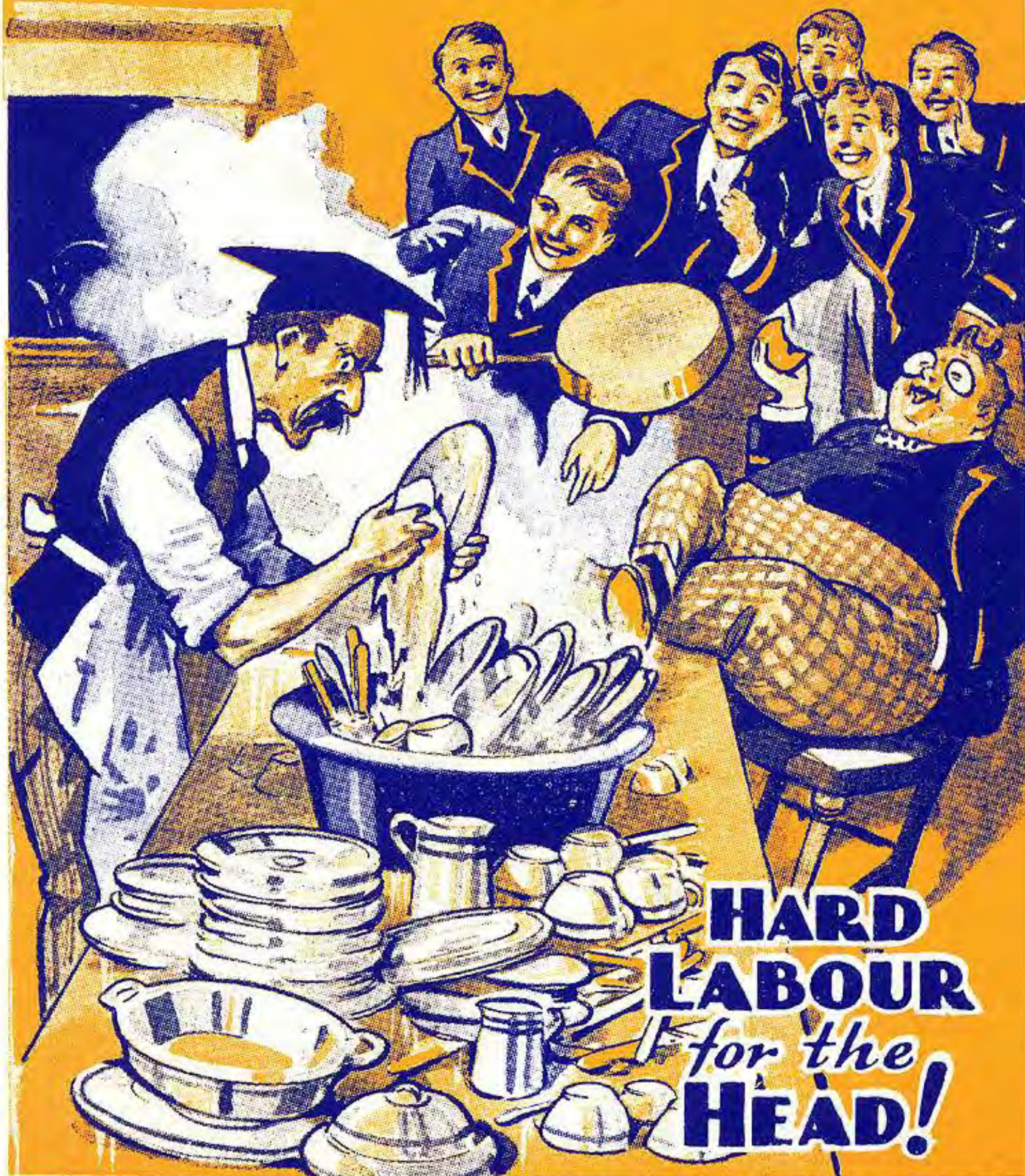


RED-HOT REBELLION at GREYFRIARS—ASTOUNDING SCHOOL STORY—
INSIDE.

The Magnet 2^D



The PRISONER of the STRONGHOLD!



By
**FRANK
RICHARDS**

Exciting Story of Schoolboy Rebellion, featuring **HARRY WHARTON & CO.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Hidden Hand!

B UZZZ!

It was quite a startling sound, in a Form-room at Greyfriars School, during class.

It made Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, jump. It made all the Shell fellows jump. It was, indeed enough to make anybody jump.

Morning classes were beginning at Greyfriars. Every Form, excepting the Remove, was in its Form-room.

The Remove were still on strike, and barricaded in the school shop in the corner of the quad.

Fellows in other Forms had shown many signs of following the example of the Remove. Everybody at Greyfriars was fed up with Mr. Hacker, temporary headmaster in the absence of Dr. Locke.

The old Head, in fact, would probably have felt very flattered had he known how anxious everybody was for him to return to his old place.

But in the Shell, they toed the line with care. The Shell was Hacker's Form: under Hacker's grim eye. Hacker had a ready and a heavy hand with a cane. And his temper, never very good, was getting worse and worse, as the schoolboys' strike continued day after day. Hacker was called the "Acid Drop" in his Form, and in these days he was all acid, of the very bitterest flavour.

So it was quite surprising for anybody to be ragging in the Shell Form Room. But it looked as if somebody was! The sudden buzzing of an electric bell during class could hardly be anything but a rag!

Mr. Hacker had just sat down on his high stool at the master's desk. He had a baleful eye on his Form, busy with Latin papers.

The faintest whisper would have reached Mr. Hacker's sharp ears, a shuffling foot would have drawn his angry glance. The Shell fellows were as still as mice. Nobody wanted Hacker to give him what Hacker would have liked to give Harry Wharton & Co., if he could have got at them!

But when that electric bell suddenly buzzed, the Shell fellows sat up and stared round. Somebody was ragging, and with Hacker in his present state of temper and nerves it needed a nerve of iron to rag in that Form-room.

"What—what is that?" exclaimed Mr. Hacker.

He jumped from his seat at his desk. Immediately the buzz of the electric bell ceased.

Mr. Hacker strode towards his Form, his grim eye fixing on startled face after startled face.

"Hobson!" he hooted.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Hobby.

"Are you ringing a bell in the Form-room, Hobson?"

"Oh! No, sir!"

"Was it you, Stewart?"

"Oh! No, sir!"

"Hoskins—"

"Not me, sir!"

"Some boy here has introduced an electric bell into the Form-room!" exclaimed Mr. Hacker. "I order that boy to stand forward!"

Not a fellow stirred in the Shell. If any fellow there had an electric bell hidden under his desk he was keeping it dark. Really, the expression on Mr. Hacker's face was not inviting.

Breathing wrath, Horace Hacker stood staring at the Form. The Form stared at Hacker.

Hacker was wrathful. But he was more surprised than wrathful. He had not expected this sort of thing in his own Form.

He had captured a great deal of

trouble since he had taken Dr. Locke's place as headmaster. The Remove openly defied him, the Fifth Form disregarded him, even the Sixth Form prefects hardly treated him with respect. But he had his own Form in hand! And now—

Among more than twenty fellows it was not easy to pick out a culprit. Mr. Hacker, after a long and deadly look at his class, went back to his desk, and sat down again.

Buzzzzzz!

No sooner had the master of the Shell seated himself than the raucous buzz of the electric bell restarted.

Hacker bounded from his seat.

It stopped!

He grabbed a cane from the desk, and stepped towards the Form again. The Shell fellows gazed at him in diabolical anticipation. Somebody was for it now!

"Which boy here has a bell in his possession?" roared Mr. Hacker.

No answer.

"Someone here has a bell! I order him to step out from the class!"

Silence!

"Leave your desks!" rapped Mr. Hacker. "I shall search for the bell myself. The boy concerned will be flogged!"

The juniors left their desks and gathered in a group, while the Form-master went from desk to desk in search of that mysterious bell.

He searched carefully, but he did not find it. Nothing like an electric bell was to be discovered among the desks.

The Shell fellows watched him silently. They were all wondering who the ragger was. Mr. Hacker turned to them at last.

"Some boy has the bell in his pocket!" he said between his closed lips. "You will all turn out your pockets!"

Pockets were turned out. All sorts

of articles were revealed. But among the assortment there was no bell. Every pocket was turned out to the lining. Hacker's eyes were as keen as a hawk's. But he could not spot what was not there. There was no bell.

He stood for a few moments non-plussed. Where was that mysterious bell? It was a mystery to Hacker, and to his Form also. Every fellow had expected the bell to come to light when pockets were turned out, only wondering what fellow was ass enough to rag Hacker in his present savage state. But nothing of the kind had come to light.

"Go back to your places!" said Mr. Hacker at last.

The Shell went back to their places. So did Hacker. He sat down at his own desk, to think this mysterious matter out.

Buzzzzzzzzzz!

Mr. Hacker almost yelled. No sooner had he sat down than the buzzing re-started after the interval.

This time he did not bound from his seat. He sat and glared about the Form-room with glinting, searching eyes.

Buzzzzzz! rang the bell merrily. It was going on continuously, like an alarm-clock. The Shell fellows stared at one another.

Who was doing it?

Nobody seemed to be doing it. Every astonished fellow there was under Hacker's penetrating eye, and he could see for himself that not a fellow in the Form had a bell anywhere about him. Yet the buzz went on without cessation. It was really mysterious, quite uncanny. It looked as if the Shell Form Room at Greyfriars was haunted by the ghost of an electric bell!

