding it somehow. But tell me, Mr. Sherwell, how do you think that American smuggled away that faked chart he stole?"

"I have a very absurd suspicion that he slipped it into his big top-boots," said Mr. Sherwell. "I did not press the matter so far as I should have done if it had been the real map, as I wanted him to get away with the false information. On the faked chart I made that dotted line go in the opposite direction, and by the time we reach the river they will be miles away from the true direction."

There was a loud laugh at the producer's cleverness. Tom Rackett was especially pleased to think his enemy had been deceived so completely. It was a professional matter with him, and he had no money where there was filming to be done.

"But I'll tell you what it is," went on Mr. Sherwell. "There is no time to lose, and we're not going to give our rivals any rope at all, so let's strike camp at once and push on as quickly as we can."

"Hurrah!" cried Dick and Larry. "I'll bet we're the first at the Silent City!"

"Hooray!" yelled Mike. "We'll beat the Americans at their own game!"

They all set to work with a will to clear up the camp.

Augustus seemed to know exactly what was required of him, and stowed away some of the things in a way that no human being could have done. His strength was prodigious, and his memory was certainly wonderful, for he picked up things in his trunk and stowed them away just as he had done many times before.

The boys were eager to be on the move, and were now getting quite expeditious in the way they packed up and made themselves useful.

Soon the long cavalcade were once more on the trail, the boys going on ahead a little with Quambo and Augustus.

The scenery they passed through was grand, and wild in the extreme. On their left was now the fringe of another great jungle, and on their right, but some little distance away, were great, rocky boulders. The ground was stony and uneven.

But every now and again the jungle branched out a little in narrow strips and spread across their path. In the distance the party could see great hills.

Presently they began to ascend, and Mr. Sherwell told the boys they were approaching a long plateau.

As Dick, Larry, and Mike walked a little in front of Augustus, Boris suddenly ran up, stopped dead, put his head to the ground, and began to sniff.

Then he gave vent to a low growl, raised his head, and sniffed again.

"What is it, Boris?" cried Dick, instinctively whipping out his revolver.

"There's something he scents which spells danger," said Larry, standing still.

Suddenly, without a moment's warning, with a savage snarl, a huge form rushed out from the outskirts of the jungle on the boys' right.

Dick fired, but the bullet either missed its mark or failed to make the slightest impression on the thick hide of the monster.

Then Boris, with a savage snarl, sprang at the throat of the animal; but with a fierce grunt and a desperate shake the brute flung him off.

"Shoot," cried Dick—"shoot!"

Larry and Mike fired simultaneously, and this time seriously wounded the animal, for blood flowed freely, and it snarled loudly with rage and pain.

Then it suddenly charged at the boys. But, before it could spring again, and with wild fury clung to its throat. Its charge was frustrated by the sudden surprise of this new adversary. The boys fired again, and this time the brute gave its last groan, and, with Boris still at its throat, staggered, rolled over, and lay still.

"By gum," said Dick, looking at the beast, "that was a narrow shave!"

"I should think it was!" put in Mike.

"Good old Boris!" yelled Larry, patting the dog's great head as he now let go his hold, and stood sniffing round the dead creature.

"Bravo!" cried Tom Rackett, from the head of Augustus. "Bravo, you boys! You've killed a tapir, and I've a splendid idea of the whole thing. While you were facing it, I was clicking my camera with one hand whilst I held a revolver in the other. It wouldn't have got you, boys, whilst Tom Rackett was about, you can bet your lives on that!"

"Bravo, Rackett!" shouted Larry. "You film everything!"

"I should think so! That's what I'm here for!" he said.

Then Mr. Sherwell and Dr. Harland came hurrying up.

"So you've shot your first tapir!" cried their leader.

"And a jolly fine, big one, too!" put in Dr. Harland. "There are any amount of them about in this part of the world, and I'm rather surprised we haven't encountered one before."

"What are we going to do with it?" asked Dick.

"Leave it where it is," replied Mr. Sherwell. "It's no good encumbering our baggage with its carcass, and it would take too long to skin. We don't want to lose any time, boys, so I know you won't mind sacrificing your first big-game stunt."

"Rather not, sir!" answered Larry. "The Silent City's our goal. But I don't think Boris seems very anxious to leave the tapir behind."

Boris, indeed, showed great reluctance to be so close to his prey, but at length he was induced to follow the boys when they were once more on the march.

Presently Tubby Bouncer, who had been walking safely in the rear, joined the boys, who were now also accompanied by Wonga.

"Take care how you go, Tubby," warned Dick, "for if you fall into any of those prickly bushes on the right there you'll be punctured all over, and go off with a bang!"

"Don't you worry about me," replied Tubby. "I've got a pretty tough hide, and if I want to sit down I'll try the ground!"

"I should think he'd be safe wherever he falls," put in Mike, "with all those elastic fixtures on him!"

Tubby stood this good-natured chaff with complete placidity. He was hot and perspiring, for they were now climbing a pretty steep ascent, and Tubby was on the look-out for a chance of taking a short rest.

