

ANOTHER BUMPER FREE GIFT ISSUE THIS WEEK, BOYS!

The Magnet ^{2^D}

**FREE
PHOTOGRAVURE
POSTCARD**
Inside!

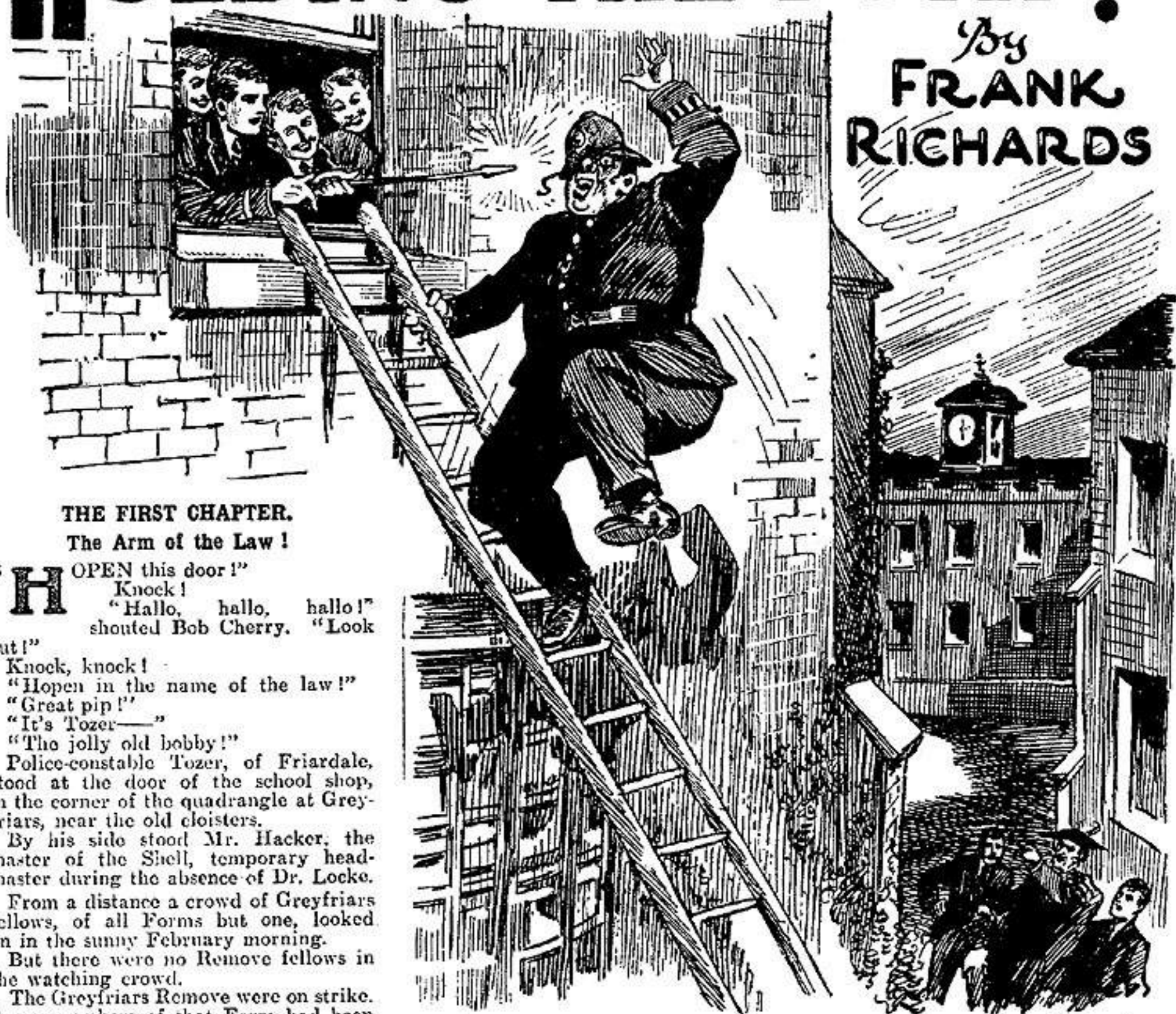


STEW FOR ONE!

THE STAY-IN STRIKE AT GREYFRIARS IS GOING AS STRONG AS EVER. IN SPITE OF THE
ODDS AGAINST THEM, THE REMOVE ARE STILL—

HOLDING THE FORT!

By
**FRANK
RICHARDS**



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Arm of the Law!

"H OPEN this door!"
Knock!
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"
shouted Bob Cherry. "Look
out!"

Knock, knock!
"Hopen in the name of the law!"
"Great pip!"
"It's Tozer—"
"The jolly old bobby!"

Police-constable Tozer, of Friardale, stood at the door of the school shop, in the corner of the quadrangle at Greyfriars, near the old cloisters.

By his side stood Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, temporary headmaster during the absence of Dr. Locke.

From a distance a crowd of Greyfriars fellows, of all Forms but one, looked on in the sunny February morning.

But there were no Remove fellows in the watching crowd.

The Greyfriars Remove were on strike. Seven members of that Form had been sacked by Mr. Hacker during his brief period of authority as headmaster.

But they were not gone from Greyfriars! They were in the school shop and the building adjoining the same with the rest of their Form, with the doors bolted and barred, planks nailed across windows, holding the fort!

Judging by the looks of the fellows watching across the quad, they regarded the schoolboys' strike as a tremendous lark. Judging by Mr. Hacker's looks, the temporary headmaster didn't!

Hacker's face, generally a little acid, was now pure vinegar in its expression. He had a cane under his arm; and his looks showed how he yearned to handle that cane on the rebels of the Remove.

From the window over the shop front a dozen faces looked out, as Mr. Tozer's loud knock rang through the building.

Every one of those faces wore a grin. Probably Mr. Hacker had counted on the official aspect of a police-constable in uniform, to strike doubt, if not terror, to the hearts of the rebels.

But they did not seem unduly alarmed by the sight of the police force of Friardale.

An Exciting Long Complete School Adventure yarn, Featuring
HARRY WHARTON & CO., the CHEERY CHUMS of GREYFRIARS.

"They had held the fort successfully so far. The stay-in strike was going as strong as ever. The Sixth Form prefects had attempted to rush the defences, at Mr. Hacker's orders, and had been ignominiously beaten off. Since then Hacker had, so to speak, used no other! No doubt he had been perplexed what step to take. Now, however, he had thought of his next move, and called in the forces of the law!"

Mr. Tozer looked up at the faces that grinned down from above. Mr. Hacker scowled up at them.

"You come down and hopen this 'ere door!" said the village constable of Friardale. "You 'ear me! I horders you to hopen that there door in the name of the law! You 'ear!"

"'Ear, 'ear!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Run away and play, Tozer!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, "Or would you like me to drop an egg on your napper?"

Mr. Tozer stepped back rather hastily

a few paces. He did not seem to like the idea of an egg on his official napper.

"Silence, Vernon-Smith!" hooted Mr. Hacker. "I warn all of you that this riot must end at once. Any boy resisting Mr. Tozer will be taken into custody."

"Gammon!" said the Bounder.

"I—I say, you fellows!" gasped Billy Bunter in alarm. "I say, perhaps we'd better chuck it! I say, I don't want to be run in! I say—yarooooh!" Billy Bunter's remarks wound up in a fearful yell as several boots landed at once on his tight trousers.

"Now then, you young rips, you hopen this 'ere door!" commanded Mr. Tozer in his sternest official tone. "I 'ope you know better than to resist the law."

"'Ope springs eternal in the 'uman breast!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Kick Bunter!"

"Owl! Beasts! Wow! Stoppit! Yow-wow!"

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"You hear me!" barked Mr. Hacker. "If you refuse to admit this police-officer he will force an entrance. Any boy venturing to lay hands on him will be liable to the penalties of the law!"

"Shut up, Hacker!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Can it!" said Frank Nugent.

"Take your face away, if you call it a face!" said the Bounder. "Don't you know it worries a chap?"

"The worryfulness is terrific, my esteemed idiotic Hacker!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I says, hopen this door!" shouted Mr. Tozer. "You 'ear me? I'm waiting for you to hopen this 'ere door!"

Smithy drew back his hand, with an egg in it, taking aim at the plump face of the constable below.

Lord Mauleverer hastily caught his wrist.

"Stop that, Smithy! Mustn't shy things at the police force!"

"Don't be an ass!" snapped the Bounder. "I'm going to get Tozer in the neck with this egg! Let go!"

"Chuck it, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton. "Mauly's skipper! We've all agreed to follow Mauly's lead! Play up!"

"I tell you I'm going to get Tozer with this egg, and Mauly be blowed!" snapped Vernon-Smith angrily.

Lord Mauleverer was leader of the Remove strike. So far his generalship had been extremely successful. Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, set the example of backing him up loyally. But the Bounder was not very amenable to authority. He had never liked toeing the line even with Mr. Quelch, his Form-master; he had been known to cheek even the Head! Now that Quelch and the Head were both away, Smithy was a leading spirit in the rebellion against Hacker. But though he admitted in theory that there must be a leader, in practice he jibbed at taking orders from any leader.

The mere fact that Mauly told him not to buzz that egg at Mr. Tozer was quite sufficient to make Smithy determined to buzz it!

He wrenched at his wrist. But Lord Mauleverer, who was generally supposed in the Remove to be almost too lazy to live, had a grip like steel when he exerted himself. He held Smithy's wrist as in a vice.

"Stop it, old man!" said Mauly urbanely. "Must respect the law! Mustn't buzz things at bobbies!"

"Has Hacker frightened you by trotting in a village peeler?" sneered the Bounder. "Are you going to let him in?"

"No! Leave that to me!"

"Let go!" roared the Bounder.

He gave another fierce wrench at his wrist.

There was a crack as his fingers unconsciously tightened on the egg in his hand. The egg burst, most of the contents shooting up the Bounder's sleeve.

"Oooogh!" gasped Vernon-Smith. "Oh! You silly ass—urrggh!"

Lord Mauleverer, grinning, let go! Smithy tore off his jacket and rolled up his shirtsleeve to mop that egg away.

For the next few minutes the truculent Bounder was too busy to butt in.

His lordship leaned over the window-sill, and fixed a placid gaze on Mr. Tozer below.

"Go away, Mr. Tozer!" he said. "We're not lettin' you in! You couldn't force that door in a month of Sundays, it's bolted, and screwed, and there's a lot of furniture nailed to the floor inside. Better go!"

"Better go quietly, Tozer!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you don't hopen that there door," blustered Mr. Tozer. "I shall come in at that winder!"

"Gosling!" barked Mr. Hacker. The old Greyfriars porter was hovering in the offing. "Gosling, bring your ladder here for Mr. Tozer."

"Yessir!" grunted Gosling.

Gosling went for his ladder.

Across the quadrangle, the staring crowd thickened. Nearly all Greyfriars had gathered to gaze.

For several days the strikers had had possession of the school shop; prepared to hold it against all comers, and the fact that they were left in possession, showed that the new headmaster was quite at a loss how to deal with the

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**His authority and prestige at stake, Mr. Hacker, the temporary headmaster of Greyfriars, plays his trump card in an effort to reduce the stay-in strikers to obedience!**

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rebellion he had provoked. Calling in a police-constable to deal with the strikers was a rather desperate resource, but it was clear that Mr. Hacker regarded it as a trump card. And the Greyfriars crowd watched eagerly, to see how it would turn out.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Hot Stuff!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. looked at Lord Mauleverer with smiling faces. Mauly was leader, and they were backing him up. So they waited for orders, wondering how Mauly was going to deal with this new development.

His lordship seemed in no hurry.

He stood gazing down from the window at the plump village constable and the acid-featured master of the Shell with a thoughtful expression on his face for a minute or two.

Then, turning from the window, he stepped towards the fireplace, picked up the poker, and stirred the fire.

Twenty pairs of eyes followed his movements.

"What the dickens are you up to, Mauly?" asked Peter Todd.

"Pokin' the fire, old bean."

"All ready for Tozer to warm his hands when he comes in this cold morning?" asked the Bounder sarcastically.

"No; his nose."

"Wha-a-t!"

"Nose!"

"Mad?" asked Vernon-Smith, staring.

"I hope not!" said Lord Mauleverer calmly. Having stirred the fire, he left the poker sticking in the glowing coal and stepped back to the window.

Gosling was approaching now with his ladder. Mr. Hacker barked at the old Greyfriars porter.

"Hurry, Gosling! You are wasting time!"

Grunt! from Gosling. He was not the man to hurry! Neither did Gosling approve of those "goings-on," though he could not venture to tell the new headmaster so. Heedless of Hacker's bark, the ancient gentleman came slowly up with the ladder.

Once already that ladder had been planted at that window, and the Sixth Form prefects had scaled it—only to be driven off, defeated. Mr. Tozer was not likely to have much better luck, unless the terrors of the law caused the strikers to retreat before him and give him free entrance.

Police-constable Tozer seemed a little dubious. It was possible—indeed, probable—that a certain consideration in cash had passed from Mr. Hacker to Mr. Tozer to induce him to weigh in. Anyhow, he was going to do his best—but he did not seem to relish the task. The juniors staring down at him did not look as if they were going to retreat like lambs. And Mr. Tozer hated the idea of rolling down that ladder!

However, as soon as it was placed in position the stout constable stepped to it, hitching his belt. He planted a large foot on the lowest rung. Then he planted another large foot on the second rung.

"Mauly, old man," murmured Harry Wharton, "he's coming."

"Yaas, I can see him!" assented Mauleverer.

"Let me get him under the chin with this mop!" said Bolsover major. "He will go down faster than he comes up!"

"Good egg!" said the Bounder. "Go it!"

"Nothin' of the kind!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Keep that mop away, Bolsover! Shut up, Smithy! Don't I keep on tellin' you that you mustn't handle officers of the law?"

"Look here, you ass—"

"Tozer's exceeding his duty!" said Peter Todd. Toddy, as the son of a solicitor, was supposed to know all about the law. "Hacker's tipped him to come here, you can bet on that."

"Yaas; but a fellow's bound to respect the uniform," said Lord Mauleverer. "Don't you men touch Tozer or shy anythin' at him."

"We're not lettin' him in!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Shut up, old man!"

"My esteemed Mauly—" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Shut up, Inky!"

"Leave it to Mauly!" said Harry Wharton. He was feeling rather doubtful now. Police-constable Tozer was half-way up the ladder. Mr. Hacker

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is presented Free with this issue.

Look out for

ANOTHER FINE PICTURE NEXT WEEK!

was watching him, evidently in the full expectation of seeing him carry all before him. The Greyfriars strikers had handled the prefects and Hacker himself. But handling an officer of the law was a serious matter, even if Mr. Tozer was, as Peter declared, exceeding his duty.

Lord Mauleverer took a handkerchief from his pocket. His comrades gazed at him. All sorts of weapons were ready if wanted—mops and brooms and eggs and lumps of coal. But his lordship only took out a handkerchief and folded it slowly and carefully.

Having done so, he stepped back to the grate. Stooping there, he picked the poker out of the fire, wrapping the handkerchief round the handle. One end of that long steel poker was red-hot, the other end was quite warm—hence the handkerchief.

Poker in hand, Lord Mauleverer stepped back to the window.

"Oh!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"Oh!" gasped Bob Cherry.

A plump red face and a helmeted head rose at the window! Police-constable Tozer had arrived. He laid two large hands on the window-sill.

"Now," said Mr. Tozer, "you young fellows stand back! Don't you dare to resist the law, or you'll get run in! You assault a policeman in the execution of his duty and you get 'ard labour! Now—Oh!"

Mr. Tozer's head popped back, so suddenly that he almost fell off the ladder, as the glowing end of a red-hot poker approached his nose.

"Ooogh! Take that away!" gasped Mr. Tozer.

Lord Mauleverer smiled at him genially over the red-hot poker. The other fellows chuckled. Mauly was not laying lawless hands on that officer of the law—but he was stopping him!

"Good gad!" gasped Mr. Hacker, at the foot of the ladder. "Mauleverer, if you dare to touch the officer with that poker—"

Mauleverer glanced down at him.

"Who's touching him?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nobody's touching the jolly old peeler," said his lordship. "But if Mr. Tozer chooses to run his nose on this poker that's his own affair. My advice to him is not to do it; but it's a free country."

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

"Look 'ere!" gasped Mr. Tozer.

"You take that there poker away! Don't you poke a man with that there poker, you young raskil you!"

"Certainly not!" agreed Lord Mauleverer blandly. "Nothin' of the sort, Mr. Tozer! I'm just holdin' it here! If you run on to it that's your look out."

"You'll find it hot, Tozer!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"The hotfulness is terrific, esteemed Tozer!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, old Tozer's afraid of that poker! He, he, he!"

Mr. Tozer paused. It was quite a long pause. The more he looked at that hot poker the less he seemed to like it.

A crusty chuckle was heard from below. Gosling seemed amused. Mr. Hacker glared round at Gosling.

"Silence!" he barked. "How dare you, Gosling! Do you desire to be discharged? Silence!"

Gosling grunted.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from about a hundred Greyfriars fellows across the quadrangle.

Hacker glared round at them.

"Silence!" he bawled. "Wingate—Loder—Carne—will you keep order! Silence, I say!"

He glared up at Mr. Tozer. That

official gentleman seemed to be a fixture at the top of the ladder.

"Tozer, why are you wasting time?" snapped Mr. Hacker. "Will you enter by that window immediately!"

"Come on, Tozer!" said Frank Nugent, laughing.

"Waiting for you, Tozer!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Tozer looked down at Hacker—then he looked at the grinning faces in the window. He looked at the hot poker, and Mauleverer's smiling face over it. Mr. Tozer had a full allowance of the pluck universal in that great institution, the police force. But he did not like red-hot poker at close quarters. He disliked them very much.

"Will you go on?" howled Mr. Hacker.

Mr. Tozer drew a deep, deep breath. He made up his mind, and made a forward movement. Then he made a sudden backward one as he felt the hot glow of the poker within an inch of his portly nose.

"Take that there poker away!" he gasped. "You young rip, you nearly 'ad it on my nose."

"Take that there nose away!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go on!" shrieked Mr. Hacker. "Are you afraid of those boys, Tozer? Will you go on immediately! That young rascal dare not touch you!"

Mr. Tozer hoped that Hacker was right! Taking his courage in both hands, so to speak, Mr. Tozer moved on, dodging to one side of the poker.

But he dodged in vain! Lord Mauleverer immediately shifted the poker, and Mr. Tozer's nose, as he pressed on, tapped on the hot end.

It was merely a tap! It was quite a gentle tap that would hardly have hurt a fly—so far as the tap went! But the slightest tap from red-hot metal was bound to be painful—fearfully painful!

The instant the red-hot poker established contact with the official nose, Mr. Tozer let out a yell that woke every echo of Greyfriars School.

He popped back so suddenly that he lost his footing on the ladder. Clasp- ing it wildly with his hands as he slid, Mr. Tozer slid down the ladder, landing in a gasping heap at the foot.

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

"Wow-ow-wow!" yelled Mr. Tozer. He sat up at the foot of the ladder, clasping his nose with both hands. "Yow-ow-ow! My nose! Wow! Yow! Ow!"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Hacker. "Upon my word!"

Hacker had not expected this! Quite a lot of unexpected things had happened since Mr. Hacker had taken Dr. Locke's place as Head of Greyfriars. This was one more unexpected happening!

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Mr. Tozer.

"Wow! Oh jiminy! Ow!"

"Come up again, Tozer, old bean!"

"Look lively, Tozer!"

Mr. Tozer tottered to his feet. Both his hands were still clasped to his nose. His helmet had fallen sideways, but he did not trouble to put it straight. It gave him rather an intoxicated look. But Mr. Tozer's attention was concentrated wholly and solely on his nose.

"Ow!" he said, with deep feeling.

"Wow!"

"You are wasting time, Tozer!" yapped Mr. Hacker. "Please go up and—"

"Wot!" ejaculated Mr. Tozer.

"Please go up that ladder at once, and—"

"I'll watch it!" gasped Mr. Tozer, still lovingly caressing his nose. "You go up, sir, if you like red-hot poker! I don't!"

And Mr. Tozer marched away. He headed for the gates. He still held both hands to his nose as he went, and his helmet still sagged drunkenly.

"Tozer!" roared Mr. Hacker.

Mr. Tozer marched on regardless.

"Tozer!" shrieked Hacker.

Mr. Tozer disappeared out at the gate.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar that echoed all over Greyfriars.

Mr. Hacker stood almost stuttering with rage. He had played his trump card—but it had been trumped! He glared up at the crowded window.

Whiz!

An egg flew from the window! It cracked on Mr. Hacker's chin. It splattered over his enraged face.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good shot!"

"Give him a few more!"

But Mr. Hacker did not wait for a few more. Clawing wildly at an egg face he scuttled out of range, followed by a roar of laughter.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Remove Rag!

"HOBSON!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"You are laughing!"

"W-w-w-w-as I, sir?"

"Take five hundred lines, Hobson!"

Hobby of the Shell was reduced to immediate seriousness.

Apparently it was not, in Mr. Hacker's opinion, a time for merriment. There had been altogether too much merriment of late at Greyfriars School, to please Mr. Hacker. Certainly he was not, personally, feeling at all merry!

Another day had passed. The Greyfriars strike was going on as strong as ever. The Remove Form Room was deserted. The Removites were still garrisoning the school shop. They were still defying authority.

In such circumstances, the new headmaster could hardly be expected to feel merry and bright!

Never a genial man, Hacker was now more acid than ever. The Shell, who had the pleasure—or otherwise—of having him for their beak, were fed-up to the back teeth with Hacker's bitter temper.

Mr. Hacker was, in his own peculiar way, a conscientious man, and did not mean to be unjust. He mistook mulish obstinacy for firmness, and harshness for just severity. He was quite unable to see any point of view but his own. He was, in fact, quite unsuitable to be a headmaster, but was utterly unaware of that fact.

As a Form-master, under the mild but firm authority of the Head, he had done quite well; but all the weaknesses of his character came to light as soon as supreme authority was in his hands. He was the man to exercise authority to breaking-point—and beyond it. Harshness having provoked resistance, his only method was more and more harshness; which did not seem to be getting him anywhere.

Sacking seven members of the Remove ought, in Hacker's opinion, to have stricken terror to the rest and reduced them to abject submission.

Instead of which, the whole Form were on strike, with the fixed intention of remaining on strike until those "sackings" were cancelled!

It was difficult for Hacker to retreat. But it seemed still more difficult to keep on. Not that he was thinking of retreat. Authority having broken like a reed in his hands, it had to be restored somehow—as yet, he did not know how. Hacker was not going to yield an inch—not a fraction of an inch! On that point, at least, his mind was made up, with what he regarded as the firmness of a rock—unaware that it more closely resembled the obstinacy of a mule!

On that particular morning the Shell were at their Form-room door, waiting for Hacker to let them in. Hacker was a few minute late. All the other Forms—excepting the Remove—had gone in; the Shell were still waiting. But Mr. Hacker came whisking up at last, and his brow, already clouded,

the waiting Form, with a terrifying glare

"Who did this?"

No answer. But the Shell fellows were very careful not to laugh now. The look on Hacker's face did not encourage merriment.

"Hobson," gasped Mr. Hacker, "if you have done this—"

"Oh, no, sir! Certainly not!"

"Hoskins—"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"I demand to know who has done this!" roared Mr. Hacker. "Unless the culprit is immediately found I shall give the whole Form detention for every holiday this term!"

"Oh!" gasped the Shell.