Buzzzzzzzzzz!

"Who the thump——" gasped Hobson. "It comes from the cupboard!" whispered Stewart.

Now that the sound was continuous, it was possible to trace its source.

All the Shell, and Mr. Hacker, stared round at the door of a tall cupboard at the end of the Form-room, in which easel and blackboard and rolled-up maps were parked. It was from that direction, undoubtedly, that the raucous buzz came.

It dawned on Hacker!

"Someone is concealed in the room!" he ejaculated. "Some Remove boy I have no doubt! One of those young rascals——"

It seemed certain to Hacker. Somebody was hidden in that cupboard, ringing the offensive bell. And who could it be but a member of the rebel Form entrenched in the tuck shop? All other fellows were in class!

Mr. Hacker grasped his cane, and bounded from his seat once more, and rushed towards the cupboard.

Immediately the bell ceased to ring! But Hacker knew where it was now!

He grasped the handle of the cupboard door, and dragged. But that door was locked. The key was gone. Mr. Hacker crashed his cane on the panels.

"You young rascal, emerge at once!" he roared.

There was no answer from the cupboard, and the bell was silent.

Crash! went the cane again.

"I know you are there, you young rascal!" bawled Mr. Hacker. "Is that Wharton or Mauleverer? Is it Vernon-Smith? Answer me at once!"

But answer there came none.

Mr. Hacker ceased to bang on the door and dragged at the handle again. But he could not drag open a locked door. He turned to his staring Form-

He turned so suddenly that he caught grins on several faces.

"Hobson! Stewart! Carr! Hoskins! Is this a laughing matter? Take five hundred lines each!" roared Mr. Hacker.

The Shell fellows ceased to grin on the spot.

"Some Remove boy has locked himself in this cupboard!" hissed Mr. Hacker. "Hobson, go to Gosling, and ask him for a hammer and a large chisel. Go quickly! If you are more than three minutes gone I shall cane you!"

Hobson hurried out of the Form-room. He put on speed. It was clear that Hacker would keep his word about the caning. He was yearning to cane somebody.

"The others will go on with their Latin papers!" snarled Mr. Hacker.

And the Shell fellows sat down at their desks again—though even Mr. Hacker could not make them give much attention to Latin just then.

Mr. Hacker went back to his desk and sat down, to wait for Hobson's return with the tools. Immediately he sat down, the buzz of the bell re-started in the cupboard.

Buzzzzzzzz! Buzzzzzzzz!

It was loud, it was unmusical, it was continuous. It rang and echoed in the Form-room. Not for a moment did it cease, as the Shell sat, giving more or less attention to Latin papers, and

Once inside Harry Wharton & Co.'s stronghold, Horace Hacker expects the schoolboy strikers to cringe at the terror of his glance and the swish of his cane! Alas for his hopes—for instead of giving orders he finds himself obeying them!

Hacker sat, with his eyes fixed in a deadly glare on the cupboard door.

Hobson, breathless, came hurrying back—and still the bell was going strong!

Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Quite Mysterious!

MR. HACKER rose from his seat as Hobson re-entered the Shell Form Room.

Automatically, as it were, the electric bell in the cupboard ceased to buzz. But there was no doubt now whence the sound had proceeded. Mr. Hacker had only to get the cupboard door open to get at that offending bell.

"Hobson, you may open the door!" he rapped.

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Hobson, quite cheerfully.

He rather liked banging about with a hammer, and it was certainly more entertaining than Latin.

Mr. Hacker stood and watched him, cane in hand, while he set to work. The cane was ready for that young rascal in the Form-room cupboard as soon as Hobson got the door open.

The Shell—regardless of Latin—watched also. They, no more than Hacker, had any doubt that a fellow had hidden himself in that cupboard to rag Hacker during class; and it was

clear that the whole thing was a Remove rag. The rebels were barricaded in the school shop, and they had been besieged there for a long time; but it was easy enough for any of them to cut across to the House, if they desired so to do.

All the prefects had been ordered by Hacker to keep a sharp eye open for them; but with the exception of Hacker's pet, Carne of the Sixth, none of the prefects was at all keen.

Once already there had been a rag in Hacker's Form-room at night; now it was a daylight rag. Who was in that cupboard the Shell fellows could not guess—except that it was a Remove man. It might be Harry Wharton or Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull or Frank Nugent, or Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, or Herbert Vernon-Smith—most likely the last, for the Bounder of Greyfriars was a reckless ragger, and more reckless than ever in the present state of disturbance at the school. But they wondered that even the iron-nerved Bounder had nerve enough for this!

Locked in the cupboard, he was out of Hacker's reach; but there was no escape for him if he was there. And any fellow might have guessed that the buzz of the bell would be traced to its source and the door forced. If there was a fellow inside that cupboard he was booked—and Hacker's grim look showed that he was not going to spare the rod.

Bang, bang, bang! went Hobby's hammer. He banged the chisel in close by the lock. Then he banged on the chisel, sideways, to wrench the lock open.

Half his bangs missed and landed on woodwork, doing some damage. But Hobson did not mind the damage at all—neither did Hacker, in his present mood.

Bang, bang, bang!

The banging was heard in every Form-room at Greyfriars. Sixth Form men shrugged their shoulders. Wingate the captain of Greyfriars, remarked to Gwynne that that ass Hacker was up to something again.

In the Fifth Form Room Mr. Prout cut short a lecture to his Form—perhaps a little to their relief—and stepped out to look down the corridor. The Fifth heard Prout snort expressively, and grinned at one another.

"That old goat Hacker again!" remarked Coker of the Fifth, to Potter and Greene. "What is he up to now?"

"Goodness knows!" grinned Potter. "That row's going on in the House—not over at the shop! It's not the Remove this time."

"Having a slindy with his own Form, perhaps!" said Greene.

Mr. Prout, in the doorway, was heard to snort again. Prout did not conceal the fact that he regarded Hacker, and his proceedings as temporary headmaster, with the utmost contempt. Prout, indeed, had been dismissed from his post by Hacker in an exasperated moment; but he had not gone, and had no intention of going. He carried on, in Hacker's teeth, as it were.

Prout came back into his Form-room, still snorting, and closed the door with a bang that was heard in the Shell. That was a hint to Mr. Hacker that other masters did not expect disturbances like this during class.

Bang, bang, bang, bang! rang from Hacker's Form-room, regardless of Prout's answering bang and his disgusted snorts.

In the junior Form-rooms the Fourth

and the Third and the Second were all grinning. Monsieur Charpentier, who was dealing with a French set in No. 10, had less attention from his class than over—and he never had very much.

Bang, bang, bang!

All over Greyfriars rang and echoed the din of Hobby's heavy hammer.

But he got through at last. The cupboard lock was wrenched open in several pieces and the door unfastened.

Mr. Hacker's eyes glinted, and he took a harder grip on his cane.

"Open the cupboard, Hobson!" he rapped.

Hobson threw the cupboard door open wide. He was sorry for the fellow hidden there—if there was a fellow hidden there! Having opened the door, Hobby put his head into the deep wide cupboard and whispered:

"Cut—quick!"

Had a fellow darted suddenly out of the cupboard, and cut, Hobby was prepared to barge, by accident, into Hacker's way, and give the fellow a sporting chance of getting clear.

But no fellow darted out.

Hobson stared blankly into the cupboard. It was large, extending from floor to ceiling, it was wide and deep and half-filled with various things. Still, he expected the fellow there to be in sight.

Nobody was in sight!

Mr. Hacker swished the cane and stepped towards the cupboard.

"Now stand out at once!" he hooted.

"Who is it, Hobson?"

"I can't see anybody, sir!"

"Nonsense!"

Mr. Hacker pushed Hobby aside and stepped nearer, craning his long neck into the cupboard and staring round the interior.

His eyes almost bulged in his astonishment, as he failed to spot the offender with the bell. Like Moses of old, he looked this way, and that way; and, like Moses again, he saw no man!

"He is here!" exclaimed Mr. Hacker. "I am absolutely certain that the bell was ringing in this cupboard. Step inside and look for him, Hobson."

"Yes, sir."

Hobby stepped into the cupboard. He peered behind an easel and several long-rolled maps and other things. A blackboard stood there, leaning against the back wall. Certainly, only a very small fellow could have hidden behind it, as it stood slanting against the wall; but there seemed no other place of concealment.

"Look behind that blackboard, Hobson!" snapped Mr. Hacker. "The boy is certainly there!"

Hobson bent his head round the side of the big blackboard, and peered into the narrow space behind it. He blinked. Hobby, as well as Hacker, supposed that the fellow must be there, as there was no other possible spot where he could be hidden inside the cupboard. But he wasn't!

"Who is it, Hobson—a Remove boy of course!" snapped Hacker.

"Nobody, sir—" stuttered Hobson.

"What?" roared Mr. Hacker. "How dare you tell me such a palpable falsehood, Hobson? You are in collusion with the young rascal, I have no doubt. Take that, Hobson!"

"Yaroooo!" roared Hobson, as he took it.

The cane came across his shoulders with a tremendous whoop.

"Go back to your place!" snapped Mr. Hacker.

"Owl! Wow!"

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James Hobson went back to his place. He went wriggling.

"Who's there, old chap?" whispered Stewart, as Hobby sat down—wriggling.