Presently he left the boys, and began to go on ahead. He disappeared from view among some thick trees on their left, his idea being to advance a little on his own and have a short rest while the others caught up to him.

Suddenly the boys heard Tubby crying loudly for help. There was no mistaking the shouts.

"Help, help! I'm being strangled! Help!"

It did not take a moment for the boys to dash after him, Wonga and Boris leading the way.

And what a sight it was that met them when they saw the unfortunate Tubby!

The fat man was helplessly caught in the grip of some thick tendrils of a stout tree. These slim branches seemed to have wrapped him round—about his legs, his waist, and his neck. His head was free, but it was getting quite blue and mottled.

The boys burst out laughing when they saw him.

"Good old Tubby!" yelled Mike.

"You've got your rest—eh?"

"I'm ch-ch-ch-o-o-o-king!" gasped Tubby.

Then the boys saw that he was really in danger, but before anyone had time to spring forward and try to release him Wonga flung his rope, noose end first, straight at Tubby's broad head. It was a splendid shot, and the noose fell over his face and encircled his neck.

But it was no time for laughing, and Wonga, who had made a mistake that time, was thrust into the background.

Dick, Larry, and Mike soon hacked away the entwining branches and tendrils and freed the unfortunate Tubby.

"Thanks, you chaps!" gasped the elephantine fellow, when he could breathe again once more. "Golly! It was awful! I tripped up and fell right into the thick of the tendrils, and no sooner was I caught in them than they wrapped and clung round me like a boa-constrictor. They jolly nearly strangled me. They seemed as though they were live creatures. Then that little wee Wonga made matters worse by trying to lasso me!"

"He meant well," said Dick, "but he did make a mistake that time."

"Why, what's all this?" asked Mr. Sherwell, at that moment coming up with Dr. Harland.

Tubby briefly told them what had occurred.

"There are certain trees in South America," explained the doctor, "which, when they feel anything foreign against them, throw out tendrils and hold the victim in such a tight clutch that it is impossible for him to get away. Our friend Tubby was evidently held by such a tree. Natives have been known to die when, undiscovered, they have had the misfortune to be held a prisoner in this way. You have had a lucky escape, Bouncer!"

But it was a long time before the boys ceased to chaff Tubby upon his queer way of getting a short rest.

At last the avalanche wero on the top of the prolonged slope, and were looking across a very deep and wide chasm which seemed to stretch for miles to right and left.

Mr. Sherwell called a halt. He stood for a little time consulting some maps

with Dr. Harland. Then he came to a decision.

"Boys," he said, "we have got to cross this chasm, and I know that by so doing we shall save miles of fruitless walking. It extends many miles, and it's no use our getting to the other side of the canyon by a circuitous route. Some of us have got to get over first, the rest will follow by a cable and cradle along across from one side to the other."

"Tung Wu!" he shouted, after a slight pause, as his keen eyes spotted the lithe, slim Chinaman, hovering near Tubby. "Come here!"

The Chinaman instantly obeyed.

"Tung Wu," began Mr. Sherwell, "you and the boys have got to get across to the other side. You can have ropes to lower yourselves from this side—the opposite cliff looks easier to scale. I put the boys in your charge. When you are all safe on the opposite ridge, I shall fire the rocket-apparatus, which will carry a thin rope. You will haul this in. There will be attached to it a steel rope which you must make very secure at your end. When this is done I shall fire another rocket, secured to which will be another rope, which in turn will be attached to a stout cradle. In this cradle we shall all of us cross the precipice, and I shall send over Augustus first so that he can help to pull us over. We shall haul the cradle backwards and forwards by the spare ropes until we have all got across. Savvy?"

"Me plenty savvy!" said Tung Wu, his little eyes beaming with intelligence. "Me make no mistake!"

No time was lost. Ropes for lowering the boys, Wonga, and the Chinaman, were soon forthcoming. The depth

of the precipice was about one hundred and fifty feet.

A short rope to Wonga, Dick, Larry, and Mike, to make for greater safety, descended first about thirty feet, then the boys followed.

"Allee ready!" sang out the Chinaman.

"Right-ho!" cried the boys in chorus. Then they began their perilous descent.

As they swung in mid-air, Larry looked down.

It seemed to him, as he clung to the now swaying rope, a terrible way to the bottom of the abyss, where a narrow stream flowed among sharp and jagged rocks. For a few moments the boys felt dizzy. Gasping, he clung on.

The Chinaman happened to glance up, and saw the look of fear that was on Larry's face.

"No lookse down!" cried the brave Chinaman. "No lookse down, Massa Larry. Clingse on with feet and handse!"

Thus encouraged, Larry took fresh heart. Soon the attack of giddiness passed. And when he thought that they were all roped together all fear of danger left him, and he was as right as rain.

To prevent being dashed against the side of the ravine the rope had been swung over a stout beam, which, very securely fastened to the ground, projected some five feet from the edge of the precipice.

It was slow work, but at length the climbers reached the ground in safety.

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

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