This was what Mr. Hacker regarded as the stern hand of a master who would stand no nonsense. It did not

inspiration to greet Hacker's eyes in the morning! But that did not occur to Mr. Hacker.

Having reduced his Form to exasperated silence, Mr. Hacker proceeded to insert the key in the lock to open the Form-room door. Then he made the discovery that it was not necessary to unlock that door. The unlocking had already been done, with the aid of a chisel—and with a heavy hand, to judge by the state of the lock.

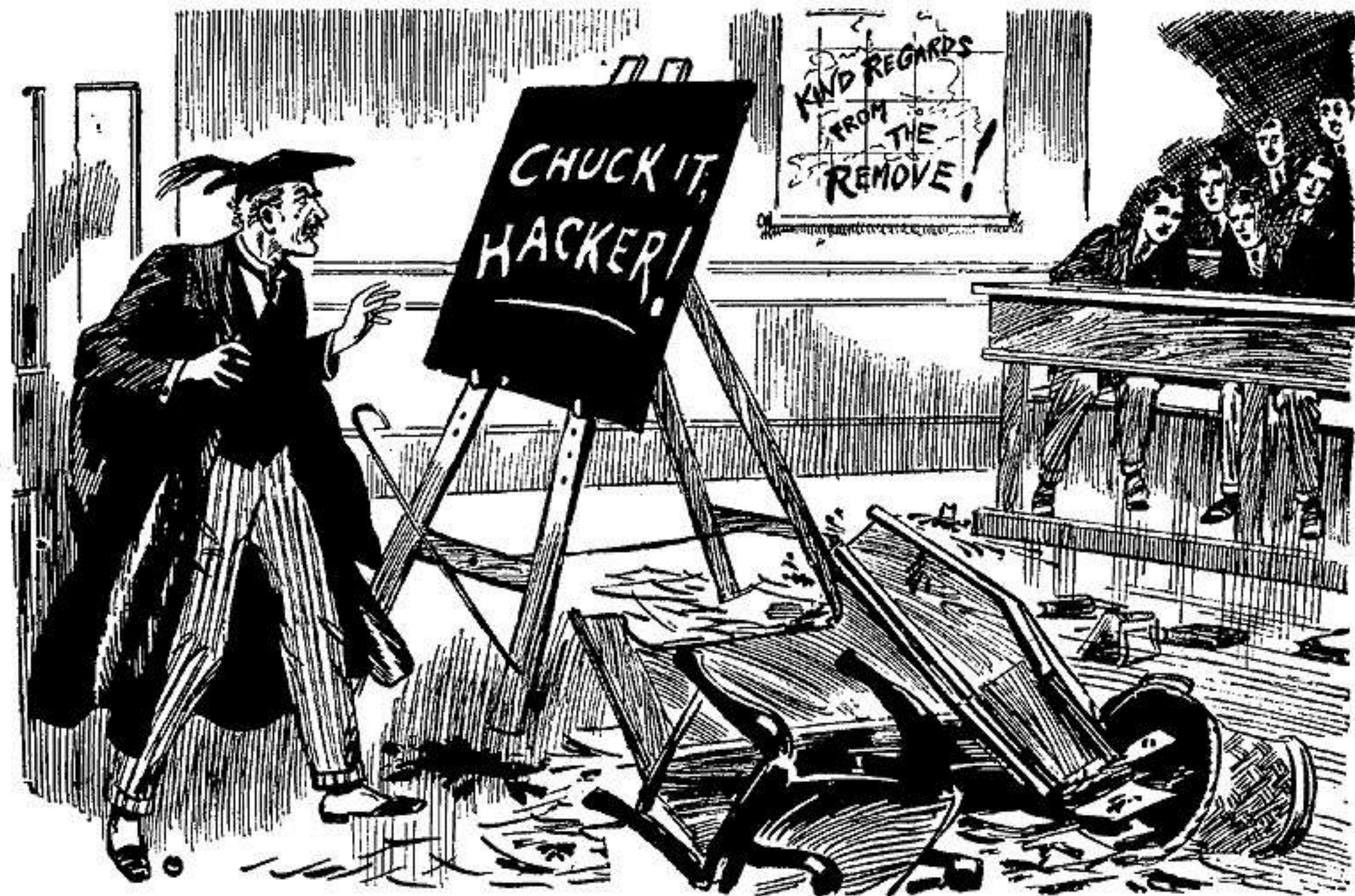
"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Hacker. "Who—who has done this?"

No reply from the Shell.

Mr. Hacker hurled open the door and the Form marched in.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Hobson.

There was a chortle, immediately suppressed. Mr. Hacker saw the cause the next moment. The blackboard



"Who—who—who did this?" gasped Mr. Hacker, as his eyes fell on the inscription on the blackboard and the map that hung on the Form-room wall. The Shell fellows exchanged glances. "Does any boy here know anything of this?" snapped the new Head, his glare sweeping round the Form. "Oh, no, sir!" answered all the Shell at once.

grew thunderous, as he saw that most of the Shell fellows were grinning—Hobson actually laughing!

Five hundred lines made Hobby serious at once. The grins were immediately washed off the other faces.

Hacker had no doubt that it was the schoolboys' strike that caused the merriment in his Form—the disorderly state of riot in the school, as Mr. Hacker regarded it. It was, in Hacker's opinion, no laughing matter.

But as he reached the door of his Form-room, he saw the immediate cause of that grinning and chuckling in the Shell.

There was an inscription on the oak, in large letters, daubed in white paint. Mr. Hacker stared at it blankly:

"BETTER CLIMB DOWN, HACKER!"

For a spellbound moment, the master of the Shell stared and glared at that inscription. Then his eyes turned on

even occur to his narrow mind that he was being unjust and tyrannical.

"I don't think it was anyone here, sir!" said Stewart quietly.

"What? Nonsense! Be silent, Stewart!"

"But if you look at it, sir——"

"I have told you to be silent, Stewart! Take five hundred lines for impertinence!" hooted Mr. Hacker.

"May I point out, sir——"

"Another word, and I shall cane you, Stewart."

Stewart of the Shell shrugged his shoulders. He had been going to point out what the hasty master of the Shell had not observed—that the paint on the door was dry, which showed that the painting must have been done a good many hours ago—during the night, in fact!

The Shell fellows guessed already that some Remove man, from the strikers' stronghold, had got into the House during the night and left that painted

stood on its case, facing the door. On the blackboard was an inscription, painted in white:

"CHUCK IT, HACKER!"

"Someone has been here!" gasped Mr. Hacker. "Who has done this?"

It was only too clear that someone had been there! The master's desk was not in its usual place. It lay on its side, in the middle of the Form-room. Books and papers were scattered round it, sprinkled with ink. Evidently there had been a "rag" in the Shell Form-room.

"Who—who—who did this?" gasped Mr. Hacker.

Even yet he did not seem to realise that it was a raid by the rebels of the Remove.

Then his eyes fell on a large-scale map of the British Isles that hung on the Form-room wall. Across that map had been painted another inscription:
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"KIND REGARDS FROM THE REMOVE!"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Hacker. The Shell fellows exchanged glances. It had dawned on Hacker now. He stood gazing at the map as if petrified.

"Oh!" he repeated. "Those—those young rascals! They—they have been here—some of them! Someone must have admitted them to the House during the night! Upon my word! I—I—" His glare swept round at the Shell. "Does any boy here know anything of this?"

"Oh, no, sir!" answered all the Shell at once, in a great hurry.

"You are laughing, Stewart!"

"Oh, no, sir! Not at all!"

"If you see anything to laugh at, Stewart, in this rascally disrespect from disobedient juniors, I shall endeavour to disabuse your mind of that idea at once! Bend over that desk, Stewart!"

It was not a happy morning in the Shell.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Hacker's Latest!

"SMITHY!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hallo!"

"Here's your pater!"

"What?"

Herbert Vernon-Smith bounded to the window.

Bob had been keeping watch on the quad. Since the visit of Mr. Tozer the previous day, there had been no move from the enemy. But nobody expected Hacker to remain idle for long. Sooner or later he had to make another move, though what move he could make the juniors did not know,

and it was probable that Hacker himself was at a loss.

Bob Cherry sighted a big Rolls in the distance driving up to the House, and recognised the magnificent car that belonged to Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith, the millionaire financier, in which he sometimes visited his son at Greyfriars.

"Oh, gum!" said the Bounder, with a whistle.

In the distance he saw a portly figure alight from the car. Mr. Vernon-Smith stood looking about him with a frowning brow.

The Famous Five exchanged glances. Smithy set his lips.

In the excitement of the "strike" the rebel Removites had not given much thought to matters outside the school. Had the expelled juniors been sent home, as Hacker intended, their people would have been apprised of the fact by their arrival, with a curt notification from Mr. Hacker that they had been expelled from the school.

But as they had heard nothing from their people, they concluded that Mr. Hacker had not communicated with their homes, so far. And, naturally, they had no desire to send such news themselves.

Now it looked as if Hacker had communicated with at least one parent, for here was Smithy's portly pater arriving at the school.

"That's Hacker's next move," said Harry Wharton. "He's sent for your father to take you away, Smithy."

"The rotten toad!" muttered the Bounder. "The beastly tick! I'm jolly well not goin'!"

"You'll have to go if your father comes across here and calls you out," said Skinner, with a sneer. "A fellow who's sacked can't stay on here."

"I guess Hacker's got you, bringing

your popper here, Smithy," said Fisher T. Fish. "You got to beat it now."

Lord Mauleverer interposed.

"Cherry! Bull!"

"Yes, skipper," said Bob, with a grin.

"Take Skinner and Fish, and knock their heads together," said the Greyfriars strike leader. "No croaking wanted here. Croakin' is barred!"

"Right-ho!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Look here—" howled Skinner.

"I guess—" hooted Fisher T. Fish.

Crack!

Bob Cherry grasped Skinner, and Johnny Bull grasped Fisher T. Fish. Two heads came together with a loud concussion. Two fearful yells were blended into one.

"Yoo-hoop!"

After which Skinner and Fishy rubbed their heads, and were silent. Lord Mauleverer stood looking out with a thoughtful shade on his brow.

Other fellows were looking very thoughtful, too. With the exception of a few slackers, like Skinner and Snoop and Fish, all the Remove were determined to carry on in a light to a finish.

But seven of them—the Famous Five, Mauly, and the Bounder—were under Hacker's sentence of expulsion. They were prepared to defy Horace Hacker and all his works; but parents were a very different matter.

Calling in the parents to deal with the rebels was a confession of weakness on Hacker's part. But that was his latest move. Smithy might declare, truculently, that he wouldn't go; but if his father commanded him to do so, he had to, and that was that! The Greyfriars strikers would rather have seen the whole array of Sixth Form prefects advancing to the attack than a single parent. Prefects could be greeted with eggs and chunks of coal. Parents obviously could not.

Mr. Vernon-Smith was seen to disappear into the House. The Bounder clenched his hands hard.

"They'll send for me now," he muttered. "Look here! I'm not going! But—but if my father comes over here—" He paused. Smithy was a reckless young rascal, but disobedience to his father was rather beyond even Smithy's limit.

"What about it, Mauly?" asked Bob. "Here comes Carne."

Carne of the Sixth was seen to emerge from the distant House, and come across towards the school shop.

Clearly he was sent for Vernon-Smith. A sour grin could be seen on the face of the bully of the Sixth as he came. Carne plainly expected to see the last of the Bounder now that his father had come for him.

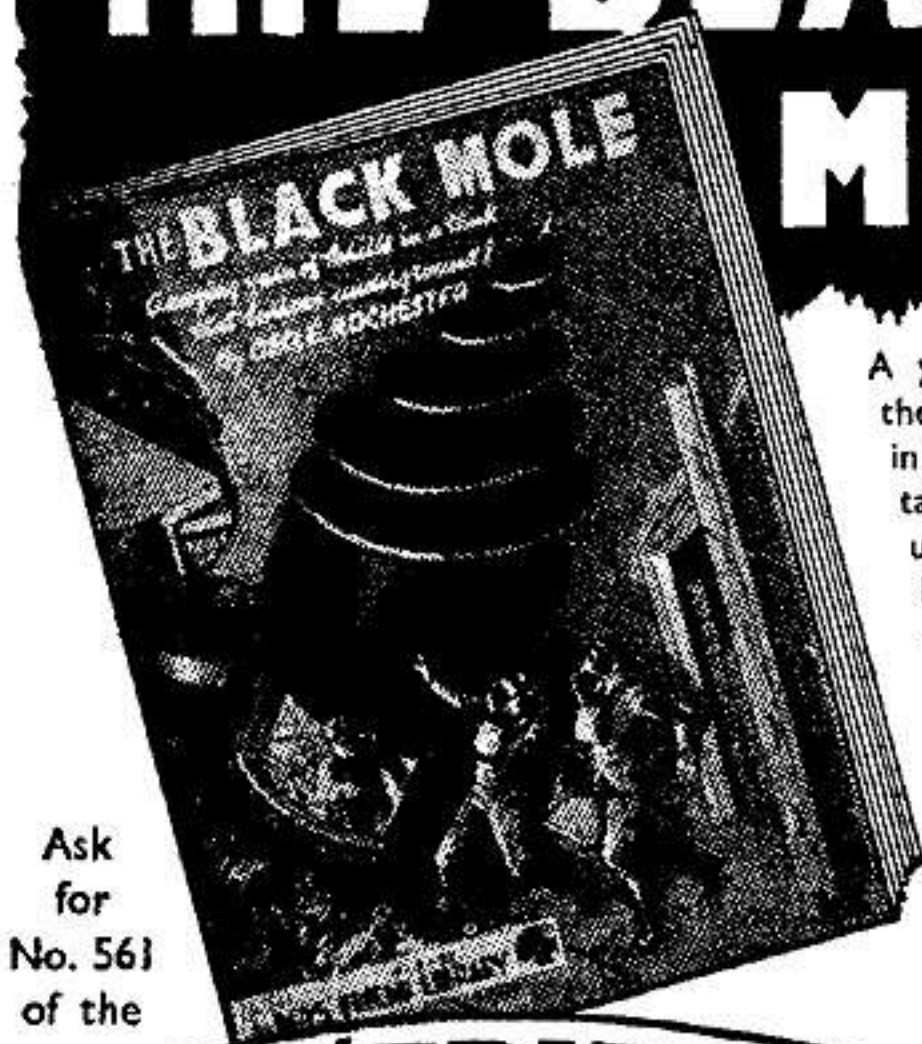
The Bounder gave him black looks as he approached.

"Yaas, there's Carne!" assented Lord Mauleverer. "We needn't worry about Carne. Smithy sticks here, old beans. If his jolly old pater comes across to see us, we'll explain to him how the matter stands. I've no doubt he will see reason. Dash it all, he can't be keen for his bonny boy to be sacked from school. Hacker will pitch him a tale of woe; but when he knows that we're simply holdin' the matter up till the Head comes back, I'm sure that Smithy's pater will think it a jolly good idea."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"Wait an' see, anyhow," said Lord Mauleverer cheerfully. "You might get a few eggs ready for Carne, and some tomatoes. Those tomatoes are a bit over-ripe for eatin', but they will do for Carne."

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"Hear, hear!"

"By gum, I'll bet Mauly's got it right!" said the Bounder. "Anyhow, I'm not goin' with Carne, and we'll make the rotter sorry he's called."

Carne of the Sixth arrived at the school shop. He stared up at the crowd of juniors looking down from the window.

"Vernon-Smith is wanted!" he snapped. "I dare say you know that his father's come. You can see his car. His father's here to take him away. You're to come to the House at once, Vernon-Smith."

"Who says so?" jeered the Bounder.

"Hacker's sent me to take you," grunted Carne. "Don't be a fool. You know your father's here. He's waiting for you in Hacker's study now. Do you want him to walk over and hook you out himself? You'd better come."

"Tell Hacker he can go and eat coke!" said the Bounder. "And take that back with you, Carne!"

"That" was an egg! The Bounder, as he spoke, hurled it with deadly aim at the upturned, sneering face below. It crashed fairly on Carne's nose, and burst there.

The bully of the Sixth gave a suffocated howl as egg spread over his face.

"Oooowgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And take that along with it!" roared Bolsover major.

An over-ripe tomato squashed on the egg that was plastered over Carne's face.

"Urrggh!" Carne staggered back, clawing at egg and tomato.

"And that!" yelled Peter Todd, weighing in with another egg.

"Go it!" chuckled Lord Mauleverer.

"Give him beans!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whiz, whiz, whiz!

Carne fairly bounded away. Three or four eggs and several tomatoes followed him as he bounded. The missiles burst all over him till he got out of range.

He stopped at a little distance, wildly clawing egg and tomato from his face, spluttering with rage.

"Come and have a few more, Carne!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, do!" chortled Nugent.

"Come on, Carne!"

"Lots more!"

But Carne of the Sixth did not come back for more. He shook a furious fist at the garrison of the school shop, and, still clawing and dabbing at egg and tomato, tramped back to the House.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Angry Pater!

"**W**HERE is my son, sir?"

"I have sent for him."

Grunt from Mr. Vernon-Smith.

The portly City gentleman was not in a good temper. He was in a very bad temper, and took no trouble to conceal the fact.

Really, it was not surprising. No parent could possibly have been pleased by the news that his son was expelled from school. Still less could he have been pleased by the information that that son, although expelled, refused to leave. It was an extraordinary state of affairs, and not calculated to put any gentleman in a good temper.

Mr. Vernon-Smith almost glared at Horace Hacker. He had seen Mr. Hacker before, but knew little of him; only that he was a member of the staff at Greyfriars School. He was angry,

annoyed, perplexed, and impatient. So far, he had been unaware of the change in the state of affairs at Greyfriars; and the news about his son had come like a bolt from the blue.

Perhaps he was not quite surprised to hear that Herbert was in trouble at the school. Herbert had been in trouble often enough before; and had more than once come very near the sack. But it was extremely disagreeable to the financial gentleman, all the same.

"I must discuss this matter with my son's headmaster," he said. "I fail to see why I was shown into this study, Mr. Hacker. Your telephone message surprised me very much—disconcerted me very much, sir. But I must see Dr. Locke, and my son's Form-master."

"If you will let me explain—" snapped Mr. Hacker.

"I fail to see how you come into the matter at all, sir!" snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I desire to see the headmaster!"

"You see the headmaster at this moment!" said Mr. Hacker coldly.

"Dr. Locke is away ill, and the

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governing board have appointed me headmaster in his place."

"Oh!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "And his Form-master—"

"Mr. Quelch is also away ill—"

"Good gad! Has there been an epidemic here, or what?" grunted Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Nothing of the kind. Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch, while out on a walk, fell into a stream from a plank bridge, which appears to have been left unsafe by some mischievous person!" said Mr. Hacker. "Both of them caught very serious colds, and are, at present, in a nursing-home."

"Then it is you who have expelled my son?"

"Acting as headmaster, certainly!"

"And why?" rapped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Defiance of authority, to the extent of laying hands on me personally!" said Mr. Hacker, with smouldering eyes.

Mr. Vernon-Smith sat silent. A fellow who had "laid hands" on a master would naturally have been expelled from any school. Mr. Vernon-Smith really could make no answer to that.

"I regret this, Mr. Vernon-Smith," went on Mr. Hacker, "but my decision is irrevocable; Vernon-Smith must leave. I should have sent him home in charge of a Sixth Form prefect, with a note explaining the matter; but he has had the unheard-of impudence to take refuge, with others, in a building from which he refuses to emerge. For that reason, sir, I telephoned to you—

you, as his father, have, I presume, authority over him, though his headmaster has none."

"I have!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith grimly. "And unless my son can give a very good explanation of his conduct, he has stern measures to expect at my hands. Why is he not here?"

"I have sent him a message to come. I should not be surprised," said Mr. Hacker bitterly, "if he refuses to obey it, although he knows that you are here. The boy is utterly rebellious and disrespectful—"

He broke off as he glanced from the window. Carne of the Sixth was coming back to the House—alone! And the state of Carne's face showed what a reception he had had from the schoolboy strikers.

Mr. Hacker threw open the window.

"Carne!" he barked. "Come here!"

Carne, dabbing at egg and tomato, came up to the window.

Mr. Vernon-Smith rose from his chair and stared at him blankly.

"Good gad!" he ejaculated.

"Did you tell Vernon-Smith?" barked Mr. Hacker.

"I gave your message, sir, and they pelted me!" gasped Carne. "I—"

"You see, sir," said Mr. Hacker, turning to Mr. Vernon-Smith, "that is what I have to deal with, and your son is a ringleader—"

"Then other boys are concerned in the matter?" snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "My son, it seems, is not the only offender. How many, may I ask?"

"That is immaterial!" said Mr. Hacker. "You are here, sir, to take away your son, who is expelled from Greyfriars. I suggest that you give him your personal command to emerge, sir—if, indeed, that will have any effect on him!" added Mr. Hacker, with a sneer.

"My son, sir, will obey me!" snorted Mr. Vernon-Smith, "and I have yet to learn, sir, whether he may have a good reason to give for not obeying you. I came here, sir, under the impression that my son had been expelled by his headmaster, and desiring to discuss the matter with Dr. Locke! I find that his headmaster is away, and that, during his absence, you have taken it upon yourself to expel my son. That, sir, is a very different matter."

"I, sir, am acting as headmaster by the appointment of the governing board, and I have full authority—"

"You do not appear to be able to make your authority good!" snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "It appears that a number of boys are concerned in this outbreak. Why is my son specially selected for extreme punishment? Is he alone, among a number of offenders, expelled?"

"Other boys have been sentenced to expulsion—all the ringleaders in this revolt—"

"How many?" snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"That is quite immaterial." Mr. Hacker was reluctant to mention that seven fellows were under that dire sentence. He was quite satisfied with himself and his methods; but he realised that the effect on others might not be so satisfactory. Seven at a blow was really a large order for any headmaster—and more especially for a temporary headmaster, only a short time in control.

"It is not immaterial!" grunted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "My son, sir, is entitled to justice. I shall inquire into this matter very carefully; and I shall

certainly, if it seems fit to me, raise the matter again when Dr. Locke returns to Greyfriars. I demand to see my son!"

Mr. Hacker pointed from the study window, towards the school shop, behind the elms in the distant corner of the quad.

"You will find him there, sir!" he said acidly.

Mr. Vernon-Smith stared at the distant building. He could see that most of the windows were broken, and barricaded, even at the distance. He snorted.

"This state of affairs, sir, looks to me as if the governors made a mistake in appointing you in Dr. Locke's place!" he snapped. "This state of affairs, sir, reflects no credit upon you."

Mr. Hacker compressed his thin lips.

"I shall not discuss that with you, Mr. Vernon-Smith!" he answered.

"You are here to remove your son from this school, as he refuses to go of his own accord. Kindly take him away without further delay."

The City gentleman gave him a long, grim look. He had come there prepared to argue with Dr. Locke on the subject of his son's sentence. He was certainly not prepared to bow to the edicts of a jack-in-office—which was how he regarded Mr. Hacker!

"I shall use my own judgment about that, sir!" he barked; and without wasting further time on the new headmaster, he strode out of the study and left the House.

With a knitted brow, he strode across to the school shop—Hacker watching him from the study window—hoping, and expecting, to see him depart from Greyfriars with Herbert Vernon-Smith in the car with him—but smitten with a doubt!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Not a Winner!

"HERBERT!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith barked the name. He stared up with a frowning brow at the many faces in the window.

"Yes, dad?" said the Bounder meekly.

"What does all this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Explain yourself, you young rascal! What are you doing here?"

"Holding the fort with these fellows!" said Smithy. "We're on strike!"