"Nobody!"

"But we heard the bell there—"

"I know! I can't make it out! But nobody's there!"

All eyes fixed on Hacker's back as he stepped into the cupboard. Hacker did not believe that nobody was there. He believed that Hobby had been making a clumsy attempt to delude him, and give the offender a chance. Even in his own Form, Hacker was only too bitterly aware there was sympathy with the rascally young rebels of the Remove.

Holding the cane ready in his right hand, Mr. Hacker grasped the big blackboard with his left, and jerked it away from the wall.

His right hand was raised, ready to bring down the cane as the hidden one, suddenly revealed, jumped to escape.

But nobody jumped.

Nobody was there!

Mr. Hacker stood almost transfixed with astonishment. The blackboard dropped back against the wall as he released it with a clump. There was nobody behind it. There was nobody in that cupboard. It had been locked, but it had been locked from the outside, and the key taken away. Hacker could hardly believe the evidence of his eyes. The bell had rung in that locked cupboard—nobody could have got out of it unseen—yet nobody was there. It was uncanny—quite unnerving.

The Shell fellows watched breathlessly, as surprised as Hacker. For a long minute the master of the Shell stood staring, dumbfounded, into that untenanted cupboard. But the most bitter and concentrated stare could not detect a fellow who was not there.

Hacker turned at last and went back to his desk. He was quite bewildered. Had his ears deceived him, and had that buzzing not proceeded from the Form-room cupboard, after all? He was certain that it had. And yet—He sat down on the high stool at his desk—or, rather, collapsed there—in a state of helpless bewilderment. And immediately he sat down, the raucous buzzing restarted.

Buzzzzzz!

And, unmistakably, it came from the Form-room cupboard, buzzing and buzzing from the open doorway—from a cupboard where, as Hacker had seen with his own eyes, there was no one hidden!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Only Hacker!

"WHAT—what—" gasped Mr. Hacker.

Loud and discordant—louder than ever now that the cupboard door was wide open—that mysterious bell buzzed.

Buzzzzzzzzzzzz!

Not for a moment did it cease. It rang as an electric bell rings when some impatient person keeps his thumb pressed on the button. It rang—or, rather, roared—from the Form-room cupboard. It was clearly quite a powerful bell. It was set going by someone, somehow; but who, and how? Sitting on the high stool at his desk, Hacker gazed at the haunted cupboard as if mesmerised.

What did it mean? Who was ringing that bell?

The Shell fellows were in a buzz now as well as the bell. They were standing

up, staring at the cupboard at the end of their Form-room.

"Who the dickens is doing it?" breathed Stewart.

"It's a jape!" muttered Hobson.

"But how—beats me!"

"Somebody must be ringing it," said Hoskins.

"But who?"

"Goodness knows!"

Mr. Hacker stepped away from his desk at last. The bell, it was absolutely certain, was in that cupboard, whether the bell-ringer was there or not. Instantly, as he left his seat, the buzzing ceased.

Some of the juniors had noticed already that the bell buzzed whenever Hacker sat down at his desk, and ceased as soon as he rose. Hacker had noticed that himself. But nobody guessed at the moment what was implied by that trifling circumstance. Certainly it did not cross Hacker's mind as a possibility that he himself was ringing the bell.

He stamped across to the cupboard. The bell was there—that, at least, was certain. With a black and bitter brow, he dragged out blackboard and easel and pitched them over the linoleum. He dragged out rolled maps, and pitched them aside. Every article stacked in the cupboard was dragged out, and then Hacker, with glittering eyes, bent and scanned the floor space inside for the bell.

He found it. Now that the cupboard was empty, he spotted a bell in a dusky corner, attached to a dry battery. The bell was silent now, but there it was. Hacker gazed at it. It was not ringing but it had rung. How?

He grabbed it up. Then he made the further discovery that it was attached to an insulated wire.

That wire ran under the linoleum, which covered the floor of the cupboard as well as that of the Form-room.

"Ah!" gasped Mr. Hacker.

He understood at last.

With a wire connecting the bell with a bell-push at a distance, it was not necessary for anybody to be on the spot to do the ringing. Some hidden hand was doing it from a distance.

Mr. Hacker turned and fixed a deadly look on his Form.

It was not a Remove ragger in the Form-room cupboard, after all. It was someone in the Form-room—somebody in the Shell. That wire ran from the cupboard, hidden under the lino, to a bell-push at the other end. That other end was in reach of the mysterious bell-ringer.

Now that he knew, Hacker could discern signs that the linoleum on the floor had been disturbed. No doubt this trickery had been done during the night, when nobody was about, and the ragger had plenty of time—all ready to begin in the morning when Hacker took his class.

Here and there he could see that the linoleum had been cut with a knife, though the edges had been packed back with great care, so that the cuts would not show at a casual glance.

The look on Hacker's face was petrifying as he glared at the Shell. His voice trembled with passion as he spoke:

"So it is some boy in this Form-room who is playing this wretched trick! That boy will be flogged and expelled from the school! I shall discover him in a few moments! It is obvious that this wire leads to a bell-push in this room! Hobson, come here, and turn back this linoleum, so that I can trace the wire!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Hobson.

He left his place and began to drag

up the line. Mr. Hacker sat down at his desk to watch with glinting eyes.

Buzzzzzzzzzzzz!

Loud and raucous came the roar of that offensive bell as Mr. Hacker sat down. He jumped. The bell lay outside the cupboard now on the floor in full view as it buzzed and buzzed and buzzed. It was still connected by the double insulated wire with the battery and the hidden bell-push, and the latter, evidently, was being pressed again by somebody.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Hobson.

Hacker gasped with rage, his Form with astonishment. On the very verge of discovery and punishment, the ragger was, apparently, carrying on.

Buzzzzzzzzzz!

"Who is that?" shrieked Mr. Hacker,

of a wire or a bell-push. He had caned Hoskins for nothing—a matter of small moment to Mr. Hacker, though painful for Hoskins.

The master of the Shell spun round at Hobson, jerking line.

"Lose no time, Hobson!" he hooted.

"No, sir! Yes, sir! I'm getting it up, sir!"

"Assist Hobson, Stewart!"

"Yes, sir!"

Two pairs of hands dragged at the line. The edges came up where they had been cut, and the wire running beneath was revealed. Hacker had no doubt that it would lead to a Shell fellow's desk, where the young rascal had sat the whole time, ringing that bell unsuspected. But Hacker, as often happened, was wrong in his conclusions.

tion from anyone who sat on the cushion. But there it was; and when—over the cushion was sat upon, the button was pressed, and the bell rang! "Goo-goo-goodness gracious!" stammered Mr. Hacker.

He saw it all now! He knew why the bell had rung whenever he sat down, and ceased as soon as he got up. He had set the bell going by sitting down at his desk. Horace Hacker himself had been the mysterious bellringer all the time!

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Hacker.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Hobson suddenly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a howl from the Shell.

They really could not help it. Hacker



"Leave your desks!" rapped Mr. Hacker. "Some boy has a bell on him! You will all turn out your pockets!" Pockets were turned out, and all sorts of articles were revealed. But among the assortment there was no bell. It looked as if the Shell Form-room was haunted by the ghost of an electric bell!

almost foaming. "Upon my word, this is almost beyond belief! Who is pressing that bell?"

"Who the dooce—" gasped Stewart.

"What silly ass—"

"Oh, my hat!"

Mr. Hacker bounded from his seat. The bell stopped again before he could reach his amazed Form, shut off suddenly as he rose.

"Hoskins," he shouted, "it was you!"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Claude Hoskins.

"You were bending under your desk!"

"I was only picking up a pencil, sir."

"I do not believe you, Hoskins! You have a bell-push there! Take that—and that—and that!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Ow! Yow! Wow!" yelled the hapless Hoskins, dodging away. "I never—I tell you it wasn't—I say—Yaroooooh!"

Hacker stooped, and glared under Hoskins' desk. There was no sign there

The wire did not lead to the juniors' desks; it led to Hacker's own high desk.

"Oh gum!" stammered Hobson. "Look here, sir!"

Hacker looked.

Emerging from a hole in the line behind his desk a wire ran, curled close round the leg of the stool he had sat on there.

Hacker, of course, had not noticed it before. It hardly showed on the dark old oak, and he had never thought of looking at the legs of the high stool at his desk.

But now that the wire was traced home, he looked, and he saw. That wire curled up the stool and disappeared under the leather cushion that lay on top, where it evidently ended.

Hobson and Stewart gazed at it. All the Shell gazed. Hacker, with an extraordinary expression on his face, grabbed the cushion from the high stool.

The bell-push was revealed.

It was a flat one, at the end of the wire; too flat and small to draw atten-

tion from anyone who sat on the cushion. But there it was; and when—over the cushion was sat upon, the button was pressed, and the bell rang! It was really enough to make a cat laugh; and it made the Greyfriars Shell shriek.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hacker was gazing at that ingenious contrivance by which he had been made to interrupt class in his own Form-room, sitting on a bell-push and ringing the bell! His suspicions switched back to the Remove—this, of course, was the work of one of those young rascals, who had penetrated into the House during the night. There could be no doubt of it.

But as his Form burst into that yell of laughter, Hacker forgot the Remove again. He turned on the Shell, almost foaming.

"You—you—Hobson—Stewart—is this a laughing matter? You—you—"

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Words failed Hacker. But he felt that it was time for action, not for words. Up went the cane, and down it came with a swipe that made James Hobson jump clear of the floor, and completely cured him of any desire to laugh.

"Ow!" roared Hobson.

Swipe!

"Wo-o-o-o-o!" yelled Stewart.

They fled back to their places, yelling. Hacker flew after them, swiping. He really had to swipe somebody, or burst!

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow-woop!"

Mr. Hacker panted.

"Now," he gasped, "the next boy who laughs—"

There was no "next." Preternatural gravity descended on the Shell. Hacker foamed and brandished his cane. It was no time for laughing. Anyone looking into the Shell Form Room just then, might have supposed that Horace Hacker had a class of funeral mates!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Six for Smithy!

"SEEN Smithy?" Harry Wharton & Co. were standing at the windows in the front room over the school shop, looking out into the quad when Lord Mauleverer strolled in.

His lordship had his hands in the pockets of his elegant bags, and looked as lazy and nonchalant as usual. But Mauly, since he had become the leader of the "stay-in" strike at Greyfriars School, had proved that he was not quite so lazy as he looked. He had, in

fact, astonished the Remove by the efficiency of his leadership, and the strictness of his discipline.

There were a good many fellows in the rebel Form inclined to kick over the traces. Slackers like Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish were fed up with the strike, and would have deserted if they could, since the Greyfriars strikers had been on short rations. Headstrong fellows like Vernon-Smith and Bolsover major did not like taking orders. But the Form generally backed up their leader, the Famous Five setting a loyal example.

"Smithy?" repeated Harry Wharton. "I haven't seen him since brekker, Mauly. Want him?"

"Yaas! Seen Skinner?"

"Anybody seen Skinner?" asked Bob Cherry, looking round.

Nobody seemed to have seen Skinner.

"Seen Snoop?" yawned Mauly.

Nobody had seen Snoop.

Lord Mauleverer's pleasant, placid face set rather grimly.

"Here's Fishy, if it's a slacker you want, Mauly!" said Peter Todd. "Fishy hasn't been able to sneak off yet. Still looking for a chance, Fishy?"

"Aw, can it, you mugwump!" grunted Fisher T. Fish. "Don't chew the rag while a guy's busy!"

Lord Mauleverer glanced at Fisher T. Fish. The junior from New York was seated on a box in a corner, with an account-book open on his knees, and a stump of pencil in his bony fingers. Fishy was not looking happy. Fisher T. Fish lived only to make money; and often he made small surreptitious sums by lending money among the fags. Shut up in the school shop, "staying-in" with the strikers, Fishy had no chance of making money. It was, as he sadly

realised, fierce! His only comfort was to go over his accounts, and gloat over what money he had made that term before Hacker became headmaster and started the strike.

So far, there had been only one deserter from the Remove. Billy Bunter had got away—scared off by rations, and lured by the solid meals in Hall. Fishy had tried to follow his example, and failed. Having been severely battered for the attempt, Fishy had not yet made another. But he lived in hope!

Mauleverer, having noted the American junior's occupation, walked over to him, lifted an elegant boot, and kicked the account-book out of his hand. It spun across the room, followed by an angry yell from Fisher T. Fish.

"Say, bo, what game do you call that?" howled Fisher T. Fish.

"Stick that in the fire, Nugent!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" grinned Nugent.

He picked up the account-book and tossed it into the fire.

Fisher T. Fish made a rush to rescue it, too late.

"Aw, wake snakes!" gasped Fishy.

"You piefaced piccan—"

"Bull!"

"Here, my lord!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Kick Fishy!"

"With pleasure!"

"You kick him, too, Inky!"

"The pleasurefulness will be terrific, my esteemed and noble idiotic lordship," said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

If it was a pleasure to Johnny Bull and Hurreo Singh to carry out Lord Mauleverer's orders, it was no pleasure to Fisher T. Fish.

He forgot even his precious account-book as two boots landed on him, and he almost bounced.

"Yurrooop!" yelled Fishy. "You piefaced boobs—yaroooh!—you pesky jays—oh, Jerusalem crickets!"

Fisher T. Fish fled for the stairs and escaped.

"That enough, Mauly?" asked Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "I'll cut after him and give him a few, if you say the word."

"Same here!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"That will do!" said Lord Mauleverer placidly. "That's enough for that tick! Get hold of a fives bat, some of you, and come with me to look for Smithy and Skinner and Snoop."

"But what's the row?" asked Harry, puzzled. "Skinner and Snoop would sneak off if they could; but Smithy's all right! He's the keenest man here on sticking it out."

"Yaas! 'Tain't that! Follow your leader!"

Bob Cherry sorted out a fives bat. The Famous Five followed Lord Mauleverer, and Peter Todd, Squiff Tom Brown, and several other fellows followed on, wondering what was up. Skinner and Snoop were exceedingly untrustworthy; but the Bounder was not the man to desert—Smithy was enjoying the "row" at Greyfriars, and was far from looking forward to the end of the strike. So what offence Smithy had given, nobody knew.

"Downstairs?" asked Bob Cherry.

"No; I've looked there!"

"They can't be in the attic!" said Frank Nugent. The big attic over the building was used as a dormitory by the schoolboy strikers.

"No! Got to find them!" said Mauleverer.

There were a good many rooms in the rather rambling old building, to which the tuckshop was a modern addition. Lord Mauleverer glanced into one after



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another; and finally stopped at a door that did not open. It was locked on the inside. It was a small room at the back of the house.

Knock!
"Hallo!" came the Bounder's voice. Evidently Herbert Vernon-Smith was there.

"Let me in, Smithy!"

"Another time, old bean! I'm busy."

"May I remind you that I am leader, and that followers have to obey orders, Smithy?" inquired Lord Mauleverer gently.

"May I remind you that you are a drawlin' ass, and that you can go and eat coke?" came the Bounder's reply from within.

"That's six for Smithy!" said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "Open the door and take your six, Smithy!"

"Rats!"

"Skinner! Snoop! Open this door!"

No reply from the two slackers! Apparently they were there with Smithy, but they did not venture to answer with cool defiance like the reckless Bounder.

The group of juniors behind Mauly grinned, though some of them frowned. From the locked room came a whiff of tobacco. The black sheep of the Remove were smoking cigarettes there, and the juniors did not doubt that a game of cards was in progress. They knew now why Mauly was on the track of the missing three.

"Toddy!" said Mauleverer placidly.

"At your orders, old bean!" grinned Peter Todd.

"Fetch somethin' and bust in that door!"

"Right-ho!"

"You needn't trouble!" came the Bounder's voice from within. "I'll open it!"

The key clicked in the lock, and the door was thrown open. The room fairly reeked with cigarette smoke, and on an upturned box lay scattered cards. The three had been playing nap.

Skinner's face was very uneasy. Snoop looked rather like a scared rabbit. But the Bounder was cool and defiant. Smithy was no fool, and he knew that a strike had to have a leader, and that the leader had to be obeyed, if everything was not to go to sixes and sevens. But he did not choose to toe the line, and that was that! He had unlocked the door rather than wait for it to be burst in. And now he faced Lord Mauleverer and the little crowd behind him, with sneering defiance.

"Smokin'!" said Mauly. "I thought so!"

"No bizney of yours!" snapped the Bounder.

"And gamblin'!" said Mauleverer.

"I thought that, too!"

"Can't you mind your own business?" asked Smithy.

"Put Smithy over that box, and give him six for disobedience to orders, you men!" said Lord Mauleverer. "That's a beginnin'."

"Don't try it on!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith, between his teeth. "Somebody will get hurt!"

"Yaas, I know that! Snaffle him!"

"Orders, old man!" said Bob Cherry, advancing into the room. "You're rather a rotter to be playing this game here, Smithy! You've asked for it!"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Smithy.

"You rotten blackguard!" exclaimed Harry Wharton angrily. "We're up against Hacker, and relying on the Head to see justice done, if we can hold out till he comes back to Greyfriars. What is Dr. Locke going to think, if he finds this kind of thing going on?"

"I don't care a straw!"

"Well, we care a good many straws! This kind of thing would put Hacker in the right, and us in the wrong?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "You've asked for it, and you're going to get it!"

"You giving orders now?" sneered the Bounder.

Harry Wharton coloured. He had forgotten, for the moment, that, captain of the Remove as he was, he had stood down for Mauly to take the lead.

"No!" he said. "I'm obeying Mauly's orders, as you're going to do, Vernon-Smith. Cough it up, Mauly!"

"Put him over that box!" said his lordship.

Up went Smithy's hands, like lightning, as four or five juniors advanced on him, to carry out Mauleverer's instructions. Vernon-Smith was not going to take a batting, if he could help it. He hit out right and left.

Bob Cherry gave a roar as the Bounder's right knocked on his nose. Harry Wharton gasped, as he caught Smithy's left with his eye. But the Bounder had no chance for more than that.

Grasped on all sides, he went head-long over, struggling and panting. He was dragged to the box on which the cards and cigarettes lay, sweeping them off as he sprawled over it. Skinner and Snoop made a strategic movement towards the door; but fellows collected there barred the way.

"Lend me a hand, you funks!" yelled the Bounder, as he struggled in a crowd of grasping hands.

Skinner and Snoop turned deaf ears to that appeal. They were not disposed to enter into a wild and whirling combat on Smithy's account. They looked on in silence, apprehensive of what was to follow for themselves.