"Good gad!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "And how many of you are mixed up in this nonsense?"

"All the Form!" said Smithy. "All the Remove's in it, father. You don't want me to sneak off and let the other fellows down, do you?"

Snort from the City gentleman.

"According to Mr. Hacker, you are the ringleader in this, Herbert!" he snapped.

"Only one of them!" said Smithy. "Mauly's skipper!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith stared at Mauleverer.

"Oh! Is he expelled, too, then?" he demanded.

"Yaas," said Lord Mauleverer. "Hacker's been rather liberal with his expulsions, sir! Seven of us are sacked."

"Seven!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Do you mean to tell me that Mr. Hacker, only a few days in control of the school, has expelled seven boys in one Form?"

"Yaas!"

"I'm one of them, sir!" said Harry Wharton. "When Mr. Quelch was here I was his head boy, as I dare say you know, sir. And we needn't tell you, I hope, that this would not have happened if Mr. Quelch was still here, or the Head."

"Who are the others?" asked Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Cherry, Nugent, Bull, Hurree Singh. You know them all, sir."

"By gad!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Smithy's done just the same as the rest, sir!" said Tom Redwing. "If he's to blame, we're all to blame in the same way, and to the same extent."

Mr. Vernon-Smith gave an expressive grunt. He knew all the fellows named quite well. And he knew perfectly well that, had the Head been at Greyfriars, they would never have been expelled.

Mr. Hacker's methods satisfied Mr. Hacker, but they made a very different impression upon an unprejudiced mind.

The fact that half a dozen of the best fellows in the Remove, among them Mr. Quelch's head boy, had been "sacked," made it clear, to a keen, practical mind, like the City gentleman's, that the root cause of the trouble was, that supreme authority had fallen into the hands of a man who did not know how to exercise it.

"I suppose Hacker's pitched you his version, father?" said the Bounder. "But you can see for yourself that the old ass isn't fit to run a winkle stall, let alone a school. You know that this strike wouldn't be on if the Head were here, or if Quelch were here. So whose fault is it?"

Another grunt from Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"If you tell me to chuck it, of course I'll have to chuck it!" added the Bounder, with unaccustomed meekness. "But you won't make me let my friends down, father! It won't make any difference if I go—the other fellows will carry on."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific, esteemed sahib!"

"Yaas, we're goin' on!" said Lord Mauleverer. "It will be all right, sir, if we hold on till the Head comes back. He will wash out Hacker's bunk. Let Smithy have his chance with the rest, sir."

"Herbert!" barked Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, father?"

"Carry on!"

"Oh, you bet!" grinned the Bounder.

"The man seems to be a fool!" grunted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "A jack-in-office, by gad—throwing his weight about—a weak man putting his foot down—pah! Carry on, Herbert! I command you not to leave the school!"

"What-ho!" said Herbert.

"I shall raise this matter with the governors!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "In the meantime, stay in the school! Don't leave on any account!"

"You bet!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bravo!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith turned and stalked back to the House. The Greyfriars strikers exchanged satisfied grins. "Hacker's latest" had not turned out a winner, after all.

The City gentleman did not re-enter the House. He strode to the study window at which Mr. Hacker was standing. The master of the Shell gave him a bitter look. He could see that he had failed.

Classes being over, there were a good many fellows in the quad, and they all

looked at Mr. Vernon-Smith with considerable interest. Plenty of them were within hearing as he addressed the master of the Shell at his study window.

"The old bean looks in a bate!" Coker of the Fifth remarked to Potter and Greene. "Wrathy, what?"

"I fancy Hacker's going to get the benefit of it!" grinned Potter.

"Serve the old ass right!" said Greene. "Does he think he can carry on like this, sackin' fellows right and left?"

"Listen!" grinned Coker.

Mr. Vernon-Smith's voice was both loud and deep. Dozens of fellows listened to it with keen interest.

"Mr. Hacker! I have seen my son and spoken to him. I refuse to remove him from the school, sir! Understand me—I distinctly refuse!"

"I insist, sir!" hooted Mr. Hacker.

"You may insist, sir, as much as you please!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"But I have commanded my son to remain, sir, in spite of you and your hare-brained folly!"

"What?" gasped Mr. Hacker.

"What?"

"And this state of affairs, sir, will not be allowed to continue long!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith. "It is my intention, Mr. Hacker, to lose no time in placing the matter before the governing board, now that it has been brought to my notice—and we shall see, sir, whether you will be allowed to play the fool like this!"

Leaving Mr. Hacker speechless, and almost green, Mr. Vernon-Smith strode away to his car.

The Rolls rolled out of the gates, Mr. Vernon-Smith sitting in it, with thunder in his brow. From the crowd of fellows in the quad there was a chortle. Mr. Hacker, at his study window, stood staring, still speechless.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Hacker Sees His Way!

"OLD on!"

Mr. Hacker gave a start.

The February evening was dark and misty. After dark, the road over Courtfield Common was lonely. Mr. Hacker was tramping along that road, his walking-stick under his arm, his hands in his overcoat pockets, and a deep frown on his brow.

He was taking a walk to think out his problem.

Really, it seemed to Mr. Hacker, a problem without a solution. How was he going to deal with a Form on strike, when the strikers had barricaded themselves in an impregnable stronghold?

The "stay-in" strike at Greyfriars had started in the Remove Form Room. The strikers had been washed out of that apartment with the hose. But they could not be washed out of the building they now occupied. Neither could they be overpowered by the Sixth Form prefects, behind their defences. In the open, no doubt, the big seniors could have handled any number of juniors. But they had been driven off, thoroughly defeated, from an attack on the school shop. And they were not going to try again.

Wingate, the Greyfriars captain, had told Mr. Hacker plainly that it was no use. He did not add that he would have refused to lead another attack—but it was quite plain to Hacker that that was the case.

The fact was, as Hacker bitterly reflected, that the whole school was in sympathy with the strike. Even the



"'Old on, guv'nor!" said the tramp. "P'r'aps you could 'elp a covey on 'is way." "Nothing of the kind!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "Stand aside at once!" "P'r'aps you could 'and a covey a quid?" suggested the vagrant. "P'r'aps you'd rather 'and it over peaceable, than 'ave yer 'ead cracked with this 'ere stick!" "Ruffian!" gasped Hacker.

prefects hardly made a secret of their opinion that it had been caused by Hacker's mismanagement.

He had, in fact, no support in the school at all. The other masters condemned his methods. The prefects could, and would, do nothing. As for the juniors, he was in uneasy dread lest some other Form might follow the example of the Remove.

He had called in Mr. Tozer—without result! He had called in the parent of one of the expelled boys—making matters worse! For he knew that Mr. Vernon-Smith was not going to let the matter rest where it was. Hacker did not feel disposed to call in any more parents. Mr. Vernon-Smith was enough for him in that line!

And if the City gentleman made his words good, as no doubt he would, and put the matter before the governing board, what was the result of that going to be? Mr. Hacker almost shuddered at the thought of any of the governors coming along and finding the school in its present state.

He had no doubt whatever that he was a far more able headmaster than the old Head. But, really, he could not point to the results with pride.

The strike had to be put down! The sacked juniors had to go—the rest flogged, and reduced to submission. But how? Where was he to raise the force required for such a battle royal? And he could not help realising what the governors must think of a headmaster who had to raise force to deal with a rebel Form! This riot had to be put down, everything restored to order, before a single governor butted in! But how?

Deeply immersed in that insoluble problem, Mr. Hacker did not notice a dim figure lurking in the shadow of the thickets by the lonely road over the common. He was thinking of rebellious

juniors, not of possible tramps and footpads.

So he was quite startled, and gave a jump when the shadowy figure lurched out into the road before him, and snapped to him to hold on.

He held on, as the man was standing directly in his path. He stared angrily at the tattered, shabby figure. Hacker with all his faults, was no coward. He was not alarmed, only intensely angry and irritated.

"Who are you?" he snapped. "What do you want?"

The man peered at him in the gloom. He was not a nice man, judging by appearances. He had a broken nose, and some of his front teeth were missing. He was badly in want of a shave, and still more seriously in want of a wash. He wore a battered bowler-hat on one side of a frowsy head, and his garments looked as if they had been picked off a scrap-heap—not a very respectable scrap-heap!

Altogether, he did not look a pleasant man to meet on a dark and solitary road, a mile from the nearest building.

Mr. Hacker slipped the walking-stick down from under his arm into his hand. He realised that he might need it.

"Stand aside!" he rapped.

"'Old on, guv'nor!" said the broken-nosed man. "P'r'aps you could 'elp a covey on his way?"

"Nothing of the kind! Stand aside at once!"

"P'r'aps you could 'and a covey a quid!" suggested the tramp. "P'r'aps you'd rather 'and it over peaceable, than 'ave your 'ead cracked with this 'ere stick!"

The broken-nosed man flourished a large and knobby stick so close to Mr. Hacker's nose that the Greyfriars master jumped back.

The tramp followed him up.

"Now, then!" he snarled. "'And it over, sharp!"

"If you fancy you can rob me, you rascal, you are very much mistaken!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "Stand aside at once—Ow!"

His hat cracked under a sudden lick from the tramp's cudgel. The crown was knocked right in, with rather painful results to the crown of Hacker's own head.

"Ow!" gasped Mr. Hacker. "Ow! Ruffian—Ow! Ow!"

"Now, then—Ow, bust my buttons!" It was the tramp's turn to yell as Mr. Hacker suddenly swung up his stick and lashed out.

The battered bowler flew off the tramp's head. He staggered, howling.

Mr. Hacker jumped forward, lashing with his walking-stick again and again.

The tap on his scalp had not frightened Hacker—it had only added to his intense anger and irritation. He fairly crashed his thick, heavy walking-stick at the broken-nosed man, and three hefty licks landed before the surprised tramp rolled over in the road at his feet.

"Ow! 'Old on!" yelled the tramp. "I says 'old on, guv'nor! Oh, my 'ead! Ow! You keep that stick away! Ow! Bust my buttons! Wow!"

The tramp had dropped his cudgel as he stumbled and fell. Mr. Hacker kicked it out of reach and stood over the sprawling rascal with his stick flourishing in the air.

The broken-nosed man blinked up at him in terror, holding his aching head with both hands.

"You rascal!" panted Mr. Hacker.

"Ow! I gives in, guv'nor!" groaned the tramp. "My eye! You go on, sir, I ain't stopping you! Ow! Wow!"

Albert Juggins had met with surprises in his unwashed career; but

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never such a surprise as this. When he had spotted a bony gent, who looked like a schoolmaster, on that lonely road, it had seemed to Albert that he was on to a soft thing. He had found Horace Hacker an unexpectedly hard nut to crack! In fact, it was his own nut that was cracked.

He clasped it with both hands and groaned. All that Mr. Juggins was anxious for now was for the bony gent to walk on and leave him alone.

But the bony gent did not walk on. He stood over Mr. Juggins with his stick ready to knock him down again if he got up. Albert did not get up.

"Leave a bloke alone, sir!" moaned Albert. "You've 'ad the best of it, bust my buttons! I ain't touching you, sir! Ow!"

Mr. Hacker glared at him with angry contempt. He was considering whether to take the dingy rascal by the collar and walk him into Courtfield and give him into custody.

But his expression changed. Other thoughts seemed to be coming into Mr. Hacker's mind. He lowered the stick.

"You may get up!" he snapped. "But don't go away."

"Hany hold thing, sir!" mumbled the dispirited Albert. He got on his feet, still rubbing his damaged head, and eyeing Mr. Hacker furtively and stealthily.

He was watching for a chance to dodge away and scuttle across the dark common—but he did not like the glint in Hacker's eye, and still less did he like the look of his walking-stick. He remained where he was.

"Who are you?" rapped Mr. Hacker.

"Name of Juggins, sir," said the broken-nosed man submissively. "I'm a honest bloke, sir—I been looking for work. I ain't found any."

Mr. Hacker eyed him keenly, searchingly. Juggins did not look as if honest work was much in his line. But he certainly looked as if he was in need of the "quid" for which he had stopped Hacker.

"Work!" repeated Mr. Hacker contemptuously. "What are you—a tramp?"

"I've been on the road a bit, sir!" mumbled Mr. Juggins. "I've had 'ard luck, sir!" He blinked curiously at Hacker. Why the bony gent was questioning him he could not imagine. Juggins was only anxious to get away—but Hacker did not seem to want to part with him.

"Suppose I offered you a job?" said Mr. Hacker.

"Oh!" said Juggins. He did not look enthusiastic.

"Nothing in the way of hard work!" said Mr. Hacker contemptuously. "Have you any friends in this neighbourhood—hooligans like yourself?"

"I know a good many blokes up and down the road, sir!" said the astonished Mr. Juggins. "But why—"

"As it happens," said Mr. Hacker, "I have need of the services of a few men—say six or seven. I will pay you, and them, a pound each, if you can do what I require."

"Ho!" said Mr. Juggins. "What might the job be, sir?" He was more and more astonished, and seemed uneasy. If Mr. Juggins had been looking for work, it had probably been in the hope of not finding any.

Mr. Hacker paused for a moment. But he had made up his mind. The barricaded school shop had to be taken from the Greyfriars strikers. Force was required for that; and Mr. Juggins had, in fact, turned up in the right place at the right moment.

What the prefects could not do, a

bunch of hefty men could do. Certainly these were extraordinary measures for a headmaster to take—measures of which Horace Hacker could not possibly feel proud! But really it was a case of any port in a storm! Hacker had to get through somehow, before the governing board came down on him like a wolf on the fold! In the peculiar circumstances of the case he could not afford to be particular about his measures.

There was a pause; but the master of the Shell spoke at last.

"Listen to me! A number of rebellious boys have taken possession of a building in the school of which I am headmaster. They must be removed by force. Do you understand?"

"My eye!" gasped Mr. Juggins.

"You are not afraid, I suppose, of a struggle with a party of schoolboys?" snapped Mr. Hacker contemptuously.

Mr. Juggins grinned.

"I been in some scraps in my time, sir!" he answered. "Jest a few!"

Albert Juggins was astonished—indeed astounded—by what the bony gent required of him. But he was glad to hear it. A job of work would have frightened Albert into the next county. But a scrap was quite in his line. A "quid" for a scrap seemed sheer pie to Albert. On Saturday nights he scrapped, as a rule, for the sheer pleasure of it. To be paid for scrapping seemed, to Mr. Juggins, something like.

"Very well!" said Mr. Hacker curtly. "Do you know Greyfriars School?"

"I seen it, sir."

"Come there to-morrow morning, at ten o'clock, and bring six or seven men like yourself with you. I will pay you a pound each for overpowering the resistance of the boys in the building I have mentioned."

"Sir," said Mr. Juggins, "it's a go! You rely on me, sir! Why, sir, I'd get you a 'undred coveys to come on them terms, sir. Five 'undred."

"Half a dozen will be enough!" said Mr. Hacker.

"We'll be there, sir! P'r'aps, sir, you'd let a covey have 'arf-a-crown for a night's lodging, sir!" added Albert hopefully.

Mr. Hacker paused; but he nodded, and placed a half-crown in a grubby palm. He walked back to Greyfriars feeling relieved in his mind. Albert Juggins bit the half-crown to make sure that it was a good one, and ejaculated:

"Bust my buttons!"

And by the time Mr. Hacker walked in at Greyfriars School Mr. Juggins walked into the Three Fishers, where the half-crown was immediately expended—though not on a night's lodging.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Bath for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Turn out, you fat slacker!"
"Oh, really, Cherry! Don't make such a row!" said Billy Bunter peevishly. "Let a fellow snooze. I—I don't feel well this morning."

Clang, clang, clang!
The rising-bell was ringing out over Greyfriars School in the misty February morning.

In the House all Forms were turning out at the clang. There, no fellow from the Sixth to the Second was able to turn a deaf ear to it. But in the strikers' stronghold—once the school tuckshop—Billy Bunter turned a deaf ear—in fact, two!

Over the shop and the house adjoining was a huge attic, which the strikers had turned into a dormitory. Some of the juniors occupied other rooms, and some had rigged up beds downstairs to be ready in case of a night attack; but half the Form were accommodated in the garret.

Bedsteads were few; but there were plenty of bedclothes, the Remove dormitory having been cleared out of those necessary articles. Camping in a rough-and-ready style seemed rather a lark to most of the Remove.

Most of the rebels were ready to turn out at rising-bell, just as if they had been still in their old dormitory. There were few slackers in the Remove, which prided itself on being a strenuous Form. But there were a few—and those few had the idea that rebellion, if it meant anything, meant that a fellow could do as he jolly well liked. And Lord Mauleverer, the easiest-going fellow in the Form, having been elected leader, they expected to get by with it.

Instead of which, Mauly was turning out quite a strict disciplinarian. Mauly disliked the rising-bell almost as much as Bunter did; but he turned out promptly in the morning; and gave instructions for all slackers to be booted out of bed. Strenuous fellows carried out these instructions with zest; and Skinner and Snoop quite gave up the idea that going on strike meant frowsting. Still more unwillingly Billy Bunter gave it up. Every morning regularly the fat Owl of the Remove remained last in bed and nourished a hope of being allowed to remain there.

Bob Cherry picked up a pillow and slung it, to fall on Bunter's head as the fat junior laid it on the pillow again.

Plump!

It dropped!

"Yoo-hoop!" came a yell from Bunter as he was suddenly jerked back from the land of dreams. "Ow! Beast! Ow!"

"Turning out now?" grinned Bob.

"No!" hooted Bunter. "I'm ill! I've told you I'm not well! I—I've got a pain—a fearful pain—a touch of bronchitis in my leg—"

"Oh crikey!"

"Now leave a fellow alone, you beast!" hooted Bunter. "I can't get up when I'm ill with a fearful pain in—"

"That's all right!" said Bob cheerily. "I'll give you another. If you can't get up with one pain, let's see if you can get up with two!"

He tossed a boot in the air this time. There was another frantic howl from Bunter as it dropped. He seemed to like it less than the pillow.

"Ow! Yaroooh! Oh, you beast!"

"Can you turn out now?" asked Bob. "I'll give you another pain, if you like—as many as you like, in fact! I've got another boot here—"

Billy Bunter sat up. He jammed his spectacles on his fat little nose and gave the cheery Bob a devastating glare.

"Beast! I'm waiting for the bath-room!" he roared. "I didn't mean I was ill. I meant I was waiting for my turn with the bath-room! Think I'm going to miss washing in the morning, blow you!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.

"Now leave a fellow alone!" snorted Bunter, and once more his fat head was laid on the pillow.

This time he was allowed to close his eyes in peace. If Billy Bunter really wanted to wash Bob was not the man to discourage him.

Washing accommodation, in point of fact, was rather limited in the new quarters of the Remove. There was only one bath, and fellows who were particular about their morning tub had to take turns with it. There were several taps and sinks, which satisfied other fellows. But Billy Bunter, hitherto, had been the most easily satisfied of all.

Never a whale on washing, Bunter had almost completely cut out that process, and since the strike had started Bunter resembled less and less Shakespeare's schoolboy with a "shining morning face." The Owl of the Remove had grown grubbier and grubbier.

If it had dawned on Bunter at long last that a bath would do him good it was a sign of grace, to be encouraged. It was more probable, however, that this was a new dodge for staying in bed. Still, he was given the benefit of the doubt, and he resumed his happy snore while the rising-bell ceased to clang.

It seemed to Bunter that he had only just closed his eyes again when he was awakened by the toe of a boot jamming into his fat ribs.

He opened his eyes and blinked. "Bath-room's ready, old fat bean!" said Bob.

"Beast!" "I've filled the bath for you," added Bob. "Jolly glad you're going to get a wash for the first time this term."

"Yah!" "Well, turning out?" demanded Bob. "I'm going down, fathead!" "Don't stop for me," said Bunter. "It's all right. I'm going to get up. You go down, old chap."

Bob Cherry chuckled. "You wouldn't go to sleep again as soon as I was gone?" he asked.

"Oh! No; I—I'm just going to jump out."

"You are," agreed Bob. "I'll help you jump! Like that! I'm going to jam my boot in your ribs till you jump! Now, jump away!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

He jumped! The largest foot in the Greyfriars Remove was not to be argued with! Glaring wrath, the Owl of the Remove jumped out of bed.

"Where's my trousers, you beast?" he hooted.

"Eh? What about that bath?"

"Well, it's jolly cold," said Bunter, "and with a touch of bronchitis in my—my arm, I—I think I'd better be a bit careful. Never mind the bath."

"But I do mind!" grinned Bob.

"You've slacked in bed an extra half-hour, waiting for that bath, old fat bean, and now you're going to get it! Take hold of his other ear, Johnny!"

"I say, you fellows—ow! Leggo!" shrieked Billy Bunter, as Bob Cherry grasped one fat ear and Johnny Bull the other. "Wow! I—I'm coming! Ow!"

"Kim on, then!" "Ow! Beast! Wow! Roster! Ow!" Billy Bunter's fat ears were led away to the bath-room. The rest of Bunter had to accompany the ears! They were not released till he was in the bath-room.

"Brekker's ready!" came Harry Wharton's voice up the staircase.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I think I'll leave it till after brekker!" gasped Bunter, blinking in dismay at a bath full of luke-warm water.

"Think so?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Yes, old chap! You see—"

"Think again," suggested Johnny.

"Look here, you beast—"

"Tumbling in, Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Nq!" yelled Bunter. "Beast! I don't want a bath! I'm not so dirty as you fellows—always wanting washing! Go and eat coke!"

And Bunter turned to bolt.

Two pairs of hands grasped the fat Owl. With a combined effort Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull heaved him up and tipped him into the bath, pyjamas and all!

Billy Bunter rolled, and splashed, and gurgled.

"Gurrrrrrrgh! Ow! I say—ooooch! Beasts! Woooooch! Groooooooogh! Oh crikey! Woooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob and Johnny went down to break-

(Continued on next page.)

Thrill of a lifetime



GET A QUICK
'LIFT' WITH
AERO WHEN
YOU'RE TIRED

OVER she goes! It's a grand feeling, taking life with a swing, always on the go! But you burn up energy *three times faster*. Sometimes you need a quick 'lift.' That's the time for Aero—the new kind of milk chocolate that is crisp, light, easy to bite—and good for you too.

Just look at a piece of Aero—it is different from ordinary chocolate. Its special texture excites the taste-buds in your mouth, gives you *all* the flavour instantly, without any cloying. It digests quicker too—and so can't spoil your next meal. Try Aero today as a between-meal snack—and get a new thrill!

Ordinary chocolate is hard—Aero is crisp, light, smooth. It literally "melts in your mouth," you get more flavour.

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fast, leaving the fat Owl splashing and spluttering. When Bunter came down at last he had a ferocious scowl on his unusually clean face. And it was probable that, whatever excuse Bunter thought of for frowsting in bed next time, it was not likely to be a claim to take his turn with the bath!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Hacker's Army!

GOSLING stared. He knitted his brows. "My eye!" said Gosling. What the man at the gate wanted Gosling did not know. He could not imagine. The gate was unlocked, and the man pushed it open, and Gosling, from his lodge, just stared at him. A shabby, stubbly, unwashed vagrant, with a broken nose and several teeth missing was a very unusual visitor for Greyfriars.

But he stopped in as if he had business there. And, to Gosling's further astonishment, several others, of similar appearance, followed him. The old Greyfriars porter wondered whether he was dreaming. A collection of the rowdiest-looking tramps in the county seemed to have decided to call at Greyfriars School that morning. It was really amazing!

"Ere, you!" Gosling rolled out of his lodge and held up a monitory hand. "Ere, you! 'Ook it!"