Still resisting gamely, the Bounder was held on the box, face down. He wriggled and struggled and panted. Bob Cherry wielded the fives bat.

"Six!" said Lord Mauleverer.

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

They came down hard and fast. Bob had a heavy hand with a fives bat. Every whack was followed by a roar from the wriggling Bounder. Then he was released, and he bounded to his feet, clenching his hands, and panting with rage.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Put in Punny!

"THAT," remarked Lord Mauleverer placidly, "is that!"

"The thatfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurreo Janset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin.

"You cheeky rotters!" yelled the Bounder. "Come on, any one of you—or two, if you like! I'll make you sit up for this, Mauly!"

"Thanks!" said Mauleverer. "I'd rather sit down at the present moment. A fellow gets tired standin' about!" Lord Mauleverer sat down on the nearest chair, and crossed his elegant legs, with a due regard to the crease in his trousers. "You've had that six for disobeyin' orders, Smithy—"

"Shut up, you yawnin' fool!"

"Now you're goin' to be punished for blaggin'—all three of you!" went on Lord Mauleverer, unperturbed. "Blaggin' is barred here!"

"Six more?" asked Bob, flourishing the fives bat.

"No; three hours in punny!" said Mauleverer.

"Eh? Where's the jolly old punish-

ment-room?" asked Bob, staring. "Not thinking of walking Smithy over to the House, are you, and asking Hacker to let us use the punishment-room for our mutineers?"

"Nanno! Coal-cellar will do!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors. The expression on Herbert Vernon-Smith's face, as he heard that, was, as Peter Todd remarked, worth a guinea a box.

"I—I say—" began Skinner.

"You needn't say anythin', Skinner!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I'm doin' the talkin'. It's a fearful fag—I never could wag my chin like Bunter—but I'm doin' it—matter of duty! Now, where was I? Oh, yaas—three hours in punny! Walk 'em down to the coal cellar."

"I'm jolly well not going—" began Snoop.

"I keep on tellin' you I'm doin' the talkin'. Discipline must be maintained," said Lord Mauleverer. "When Quelch comes back, you can put in all the blaggin' you like, if Quelch doesn't catch you. While I'm in command, blaggin' is strictly barred. Cherry! Bull! Take Skinner's arms!"

"Hear, hear!"

Skinner did not resist. He scowled like a demon in a pantomime; but he did not want a thumping to precede punny, and he allowed himself to be pinned like a lamb—though he did not look very lamb-like.

"Squiff! Brown! Take Snoop."

Sampson Quincy Illey Field and Tom Brown, grinning, pinned Snoop by the arms. He was as lamb-like as Skinner.

"Wharton! Toddy! Take Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder's eyes blazed. He was no lamb!

"Try it on!" he snarled.

"Bang his head on that box if he resists," said Mauleverer calmly. "Must toe the line, Smithy! Wouldn't you keep up discipline, if you were leader?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"You three seem sort of fond of one another's society," drawled Mauleverer. "You can go on enjoyin' it—in the coal-cellar, without the aid of smokes and cards. Don't make a fuss, Smithy! Toe the line, what?"

"I'll watch it!" hissed the Bounder.

Wharton and Toddy advanced on him. Vernon-Smith's fists flew up, and the next moment he was fighting again. But he was pinned, all the same, and he was swept off his feet.

"Bang his head!" said Mauly cheerfully. "You were told what to expect, Smithy, if you resisted. Sorry, dear boy; but a man has to toe the line."

Bang!

"Ow!" spluttered the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now walk them off!" yawned Lord Mauleverer. "I'll come and see them safely locked in." His lordship rose from his chair. "March!"

Skinner and Snoop were led out—unresisting. Herbert Vernon-Smith followed them, resisting every inch of the way. But either Wharton or Peter Todd was a match for the Bounder, and they had his arms in an iron grip. He had to go, and he went.

"Ogilvy!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Yes, my lord and chief!" grinned the Scottish junior.

"Gather up those cards and smokes, and shove them into the fire!"

"I'll do that, if you like!" said Hazeldene.

"You won't!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"They mightn't get as far as the fire, if

you did! See to it, Tigellinus—I mean, Oggy!"

"Leave it to me!" said Ogilvy.

Lord Mauleverer followed the three culprits and their conductors from the room. Skinner and Snoop were going like lambs—the Bounder like a tiger. On the staircase he clutched the banisters, and held on, savagely and desperately. Harry Wharton and Toddy dragged—the Bounder clung—and Lord Mauleverer, behind them, came to a halt.

"You're stoppin' the traffic, Smithy!" he said gently.

"I'll smash you, you lackadaisical fool!" yelled the Bounder.

"Move on, dear man!"

"Rats to you!"

"Bang his head on the stairs," said Lord Mauleverer placidly. "Here, Russell! Take hold of his ears, and give him a bang!"

Dick Russell, grinning, grasped the Bounder's ears.

Bang!

The yell Herbert Vernon-Smith gave could have been heard across the quad. He let go the banisters. One bang was enough, even for the obstinate Bounder.

"Oh, you rotters! I'll pay you out for this!" he panted, as he was yanked down the stairs.

"No, you won't, old bean!" said Mauleverer. "You're not such a rotter as you make yourself out to be, Smithy! Get on with him!"

The Bounder, red with rage, arrived at the coal-cellar, below the building. Monty Newland had opened the door, and Skinner and Snoop were pushed in, one after another. They scowled back from the blackness.

Vernon-Smith made a last effort as he was marched into the doorway. He struggled so desperately that he almost broke loose.

But not quite! Wharton and Toddy, with a combined effort, pitched him headlong into the coal-cellar, and he crashed on Skinner, sending that youth staggering back over the coals.

Skinner howled as he sprawled. But the Bounder was on his feet in a twinkling, grasping up a piece of coal to hurl at the juniors outside.

Crash!

The whizzing lump smashed on the door as it was slammed.

Lord Mauleverer turned the key, drew it out of the lock, and put it in his pocket.

Thump, thump, thump! came on the inner side of the door. The Bounder was wreaking his wrath on the unoffending woodwork. However, so long as that afforded Smithy any satisfaction, he was welcome to keep it up. The Removites, grinning, left him to it. Loud and angry thumping still echoed behind them, as they went up the cellar stairs.

Lord Mauleverer looked at his watch.

"Ten o'clock!" he remarked. "Somebody remind me to let them out at one."

"Look here, that's all very well!" said Bolsover major, in his most aggressive tone. "But I don't see it, see?"

Mauleverer glanced at him.

"No?" he asked.

"No!" said Bolsover. "It was Smithy got out last night, to fix up that jape in Hacker's Form-room. Well, let Smithy alone, see?"

"You're not satisfied?" asked his lordship.

"No. I'm jolly well not!"

"Bull! Cherry! Take hold of Bolsover, and bang his head on that wall!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Any old thing!" grinned Bob Cherry.

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The next three minutes were filled up, strenuously, by a terrific struggle. Then Bolsover major, breathless, had his bullet head banged on the wall, as directed by the strike-leader of Greyfriars.

"Satisfied now?" asked Lord Mauleverer mildly.

"No!" roared Bolsover furiously.

"I'll jolly well——"

"Give him another!"

Bang!

"Yoo-hooooop!"

"Satisfied now?" inquired his lordship.

"Ow! Oh crikey! Yes, if you like!" spluttered Bolsover. "Oh, my napper! Wow!"

"That's all right, then! So glad you're satisfied!" said Lord Mauleverer amiably. "You can let him go! Any more cheek, and he goes into punny for three hours with the others!"

Bolsover major stood rubbing his head, and glaring. But there was no more cheek from him. He did not want three hours in the coal-cellar, along with Skinner & Co.

Lord Mauleverer glanced round at a crowd of grinning faces.

"That's that!" he remarked. "If you men are not satisfied, I'm ready to resign. Put it to the vote, and I'll be rather glad if you vote me out—it's a fag bein' chief-in-command."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Carry on, old bean!" he answered. "Wouldn't part with you for your weight in gold."

"Hear, hear!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

The thumping in the coal-cellar died away. It was renewed several times during the morning. But it was not till one chimed out from the clock tower that the door was unlocked, and the three prisoners released. They came out black with rage, and blacker with coal. And the look that the Bounder gave Lord Mauleverer, when he came out, indicated that there was trouble to come for his lordship. Which did not disturb his lordship's lazy equanimity in the very least!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Coker Asks For It!

HALLO, hallo, hallo! Jolly old Coker!"

"Looks shirty!"

"Terrifically shirty!"

Coker of the Fifth looked decidedly shirty, as he walked across to the school shop, in the corner of the quad, after class.

According to Hacker's severe orders, no Greyfriars fellow was allowed to hold communication with the strikers. Prefects were sternly directed to see that no such communication took place.

But Coker passed by Hacker's orders like the idle wind which he regarded not. Neither did any of the Sixth Form prefects bother about Coker. Wingate, the head prefect and captain of the school, was in the quad, and saw Coker, but gave no heed. Carne of the Sixth, who was Hacker's pet, would willingly have carried out Hacker's instructions. But Coker had punched Carne once, and Carne did not want any more of the same.

"Punching prefects" would have been a very dangerous amusement, under the old Head. But under Hacker, authority was being scattered to the four winds. Coker was ready to punch any man in the Sixth, or even Hacker himself. In fact, Coker had punched Hacker, when the now headmaster started to wield the cane in Coker's Form-room. Coker, for that dire

offence, was expelled—but he was not gone. He was not going. And Hacker, having his hands full with the rebellious Remove at present, had let the matter drop.

The fact was, that Mr. Hacker had flung expulsions about so liberally and recklessly that even that last, dire punishment had lost its terrors. Seven members of the Remove were under that sentence—and taking it simply as a bad joke of Hacker's. Wingate of the Sixth was under the same sentence—treating it with open contempt. Coker of the Fifth regarded it no more seriously than the others. Authority, overstrained in Hacker's hands, had broken like a reed.

"Not gone yet, Coker?" called out Harry Wharton from the window over the school shop, as the great man of the Fifth came stalking up.

Coker stared up at him.

"Don't be a young ass!" he snapped. "Think I'm taking any notice of a tick like Hacker? Prout's told me to take no notice of him—and what my Form-master says is good enough for me."

"Prout's not gone, either?" grinned Bob Cherry. "I've heard that Hacker's dismissed Prout."

"Old goat!" said Coker. "Fat lot of notice Prout will take of him! We barged him out of our Form-room the other day, when he was throwing his weight about there, and he hasn't bothered Prout since. But I haven't come here to talk about that ass Hacker. I want my hamper!"

"Your whatter?" ejaculated Harry.

"My hamper!" said Coker, glaring. "I know you young sweeps are running short of grub, and if you asked a fellow to help, it would be a different matter; but snaffling a fellow's hamper after dark is too thick, and I can jolly well tell you I'm not standing it!"

The Remove fellows stared down at Coker.

It was true that, even on rations, food supplies were running rather short with the strikers. The renewal thereof was a rather pressing problem. Mr. Hacker was banking on starving them out—every other means having failed.

But certainly they had not thought of raiding Coker's study for grub. Nobody in the schoolboy garrison had over heard of Coker's hamper.

"Dreamin' old bean?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"Don't be cheeky!" rapped Coker. "Some of you were over at the House last night; I've heard about some rag with an electric bell that you fixed up in Hacker's Form-room. You bagged my hamper—well, I want it!"

"Your mistake, old man!" said Lord Mauleverer amiably. "Never even heard of the jolly old hamper!"

"Not guilty my lord!" said Frank Nugent.

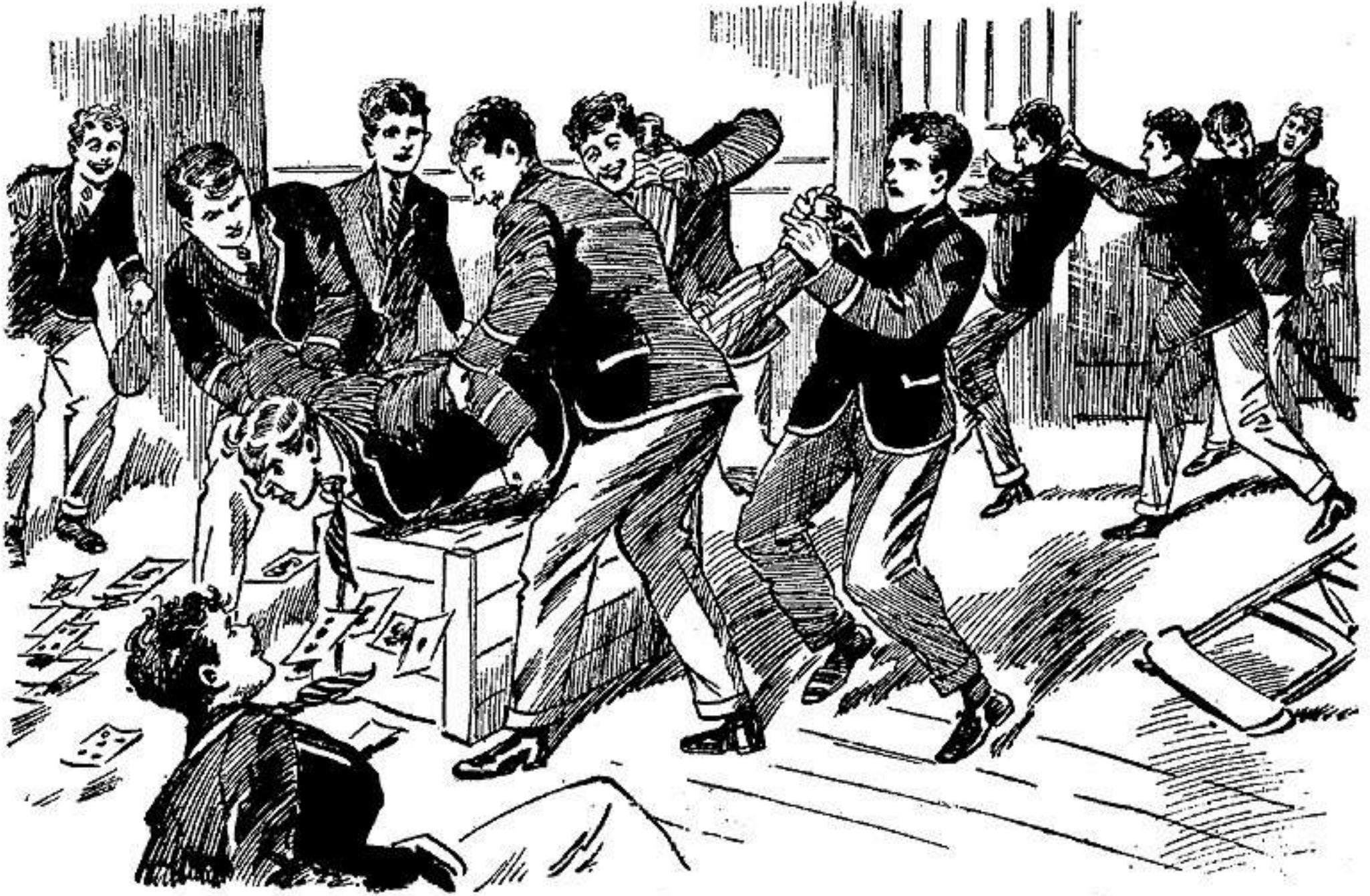
Coker knitted his brows. His hamper—one of those scrumptious hampers he had from his celebrated Aunt Judy—had been in his study overnight. In the morning it had like the Hunter of the Snark who saw the Boojum, suddenly, silently, vanished away. And, as Remove raiders had been in the House overnight, Coker had not a shadow of a doubt about the direction in which his hamper had travelled.

"Now, don't talk rot!" he snorted. "You've had it! I don't want any gammon; I want that hamper!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly. "Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove fellows guessed it at once. Billy Bunter was the only member of the Remove who was not in the strikers' stronghold. He was over



Grasped on all sides, Vernon-Smith went headlong over, struggling and panting. He was dragged to the box on which the cards lay, sweeping them off as he sprawled over it. Skinner and Snoop made a strategic movement towards the door, but fellows, collected there, barred the way. "Lend a hand, you funks!" yelled the Bounder.

in the House somewhere. And if a hamper was missing, and Bunter wasn't, it was easy for fellows who knew the fat Owl of the Remove to put two and two together.

"The Bunterfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and disgusting Bunter has been grub-raiding."

Coker caught the words, and glared up suspiciously.

"What's that?" he rapped. "Isn't Bunter there with you?"

"No!" answered Harry. "He's deserted and cleared off!"

"I know that! But he's not in the House now! Hacker had him in Form with the Shell, but he's not with the Shell to-day. He's come back here."

"He came back once, but Hacker chased him off when old Popper was here," said Frank Nugent. "He hasn't been back since."

"Oh, rot!" said Coker crossly. "He can't be in the House without anybody knowing! That's rot!"

"Fathead!" said several of the Removites together.

"Ass!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Idiot!" remarked Peter Todd.

"Run away and play, Coker!" said Bob Cherry.

Coker of the Fifth did not run away and play. He was shirty already, and the remarks of the strikers seemed to make him more shirty. He shook a beefy fist at the faces looking down from the windows.

"Now, enough of that!" he exclaimed. "I want my hamper! Drop it out, and all right; otherwise I shall come in and take it. And while I'm there I'll give you a jolly good whopping! That's a tip!"

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

Mr. Hacker had failed to root the strikers out of their stronghold. The

Sixth Form prefects, in a body, had failed. Coker apparently was under the impression that he could, if he chose so to do, tackle that rather hefty task single-handed. That was rather like Coker. Coker's confidence in himself was ill-founded but unlimited.

"What are you sniggering at?" demanded the exasperated Coker. "I mean it! Gosling's ladder is here, and if you don't drop that hamper out I'll shove the ladder to the window and come up for it!"

"Do!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Oh, do!" implored Johnny Bull.

"Come on, Coker!"

"Barge in, old bean!"

That merry roar of welcome might really have warned Coker of the Fifth. But Horace Coker was not the man to heed warnings.

He gave the laughing juniors a stern, rebuking glance and strode away for Gosling's ladder.

That ladder lay where it had been left after the last attack on the strikers. It was a long ladder and a heavy one, but the burly, brawny Coker swung it up without much difficulty.

The top came with a crash on a window-sill. Up the ladder came Coker, with a grim, stern brow.

The window above was boarded over. Between the boards the Removites grinned at Coker. They were quite interested in the Fifth Former's attempt to carry their citadel single-handed.