The broken-nosed man looked at him. "This 'ere is Greyfriars, ain't it?" he asked.

"Yes, it are!" grunted Gosling. "But your sort ain't wanted 'ere, and so I tell you! You 'ook it, sharp!"

"Name of Juggins," said the broken-nosed gentleman. "Ain't you expecting me 'ere?"

Gosling started. Mr. Hacker had told him that a Mr. Juggins would be calling that morning, with some other men, without stating why. Gosling was prepared to admit Mr. Juggins when he came. But he had never dreamed that Mr. Juggins was this kind of man. He blinked at him.

"You Juggins?" he ejaculated.

"Albert Juggins, when I'm at 'ome," said the broken-nosed man affably. "Called to see a gent of the name of 'Acker!"

"Oh, my eye!" said Gosling. "Look 'ere, you, there's some mistake! Don't you come in 'ere. I'll send for Mr. Hacker and ask—"

Mr. Juggins came cheerfully on. After him came a six-foot tramp, with a black patch over one eye. Then came six more tattered gentlemen, grinning. Juggins & Co. seemed to be looking on their "job" at the school as a sort of joke.

"Look 'ere, I tell you, you can't come in 'ere!" exclaimed Gosling. "Blessed gang of tramps! Look 'ere, you stop where you are—"

"Give him a wiper, Fred!" said Mr. Juggins, addressing the six-foot gentleman with the patch. "He's cheeky, that cove is! Wiper him over the cabeezer!"

"He won't cheek me!" said Fred. And he reached at Gosling with a fist that looked like a leg of mutton.

Gosling jumped back. "Look 'ere—" he gasped.

Fred followed him up. Gosling backed into his lodge and slammed the door. He did not like the look of that leg-of-mutton fist.

From the direction of the House Mr. Hacker appeared in sight. He had had

an eye open from the window of the Shell Form-room.

At that hour all the Greyfriars fellows were in class, with the exception of the strikers. Mr. Hacker had planned for his "army" to arrive while the fellows were in the Form-rooms, hoping that the whole affair would be over before the bell rang for break.

Even Hacker was not proud of the methods he was using to put down the schoolboys' strike. He preferred the proceedings to proceed without witnesses, if possible. By the time the school came out in break, Mr. Hacker hoped and expected that the Remove rebellion would be a thing of the past.

But inflexible as his determination was, he was a little dismayed as he looked at Juggins and his tattered crew. They were all hefty men, and there were eight of them; and it seemed probable that they would be able to deal with any number of junior schoolboys. But such a collection of frowsy, stubbly tramps he had seldom seen. He could not help feeling a slight misgiving at the sight of such a crew in the old quadrangle at Greyfriars.

"Ere's the guv'nor!" said Albert Juggins cheerfully. He touched his battered bowler to Mr. Hacker. "Morning, sir!"

"Oh, good-morning!" gasped Mr. Hacker.

"Ere we are, sir," went on the cheery Albert. "At your horders, sir, and ready and willin'. This 'ere is Fred, sir—I dessay you've 'eard of Fighting Fred, what was in the ring— afore he pushed too many back and 'ad to chuck it?"

Mr. Hacker had never heard of Fighting Fred. He blinked at the prizefighter, who ducked his head in salute.

"And this 'ere, sir," went on Mr. Juggins, indicating a small wiry man, with a grinning, foxy face—"this 'ere is Ike the Weasel, sir, and if it's scrapping you want, I jest tell you Ike's the man! I seen him chew a bloke's ear off—"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Hacker. "Kindly do nothing of that kind here! Goodness gracious! It is merely a question of compelling some rebellious boys to vacate a building in which they have barricaded themselves. No harm to be done—no damage—no injury inflicted."

"Oh, we won't 'urt 'em, sir!" said Albert. "A few 'ard knocks won't 'urt 'em! Don't you get to biting no ears, Ike!"

"I won't 'urt 'em, if they don't 'urt me!" said the Weasel. "If they does, they got to get what's coming to 'em!"

"That's only fair!" said Mr. Juggins. "You'll hown up that's fair, guv'nor! This 'ere bloke"—Albert went on with the introductions, tapping a burly, red-headed man on the shoulder—"this 'ere is Ginger, and I dessay you're 'eard of ginger for pluck, sir! I don't mind telling you that I've seen 'im handling two policemen at once, and they never got him to the stone jug!"

"I've 'andled three, in my time!" said Ginger.

"And this 'ere," resumed Mr. Juggins, pointing to a ferret-eyed man in a frowsy fur cap—"this 'ere is Jimmy the Pincher—but he won't pinch nothing 'ere, will you, Jimmy?"

"Not 'arf!" said the Pincher.

"Oh! Yes! Quite so!" said Mr. Hacker, cutting short the introductions. "Please come with me, and I will show you what you have to do."

"Old on!" said Fighting Fred. "Let's 'ave it clear! Albert 'ere says it's a quid all round! That right?"

"A—a what? Oh, yes! A pound apiece!" said Mr. Hacker. "Certainly! That sum will be paid immediately you have turned the boys out of the building they now occupy."

"Easy money!" remarked Ike the Weasel.

"I believe you!" agreed Jimmy the Pincher. "This 'ere is pie, and I'll say, Albert, old feller, that I'm obliged to you for putting a cove on to it!"

"I ain't the bloke to forget my pals when there's anything going!" declared Albert. "You show us the way, sir, and we'll 'ave them young rips out, and 'owling, before you can say knife!"

"Yes, yes! Please come with me!" gasped Mr. Hacker.

The more he saw of Albert & Co. the less he liked their looks. He was almost feverishly anxious to get through and dismiss that extraordinary array before all Greyfriars could behold them.

As a matter of fact, a good many eyes had seen them already. Mr. Hacker had had to leave his Form, and a dozen Shell fellows were at the windows of their Form-room, staring out. And Hobson & Co. almost rubbed their eyes at the sight of that crew of stubbly tramps in the quadrangle.

"We're arter you, sir!" said Albert.

Mr. Hacker led the way, with long strides, and after him marched the grinning crew of gentlemen of the roads and hedges.

Gosling, from his lodge, stared blankly. Hobby & Co., from the Shell Form-room looked on like fellows in a dream. Mr. Prout, from the Fifth Form-room, gazed out, and refused, for a moment or two, to believe his eyes. Finding, however, that his eyes did not deceive him, Mr. Prout rolled out into the quad, to ascertain the cause of this amazing state of affairs.

And as soon as he was gone, most of the Fifth lined the window to stare.

"Mr. Hacker!" Prout boomed, as he rolled into the quad. "Who are these men—what are they doing here?"

Mr. Hacker looked round, with a bitter look on his face. Really, he could hardly have hoped to carry on unobserved, with the quad under view from so many Form-room windows. But it was intensely annoying to him for the Fifth Form beak to barge in.

"Kindly return to your Form-room, Mr. Prout!" he snapped. "This matter does not concern you, sir!"

"But what—" gasped Prout.

"I repeat, sir, that this does not concern you!" hooted Mr. Hacker. "Will you return to your Form-room? I desire no argument from a member of my staff, sir!"

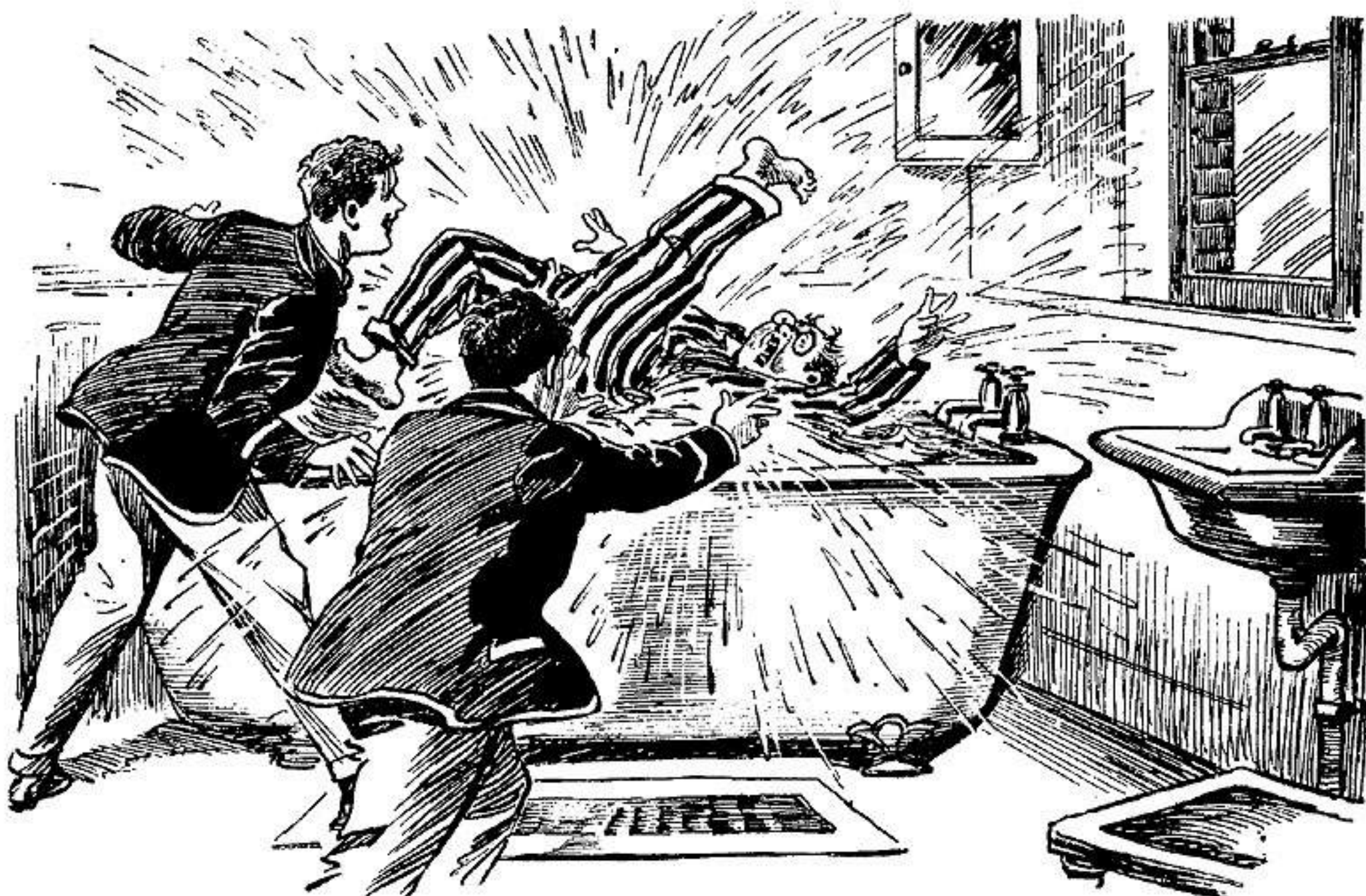
"Your staff, sir!" boomed Prout. "I, sir, am a member of Dr. Locke's staff, and I refuse—I distinctly refuse, sir—to be described as a member of your staff, sir! And I demand to know, sir, what these tramps—these ruffians—these hooligans—are doing here, sir! I have a right to make such a demand, sir! If it is possible—if it is even remotely possible—that you intend to use such ruffians, sir, to deal with the Remove boys—"

"Ere, you draw it mild, old covey!" said Fighting Fred. "'Ooo are you calling names, I'd like to know! If you want a wiper round the kisser—"

"It 'im, Fred!" said the Weasel. "Cheeky ole sketch! 'It 'im in the eye!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Prout. "Mr. Hacker, I protest—I protest, sir, against these—these ruffians being admitted into the school!"

"Silence!" roared Hacker. "Another word, sir, and I shall dismiss you from



Two pairs of hands grasped Billy Bunter. With a combined effort Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull heaved the fat junior up and tipped him into the bath, pyjamas and all. "Gurrrrrrrgh! Ow! I say—oooooooooh!" roared Bunter, as he landed with a terrific splash. "Beasts! Woooooh! Groooooogh! Oh crikey! Woooooh!"

Greyfriars! Go back to your Form-room at once!"

"What?" gasped Prout. "What?"
"I'll shift 'im for you, guv'nor!" said Albert Juggins, and he made a movement towards Mr. Prout, clenching knuckly fists.

The Fifth Form master retreated into the House.

He went back to his Form-room in quite a dizzy state. He found his Form in a buzz of excitement. But he did not heed it. He stood gazing from the window—like a man in a dream. And in a very few minutes most of the windows of the House were packed with faces. Mr. Hacker's hope of getting through, unnoticed, or almost unnoticed, while the Greyfriars fellows were in class, was rather a delusive one!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Attack!

"GREAT pip!"
"Look!"
"Oh crumbs!"
"What a crew!"
"I say, you fellows—"
"Phew!"

There was quite a roar of voices in the strikers' stronghold. Faces appeared at windows, staring. There were startled looks on all sides—and dismay in more than one face.

The schoolboy strikers could, indeed, hardly believe their eyes at the sight of Mr. Hacker coming up, with his tattered army at his heels.

They had been wondering about Hacker's next move. They did not suppose that he was going to let the "stay-in" strike go on unregarded. He had to do something.

But they had not, certainly, expected anything like this. They gazed at the gang of tramps blankly.

"Is Hacker going to set that crew on us?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Looks like it!"

"Hacker means business!" grinned Vernon-Smith. "I wonder where he dug up that lot? Must have gone rooting through the casual wards."

"They want washing, but they look pretty hefty!" remarked Johnny Bull. "This won't be like scrapping with the prefects. There'll be real damage done if that mob get going!"

"They'll get most of the damage!" said the Bounder.

"But Hacker can't mean—" said Frank Nugent.

"He hasn't brought them here for fun!" said Peter Todd. "We've got to pull up our socks, you fellows, if we're going to hold the fort."

"No 'if' about it!" said Harry Wharton. "It won't be a picnic this time, but we're holding on!"

"No surrender!" roared Bolsover major.

"No fear!"

"I say, you fellows, suppose we get out of the back windows, and—and cut?" suggested Billy Bunter. "You see—"

"Cherry!" rapped Lord Mauleverer.

"Here, old bean—"

"Kick Bunter!"

"I say— Yarooch! Beast!" roared Bunter.

"I guess," began Fisher T. Fish, with an extremely uneasy eye on the tattered array in the quad—"I—I guess—"

He broke off, as Bob Cherry's boot was applied to Billy Bunter's tight trousers.

"Yaas," said Mauleverer sweetly.

"What do you guess, Fishy? Get ready to kick him, Toddy! Now then, go on, Fishy!"

"I—I guess we're going to give 'em socks!" said Fisher T. Fish hastily; which was certainly not what he had intended to guess.

Fishy, like Bunter, was thinking that a prompt retreat by the back windows was a first-class idea. However, he did not venture to say so.

Skinner and Snoop, exchanging a glance, strolled away towards the cellar stair. They had no use for hard knocks, and it was clear that if Hacker's new forces got to close quarters, the knocks were going to be fearfully hard.

"Get hold of somethin', you men!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Fists won't be much use against that mob. Golf clubs and things will be useful."

"Hear, hear!"

Mr. Hacker came to a halt in front of the school shop. His face was grim and acid as he looked up at the crowded window.

Behind him, his mob stood grinning. Juggins & Co. no doubt, were surprised by the strange state of affairs at Greyfriars School, and still more surprised, at being called in to deal with it. But evidently they regarded the task before them as an easy one, and looked on it chiefly as a jest. They were likely to find it a more serious matter than they supposed at present.

Mr. Hacker raised his hand.

"Listen to me!" he rapped. "Todd, Field, Brown, Hazeldene, and the rest of you. I order you to come out of that building at once. Otherwise these men will force an entrance and turn you out. If you resist, you will not be gently treated. Take warning in time."

"We are resistin', old bean," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Do not dare to answer me, Mauleverer! I will listen to nothing

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HOLDING THE FORT!



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from
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from an expelled boy!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "You leave Greyfriars today!"

"I think not!" said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "But go ahead, Hacker! We're ready for the jolly old circus!"

"The readiffulness is terrific, esteemed Hacker."

"I warn you," shouted Mr. Hacker, "that these men will not use gentle measures if you force me to use them to quell this riot."

"Neither shall we!" said Harry Wharton.

"Silence, Wharton! I command you to remove the barricade from the door below, and allow me to enter! You will all leave the building! The expelled boys will be sent away from the school, the rest will go to their Form-room. I have no time to waste! Make up your minds at once!"

"Can it!"

"Chuck it!"

"Go home, Hacker!"

"Shut up!"

It was a roar of defiance from the strikers. It was followed by several whizzing missiles. Mr. Hacker dodged an egg and caught a tomato. He gave a spluttering howl.

"Juggins!" he gasped. "You see what you have to do! Take that ladder, set it up, and enter by the window!"

"We're on, guv'nor!" grinned Albert.

Gosling's long ladder lay near at hand. The tramps grasped it and swung it up. Mr. Hacker stepped back out of range of missiles and watched.

Planks had been nailed across the window, with spaces between. There was space left to hurl missiles, but there was no room for an assailant to push in. Within, the juniors crowded, most of them with something hard and heavy in their hands, ready for the attack.

The ladder clumped on the window-sill. Mr. Juggins, with a thick stick in his grip, clambered up.

Crash, crash, crash! went his cudgel on the planks. Plenty of nails had been driven in to secure them, but under that hefty assault it would not have taken Albert long to knock a way in, had he been uninterrupted.

But he was interrupted suddenly.

Eggs and tomatoes whizzing from within did not deter Albert. They squashed over him unheeded. Albert did not mind, he could not, really, have become much grubbier than he was already.

But suddenly a broom-handle came out between the planks, and the end of it jammed on Mr. Juggins' waistcoat. "Oooooogh!" gurgled Albert.

He fairly doubled up under that lunge. The cudgel dropped from his hand, and a loud yell from Jimmy the Pincher, below, announced that it had dropped on the Pincher's head. Albert pressed both hands to his waistcoat.

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"Wooooogh!" he gurgled.

The broom-handle was drawn back, and thrust again. This time it caught Albert under the chin.

He went backwards.

"Oh, gosh!" gasped Fighting Fred as Albert came slithering helplessly down the ladder.

Fred grasped at Mr. Juggins and helped him to land. Albert Juggins sat on the ground, still clasping his waistcoat. Every ounce of breath had been knocked out of Albert, and he could only gasp and gurgle and moan.

"Urt!" asked Fred.

"Urrrrgggh!"

"Winded, ole man?" asked Ike the Weasel sympathetically.

"Gurrrgggh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from above.

"Wooooogh!" moaned Albert Juggins.

He sat and rocked, his hands to his waistcoat. Albert, for the time, was "hors de combat." Fighting Fred put a foot on the ladder and withdrew it. It occurred to him that he did not want to share Mr. Juggins' painful fate. There was a pause, while it dawned on the minds of Mr. Hacker's army that this little task was not such soft pie as they had fancied.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Holding the Fort!

"PROCEED!"

Mr. Hacker yapped at his army.

Hacker was anxious to get through. He was not there to watch Albert Juggins rocking and moaning, and the other seven looking at him while he rocked and moaned. Hacker wanted results!

Juggins seemed to have had enough of the results so far. He rocked and moaned and heeded not. The others seemed rather at a loss. But the little ferret-eyed man, Jimmy the Pincher, was a man of ideas.

"Ketch 'old of that there ladder, mates," he said. "Ketch 'old of it and bust the blooming winder in!"

"You got it, Jimmy!" agreed Fred.

The ex-bruiser grasped the ladder. Ike the Weasel lent him a hand. They swung it from the ground, and crashed the upper end on the planks nailed across the window with a terrific concussion.

"Look out!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Oh scissors!"

"Stand clear!"

One of the planks flew from its nails under the terrific drive from the long ladder. It dropped into the room, crashing, and the juniors jumped hastily out of the way.

"Oh, gad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

"I say, you fellows, don't tread on my feet, don't barge a chap over— Ow!"

Crash! came again.

The ladder, used as a battering-ram, was quite effective. It knocked away another plank.

"Excellent!" exclaimed Mr. Hacker, watching with great satisfaction. "Very good indeed! Very good!"

Crash, crash, crash!

Fighting Fred and Ike the Weasel handled the long, heavy ladder with great effect. Missiles from above rattled and banged on them unheeded. The ex-pugilist gave a snort as a piece of coal caught him in the ear. But he gave it no other heed. The others watched the battering with grinning faces. They were going to get to close quarters now, and once at close quarters, they had no doubt of the outcome.

"That's done it!" gasped Ike.

"I believe you!" said Fighting Fred. "Now stick that there ladder at that there winder agin, and we'll see."

The ladder was put into position again. The window was wide open to attack. Glass and sashes had gone before, now the planks were gone, and there was ample space for assailants to clamber in.

"Steady the Buffs!" drawled Lord Mauleverer.

He had a golf club in his hand ready. The Famous Five were at his side, other fellows crowded round. Hot work was coming!

Herbert Vernon-Smith, who was handling the broom, reached out with it and hooked it into the top rung of the ladder, as Fred started to come up.

"Go it, Smithy!" chuckled Bob.

With a hefty shove the Bouncer drove the ladder back, and it pitched over.

Fred was on the third rung as it went. He gave a roar like a buffalo as he went backwards and landed on the ground, and the ladder landed over him.

"Oh!" roared Fred. "Strike me pink! Oh!"

"Good man, Smithy!" chuckled Harry Wharton.

"Wow!" yelled Fred. "I'm 'urt! Wow!"

Three or four pieces of coal hurtling from the window hurt Fred a little more.

He scrambled up, his stubby face crimson, his single eye gleaming with wrath. He spluttered out expressions seldom or never heard in the Greyfriars quad. Fred, it was clear, was getting bad-tempered!

"Git 'old of that there ladder!" he roared. "Git it up agin, and 'old it for a bloke! Let me git at them young coveys! Won't I smash 'em! Won't I out 'em! Won't I knock their dials in? Won't I just!"

Hitherto, Fred had been thinking only of earning the promised "quid." But now it was getting to be a personal matter with Fred! He wanted to get at the schoolboy rebels for his own satisfaction!

His looks showed what was going to happen to them when he got them!

"Look slippy with that there ladder!" he bellowed. "Jest let me get at them young rips, and their blooming relations won't know them again!"

Mr. Hacker made a step forward. He was a little perturbed; in fact, a little alarmed.

"Not too much violence, please!" exclaimed Mr. Hecker. "You need not be gentle in dealing with those young rascals; but no injury—no extreme violence—"

"Shut it!" roared Fred.

"Wha-a-t? What?"

Fred glared at him. Fred was hurt. He had more bruises than he could have counted on his long, ungainly person. He was in no gentle mood! Far from desiring to avoid extreme violence in dealing with the schoolboy rebels, Fred was going to put in all the violence he could, hot and hard and heavy!

"You 'old your row, ugly mug!" roared Fred. "Think I'm going to be knocked over on my 'ead, with a blinking ladder a-dropping on me! I tell you, I'm going to smash them young rips up! You got that, bony face?"

"But—but I insist—" gasped Mr. Hacker.

"I said 'old your row!" roared Fighting Fred, with so threatening a glare that Mr. Hacker jumped back like a kangaroo.

Matters were getting a little beyond his control. Hacker certainly had no use for gentle measures; but blackened

eyes and smashed noses were rather outside his reckoning. He looked on very uneasily.

The ladder was jammed into place, and the whole gang held it there, while Fighting Fred started up again.

A push from above had no effect on it, with half a dozen muscular ruffians holding it in place. The ex-pugilist came up, step by step, glaring rage at the schoolboys in the window.

"Steady!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"Back up!"

Up came Fighting Fred, glaring like a demon in a pantomime. He reached the window and glared in. The broom-handle thrust out at him, but Fred grabbed it in one muscular hand, and wrenched it away from the Bounder.

"Nar then!" hissed Fred.

He plunged in at the window, headlong. Five or six fists crashed on him as he came—hefty knocks, that would have been more than enough for a Greyfriars man; but which had no more effect on the ex-bruiser than they might have had on a rhinoceros.

A huge fist swept out, and Bob Cherry gave a gasp and went spinning across the room. Frank Nugent spun after him, then Harry Wharton. Fred only needed to land one knock each! A knock from Fighting Fred was something like a kick from a mule.

"Oh!"

"Ow!"

"Oooogh!"

Fred scrambled on. He had a knee on the window-sill now, and the defenders backed from the mighty fist. He grinned savagely.

Crash! came Lord Mauleverer's golf club. It landed on Fred's bullet head with all the force of Mauly's arm, knocked in his hat, and nearly knocked in his head!

Fred was tough! Greyfriars fists hurt him hardly more than flies brushing him. But a gold club landing on his head made even Fighting Fred think!

He swayed on the window-sill, blinking.

"Sorry, old bean!" said Lord Mauleverer gently. "But you can't come in here! Please go away before I give you another!"

"Oooogh!" gasped Fred. "Oh, my head! I'll smash you into little bits! I'll—" He plunged on.

Crash! came the golf club again. Mauly was, as he had said, sorry. But, really, there was no other way of dealing with a redoubtable antagonist like Fred! He had to have it!

And he had it, hard! The second knock sent him sprawling, and he hung on to the window-sill, his legs dangling over the ladder.

"Good man, Mauly!" gasped Harry Wharton. The captain of the Remove picked himself up dizzily. "Pile in!"

Three or four more were on the ladder behind Fred. Fortunately for the defenders, they could not get past him. They could only follow him in, if he got in! But he was not getting in! He was hanging on the sill, spluttering, and his followers had to get busy dodging his thrashing legs.

"Get on, Fred!" shouted Ike the Weasel.

"We're arter you, Fred!" exclaimed Jimmy the Pincher.

"Give him jip!" roared the Bounder. He leaped forward with a chair-leg in his hand.

Bang, bang, bang!

"Easy does it, Smithy!" gasped Mauleverer, as the Bounder banged on Fighting Fred's unfortunate napper with the chair-leg. "Don't kill him!"

"He's got to go!"

"Ooooooooooh!" roared Fred—and he went.

Tough though he was, Fred had had enough of this. Dazed and dizzy, the ex-bruiser slid back on the ladder, and his followers, yelling, scrambled out of the way. They dropped from the ladder, panting, and Fred rolled off it, and stood holding his aching head with his hands, making remarks that bade fair to turn the atmosphere blue.

Smithy reached out, grasped the ladder, and sent it toppling over. With a howl, the tattered rascals below dodged the falling ladder, and it crashed on the ground.

"Our win!" gasped the Bounder.

"Ow!" Bob Cherry dabbed a nose that streamed crimson. "Wow! Look at my nose! Oh crikey! Wow!"

"Look at my eye!" groaned Frank Nugent.

Some of the defenders had rather severe damages. But the enemy had been beaten off, for the moment, at least, and Lord Mauleverer rapped out orders. There was a clanging of hammers as the planks were nailed across the window again.

Below, Mr. Hacker's "army" raged, but it was clear that they were not

simply master of the Shell, and it was like his dashed cheek to give a Fifth Form man an impot.

But the crowd surged back. Still, they looked on from a distance—even Mr. Hacker could hardly order them out of the quad altogether.

Wingate of the Sixth came forward, however. The Greyfriars captain looked at the tattered crew, and caught some of their lurid remarks as he came up. His manner was barely respectful as he spoke to Mr. Hacker.

"Are these men here to deal with the Remove, sir?" he asked.

It was hardly necessary to ask the question, as it was clear that there had already been an attack on the strikers, and that it had been beaten off.

"Certainly they are, Wingate!" yapped Mr. Hacker. "My prefects have failed to do their duty, and I have had to engage these men—"

"Then I protest, sir!" said Wingate.

"What?" roared Mr. Hacker. "How dare you?"

"As head prefect and captain of the school, I protest against these hooligans being brought here to deal with Greyfriars boys!" exclaimed Wingate hotly.

"Silence! Go back to the House and remain there! Go at once!"

"What do you think will be the outcome if those ruffians begin scrapping with junior boys?" exclaimed the Greyfriars captain. "Do you want to see the boys with black eyes and broken noses, or what? You, sir, are responsible for any damage that may be done! You have no right to do anything of this kind, Mr. Hacker, and you know it as well as I do!"

Mr. Hacker stared at him, pale with anger. During his short reign as headmaster, Hacker had succeeded in exasperating the whole school; but the prefects, hitherto, had given him their support, though reluctantly. Wingate's plain language came as a surprise to Hacker.

"Wingate," he gasped, "be silent! Do you desire me to deprive you of your rank as prefect?"

"You can please yourself about that, Mr. Hacker. I have no doubt that Dr. Locke will reinstate me when he returns," answered Wingate. "I repeat, sir, that I protest against the measures you are taking, and I am not at all sure that I ought not to interfere."

"Interfere!" stuttered Mr. Hacker. "Interfere with measures taken by your headmaster? Are you out of your senses, Wingate?"

"I think you must be!" retorted the Greyfriars captain. "And I warn you, Mr. Hacker, that neither I nor the other prefects will stand idly by and see the Remove boys ill-used by a gang of ruffians!"

Mr. Hacker raised a hand that trembled with rage and pointed to the House.

"Go!" he spluttered. "Go back to the House! Remain in your study! I order you to do so, Wingate! Go!"

Wingate of the Sixth turned on his heels, and walked away, but he did not go into the House; he joined his friends Gwynne and Sykes and two or three others of the Sixth, and they stood in a group in animated discussion.

Mr. Hacker's eyes glittered balefully after the Greyfriars captain; but he took no further notice of him, affecting to pass unobserved Wingate's disregard of his order to go into the House.

Three of the masters—Prout, Capper, and Wiggins—came out and stood looking towards Mr. Hacker and his merry men.

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anxious to advance to the attack. So far, at least, the Greyfriars strikers had succeeded in holding the fort!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Getting Out of Hand!

THE bell clanged and the Greyfriars fellows come pouring out of the Form-rooms.

Every fellow in the school had heard the uproar from the citadel of the stay-in strikers, and there had been little attention given to classes since that uproar had started. There was a rush across the quad to the scene of action; innumerable eyes being turned on the tattered gang of vagrants, and innumerable voices buzzing.

Mr. Hacker swung round and waved a forbidding hand at the eager onlookers. He had hoped to be finished before break; but, so far from having finished, he hardly seemed to have started yet!

"Go back!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "Hobson, take a hundred lines! Stewart, take a hundred lines! Coker, take two hundred lines!"

"What?" hooted Coker of the Fifth.

"Temple, two hundred lines! Go back at once!"

"The cheeky bargee!" breathed Temple of the Fourth.

Coker of the Fifth gave Hacker a glare of open scorn as he stalked away. It was true that Hacker was temporary headmaster, but in Coker's eyes he was

Hacker heard Prout's boom from the distance.

"Scandalous! Unprecedented! What would Dr. Locke think of this? What would the governing board think? Unparalleled!"

Mr. Hacker's thin, bony face was crimson with anger and discomfort. He was anxious for break to be over and for the Greyfriars fellows to disappear into the Form-rooms again. Even Hacker, inflexibly obstinate as he was, did not feel disposed to order his tattered army to carry on under the eyes of the whole school.

The "army" were not in a hurry to carry on. Fred was still rubbing his damaged head; Mr. Juggins, though feeling better by this time, still caressed his waistcoat tenderly; the others were at a loss, obviously disinclined to try their luck at the window; Ike the Weasel was examining the door and window of the shop, but on the ground floor the defences were very strong. It looked like a hefty job of work to force a way in.

While the Weasel was making his examination Vernon-Smith leaned out of the window above, with a bucket of water in his hands.

He tipped it, and there was a drenching downpour on the Weasel's head, and Ike bounded away with a yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar across the quad from the many onlookers.

The Weasel shook a grubby fist at the grinning faces above.

"Come and have another!" chortled the Bounder. "You look as if you can do with a wash!"

"You wait till I get at yer!" gasped the Weasel. "You jest wait! That there nose of yours won't look much like a nose arter I've 'it it jest once!"

"Be silent, please!" snapped Mr. Hacker. This was not the sort of talk he wanted a swarm of Greyfriars fellows to hear.

Ike gave him a drenched and savage glare.

"Oo you torking to?" he demanded.

"What—what? I am speaking to you, my man!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "Kindly be silent!"

"You ole sketch you!" said the exasperated Weasel. "'Old your row! 'Ear me? Not so much of your old buck if you don't want a wipe on the tater-trap!"

Mr. Hacker did not bid him be silent again. His helpers seemed to be getting rather out of hand, and Horace Hacker certainly did not want what Ike described as a "wipe" on the "tater-trap."

It was a great relief to Mr. Hacker when the bell rang for third school and the quad was deserted again.

He had a clear hour before him now before he had an audience once more, and in that space of time he hoped to get through.

"Now, Juggins—" he said, when the Greyfriars fellows had gone in. "Now, please lose no more time! Another attempt—"

"We ain't going up that blooming ladder again!" said Fred sulkily. "I tell you I ain't going to 'ave my head stove in by them young rips!"

"It ain't good enough!" agreed Albert Juggins, rubbing his waistcoat. "I got a pain in my tummy, guv'nor, something cool!"

"You must do your work somehow!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "You do not expect me to pay you for nothing. I presume?"

Fred gave him a surly glare. "Don't you worry," he said: "we're getting at them fellers, and we're going

to knock 'em into bits! Don't you worry!"

"I believe you, Fred!" said Mr. Juggins. "Pay or no pay, I ain't going out of 'ere till I've got 'old of that young 'ound what plugged me in the weskit and altered his features for him!"

"I repeat," gasped Mr. Hacker, "that only such force must be used as may be necessary to overcome resistance—"

"Chuck it!" snarled Fred.

"Yus, you can pack that up!" declared Albert. "You leave this 'ero job to us, and don't jore so much, guv'nor!"

"My good man—"

"When I says pack it up, I means pack it up!" snapped Albert. "You pack up the jore and get outer the way! See?"

Two or three of the tramps hustled Mr. Hacker back. Tempers had risen in the tattered gang, and they seemed to have no use for Hacker and his "jaw."

"Now," said Fred, "we got to get at 'em! I ain't going up that there ladder no more! We're going in at that there door! We got to get some crowbars and sich, and get it open! You get me?"

"That's it!" agreed Juggins.

"You got it!" said Jimmy the Pincher. He looked round at the master of the Shell. "'Ere, you! We want some tools to get that blinking door open!"

"There are tools in the gardener's shed," said Mr. Hacker. He was glad to see them getting going again, at all events. He was by this time almost as anxious to get rid of his army as to get the Remove under control. "I will show you the way."

Two or three of the gang followed Mr. Hacker; they came back with their arms full of various implements.

Fred took a crowbar and started on the door of the tuckshop; Albert backed him up with a heavy hatchet; Jimmy the Pincher wielded another crowbar—and they put plenty of beef into the work.

Crash! Bang! Wrench! Bang! Crash! Crack!

Mr. Hacker looked on in silence. Immense damage was being done, but it was clear that the rebels could not be got at without a lot of damage; Hacker had to make up his mind to that. Smashed wood flew right and left.

All over Greyfriars the terrific din rang and echoed, and fellows in the Form-rooms looked at one another, and Form-masters looked out of windows.

Mr. Hacker had no doubt that the governing board had decided wisely in appointing him to carry on in the place of the absent Head, but Mr. Hacker had that belief entirely to himself; to everyone else at Greyfriars his proceedings appeared, as Mr. Prout eloquently expressed it, scandalous and unprecedented and unparalleled.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Warm Work!

BANG! Crash! Bang! Crash! "I say, you fellows, they'll be in in a minute—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!"

Bang, bang, bang!

"By gum, they mean business!" remarked the Bounder.

"Sounds like it!" grinned Bob.

"Come on, you men!" said Lord

Mauleverer. "The door won't last long

at that rate. We've got to put paid to them when they get through!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Bunter!" rapped Lord Mauleverer.

"Oh, yes, Mauly?" gasped Bunter.

"I—I—I'm coming! I—I wasn't going up to the attic, Mauly! I'm not the fellow to hide. I hope—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You stay here and keep watch at the window, Bunter!" said Lord Mauleverer. "The rest of you come on!"

"Oh, yes, I—I'll keep watch like—like anything, old chap!" gasped the fat Owl. "You leave that to me, Mauly!"

Leaving Billy Bunter on the watch at the window, Lord Mauleverer led his followers down the stairs; they crowded into the shop.

Strong as the defences were, there was no doubt that the enemy were getting through. The door was bolted, barred with nailed planks, and barricaded with various articles of furniture nailed or screwed down within. The Remove rebels had regarded that defence as impregnable, but they had not counted on crowbars wielded in hefty hands.

Already there were gleams of daylight through the door; it was splitting to pieces under the attack.

In ten minutes, perhaps, the attack would come through, and the barricade within would be smashed down, like the door; then it would be close quarters—a gang of hefty ruffians against the crowd of schoolboys. Plucky as they were, the Removites could not help looking grave. Lord Mauleverer, calm and placid as ever, gazed at the door with a meditative eye.

Skinner and Snoop were hiding in the cellar; Bunter, in the room above, was keeping watch, ready to scuttle at a moment's notice; Fisher T. Fish had disappeared; Hazeldene and several other fellows kept near the stairs, only too obviously ready to bolt when the enemy got in—but even the most determined fellows looked, and felt, serious enough.

The Famous Five, the Bounder, Toddy and Squiff and Tom Brown, Redwing and Ogilvy, and others, were ready for a fight to a finish. But they could not help wondering what was going to happen when that hefty crew of reckless ruffians got to close quarters. There were good fighting-men in the Remove—but even Bob Cherry was little more than an infant against an adversary like Fighting Fred. And the prospect of black eyes, smashed noses, and teeth knocked out, was far from attractive, though they were ready to face it.

Lord Mauleverer glanced round at his followers, with a faint smile.

"Any orders to give, Mauly?" asked Bob. He grinned—though he did not, at the moment, feel like grinning.

"Yaas! Put the kettle on."

"The—the what?"

"Kettle."

They gazed at him.

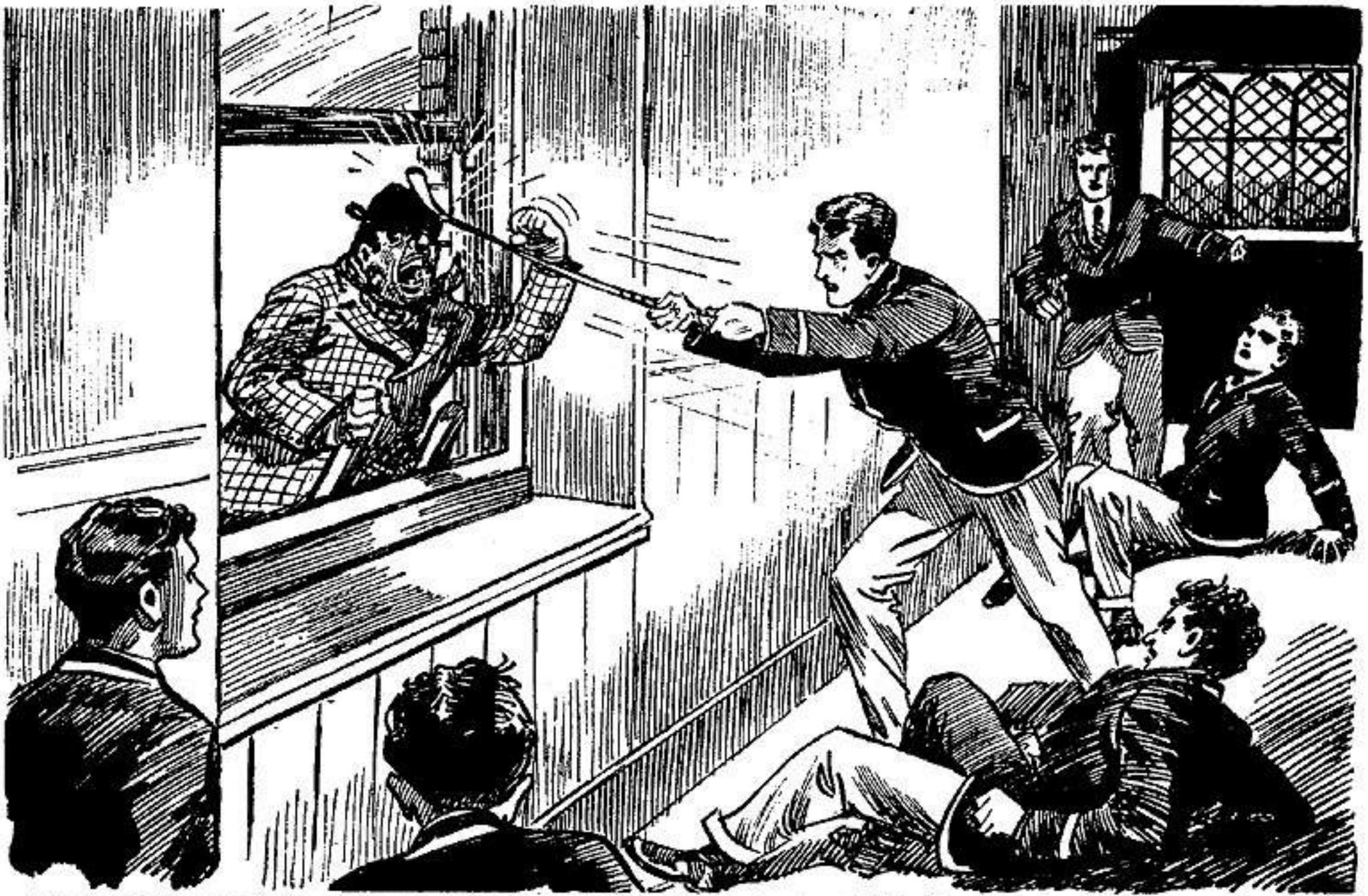
"Going to have tea?" asked the Bounder, with deep and withering sarcasm. "Bit early for tea, isn't it?"

"And don't you think we might be interrupted?" asked Peter Todd, equally sarcastic.

Harry Wharton, however, went into the back room and put the kettle on the fire. He stirred the fire under it. What Mauly meant, if he meant anything, the captain of the Remove did not know. But he had undertaken to back Mauly up, and he was backing him up.

"There's another fire in the kitchen," said Lord Mauleverer mildly, "and another kettle. Put that on, please."

Johnny Bull went into the kitchen.



Fighting Fred reached the window and glared in. A huge fist shot out, and Bob Cherry went spinning across the room. Frank Nugent spun after him, and Harry Wharton followed. Then—crash! Lord Mauleverer's golf club landed on Fred's bullet head. "Sorry to have to do it," said Mauly, gently, "but you can't come in here!"

"Look here," snapped the Bounder, "what—"

"What the dickens, Mauly—" exclaimed Squiff.

Lord Mauleverer did not answer. He was a fellow of few words. He sorted out a large garden squirt, of which there were several to be had, took a duster, and wrapped it carefully round the squirt. The other fellows watched those proceedings as if mesmerised.

"Mad?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"My esteemed Mauly—" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Going to drive them off by squirting at them?" asked the Bounder, with savage sarcasm.

"Yaas!" assented Lord Mauleverer.

"Think that will stop them?" yelled Peter.

"Yaas!" answered Mauly urbanely.

"Then you're a silly ass!" hooted Toddy.

"And a fooling fathead!" said Russell.

"And a blithering idiot!" howled Bolsover major.

Mauleverer gazed at them in mild reproach while he tied the duster in place round the squirt with twine.

"This sort of thing won't do!" he remarked. "This is next door to mutiny, by gad! I shall kick you, if you don't shut up, Smithy."

"You silly chump—"

"You frabjous ass—"

"What the thump are you tying a duster round that squirt for, if you're not balmy?" roared Peter.

"Well, I don't want to burn my fingers."

"Bib-bub-burn them!" gasped Peter.

"Yaas! It will be rather hot."

"Hot!" repeated Peter.

"Yaas."

Crash, crash, crash! came at the door. Through the furniture barricade within, the juniors could see a wide split in the door now

The sunshine gleamed through and they had a glimpse of Fred wielding the crowbar, and Albert wielding the hatchet. Both of them, now that the door was widely split, were easily within range of a squirt; but if Mauly supposed that squirting at them would stop them, he was the only fellow there who supposed so.

"Wharton!" called out the placid Mauly.

"Yes, Mauly!" came Wharton's voice from the back room.

"That water hot?"

"Yes; not boiling yet."

"That's all right! Bring it here, old bean," said Lord Mauleverer. "Tell Bull to get the kitchen kettle on the boil. We mayn't want it—but then again, we may."

Harry Wharton brought the kettle into the shop. He set it down, and Lord Mauleverer knocked off the lid and inserted the end of the squirt into the interior.

"Oh!" gasped the Bounder. He understood now.

A quart of hot water was drawn into the big garden squirt. Immediately that squirt became painfully hot to the touch, and the duster wrapped round it was very much needed, if it was to be handled.

"Stick the kettle on again, old bean!" said his lordship.

"Oh, my hat! Right-ho!"

"Oh, gum!" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"Mauly, old man—oh, gum!"

Lord Mauleverer stepped towards the door, with the loaded squirt in his hands. He took aim, through openings of the barricade, at the split in the shop door.

Fred glared in at him.

"You jest wait a few more minutes!" panted Fred. "Jest a few more minutes, you young 'ound you! Jest you wait!"

"Oh, quite!" said Lord Mauleverer

politely. "Please stand back from the door, will you? I want you to go away at once."

"Hay!" ejaculated Fred, staring.

"Go away at once, please."

"You young idjit you!" said Fred. "Jest you wait!" He drove in the crowbar again and wrenched.

There was a loud crack from the suffering door.

Lord Mauleverer reached forward with the squirt, put the nozzle to the split, and discharged it. Hot water shot out in a stream, and there was a fearful yell from Fighting Fred.

"Oooooogh! I'm scalded! Oooogh! I'm burnt! Yoooooooooogh!"

The crowbar went to the ground with a clang. Fighting Fred bounded away from the door, roaring! There was a yell within.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good man, Mauly!"

"Oh, ripping!"

"Wooooogh-ooogh-oooh!" came in a frantic roar from Fighting Fred, outside.

Lord Mauleverer, with his usual kind considerateness, even for an unpleasant person like Fred, had refrained from using boiling water. The water was hot—not hot enough for scalding, but hot enough to feel extremely unpleasant. It was, in fact, intended as a hint—a strong hint—of what the enemy might expect, if they pushed on. The hint seemed enough for Fred.

He bounded back a dozen feet from the door.

Albert Juggins, without waiting for a similar hint, bounded after him. So did Jimmy the Pincher.

"Keep those kettles goin', you fellows!" called out Lord Mauleverer. "They may want some more—and it's goin' to be hotter every time! They're not hurt yet—but they're goin' to be, if they insist."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The attack on the door had ceased. Clanging and banging died away into silence—and through the silence came the howls of Fighting Fred. And Fred's howls were answered by a roar of laughter from within.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Rough Luck!