Coker arrived at the window-sill. He gripped the lowest board in a pair of very large and very sinewy hands to wrench it out of place. Bob Cherry picked up a hammer, with the intention of giving Coker a gentle rap on the knuckles. But Lord Mauleverer gently interposed.

"Take his paws!" he murmured.

"Right-ho!"

There was a space of about nine or

ten inches between the horizontal boards nailed over the window. That gave ample room for the juniors to reach out at Coker. Bob Cherry grasped his right wrist with both hands. Harry Wharton grasped his left.

"Leggo!" roared Coker, in wrath.

Coker of the Fifth might really have expected something to happen when he reached a window packed with defenders. But Coker of the Fifth never expected anything till it happened. Then, of course, it was too late.

The juniors gripping his wrists did not let go. They held those wrists as in a vice, dragged Coker's hands loose from their hold and dragged his arms in between the boards.

Coker struggled fiercely. He dragged and he wrenched. It was rather fortunate for him that the juniors did not let go, for had Coker succeeded in wrenching loose he would certainly have toppled backwards off the ladder. Far from realising how fortunate it was for him, Coker tugged and wrenched and dragged.

Three or four fellows grasped his arms within and tugged. Coker had not the remotest chance of getting loose. He was dragged close to the open space between the boards, into which his red and furious face was jammed, glaring.

"What next, skipper?" grinned Bob.

"Hold him tight!" drawled Mauleverer.

"We've got him!"

"The tightfulness is terrific!"

"Smithy—"

"Go and eat coke!" snarled the Bounder. Herbert Vernon-Smith was still in a state of sulky, savage resentment.

Lord Mauleverer raised his eyebrows slightly. But he took no other heed.

"Squiff!" he said.

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"Here you are!" said the Australian junior.

"Get a shovel of soot from the chimney."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you dare—" roared Coker.

"My dear man, haven't you come up specially to ask for it?" asked Lord Mauleverer. "What's the row?"

"Leggo my arms!" yelled Coker.

"You haven't had the soot yet!" said Mauleverer gently. "We're not goin' to hurt you, little man! But you've got to learn not to barge in where you're not wanted! Back up with that soot, Field!"

Squiff, grinning, brought a fire shovel laden with soot from the grate.

Coker eyed it with horrid apprehension. He wrenched frantically at his imprisoned arms.

Coker apparently had given up the idea of invading the strikers' fortress. His desire now was to get away. But it was easier to get into trouble than out of it. Coker was safely held.

Lord Mauleverer put on a glove carefully. Then he took a large handful of soot from the shovel. Coker glared at him in rage and horror, and wrenched and wrenched again—in vain. Calmly and sedately his lordship rubbed that handful of soot over Coker's red and wrathful face. Red disappeared under deep black.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites, as Coker was transformed from a Fifth Former of Greyfriars into a sort of nigger minstrel.

"Ugggh!" gurgled Coker. "You young—Grooooooooooogh!" Coker's mouth being open, some of the soot naturally went into it. Coker gurgled horribly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer took another handful, and mixed it in the same calm manner in Coker's hair. His lordship was always leisurely in his movements, and he took his time. But the mixing was thoroughly done.

"Now put the rest down his neck!" said Lord Mauleverer.

Frank Nugent reached out and pulled Coker's collar back, and Squiff pushed the remainder of the soot down the back of his neck.

Coker wriggled wildly.

"You—you—oooooh!—you—you—Gurrrrgh! Oh crikey! Ooooooh!" gurgled Coker. "Oooooh! I'll jolly well—Oooooh!"

"Now you can run away and play, dear man!" said his lordship gently. "Come back if you want any more! There's lots and lots of soot in the chimney, I believe!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker, released, held on to the board and glared in at the yelling juniors with a sooty and enraged face. For a moment or two he seemed bent on renewing the attack. Squiff gave him a gentle tap on the nose with the fire shovel, and Coker gave up the idea. Gurgling soot, he slithered down the ladder. Soot floated from him in clouds as he went. Bob Cherry pushed the ladder after him, and it went down with a crash.

Coker, black as the ace of spades, gasped and panted, and glared up in black wrath at the Removites. A tomato tin whizzed down, and landed on Coker's nose. A piece of coal followed it, catching him under the chin. Then another empty tin clumped on his head, scattering soot from his hair.

Coker turned and departed. He disdained to run—but he departed at a good speed. And he accelerated a little as a bundle of firewood clicked on the back of his head.

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Hamper or no hamper, Coker of the Fifth was tired of the Remove.

"Come back and have some more, Coker!" roared Bob Cherry.

Coker of the Fifth did not come back. He did not even turn his head. Coker clearly did not want any more!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Tracked To His Lair!

BILLY BUNTER smiled with satisfaction

It was tea-time.

Bunter was sitting in his old study—No. 7 in the Remove. In front of Bunter was a large hamper—open.

Every minute or so Bunter's fat paw dipped into that hamper, extracting therefrom something of a comestible nature—which promptly disappeared down William George Bunter's fat neck.

Bunter, at the moment, was enjoying life.

In these days, while the Remove were on strike and barricaded in the school shop, the Remove studies were, of course, deserted. Hardly ever did a footstep sound in the Remove passage—once the least reposeful at Greyfriars. Bunter, as a rule, was a gregarious animal, and liked company. But in his present circumstances the fat Owl of the Remove found, like the sages of old, charms in the face of solitude!

Billy Bunter had deserted the strikers when the food ran short—a most natural and inevitable proceeding on the part of Bunter. But, as the only Remove fellow at Hacker's mercy, he had had a hectic time with the irritated and exasperated Hacker. He had even gone so far as to make an attempt to get back to the strikers' stronghold, to get away from Hacker.

Now he was on his own.

Hacker, no doubt, believed that he had rejoined the rebels. Anyhow, he had dismissed him from mind. But going short of grub had no attraction for Bunter. He had thought of a better dodge than that.

He camped in the Remove box-room. Nobody suspected or dreamed that he was there. In the day-time he sneaked down to his old study in the Remove passage. He burgled coal from the other studies, and kept a fire going. And the food problem was solved in Bunter's own way.

While everybody was in class, the fat Owl explored for food—and picked up a trifle from one study and a trifle from another. Great luck had come his way in Coker's study. Aunt Judy could not have sent her dear nephew a hamper at a more opportune moment.

Bunter was on his travels now—through that hamper. It had furnished him with last night's supper, breakfast in the morning, dinner that day, and now he was having his tea. And there was still a lot left. Aunt Judy packed those hampers with a liberal hand.

Life seemed an agreeable proposition to Bunter just at present. So long as the strike lasted he was getting out of lessons, without sharing in the dangers and hardships of the strike. So long as Hacker did not run him down, he was safe. And so long as he was able to carry on his grub-raiding undetected, he had ample supplies of food—the most important consideration of all.

So it was no wonder that Billy Bunter smiled. He drew a creamy cake from the hamper, and fairly grinned with enjoyment over it. Then he took a bite—and a third of the cake disappeared from sight.

"Prime!" murmured Bunter.

And then suddenly the fat Owl gave a start. There was a footstep—a heavy footstep—in the passage outside the study.

It was not Hacker's! Hacker's step was soft and almost stealthy. It sounded like a delivery of coals. Bunter thought of Coker at once.

He paused in his operations on the creamy cake. That cake remained in his fat hand, suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between the heavens and the earth. Billy Bunter listened, and the fat ears strained.

In ordinary circumstances Coker of the Fifth might very likely have looked for Bunter when he missed a hamper. But, in the present circumstances, Bunter had not expected to be looked for: as Coker, like everybody else, supposed that he was with the rest of the Remove. But that floor-shaking footstep undoubtedly sounded like Coker of the Fifth.

It came up the passage. Other footsteps were following it. A voice came to Bunter's ears as the footsteps approached.

"I'm going to look, anyhow, Potter! Those cheeky young scoundrels at the shop said that Bunter was not there."

"I don't see how he could be here!" came Potter's voice.

"Hacker jolly well doesn't know, if he is!" came Greene's voice.

"Well, I'm going to look! They made out that they hadn't got my hamper, and smothered me with soot when I was going in to look for it. What are you sniggering at, I'd like to know?" Coker's voice rose to a roar. "If you think it's funny for a gang of fags to smother a Fifth Form man with soot—"

Billy Bunter rose to his feet.

Coker filled up the next minute in telling his friends, with emphasis, what he thought of them. Bunter occupied that minute in pushing the hamper behind the armchair out of sight. Then he squeezed himself into the lower part of the study cupboard, and drew the door shut.

He hoped that Coker, looking in, and failing to spot either Bunter or a hamper, would be satisfied. It was his only hope.

The study door was flung wide open and Coker strode in. Potter and Greene stood in the doorway, looking in after him.

"Not here!" growled Coker.

He stared round the study. Both Bunter and the hamper were out of sight. Coker gave a disappointed glare round the room.

"Might be in some other study!" he said. "That will be it."

"He's been here!" grinned Potter. "Can't you see—?"

"No, I can't!" yapped Coker. "I can see that he's not here, and I've no doubt he's in some other study. Let's go farther on."

"But—" said Greene.

"Don't jaw, Greene!"

"But—" said Potter.

"You're wasting time, Potter, with your silly jaw!" said Coker impatiently. "He may have heard us, and he will be getting away, while you fellows stand there chin-wagging!"

"Do you think that fire lighted itself?" roared Potter.