HOBSON grinned.

"They've put paid to Hacker!" he remarked.

"More power to their giddy elbow!" said Stewart.

The Shell were crammed at their Form-room window. In third school, while Mr. Hacker was directing military operations against the strikers, the Shell were taken by Walker, a prefect of the Sixth. But they were taking no notice at all of Walker of the Sixth.

That prefect sat at Mr. Hacker's desk with a novel open before him.

He did not even make any attempt to keep the Form in order, or to keep up any pretence of work in the Form-room. The Shell fellows stared from the window without a word from Walker. He was, in fact, only too glad to avoid trouble.

What had happened to Carne, with the Remove, was enough to make Walker walk warily! He was not taking any risk of the Shell following the example of the Remove.

Hobson & Co. could glimpse the school shop in the distance. They could see—and hear—that the terrific attack on the door had ceased. The gang of roughs had gathered at a little distance from the building, and were talking together excitedly. But it was clear that the attack had been stopped.

Mr. Hacker had disappeared from sight. He stalked away, with feelings too deep for words. After all the uproar, after all the tremendous damage that had been done, after causing the sensation of the term at Greyfriars, nothing, so far, had come of it. Hot water from a squirt was a little too much of a good thing for Albert Juggins & Co. Hacker was at a loss—and his "army" were at a loss—and the "strike" was going as strong as ever.

The Shell fellows chuckled over it. Mr. Hacker was not popular in his Form—especially since the strike had started. His temper, never good, was worse than ever; and his cane had had more exercise the last few days than it generally had in a term.

"Old ass!" remarked Hoskins. "I say, the Head would have a fit if he saw the crew that Hacker's brought into the school."

"Boot for Hacker, if the Head came back and caught him at it!" said Stewart.

"I jolly well wish Dr. Locke would blow in while it's going on," declared Hobson. "I'd like to see Hacker's face if he did! That old ass a headmaster! He ain't fit to be headmaster to a school of bunny rabbits."

"Oh crikey, shut up!" gasped Carr of the Shell, as the Form-room door suddenly opened.

Mr. Hacker stepped in.

"Oh!" gasped Hobson.

He gave his Form-master a horrified stare. The Shell fellows had supposed that Hacker was still out of the House. They had not heard him coming. Mr. Hacker had a way of stepping about silently that did not endear him to his Form. The horrified Hobby saw, at a

glance, that Hacker had heard his words, as he opened the door.

There was a scamper of the juniors to their desks. Walker of the Sixth jumped up and hastily grabbed his novel and put it behind him. He was taken by surprise as much as the Shell.

Mr. Hacker's bitter glance gleamed over his startled Form.

Hacker was far from realising that his defeat at the hands of the schoolboy strikers had made him savagely angry, and anxious to wreak his wrath on somebody or anybody. He was going to wreak it on the hapless occupants of the Shell Form-room—but justly! Certainly, they had asked for it. Every fellow had been out of his place, and obviously no work of any kind had been going on. And even a good-tempered master might have been annoyed by what Hobson had said.

He fixed a devastating glare on Walker of the Sixth.

"Is this how you keep order, Walker, when I place you in charge of a Form?" he hooted.

"I—I—" stammered Walker. He was quite taken aback. He was holding his novel behind him, and hoped that Hacker had not seen it. But Hacker had. Few things escaped Hacker's sharp eyes.

"You sit there reading, while the boys in your charge scamper about the Form-room, Walker! You allow them to speak of their Form-master with utter disrespect. You are no longer a prefect, Walker, and you are deprived of your Sixth Form privileges!"

Walker glared at him.

"Look here, sir—" he hooted.

"Do not answer me back, Walker! You have neglected your duty! You are idle and incompetent! I shall give you an imposition, Walker!"

"Wha-a-t!" gasped the prefect.

"You will take five hundred lines!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "Now go back to the Sixth Form-room. You are useless here—lazy, incompetent, undutiful! I have a great mind to cane you, Walker."

"Kik-kik-cane me!" stuttered Walker, like a fellow in a dream. He wondered, dizzily, whether this bargee really fancied that he could cane a Sixth Form man.

"Yes! Leave this Form-room at once!"

Walker almost tottered out of the room. A few minutes later he was telling the Sixth, in deep, thrilling whispers, that that bargee, that swab, that tick Hacker had threatened to cane him!

Hacker slammed the door after Walker of the Sixth, picked up a cane from his desk, and faced his Form. They eyed him in dismal silence. Mr. Hacker himself might not realise it, but the Shell realised only too clearly that they were going to get what he could not bestow on the Remove.

"Hobson!" yapped Hacker.

"Yes, sir!" groaned James Hobson.

"Stand out before the Form!"

Hobby almost crawled out. From the bottom of his heart he wished that he had never expressed that opinion of Mr. Hacker's capabilities as a headmaster.

"I heard what you said as I entered, Hobson!" said Mr. Hacker bitterly.

"You dared to express the opinion, Hobson, that your Form-master is unfit for the trust reposed in him by the governors of the school. I shall cane you severely, Hobson. Bend over that desk!"

Hobson, in the lowest of spirits, bent over the desk.

The cane went up, and came down. There was a yell from Hobson as it

landed. Mr. Hacker seemed to fancy that he was beating carpets by the way he laid it on.

"Ow!" yelled Hobby. "Wow!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Oh! Ow! Oooogh!" roared Hobson, wriggling wildly.

"Shame!" came a voice from the class.

Mr. Hacker, about to whack again, glared round, his cane suspended in the air.

"Who spoke?" he roared. "Was that you, Stewart? Stand out before the class, Stewart! Bend over that desk!"

Nobody else in the Shell ventured to make a remark as the cane whacked. They looked on in silence while Mr. Hacker laid it on. Hobson and Stewart limped back to their places when Hacker was finished.

He laid the cane on the desk, breathing hard. His exertions had rather tired him, but undoubtedly he was feeling better!

Third school was almost over by this time; but the short remainder seemed endless to Hacker's Form. They got out of their Form-room at last. Hobson and Stewart wriggled painfully as they went down the corridor.

"Rough luck!" said Hoskins sympathetically. "The old bird had to take it out of somebody! Feel bad, Hobby, old man?"

"Ow!" said Hobson, with deep feeling.

"Wow!"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Stewart, wriggling. "Oh crikey! I'll make him sit up for this somehow! I'll make him squirm! Wow!"

"Ow!" groaned Hobby.

"Wow!" moaned Stewart.

And they wriggled out into the quad—only comforted by a determination to make Hacker "sit up." Which, as it happened, was to have unexpected results for Horace Hacker!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Face at the Window!

"PRIME!" murmured Billy Bunter.

His fat face beamed.

The clanging of hammers, the banging of nails rang and echoed through the strikers' stronghold. Many hands were at work, repairing the damages caused by the last attack. Planks ripped from floors, doors taken off hinges, counters from the shop pulled to pieces, afforded ample materials.

But Billy Bunter was not taking part in that labour. Bunter was cooking.

It was never easy to get Bunter to do any work. But he was willing to cook. Cooking, to Bunter, was not work, but pleasure. The smell of cooking was sweeter to him than attar of roses. The things that Bunter could not do were innumerable; but he could cook.

He had the kitchen to himself. There was a roaring fire in the range. Pots and pans were thick as leaves in Vallombrosa.

One large saucepan contained a stew, simmering. Bunter beamed over that stew. He snuffed at its delightful scent and smiled happily.

"Prime!" said Bunter for the umpteenth time.

He heeded not the banging and clanging.

It was getting near dinner-time. Bunter was taking a snack every now and then from the supplies that surrounded him, as a cook was entitled to do. But he was not afraid of spoiling his dinner. He had ample space left for the stew when it was done. And he

looked forward to it with ecstatic anticipation.

Bunter was as busy as any man in the garrison of the school shop. And all were busy. Skinner and Snoop had come up from the cellars after the attack was over—Fisher T. Fish had emerged from some unknown hiding-place. Lord Maulverer strolled about with his hands in the pockets of his elegant bags, giving instructions. And two large kettles were kept on the boil, ready if they should be required!

But for the present the enemy were holding off. When the juniors looked out they could see the gang of tramps at a distance, evidently surly and savage, but not caring to approach nearer. Mr. Hacker had disappeared—and the little wiry man called Ike the Weasel was not to be seen. But the other seven were in full view—and clearly in very bad tempers.

Fighting Fred had discovered that he was not much hurt, after all, though the squirt full of hot water had been very disconcerting and disconcerting. But he did not want any more. The next lot might be hotter—in fact, there was no doubt on that point. That was more than Albert Juggins & Co. had bargained for—and they had agreed unanimously that it was not good enough.

So they kept a respectful distance, while the schoolboy strikers laboured at strengthening the damaged defences.

"I say, you fellows!" called out Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"I want some salt. Come and find it for me."

"I'll come and boot you till you find it, if you like!"

"Beast!"

Bunter was a willing cook; but nobody seemed keen on being kitchen-maid! The fat junior gave the simmering stew a blink, and then rooted round for salt.

Leaving the stew to simmer, he went across to the larder.

He opened the larder door, and blinked in, over the many shelves, for what he wanted.

Then he gave a sudden startled squeak.

The larder was lighted by a small, square window, looking over the yard at the back of the house.

That window was small—very small—and perhaps for that reason had been rather overlooked by the garrison. In fact, they had probably not thought of it at all.

It was much too small to admit any man of normal size. Even one of the juniors could only have squeezed through with difficulty. But Ike the Weasel was a very slim and skinny man. The Weasel was, in fact, accustomed to this kind of work; often and often had he insinuated himself into little unguarded windows in following his trade as a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles.

"Oh!" squeaked Bunter.

He forgot the salt for which he had come to the larder as he stared, with his eyes almost popping through his spectacles, at a stubbly, unwashed face over the shelves.

Ike the Weasel was half-through.

He had prowled round the building looking for such a chance, and he had found it. Silently he had got that little window open. Softly and silently he squeezed his snaky form in.

Another minute, and Ike would have been inside the larder, and inside the defences of the schoolboy garrison.

Once inside, he did not expect any difficulty in letting in his friends. Opening a door or a window would have been enough. Even if he was spotted

as soon as he got through the larder, Ike had no doubt of keeping the schoolboys busy with his cudgel while his comrades rushed the defences. And it was very probable that Ike was right—if he had been granted that minute.

As it was, he was still squeezing painfully through when Billy Bunter's startled eyes and spectacles fell on him.

Slim and wiry as he was, it was a close fit in that little window, even for

the Weasel. He squeezed through inch by inch.

Billy Bunter stood and blinked at him with popping eyes. Ike glared furiously at the fat Owl, and made a tremendous effort to squeeze right through. His head and shoulders were in, and his cudgel lay handy on a shelf. Gritting his teeth, he forced himself forward.

(Continued on next page.)

The STately HOMES of GREYFRIARS

THE HEAD'S HOUSE

By
The Greyfriars Rhymester



(1)

When we play footer in the Close
We sometimes kick the ball
Too high to stop—and then it goes
Over the garden wall!
The garden on the other side
Is beautiful and fair,
But 'tis the Head's, and woe betide
The youth who ventures there!

(2)

For Mr. Mimble stands on guard,
The "guardener" is he,
And if he catches us, it's hard
To get away scot free.
He takes our names, which means a row,
For off to Quelch he'll go.
What happens after that? Ow-wow!
(I've been there, and I know!)

(4)

The Head's house, built of old red brick,
Stands in among the trees,
Those trees—with pears and apples
thick!—
They give us agonies.
We look at them with longing eyes,
While Mimble looks at us.
Ye gods! Those apples! What a size!
How cruel to tempt us thus!

(6)

Sometimes he'll ask old Quelch or Prout
Across to take their teas,
And then the beaks sit round and spout
Long yards of Sophocles.
This thrills good Mrs. Locke, and keeps
Her breathless with suspense.
Her eyelids flutter, and she sleeps—
Which shows her common sense.

(3)

To bust the Head's cucumber frames
Makes Mr. Mimble roar,
Away he goes with all our names,
And soon we're feeling sore!
It's fun to climb the trees, or tread
The paths with cautious feet;
We're risking trouble with the Head,
And stolen joys are sweet!

(5)

The house itself is neat and prim,
Where Mrs. Locke is queen,
But Dr. Locke—well, as for him,
I think he's seldom seen.
Deep in his Greyfriars lair he lurks,
His study is his home.
'Tis there he thinks and reads and works,
With many a massive tome.

(7)

Books, books, and more books, on the
shelves—
The doctor and his wife
Could not have read them all themselves,
'Twould take a man his life!
But still, the house and garden looks
Quite comfortable as such,
Especially if you're fond of books,
(Which I'm not—very much!)

Next Week: MOOR FELL, Johnny Bull's home, 'way up in Yorkshire.

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

He jumped back.

Billy Bunter's fat brain did not work quickly. But it worked. It was a matter of moments, and only for two or three of those precious moments did Bunter stand blinking in horrified astonishment at the Weasel in the larder window.

Then he scudded back across the kitchen.

He grasped the stew-saucepan by its handles and whisked it off the range. He scudded back to the larder with it.

Ike was almost in, but not quite. Up went the saucepan!

Down it came!

It bonneted Ike the Weasel!

Hot stew streamed over the unfortunate Weasel. He gave a muffled howl. Potatoes and carrots, parsnips and onions, fat dumplings, streamed over him.

It was an appetising stew. It was one of Bunter's best—and Bunter could make a stew. But Ike did not find it appetising. He did not find it nice. He found it hot—fearfully hot. He found it horrid. He gurgled and guggled and howled horribly as it streamed over him, soaking his tousled hair, drenching his stubbly face, and running down his neck.

He squeezed madly backward to escape.

But it was as hard to squeeze out of that narrow window as to squeeze in. Ike was in a hurry, but he had to go slowly. He squeezed away frantically, with the stew-saucepan on his head.

Bunter jerked it off. Ike's face was revealed, clothed in stew. Carrots and onions filled his tattered collar. Stew filled his mouth and nose and ears and hair. He was of the stew, stewy!

"Wurrrrrugggggh!" spluttered the wretched Weasel.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter.

Up went the saucepan again. Down it came again, this time with a clang on Ike's drenched head.

"I say, help!" yelled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, this way!"

Bang went the saucepan again on the hapless head of the Weasel. Ike's yell rang louder than Bunter's frantic squeak.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What——"

"This way!" shrieked Bunter. "I've got him!"

"Yoo-hoop!" roared Ike the Weasel, frantically wriggling in the window.

"Ow! Blow me pink! Wooogh!"

"What the thump——"

"Bunter, you ass, what——"

"What the dickens——"

"Oh, my hat! Look!"

There was a rush of footsteps across the kitchen. A dozen fellows stared into the larder—and at the smothered, steaming face at the window.

Ike was wriggling his shoulders out. But they seemed to jam in the narrow space. He wriggled and wriggled, and howled and yelled.

"He was getting in!" gasped Bunter.

"I got him with the stew!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old fat man!"

"Urrrgh!" spluttered Ike.

"Wurrrgh! Oh, jimmie! Gurrerrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry grasped a tin of treacle from a shelf and whipped off the lid. He reached at the wriggling Weasel, and up-ended the tin over his stew-smothered head. Treacle streamed over the stew.

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

"Groooooogh!" The Weasel gurgled horribly. "Yooooogh!"

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He got clear at last and dropped. Spluttering stew and treacle, he fled. A yell of laughter followed him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, he would have got in if I hadn't stopped him!" gasped Bunter. "I say, I jolly well stopped him——"

"Good man!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Blessed if I thought of that window! Good old fat man!"

"I say, you fellows, that stew's wasted now! And it was a jolly good stew—and it was nearly done!"

"It's quite done now!" chuckled Bob.

"The donefulness is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a clang of hammers and nails as the larder window was boarded up. Ike the Weasel was not going to get another chance if he wanted one. But it was probable that Ike had had enough. Ike was very busy, scraping off stew and treacle, and it kept him busy for quite a long time. And his remarks, as he scraped, were such as had seldom or never been heard within the walls of Greyfriars School.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Hacker Knows How!

"ALL clear!" whispered Stewart of the Shell.

"Hacker——"

"He's out of the House—gone to jaw to his tramps, I suppose! Come on!"

"Right-ho!" breathed Hobson.

Prep was on in the studies, but two members of the Shell were giving prep a miss. Hobson and Stewart were on the trail of vengeance.

Both of them were still feeling severe twinges from the whopping of the morning. The new headmaster had laid it on not wisely, but too well. Stewart had been keeping an eye open, and noted that Hacker had left the House. They trod down Masters' Passage to Mr. Hacker's study.

They did not care very much if any other beaks happened to glance out. Hacker was on the worst of terms with the rest of the staff. He had gone so far as to threaten Mr. Prout with dismissal. Common-room, when Mr. Hacker was not there, was in a continual buzz of condemnation of Hacker and his methods. No other master was likely to interest himself in anything that might happen in Hacker's study.

Neither were the prefects so vigilant as of old. Even Hacker's pet, Carne of the Sixth, was feeling doubtful about the present state of affairs, and what might be the outcome of it. Wingate and his friends were actually considering whether to intervene. In all Greyfriars Mr. Hacker had his own approval and nobody else's. So long as Hacker was off the scene, Hobby and Stewart felt it safe to go ahead—and they went ahead.

Hobson opened Hacker's study door, and they entered and the door was shut. The study was dark, but there was a glow of firelight.

They did not need much light for what they were going to do. Stewart started by taking the study table at the end and tilting it over.

Books and papers and inkpot shot off in a shower to the floor. Stewart tipped the table over on top of them, legs in the air.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Hobson. "Hacker will be wild, old man!"

"Let him!" said Stewart.

"If he spots us——"

Hobson broke off, with a gasp, as Stewart picked up the poker and swept

it along the mantelpiece. The mantelpiece was cleared with one swipe, amid a crashing and smashing.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Hobby. "You're going it, old man!"

"I mean to," said Stewart. "Lend me a hand with the bookcase."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They grasped the bookcase together, and it went over with a terrific bump.

By that time Hacker's study was beginning to look as if a tornado had struck it. But the ragers were not finished yet.

"There'll be a fearful row about this," chuckled Hobson.

"There'll be a row, anyhow," said Stewart. "So long as Hacker can't get at the Remove, he will take it out of us. We may as well give him something to get shirty about."

"That's so," agreed Hobson.

"Got a pocket-knife? May as well cut the telephone"

"Oh crikey!"

Hobby felt in his pocket for his knife. As he did so, there was a sudden well-known tread in the passage.

Hobson jumped. His heart almost missed a beat.

"Oh crumbs!" he gasped. "That's Hacker!"

"Oh, scissors!" breathed Stewart.

For a second they stood spellbound. Hacker having gone out of the House, they had no doubt that he was after the Remove again, and that there would be time to get through with the rag in his study. Evidently that was a little mistake.

The bare idea of being caught there by Hacker, with the study in that state, was terrifying. What they had received that morning would be a mere jest to what they were booked for now.

"Get out of sight!" whispered Stewart.

"But—how—where——" stuttered Hobby.

"Quick, you ass!"

Stewart grasped him by the arm, and jerked him behind the window curtains. They were thick and heavy, and hung from the rod above the window to the study floor. Backing close to the window the two juniors were out of sight—so long as Hacker did not draw the curtains aside. It was not likely that he would, and they could only hope that he wouldn't.

They were hardly out of sight when the study door opened.

Mr. Hacker stepped in and switched on the light.

"Come in!" he said. Hacker was not alone.

"I'm arter you, guv'nor." It was the voice of Albert Juggins.

"I—— Why—— What——what——" Mr. Hacker came to a halt, and stared at his study.

Mr. Juggins, in the doorway, stared also.

Juggins did not know much about schoolmasters' studies in schools, but he could see that this study was in a very unusual state.

"What rascal—what scoundrel——" gasped Mr. Hacker. "What—what—what ruffianly, depraved young rascal has——"

Hacker could scarcely believe his eyes as he stared round the study. Behind the window curtain, Hobson and Stewart scarcely breathed. If Hacker discovered them now——

Fortunately for them, it did not occur to Mr. Hacker that the ragers were still in the study. He glared at the havoc they had worked, breathing fury.

"Something 'appened 'ere, sir," said



Fred took a crowbar and started on the door of the tuckshop. Albert backed him up with a heavy hatchet. Jimmy the Pincher wielded another crowbar. And the tramps put plenty of beef into the work. Crash! Bang! Wrench! Bang! Crash! Crack! Mr. Hacker stood at a distance, looking on in silence.

Albert, a grin spreading over his stubbly face.

Mr. Hacker panted.

"Some of those young rascals must have been here—since darkness has fallen. I warned you to keep watch for them!" he snarled. "Some of them must have got into the House, and perpetrated this outrage."

Stewart nudged Hobson silently behind the curtain. Hacker had jumped to the conclusion that the rag was a Remove raid. They were quite satisfied to let him go on thinking so.

"None of that lot ain't got away, guv'nor," said Albert Juggins, shaking his head. "All the blokes is keeping a heye hopen—"

"I tell you that some of them must have been here!" snarled Mr. Hacker. "You can see what they have done. A few nights ago something of the same kind occurred. You will warn your men to keep a careful watch, Juggins, and see that they have no opportunity of getting back if they leave the place again."

"Yessir; but I don't think—"

"Nonsense!"

"We've been a-watching the place like blooming cats watching a mouse-hole, guv'nor," asserted Mr. Juggins.

"Nonsense!" repeated Mr. Hacker. "Keep a more careful guard. But never mind that now. Shut the door. I have something to say to you, Juggins, which no one must hear—that's why I have brought you here. Not the slightest risk must be run of those rebellious young rascals being placed on their guard. And there are many, I fear, who would try to give them warning, if they had the slightest inkling of what I intend."

"Go it, guv'nor!" said Mr. Juggins.

He set the study table on its legs, sat on a corner of it, and lighted a cigarette. That proceeding caused Mr.

Hacker to give him a glare. But Albert seemed impervious to glares. He blew out a cloud of smoke.

Mr. Hacker, suppressing his feelings, sat down in his armchair. The door was shut, and he was, as he believed, alone with Juggins; but he lowered his voice as he spoke again. Only too well Mr. Hacker knew that all, or nearly all, Greyfriars was in sympathy with the schoolboy strikers, and that plenty of fellows would have been glad to give them warning of a hostile move.

"Now, listen to me, Juggins! So far, you and your men have failed. You have allowed those rebellious boys to beat you—"

"Dror it mild, guv'nor!" remonstrated Albert. "We'd 'ave got in all right, but squirting 'ot water over a bloke—I tell you, guv'nor, that ain't good enough!"

"That will do! You cannot overcome the resistance of these young rascals," said Mr. Hacker, bitterly and contemptuously. "I cannot keep you here much longer. Your presence is causing too much commotion in the school. To-night the matter must be brought to an end."

"You figger that we'll ketch 'em asleep?" asked Mr. Juggins dubiously. "I reckon they'll wake up fast enough when we begin bangin' in the doors and winders."

"Will you listen to me?" snapped Mr. Hacker. "It must be left till a late hour—till all the other boys here are in bed. I desire as little commotion and excitement as possible. It is likely that those young rascals will be asleep, also. You will, in any case, be able to approach the building unseen in the darkness."

"Easy enough," assented Albert, "but—"

"There is a trapdoor in the roof of

the building, placed there in case of fire. It is probably fastened inside, but should not be difficult to open. It is over a landing. Do you understand?"

"Oh!" said Mr. Juggins. "I get you, guv'nor!"

"You will place the ladder quietly, and gain the roof. You will open the trap and drop in, one after another. You understand? It is very probable that the young rascals have never noticed that trap in the roof at all. They are, of course, quite unacquainted with the interior of the building till the past few days. So long as you make no noise and give no alarm, there is no doubt that you will take them by surprise. Once within the building you will not, I suppose, allow these schoolboys to defeat you," added Mr. Hacker, with a sneer.

"Jest give us a chance at 'em—that's all, guv'nor," said Albert. "If you're sure about that there trap in the roof, it's as easy as pie."

"There is no doubt about that. You will find it easily enough on the flat section of roof behind the chimney-stack. But take care, Juggins—not a word of this where it may be overheard. If the boys are placed on their guard, they may contrive to defeat you again. If you take them by surprise, the matter will be perfectly simple."

"Easy!" agreed Mr. Juggins.

"Warn your friends to be ready at eleven o'clock," said Mr. Hacker. "That will be the best time. The school will be asleep then, and most likely those young scoundrels, also. You must be careful, however, as some of them may keep on the watch during the night. And, mind, not a word where any Greyfriars boy could overhear you."

"Leave it to me, gov'nor," said Albert.

And he left the study, grinning. It seemed to Albert Juggins that the thing was going to be easy, after all.

It seemed so also to Mr. Hacker. Now that he had thought of this new move, the new headmaster of Greyfriars felt like a mariner who saw land at last. A few hours more, and the rebels of the Remove would be in his hands—the expelled seven gone, and the rest visited with such drastic punishment that they would not be likely to think of rebellion again.

That happy prospect almost consoled Mr. Hacker for the disastrous state of his study. However, that study had to be put to rights, and he rang for Trotter.

The House page blinked when he looked in and saw the havoc. A grin dawned on his face, which disappeared instantly under the baleful glare from Mr. Hacker.

"Trotter, some of the Remove boys have been here and done this damage!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "Kindly put the room to rights, and lose no time!"

"Yessir!" said Trotter.

And Mr. Hacker left the study and walked along to the Common-room, leaving Trotter to put the room to rights. And two Shell fellows, hidden behind the window curtains, breathed more freely when he was gone.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Fred Gets the Brick!

"ARK at 'em!" muttered Fighting Fred.

"Jest 'ark!" agreed Ike the Weasel.

From the beleaguered school shop, sweet strains of music floated out into the dim February night. Tom Brown of the Remove had his portable wireless going, and music—or, at least, what was regarded as music by the B.B.C.—roared out merrily. The large front room over the shop gleamed with light, which shone out through the interstices of the planks nailed over the windows.

Most of the Remove seemed to be gathered there, after supper. Other Forms at Greyfriars were at prep; but prep was the last thing of which the strikers were likely to think. The wireless was going, and a good many voices could be heard, and a sound like a coal-man delivering coals, which, however, was only Bob Cherry tap-dancing!

Fred and Ike were prowling close to the building, under cover of darkness. The rest of the gang were smoking pipes and playing nap with greasy cards, sitting on benches and boxes round a fire that glowed in a perforated pail.

It had certainly not been Mr. Hacker's intention to keep his "army" within the school precincts so long. He had hoped that the affair would be finished in the morning. Then he had hoped that it would be finished in the afternoon. Now he was hoping that it would be finished in the night. Until it was finished, Juggins & Co. were a fixture at Greyfriars.

With all his dogged obstinacy, Mr. Hacker was not insensible to the opinion of the whole school; masters and boys alike. He would have been glad to relieve Greyfriars of the presence of that rough and rowdy gang. But he had no other resource for dealing with the strikers—and that settled it.

They had camped under the big elm—

tree that stood in front of the school shop. Mrs. Kebble, the House dame, had given Mr. Hacker a most expressive look when requested to supply them with food. However, food had been supplied liberally. Jimmy the Pincher had found a pail in Gosling's woodshed, into which he knocked holes to build a fire therein—and the tramps had gathered round it, under the big elm, while they waited for the time for action.

Fred and Ike, however, had left the cheery circle, and were prowling. Fred had collected so many bumps that the top of his bullet head felt like a succession of hills and valleys, and there was a rather severe pain in the same. Likewise, he had a malevolent recollection of the squirt of hot water. The Weasel was nursing bitter memories of a hot stew and a tin of treacle. Both of them were fearfully keen to get at the "young rips." Under cover of darkness, they prowled unseen—and listened to the cheery voices, the thump of Bob Cherry's feet, and the alleged music of the wireless, and scowled.

"Jest 'ark!" repeated the Weasel. "Carrying on as if they was on a beano, the young rips! I jest want to get at that fat bloke what got me with that there saucepan on the crumpet—"

Fred stood back and stared up at the gleaming windows above. Fred was thinking. Thinking was not much in the ex-bruiser's line; but perhaps the bangs on his head had set his intellect going with unusual activity.

"Might get 'em with a 'arf-brick!" he suggested. "There's room to 'eave a 'arf-brick in at that winder, if a covey got to it, see?"

"They'd 'ear us a-sticking up the ladder!" said Ike, shaking his head. "And I don't want any 'ot water, I don't!"

"Nor do I, neither!" agreed Fred. Fred, in fact, hated hot water, especially if it had soap with it! "They would 'ear the ladder, and git ready, jest like you say, Ike; but s'pose you was to step on my shoulders—me bein' tall, and you bein' a light-weight, and a reglar monkey—see?"

"By gum!" said Ike. He nodded, evidently taken with the idea. "'Old on a tick while I get a 'arf-brick!"

The Weasel departed in search of that article. What Mr. Hacker would have thought of heaving half-bricks at the juniors, was a consideration that did not trouble either Ike or Fred. Hacker did not want any serious damage done—but Ike and Fred, on the other hand, were keen to do as much damage as they could. They were not worrying about consequences, like Mr. Hacker.

Ike returned in a few minutes, his tattered pockets bulging with hefty missiles. Above, considerable noise was going on. The juniors would certainly have spotted the ladder being placed to the window; but the noise was more than sufficient to drown any slight sounds made by the two rascals.

Ike the Weasel, light and active as a monkey, clambered on the massive shoulders of the ex-pugilist. That brought his hands within reach of the window-sill above.

He pulled himself up, kneeling on the sill, and holding on to the planks that criss-crossed the window space.

Between two of them, he had a clear view in at the window into the room. It was brightly lighted, and the light gleamed on cheery faces. Ike's ferret eyes glinted at a fat junior who sat with a cake on his knees, slowly but surely travelling through the same. This was

the fat covey who had got him with the stew saucepan.

Having packed away several suppers, one after another, the fat Owl was packing the cake after them. But it went slowly—for even Bunter's capacity had a limit, though a wide one.

But it was a scrumptious cake, and Bunter could not resist it. So long as there was an available half-inch inside his extensive circumference, he was going to pack it with cake.

Ike the Weasel, kneeling on the sill, held on to a plank with his left hand, and groped in his tattered pocket with his right. Billy Bunter was hardly ten feet from him—unconscious of danger, conscious only of cake.

Ike, grinning, took aim with the half-brick.

From where he knelt on the sill, peering in, the Weasel had a view of the room, and the crowd of schoolboys in it. But he could not, of course, see directly below the window.

He was unaware that Lord Mauleverer sat there, with an eye open.

Between the lowest plank and the window-ledge was a narrow slit through which Mauly, as he sat at ease in an armchair, was able to keep a watchful eye on the quad.

There were several other sentries posted at different parts of the building. At this particular spot, Mauly was on the watch—and he sat up suddenly and took notice as something moved in the dark outside.

He had heard nothing—Ike was very cautious. But something was there. Lord Mauleverer leaned forward closer to the aperture to ascertain what it was. He had a view of a pair of ragged and grubby trousers, and realised that somebody was kneeling on the window-sill.

Mauly was generally regarded in the Remove as too lazy to breathe. But he acted quite promptly now.

His slim hand shot through the aperture with a pin between finger and thumb.

There was a sudden jab!

Ike's right hand was drawn back, the half-brick in it, taking aim at the fat covey through the wider opening higher up.

But as the pin jabbed into his leg, Ike forgot quite suddenly all about the fat covey. He gave a startled yell, and the half-brick dropped from his hand.

Below, Fighting Fred was staring up with an eager grin. Against the gleams of light through the boards at the window, he could see his pal clearly—and he waited gleefully to hear the crash of the "arf-brick" as it landed within.

What happened next was rather unfortunate for Fred.

Ike, above, gave a frantic yell; and something hard and heavy dropped on Fighting Fred's upturned face.

He did not know, for a moment, what it was. It was, as a matter of fact, the half-brick. But he knew that it crashed on his pug nose with a fearful jolt, and knocked him backwards.

His yell sounded like an echo of Ike's. He staggered back, clutching at his damaged nose, which spurted crimson. Then something followed the half-brick.

It was Ike the Weasel!

That sudden, painful jab in the leg had caused Ike to lose his rather precarious hold. He slipped off.

Having no visible means of support, the law of gravitation did the rest. Like all falling bodies, Ike obeyed the well-known law expounded by Sir Isaac Newton, and shot towards the centre of the earth. The surface of the earth would have stopped him in transit, had

not Fighting Fred been in the way. But Fighting Fred was in the way, and it was Fighting Fred that stopped his downward career.

"Urrrrggh!" gasped Fred, as the Weasel crashed on him.

The half-brick on his nose had made him stagger. The Weasel flattened him out. Fred was extended on his back, and Ike sprawled blindly over him.

There was a shout from above:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"What's that?"

"The jolly old enemy!"

"All serene, I think!" drawled Lord Mauleverer. "The good man's gone! I think he went in rather a hurry!"

"Sounds like trouble in the happy family!" grinned Bob Cherry, as wild sounds floated up from below.

It did. Ike, as he rolled off Fred, was grasped in a muscular hand. Fred was hurt, and Fred was wrathful.

"You blinking idjit!" roared Fred. "Dropping on a bloke's 'ead! Knocking of a covey over! Busting a bloke's smeller with your blooming 'arf-bricks! You take that—and that—and then that—and—"

"Ow could a bloke 'elp it, with something sharp a-sticking in his leg!" howled the Weasel. "Give over! Yaroooh! Oh, my eye! Take that, blow yer!"

"Ere, 'old on!" came the voice of Mr. Juggins, from the happy circle round the fire-bucket. "Wot's that there row? 'Old on, I tells yer!"

But the mutually exasperated Fred and Ike did not hold on. They punched and thumped, and thumped and punched, and by the time they separated, both of them were looking seriously damaged—especially Ike. And Ike was not thinking of heaving any more half-bricks. By the time the ex-bruiser had finished with him, Ike was not feeling equal to heaving anything. He was hardly able to heave a sigh, let alone a half-brick.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Tip in Time!

"HOBSON!" exclaimed Mr. Hacker. "Stewart!"

"Ketched 'em mooching round, guv'nor!" said Albert Juggins.

He had the two Shell fellows by their collars, one in each hand.

Mr. Hacker glared at those two members of his Form.

It was after prep—long after lock-up. No fellow should have been out of the House. And these two had been caught out. And Mr. Hacker did not need telling that they had gone to speak to the rebels. Any communication with the rebellious Remove was strictly forbidden. Evidently the bonds of discipline were relaxing in Hacker's own Form.

Certainly Hacker did not guess for what special reason the two Shell fellows had slipped out of the House by a back window, and approached the beleaguered tuckshop. He was quite unaware that they had been in his study during his talk with Albert Juggins, and had important news to carry to the Greyfriars strikers.

After Hacker had left his study, leaving Trotter to clear it up, the two ragers had emerged from behind the window curtains, much to Trotter's surprise. But they did not mind Trotter; he was not going to give them away. Trotter only grinned when they cut past him, and escaped from the study.

They went back to prep, happy to have escaped discovery. Hacker attributed the rag to a Remove raid, which was very satisfactory to the Shell ragers. As Hacker was evidently prepared to put down everything that happened to those young rascals of the Remove, Hobby and Stewart agreed that they would give him some more to put down to that account at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, they were anxious to convey a warning to the strikers. There was little doubt that if the night attack was carried out, as they had heard Hacker planning it with Juggins, the strikers would be dished. It was exceedingly risky to attempt to convey a warning—but Hobby and Stewart had risked it—with disastrous results. And here they were, marched back to the House with Albert's grubby grip on their collars, to face the wrath of the new headmaster of Greyfriars.

"Ketched 'em all right, sir," said Juggins, grinning. "They was a-sneaking round—going to join the other young coveys, I dessay! I ketched 'em!"

"Thank you, Juggins! I am glad to see that you were on the alert,"

said Mr. Hacker. "Stewart—Hobson, go to my study!"

Mr. Juggins released the two Shell fellows, and disappeared grinning into the night. Hobby and Stewart, in the lowest of spirits, went to their Form-master's study, followed by Mr. Hacker.

The master of the Shell picked up a cane from the table. The hapless juniors exchanged lugubrious looks. They were still feeling twinges from their last licking. Now there was another one coming.

"Is it possible that you two intended to join those rebellious Remove boys now defying my authority?" thundered Mr. Hacker.

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Hobson. "Not at all, sir!"

"Only going to speak to them, sir," said Stewart.

"In direct disregard of my orders!" roared Mr. Hacker. "I shall give both of you detention for every half-holiday this term. You will take five hundred lines each! And I shall cane you severely!"

"Oh!" gasped Hobson.

Mr. Hacker was getting rather wholesale with his punishments, handing them out quite recklessly.

"Now bend over that table!" hooted Mr. Hacker, swishing the cane. "I will be obeyed in my own Form. I shall make that clear to you! Bend over that table at once! You first, Hobson!"

James Hobson of the Shell prided himself on being able to take a licking. But he yelled loudly as Hacker laid on the cane. He was wriggling like an eel when Hacker was through.

"Now, Stewart!"

It was Stewart's turn to yell and wriggle.

"Let that be a warning to you!" said Mr. Hacker, pointing to the door with his cane. "You may go!"

They wriggled away, gasping. Claude Hoskins gave them sympathetic looks when they wriggled back into Study No. 4 in the Shell.

"Copped?" he asked.

"Ow! Wow!"

"Had it bad from Hacker?"

"Wow! Ow!"

Those answers were not very intelligible. Still, the meaning was clear. The hapless two had been "copped," and they had had it "bad."

(Continued on next page.)

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"You never got word to Wharton's lot?" asked Hoskins.

"Ow! No! Wow!"

"Then their game's up, from what you've told me," said Hoskins. "Hacker will get them all right. Look here! Shall I jolly well try it on?"

"No go!" groaned Hobson. "Those unwashed blighters are watching like a lot of cats! You couldn't get through, any more than we did."

"We're going to tip them somehow," muttered Stewart. "Hacker's not going to get them with that gang of roughs, if I can stop him!"

"Ow! Wow! Yow?" asked Hobson.

Stewart did not answer that. He was determined, and that latest licking from Hacker had made him more so. But how it was going to be done was a difficult question to answer.

The unhappy two were still mumbling and moaning when half-past nine chimed, and they went to their dormitory with the rest of the Shell. Mr. Hacker saw lights out for his Form; and he gave Hobson and Stewart grim looks.

Two of the Shell were still awake after the rest had gone to sleep. Hobson and Stewart were disinclined for slumber. Ten o'clock chimed out; then half-past ten. And then suddenly Edward Stewart sat up in bed.

"By gum!" he ejaculated.

"That you?" asked Hobby's dismal voice. "Ow! I say, I can't go to sleep! Ow!"

"Blow going to sleep!" said Stewart. He put a leg out of bed. "I say, I've thought of a dodge! I'm going to tip those Remove men. There's still time. Hacker fixed it for eleven, and it's only just turned half-past ten."

"Chuck it, old man!" gasped Hobson. "I'd like to tip them as much as you would, but there's nothing doing. If Hacker catches you out of the House—"

"He won't!"

"Bet you he will. He will be out

there with those frowsy rotters now, too! You haven't an earthly!"

Stewart chuckled. He was plunging into his trousers.

"I'm not going out of the House, Hobby, old man," he answered. "What about phoning them?"

"Eh?"

"The shop's on the telephone," said Stewart. "And ten to one Hacker's gone out now, and a fellow can cut downstairs. I can use Quelch's phone. Nobody in his study while old Quelch is away—what?"

"Oh!" gasped Hobson. "I say, if Hacker catches you—"

"I'm chancing it."

Stewart slipped on a pair of slippers. In trousers and slippers he crept to the door of the Shell dormitory, and opened it.

At that hour all was dark and silent. Fifth and Sixth had gone to bed, as well as the junior Forms. Masters, probably, were still up—certainly the master of the Shell. But Stewart was prepared to risk that. And it was very probable that by that time Mr. Hacker had gone out to join his "army" in the quad as the night attack was booked to take place under half an hour.

On tiptoe Stewart reached the corner of Masters' Passage. A light was burning there, but no one was to be seen. Hacker's door was closed. Whether he was in his study or not, the Shell fellow could not tell, and he tiptoed softly along the passage till he reached Mr. Quelch's old study, now unoccupied.

He whipped swiftly into that study, shut the door silently, and locked it. Then he groped across to Mr. Quelch's telephone.

His hand was on the receiver, when an elephantine tread passed the door. It was Prout coming away from Common-room.

Stewart waited till that elephantine tread died away up the passage. Then all was silent, and he lifted the receiver from the telephone. There was

still time to give the warning to the schoolboy strikers, and that warning was going to be given. Mr. Hacker, had he only known it, would have done more wisely not to lay on the cane quite so hard in his Form-room.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Forewarned is Forearmed!

B UZZZZZ!

Harry Wharton gave a jump at the sudden sound of the telephone bell.

Lights were still burning in the strikers' stronghold, but most of the Remove had turned in long ago. Two fellows, however, were keeping watch and ward at different points—upstairs and down. The Remove fellows took it in turns to do sentry-go, and from ten to eleven that night Wharton was on the watch in the shop, and Bob Cherry in the room above.

The captain of the Remove was sitting on the barricade at the door, with a "Holiday Annual" open on his knees, on the alert for a sound from the enemy. The buzz of the telephone from the little parlour behind the shop startled him. It was rather an unexpected sound.

He put down his book and went through into the parlour. He supposed that somebody was ringing up Mr. or Mrs. Mumble, not knowing that they were gone. He placed the receiver to his ear and called:

"Hallo!"

"Hallo!" came back in a cautious tone. "Who's that?"

"Harry Wharton speaking," answered the captain of the Remove. "Mr. Mumble is away at present, if you want him."

He heard a low chuckle over the wires.

"I want to speak to you, old bean. Stewart of the Shell speaking."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"I've got at old Quelch's phone," went on Stewart's voice. "I came down from the dorm to give you the tip. Were you awake?"

"Oh, yes! Keeping watch," answered Harry. "Anything up?"

"Yes, rather! Hacker's after you. Look out for him and his mob at eleven o'clock; it's not far off now."

"I say, that's awfully decent of you, Stewart, old man!" said Harry. "I'll call the fellows at once, and we'll be ready for them. Sure they're coming?"

"I heard Hacker fixing it with Juggins—and tried to get over to speak to you, but they ran me in!" said Stewart. "But I thought of the phone—see? Listen! I've got to get through—I don't know whether Hacker's in the House or not, and if he catches me here—"

"Carry on!"

"There's a trap in the roof, in Mumble's place—sort of fire-escape. Have you noticed it?"

"Eh? No!" Wharton started.

"How do you know?"

"Heard Hacker tell Juggins. They're going to get a ladder up quietly at the back of the house, after you've gone to bed, and get at you from the roof. Eleven was the time fixed—it's about a quarter to now. In fifteen minutes they'll be dropping in on your nappers."

"Oh crumbs!"

"I don't know whether you can stop



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them—but if you don't, your game's up, old bean. Anyhow, you know what to expect," went on Stewart's voice. "From what Hacker said, the trap's over a top landing."

Harry Wharton caught his breath. The top landing in the Mimble's house adjoined the attic, where most of the Remove had gone to bed. There was no light on that floor, and no watch kept there. Unaware of the existence of the trap in the roof, the schoolboy strikers had not the remotest suspicion or expectation of an attack from above.

"By gum!" muttered Wharton. "I never knew— Oh, my hat! Stewart, old man, you're a real Briton! You've saved our bacon!"

"I'd be jolly glad to see you put paid to Hacker. Wish I could lend you a hand. Anyhow, you know what to expect now. Good-night!"

"Good-night, and tons of thanks, old chap!"

Wharton put up the receiver, breathing hard. Bob Cherry looked in through the doorway from the stairs. He had heard the sound of Wharton's voice.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Tip on the phone—from old Stewart!" said Harry. "Quick, old chap! They're coming at eleven—and it's a quarter to! Have you ever noticed a fire-escape trap in the roof over the landing?"

"Eh? No!"

"Well, Hacker knows about it, and that's the way they're coming! Call the fellows—quick! Turn out every man!"

"What-ho!"

The two juniors ran up the stairs. There was no time to waste. Already, it was probable, the ladder was reared up to the roof, from the yard at the back, under cover of the darkness. The enemy were at hand.

Bob Cherry cut into the attic, to call up the sleepers. Harry Wharton ran into the room where Lord Mauleverer was sleeping the sleep of the just on a sofa. He grabbed Mauly by the arm and shook him.

"Yaw-aw-aw!" His lordship opened his eyes and yawned. "Hallo! Anythin' up?"

"They're coming!"

Mauly was off the sofa with a bound. Blankets flew right and left. Wharton hurriedly explained, while Mauly bundled into his clothes. In two minutes, Mauleverer was on the top landing, a flash-lamp in his hand. There was no electric light on the attic floor of the building.

The landing was not large. It lay under a flat section of the roof above. The roof was timbered, crossed and re-crossed by ancient beams. Mauly flashed the light up.

In the space between two of the old beams, it seemed, there was a trapdoor—a way of escape in case of fire—but it was not easy to pick out. The roof was high, the spaces between the beams deeply dark, and considerably covered with cobwebs. The attic was never used when the Mimble family were in residence, and it was evidently a long time since a broom had been handled there.

"Spot it, old bean?" asked Harry.

"No. Cut down and get the step-ladder from the kitchen—if you don't mind takin' the trouble!" added his lordship.

"Fathead!"

Wharton raced down the stairs. There was a buzz of voices from the attic, where Bob, with a flash-lamp, was awakening the Removites.

"What's up?" grunted Bolsover major. "Look here—"

"Oh, let a fellow sleep!" grumbled Skinner.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Turn out!" snorted Bob. "Up you get! Every man here! I tell you the giddy enemy's coming!"

"Oh rot!" mumbled Hazeldene. "I can't hear anything. Look here, I'm not turning out— Ow! Yow! Keep your hoof away, you silly idiot! Ow!"

"Turn out!"

Lord Mauleverer looked into the attic.

"Not so much row!" he said. "No need to tell the jolly old enemy that we're expecting a visit! Quiet, you men!"

"Look here—"

"Shut up, Bolsover!"

"They're going to take us by surprise!" drawled Lord Mauleverer.

"The surprise may work the other way if you keep quiet!"

"Sure they're coming?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yaas!"

"Buck up, you fellows!"

"Jump up!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm sleepy—I mean, I don't feel well! I say— Wow! Leggo my ear, Bull, you beast! I'm getting up, ain't I?"

There were rapid movements in the attic. Every fellow turned out, willingly or unwillingly. Most of them were keen enough at the news of an attack coming.

The Bounder was the first out on the landing, with a poker in his hand. Lord Mauleverer was flashing up his light again to the dusky, cobwebby roof.

"What—" asked Smithy.

"Trapdoor in the roof," said Mauly succinctly. "Can't see it! Hurry up with that ladder, Wharton, old bean!"

The captain of the Remove was already returning with the step-ladder. Vernon-Smith gave him a hand with it, and it was set up on the landing.

Lord Mauleverer mounted it, and took a closer view of the roof. More and more fellows gathered on the landing, in suppressed excitement. The alarm had spread to the whole garrison now.

"By gad!" breathed Mauleverer. "Here it is! The jolly old spiders have been rather busy here, but here it is!"

Between two of the heavy roof-beams was a space about three feet wide. It was festooned with cobwebs. But on close inspection, with the aid of the flash-lamp, Mauleverer made out the framework of the trap. It lay flat to the roof, and was fastened by a rusty old bolt. That bolt would not have held it long when it was prised up from above with a crowbar—one wrench would have been enough.

"Then—it's really there?" asked the Bounder.

"Yaas! They'll open it easily enough—no stoppin' them!" said his lordship. "If we hadn't been on the watch, dear men, they'd have had us this time; but—"

"But fore-warned is four-legged, as the English proverb remarks!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "A stitch in time saves ninepence!"

Lord Mauleverer chuckled.

"Yaas! Exactly! We can't stop our friends droppin' in to see us; but they may be sorry they dropped in! Get some ropes ready, you men! Wharton, Cherry, Smithy, Todd, Bull, get hold of some ropes, and made slip-knots at

the end. Put out all those dashed torches and things. An' keep quiet! I think I can hear a gentle footstep on the roof already."

"But what—" began Bolsover major.

"Don't jaw old chap—can't stop them with chin-wag!"

Lord Mauleverer stepped off the step-ladder, and it was taken away. Coils of cord were swiftly fetched up from below. All lights but Mauly's were extinguished, and by the gleam of a single flashlamp the preparations were made for the coming enemy. Mauleverer whispered his instructions. The enemy were at hand now. Then the last light was shut off, and the Greyfriars strikers waited, in tense, suppressed excitement, for the attack.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Albert Drops In!

CRACK! It was the snap of a rusty bolt.

Albert Juggins grinned.

"That's done it!" he muttered.

"I believe you, Albert!" said Fred.

At the back of the house the ladder stood against the wall. Mr. Hacker, at the foot of it, gazed up, anxiously and hopefully. On the flat section of roof, at the top, eight tattered, frowsy individuals were gathered round the trapdoor.

From above the trap was easily seen, as there was a projecting framework round it. Fred jammed a crowbar under the edge, gave one wrench, and the trapdoor lifted. And the frowsy army grinned. Albert Juggins took hold of the trap, now unfastened, and lifted it cautiously and laid it back on the roof without a sound, beyond a creak of rusty hinges.

A black opening, two feet square, lay below. Not a glimmer of light came from it. In the downstairs rooms of the building the lights were still on, but the top floor was completely dark.

Mr. Juggins knelt beside the open trap and peered in. He could see nothing, and hear nothing.

Watching eyes below could make out the dim outline of the orifice, with the sky above, and Mr. Juggins' head like a black shadow. But Juggins, looking down into the interior, saw only blackness.

"It's orlright!" whispered Juggins. "Right as rain! They never 'eard nothing—there ain't a sound! All fast asleep, I fancy! But don't you make a row, mateys. If they was to 'ear us coming—"

"You let me get at 'em, that's all!" murmured Fighting Fred. "Once I git near enough to 'it 'em—"

"Yus!" said Juggins. "But we got to get in one at a time, matey, and there's a 'ole swarm of them young rips! You keep mum!"

"Ow far is it to drop?" asked Ike the Weasel.

"Can't see nothing. But that boney old cove said it was about twelve feet. 'Olding on with the 'ands, it will be heasy enough! Four or five feet drop won't 'urt a bloke! There's the land-ing jest under. But keep mum. I tell you, I don't want to drop into the 'ands of a 'ole crew of 'em."

While the rest of the gang watched in silence, Mr. Juggins swung himself carefully in. He slid his tattered legs down, rested his elbows on the edge, and lowered himself till he was hanging on by his hands.

Then suddenly he gave a startled squeal.

"Ooooooogh!"

He held on convulsively.

"Oo's making a row now?" asked Jimmy the Pincher.

"Oooogh!" gasped Juggins.

"Wot's up?" muttered Fred.

"Oooogh! Somebody's got 'old of my legs!" gurgled Mr. Juggins. "There's some bloke there—more'n one! They got 'old of a covey's legs!"

"Drop, and chance it!"

"Oooooogh! I'll watch it!" gasped Albert.

He held on. Dropping a yard or so, with his feet free, was one matter. Dropping with his feet held was quite another. Albert Juggins did not want to land on his head, hitting the landing with the same! Very much indeed he did not!

"Leago!" he hissed, trying to peer downward. "You leago! You 'ear me! I'll kick you in the jor if you don't leago!"

"Hold on!" came Lord Mauleverer's voice. "If he kicks twist his ankles. But I don't think he can kick."

"The kickfulness will not be terrific!"

"We've got the brute!"

Hanging on by his hands, Mr. Juggins tried to kick. But he tried in vain. Both of his legs were grasped by many hands, with vice-like grips. And a slip-noose was passed over his tattered boots and drawn tight round his ankles. It was knotted fast there. Unable either to advance or retreat, Albert could only submit to his fate.

"Oh, my eye!" gasped Albert. "They're a-tying up my blinking-feet! Look 'ere, Fred, you try to squeeze in."

"There ain't no room for a covey to squeeze in till you drop" grunted Fred. "Drop, and chance it, I tell you! Get out of a bloke's way, can't you?"

"Oooogh!" mumbled Mr. Juggins. "I can't 'old on much longer! They're putting another blinking rope round a bloke! You coveys pull me out!"

"Sorry, old bean, but we're not goin' to part with you!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Stand on that chair, Wharton! Slip it up—that's right!"

Unseen hands groped over the wretched Albert as he hung. His feet were already tied together. Now a slip-noose was lifted round him, over his shoulders, over his head, till it encircled his upstretched arms. Harry Wharton, standing on a chair beside him, reached up and arranged the slip-noose carefully. Juggins unable to offer the least resistance. All Juggins could do was to hang on.

The knot tightened; Albert's upstretched arms were drawn together. His hands were still clutched convulsively on the edge of the trap, while his arms were bound. He was quite helpless now; and it was time for him to drop, like a ripe apple, into the hands below.

"Let go, old bean!" said Mauleverer.

"We'll catch you as you fall. If you get a bit of a bump you mustn't grouse, you know; nobody invited you in. Would you mind lettin' go?"

"Oooooogh!" groaned Albert.

He held on.

"I've asked you to let go, old thing!" said Mauleverer. "If you don't, I'm afraid we shall have to apply pressure."

"I say, you fellows, stick a pin in him. I say, I've got a pin."

"Oooogh! You keep that pin away!" gurgled Mr. Juggins, wriggling in horrid anticipation. "Ere, you young coveys, you let a bloke go, and I'll git out—on my davy, I will! All I wants is jest to git out!"

"Sorry we can't part with you!" said Lord Mauleverer. "You see, you're such a nice chap, and we want your company! You're goin' to be locked up in a coal-cellar out of harm's way, my good man. Plenty of accommodation there for your friends, if they like to follow. Would you mind droppin'?"

"Ow! Keep orf! I'm a-comin'!" yelled Mr. Juggins. And he came. A flash-lamp gleamed, and by its light the crowd of juniors caught Albert as he dropped.

They laid him, wriggling, on the floor, and two or three fellows tied more cord round him to make him safer. Mr. Juggins was not in a position to raise objections. He could only use his voice—which he did loudly, till Smithy jammed the end of a poker into his mouth—after which Albert only gurgled.

The light gleamed on a circle of stubbly faces, glaring down from the trap. Then it was shut off. From the darkness came Lord Mauleverer's pleasant voice:

"Next, please!"

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Not Nice for Hacker!

"NEXT!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no "next."

Fighting Fred grasped the edge of the trap to swing himself over. But he refrained. He realised that it was not good enough.

"Waitin' for you!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Come on!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Do come!" urged Bob Cherry.

"Juggins would like your company in the coal-cellar. Room for the lot of you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If a bloke could get at them young coveys—" breathed Fred.

"Cherry—" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Ay, ay, skipper!" chuckled Bob.

"They've got a ladder up somewhere at the back. See if you can reach it from a window with a broom or something, and push it over. Those sportsmen can stay on the roof till the mornin'." If they find it a bit parky up there, it will be a tip to chuck up roof-climbin' stunts!"

"Good egg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a sound of rapid feet on the roof above.

Mauleverer's voice had reached the frowsy gang on the roof, and warned them that it was time to retreat.

The prospect of spending a long winter's night on the roof was enough for Fred & Co.—more than enough!

They lost no time in getting back to the ladder to descend before it could be pushed over from a window.

Fred was the first to reach it, and he went down sliding with a whiz. After him slid the whole crew, one after another, in haste.

Mr. Hacker, standing at the foot of the ladder, with one hand resting on a rung, was gazing upward.

He was growing impatient. By that time he had expected to hear that his "army" were in possession of the building, and to see a door opened for his own admittance. The very last thing Hacker expected was the sudden return of his army, whizzing down the ladder one after another.

He had a moment's glimpse of Fighting Fred whizzing down—and then Fred arrived. Both Fred's tattered boots landed on Mr. Hacker—one on his chest, the other on his face.

Mr. Hacker went over backwards as if a cannon-ball had hit him. Fred, stumbling over him, rolled.

His followers naturally supposed that Fred had jumped clear at the bottom of the ladder. They did not know that he was mixed up with Mr. Hacker there, and they were going too fast to stop, even if they had known. Fred, as he struggled to disentangle himself from Hacker, received Jimmy the Pincher on the back of his neck, and a moment later like the Weasel was sprawling over Jimmy; and it was only a matter of seconds before the whole gang were heaped at the foot of the ladder—sprawling, wriggling, and yelling frantically.

"Ooooooogh!" moaned Mr. Hacker, at the bottom of the heap. "Wooogh! Oh—ooogh—what—what—woooogh!"

Seven frowsy and winded tramps disentangled themselves and scrambled up, spluttering. But it was long minutes before Horace Hacker was able to get on his feet. Winded to the wide, he lay and moaned.

When at last he resumed the perpendicular, Hacker did not speak. He only moaned. Still moaning, he tottered away to the House. Once more the tyrant of Greyfriars had failed—and the "war" was still going on!

THE END.

(What will be Hacker's next move? You'll be surprised when you read: "THE FIGHTING FORM!" the next yarn in this exciting series which will appear in next week's FREE GIFT NUMBER of the MAGNET. Be sure and order your copy EARLY!)

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THE ST. SAM'S TREZZURE HUNT!

First Chapters of a Side-Splitting New
Serial

By DICKY NUGENT

SIR GOUTY'S OFFER!

One bright morning, after breakfast, Doctor Alfred Birchmell, the revered and majestic headmaster of St. Sam's, rushed into the dining-hall like a tornado. There was a letter in his hand and a fierce look on his face.

"Everybody listen!" he roared. "I have just received the report of the eggaminers on your eggamination papers last term. And it's the limmit!"

"Oh, crumbs!" "Never in the course of my long career as a skoolmaster have I come across the likes of it!" cried the Head. "Just listen to this here!"

He insulted the letter in his hand, and the skool waited in fear and trembling, their necks fairly noddling as Doctor Birchmell read out the eggaminers' verdict.

"We, the eggaminers, hereby certify, after eggamin'ing the St. Sam's eggamin' papers, that the noddle of the boys in Latin, French, English, history and jog-grafy is very defective. There duzzent seem to be much intelligence noddling about amongst them, either. The headmaster seems to have neglected his duty or something, and we kon-sider that he deserves a seveer ticking-off."

"Few!" Dr. Birchmell pocketed the eggaminers' report and gave the uneazy St. Sam's boys a savidge glare.

"And that's the gratitude I get from you for all the efforts I have made to distill noddle and learning into your wooden noddles!" he cried skornfully. "It duzzent half make my blud boil! Is there any boy hear who has got the ordassity to say that I have ever neglected my duty?"

"Nunno, sir!" "Don't think that, sir, for a moment!" "Have I not kept you grinding away at your skool work like slaves? Have I not birched you and booled you for each trifling error you ever made? Answer!"

"YES!" "Only too trew, sir!" "Yet you have failed in your eggamin' ground out the Head.

"In spite of my brootal dissipline and my eggspert way of learning you, you have—"

"Excuse a fellah, Birchmell! Mite I come in?"

Everybody stared at the doorway. The deep, refined axcents of the speaker simply compelled attention. Even Doctor Birchmell stopped shouting the odds. He looked round like a startled fawn.

"Sir Gouty Greybeard!" he gasped.

It was Sir Gouty Greybeard—a Guvvornor of St. Sam's and one of the most important jentlemen in the county!

The Head's demeanour changed immediately. He dropped his boooling manner like a hot brick and started boughing and scraping and fawn-ing and grovelling all over the place.

"Good-morning, Sir Gouty!" he cried. "Welcome to St. Sam's, your honner! It's not often we have the honner of receiving your honner at this early hour! If your honner will be gracious enuff to come along to my study to discuss your honner's bizzness—"

"Don't worry about the study, my dear Birchmell!" broke in Sir Gouty Greybeard. "My bizzness concerns the whole skool, bai Jove, so the whole skool may as well listen! What I have called about is the eggaminers' report!"

Doctor Birchmell started violently and began nervously stroking his beard.

"Beleeve me, Sir Gouty, I am at a loss to understand my pewpils' failure!"

Sir Gouty larfed. "Tutt-tutt! The reason should be obvious to the meenest intelligence. Even you yourself should undahstand it my deah fellah! The fakt is, you have been over-cramming them!"

"Really, Sir Gouty, I—"

"That's why I've called, bai Jove!" said Sir Gouty. "What the boys need is fewah stuffay lessons and more prakkits in using their natcheral intelligence. So I'm going to organise a grate trezzure hunt!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"A trezzure hunt will be carried out like this here," said Sir Gouty, smiling slitley at the fellows' amazement. "Once a week for the next few weeks a sealed envelope will be handed over to you to be opened in front of the whole skool in the morning. That envelope will contain the name and description of something which the boys will have to set out and find."

"Grate pip!"

"Nothing doing, Tubby!" said Jack Jolly, with a rowful larf. "We're luckless and tuckless ourselves just at present."

"We're having a konfab on how to raise enuff munny to live on for the rest of the term, old been!" grinned Frank Fearless. "Our only hoap is to win Sir Gouty Greybeard's fifty quid prize. So now we're waiting eagerly for the

on a large cake that was standing on the Head's table.

"My word! It duzzent half look prime!" he mormered admiringly. "If the Head will only stay away for five minnits—"

The fat junior never finished his sentence, because at that moment he realised that Doctor Birchmell was not going to stay away for five seconds—let alone five minnits! A sudden clatter of hob-nailed boots up the stairs leading to the Head's passidge told their own story. Doctor Birchmell was returning!

Tubby quivered and quaked with fear. Was he to be caught red-handed? His face turned green at the thought. It made him feel quite blue.

In sheer desperation, he made a sudden dive under the table. A cupple of seconds later the door of the study opened and Doctor Birchmell himself stalked in.

"Come in, Scrownger, my boy!" the trembling Tubby heard the Head say. "Sit down and make yourself at home. Shall I cut you off a slice of cake?"

"Thanks awfully, sir," came the reply in the unplezzant voice of Scrownger of the Fourth. "It's very kind of you, sir."

"What else would you eggspect, Scrownger? Ain I not known far and wide as a kind-harted jentleman?"

"No fear, sir!" said Scrownger, with a sin-nical larf. "Most of the chaps say you're the biggest booly and tirant since the days of Nero!"

"Tutt-tutt! They're quite mistaken. As a matter of fakt, I'm always out to do a boy a good turn. That's why I've brought you here, Scrownger."

"I'll beleeve that, sir, when you do it—but not before!"

"Then you won't have long to wait, Scrownger! I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to win Sir Gouty Greybeard's grate prize for you!"

Tubby Barrell pricked up his ears. He even forgot to cake as the Head's surprising words sank into his fat noddle. Evidently Scrownger was serprized, too, for Tubby heard him give a long, drawn-out wissle.

"The dickens you are, sir!" he eggscelained. "Do you mean to say you're going to wangle it for me?"

There was a sharp whinny of indignation from the Head.

"How dare you suggest such a thing! There is nothing, Scrownger, that I detest more than wangling. Theeving or blackmailing I don't mind, but wangling I do bar!"

"Then how are you going to win the prize for me, sir?"

"By opening Sir Gouty's sealed orders, my dear Scrownger, and blowing the gaff to you so that you can get a start on the others!"

"My hut! And isn't that wangling?"

"Of course not!" said the Head blandly. "That's stratagy!"

"Grate pip!"

"For doing you this wonderful good turn, Scrownger, I shall meerly require a modest three-fifths of the prize-munny—namely, thirty pounds. Is it a bargain?"

"Yes, rather, sir!" came the prompt reply from Scrownger, who was an unscrupulous yung blaggard at the best of times.

The Head uttered a gloating larf.

"Good egg! Now sit down, my dear boy, and wade into this fruit cake. While you are doing so I will steam open Sir Gouty's first envelope, which has just arrived."

Scrownger sat down and his heavy feet came down on Tubby's fat paws like a cupple of ton wails.

The popularity of herrings—which have so long been the staple diet of the Second Form—is threatened by a sudden movement in favour of haddockes.

May we suggest as a rallying-mthem, the old Irish song, "Come Back to 'Herring'?"

What happened next was a staggering serprize to the Head and Scrownger. Tubby jumped up with a squeal of aggerny, the table shot up with him, and the Head and Scrownger, who were bending over it, both received a smashing blow in the face that knocked them flying.

Bang! Crash! Wallop!

"Yarooooo!" "Ow-ow-ow!"

It was an absolute mirracle that Tubby wasn't spotted; but he wasn't. By sheer luck, it happened that Scrownger kicked out as he fell backwards, and his kick sent Tubby rolling over and over across the floor till he rolled out of site again under a curtained-off recess in the corner!

Scrownger and the Head were far too bizzzy landing on their necks to notice him. When they picked themselves up again neither of them had the phoggiest idea that a yewman being had caused the axcident.

"It was the House dame's cat. I heard it squeal!" wailed the Head as he picked himself up. "It must have jumped out of the window! Ow-ow!"

"Grooo! I suppose I must have kicked it, then. Yow!" groaned Scrownger.

From his new place of concealment Tubby rubbed his injured anatomy and grinned. Now he could listen in safety!

So Tubby listened.

He heard the Head boiling water on his spirit-stove and heard him give a gleeful chuckle as he steamed the envelope open.

"Here it is, Scrownger!"

"St. Sam's Trezzure Hunt. Round One. One mark will be awarded to the first boy who brings back to St. Sam's a genuine perlick-man's helmet. (Sined) Gouty Greybeard, Bart."

"Oh, grate pip! Have I got to go out and pinch a copper's helmet?" cried Scrownger, in dismay.

"Don't worry. We'll find a way of getting one, never fear!" chuckled the Head. "Report to

me soon after rising-bell to-morrow, Scrownger, and I'll tell you what to do. Meanwhile, mum's the word, and the first round of the kontest is as good as ours!"

"He, he, he! I'm not so sure about that!" sniggered Tubby Barrell to himself as he followed

the plotters out of the Head's study two minnits later. "Perhaps I shall win Round One myself. Who knows?"

(We shall all know next week, anyway, when Dicky Nugent continues "The St. Sam's Trezzure Hunt!" in sparkling fashion!)

Hoskins believes in taking precautions. When he ran into a wall and smashed up his cycle in the village one evening recently, he decided that it wasn't safe to walk back to the school without warning motorists of his existence.

So after he had left his cycle at the repair shop, he fixed himself up with lights, back and front. The front light was a pocket-torch which he carried in his hand. The back light was a red oil-lamp, detached from the bike and suspended from his shoulders by straps.

Thus armed, Hoskins set out for Greyfriars. One car after another passed him on his journey and every driver spotted the red rear-lamp and avoided him. So Hoskins duly reached the school without being knocked down.

The only drawback was that, soon after his arrival, the lamp set fire to his coat, thereby putting him to the inconvenience of taking a header into the water-butt outside Gosling's lodge.

Some critics say he should have had the sense to wear an asbestos suit or a diver's outfit. But you can't expect a chap to provide against every risk, can you?

While practising ventriloquism last nite, I threw it across the room and have not yet succeeded in recovering it! Finder, on returning to H. J. Coker, will be rewarded with one coff-drop!

LOST—A VOICE!

BLUSHING TOUGHS' BLUFF CALLED!

PENFOLD SOLVES INTRIGUING MYSTERY!

In Courtfield High Street the other "halfer," Dick Penfold came across an intriguing mystery.

He ran into several Greyfriars men one after another—and they all blushed when he hailed them.

The odd thing about it was that they were some of the toughest chaps in the school. Bolsover major was one, for instance. Then there was Bulstrode and Russell and Bob Cherry of the Remove, Hobson of the Shell, and Blundell and Coker of the Fifth.

Penfold couldn't help wondering what the little game was. Why the dickens should these mighty men of valour all turn the colour of a beetroot on being seen in Courtfield High Street?

He decided to shadow Coker and see what happened.

Coker went to Chunkley's. The others had been either going to Chunkley's or coming away from Chunkley's, too.

Coker looked this way and that way, then sneaked into the shop. He went to the stationery department. He crawled past the comic post-cards, skirted the notepaper and envelopes, and at last came to roost against a counter marked "Valentines."

Five minutes later he had selected a valentine and was making for the exit at the double, his face scarlet.

And so Penfold solved the mystery of the blushing toughs in the Courtfield High Street. They were preparing for Valentine's Day—laying in cards containing sentimental verses to send to the fair charmers who had smitten their tough hearts!

Would you believe it? Can you imagine all these hard eggs sending out valentines?

If things go on in this way it's pretty soon going to bring down our grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. Honour bright!

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The GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 227.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

February 13th, 1937.



DON'T MENTION DORM FEEDS TO ME!

Snorts GEORGE BULSTRODE

Bob Cherry marched up to me the other morning with a list in one hand and a collecting bag in the other, and said: "Minimum sub. one shilling. Shell out, old bean!"

"What for?"

"Dorm feed, of course. We haven't had one this term!"

I might have said: "Blow dorm feeds! I go to bed to sleep—not to feed!"

But, of course, I didn't. A chap doesn't! The mere mention of dorm feeds is supposed to make a chap's eyes glisten and his mouth water. So I tried to make mine glisten and water. But I didn't succeed too well.

You see, I know all about these blessed dorm feeds. I've had some!

They're about the most over-rated feature of school life I know.

It's all very well for white-whiskered old fogeys to look back on their schooldays and get sloppy over the dorm feeds of long ago. When you're indulging in dorm feeds yourself it's not so hot.

Especially when they're held somewhere around midnight on a freezing cold night in early February. I might tell you! Gosh! What a night it was when Cherry's dorm feed took place!

Most of us were asleep, but, of course, we all had to get up and look fearfully bucked about it. The cakes were stale, the ginger-pop froze my tongue, and everything tasted of candle-smoke. But, like the rest of the fat-heads, I said it was all great!

Fortunately, we didn't have time to catch 'flu all round. Wingate happened to look in before we'd been going five minutes, and that finished it. But, to make up for not getting 'flu, we all got "six" after prayers the following morning!

Dorm feeds! Br-r-r-r! Don't mention the blessed things to me!

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