"Oh!" Coker stared at the fire in the grate. "Ah! Somebody's had a fire here! Um!"

"And do you think those crumbs walked here?" inquired Greene.

"Eh?" said Coker. "Oh!"

He glanced down at the floor. He was standing in an ocean of crumbs!

"He's jolly well been here, and jolly well had grub here!" said Potter.

"I said all along he had been here, Potter! It's plain enough—with a fire in the study and crumbs all over the place! I was right, as usual. He's had my hamper here. The fat scoundrel! I'll burst him all over the passage if I spot him!"

Billy Bunter, crouched in the cupboard, palpitated. He could only hope that the irate Coker would not spot him.

"The hamper's not here now," said Coker.

"Might be in the cupboard!" suggested Greene.

"I was just going to look in the cupboard, Greene. No need for you to jaw!" said Coker. And he tramped across to the study cupboard and jerked the door wide open. "I— Oh, my hat!"

"Ow!"

"Bunter!" roared Coker. "You're there, are you?"

"Ow! No! I—I'm not here!"

gasped Bunter. "I—I mean, I—I—I—I mean— Ow! Leggo, you beast!"

Coker of the Fifth grasped the fat Owl, and hooked him out of the study cupboard like a fat winkle from a shell.

Billy Bunter sprawled across the carpet, roaring.

"Got him!" said Coker grimly. "Now, you fat brigand, where's my hamper?"

"Yaroooooh!"

"Have you had it?" roared Coker.

"Ow! No! Wow!"

"I thought at first that those cheeky young rotters at the shop had raided it. They said they hadn't! You had it—"

"Ow! I hadn't!" gasped Bunter. "The—the fact is, they—they had it, Coker! They—they got it last night! I—I saw them—a lot of them!"

"You saw them bagging my hamper!" howled Coker.

"Yes," gasped Bunter. "I—I saw them—a lot of them—getting it out of

your study in the Fifth. They—they got it away—"

"Well, my hat!" said Coker. "If they had it, after all, I'll—I'll—"

"Oh! Yes!" gasped Bunter. "And—and I heard Smithy say that fool Coker would never think of looking for it in the school shop. He—he called you a fool, old chap! I heard him."

"I'll smash him! I'll spifficate him! I'll—"

Coker strode towards the door, and Bunter gasped with relief.

Fortunately, it was always easy to pull Coker's leg. But, unfortunately, Potter and Greene were not such easy subjects.

"Hold on, old man!" said Potter.

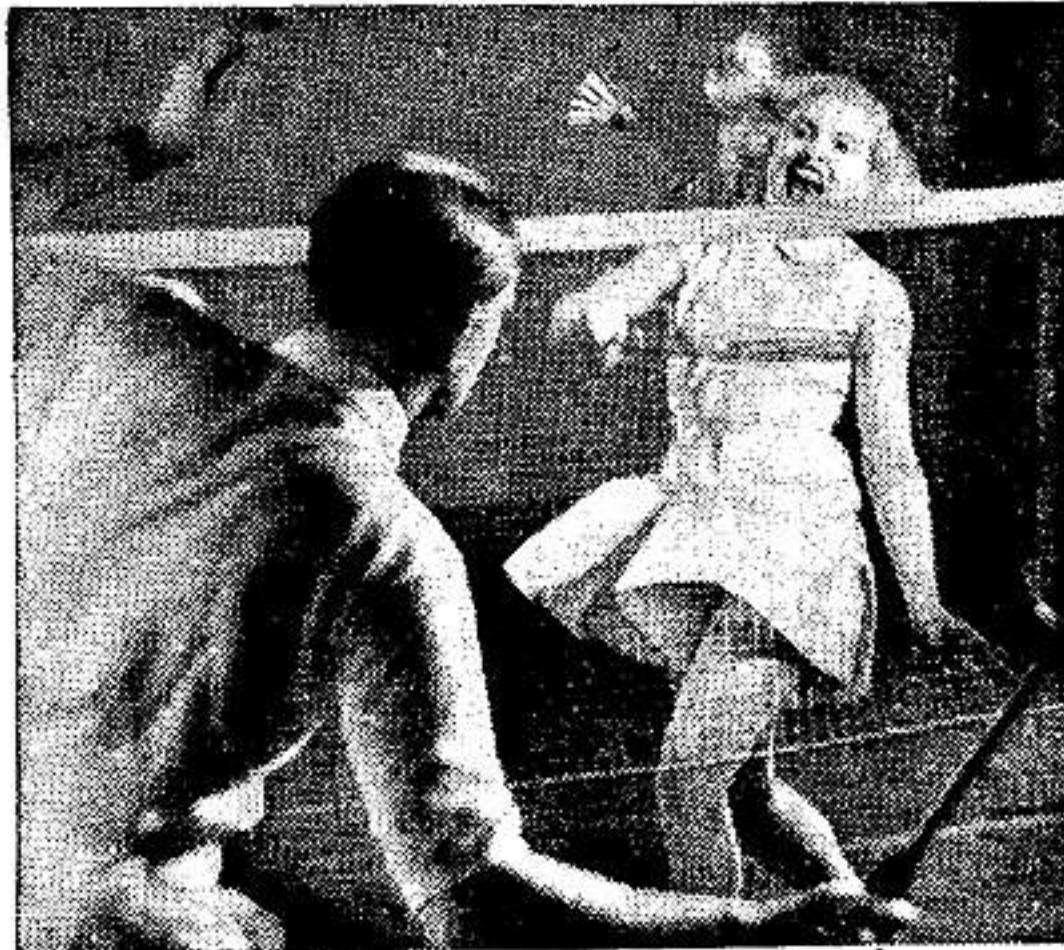
"Don't jaw, Potter! I'm going—"

"Hain't you better look round the room first?" said Potter. "That fat porpoise has been gobbling something—look at the crumbs."

"I was going to look round the room first, Potter. You needn't jaw, a—"

(Continued on next page.)

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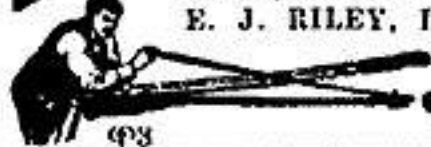
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if nobody but you ever thinks of anything!"

"I—I say, it's not here!" squeaked Bunter, in alarm. "I—I don't know anything about your hamper, Coker! I've never seen it—never knew you had one!"

"Why, you young rotter, you just said you saw them taking it away last night!" bawled Coker.

"Oh! I—I mean, I—I never saw it till then! They—they got it out of your study, old chap. I saw them——"

"And what were you doing in Coker's study?" grinned Greene.

"Eh? Nothing! I wasn't there! I—I was fast asleep at the time. I had nothing to do with it——"

"You were fast asleep when you saw them bagging my hamper!" shrieked Coker.

"Oh! I—I meant to say—yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter roared, as a large size in boots smote him. Leaving him roaring, Coker proceeded to root about the study for his hamper. As soon as he jerked the armchair aside, the same was revealed.

"My hamper!" roared Coker. "Half-empty!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He wriggled to his feet. Potter and Greene joined Coker, all three of them staring into the hamper. It was rather more than half-empty. Billy Bunter had done very well out of that hamper.

"That's my hamper!" gasped Coker. "And that fat scoundrel's scooped half the stuff—more than half! Look at it!"

Billy Bunter gave Coker's broad back a ferocious blink through his big spectacles.

He was unwilling to part from that hamper. But he was very eager to get away from the hamper's owner. He leaped for the doorway.

"I'll smash him!" breathed Coker. "I'll spifficate him! I'll burst him! I'll whop him black and blue! I'll——"

Coker turned round from the hamper to grasp Bunter. A fat figure was disappearing out of the study doorway.

Coker bounded after it. Billy Bunter fled for his fat life. Up the Remove passage he went, his feet hardly touching the floor.

"Stop!" roared Coker, as he raged in pursuit. "I'm going to smash you! I'm going to mop you up all over the shop! Stop!"

That was not the way to make Bunter stop! It had an accelerating effect! Bunter not only flew—he flashed!

He reached the box-room stair at the end of the passage, and bounded up. After him rushed Coker. After Coker rushed Potter and Greene. Coker grabbed at a fat ankle whisking ahead, and barely missed it.

Billy Bunter shot across the landing at the top, whizzed into the box-room, slammed the door, and turned the key in the lock, just as Coker's heavy hand banged without.

Click!

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

He sank down on a trunk, spluttering for breath. It was a cold February day, but perspiration ran in streams down Billy Bunter's fat face.

Thump, thump, thump! came at the door.

"Bunter! Let me in! I'm going to smash you!" roared Coker.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

Thump! Bang!

"He's locked it!" came Potter's voice. "You'll have Hacker up here, at this rate, old chap!"

The thumping ceased.

"Well, I don't want to bring that cad after him!" said Coker. "But I'll smash him—I'll pulverise him—I'll

spifficate him when I get hold of him. I'll jolly well keep an eye open for him, and next time I spot him——"

Heavy footsteps receded down the box-room stairs. Coker & Co. were gone—taking the depleted hamper with them. But Bunter, for the moment, was not thinking even of the hamper—he was glad to hear Coker depart!

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

And the fat Owl of the Remove sat and spluttered for breath, what time Coker & Co., in their study in the Fifth, dealt with what remained in Aunt Judy's hamper.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Hacker on the Warpath!

MR. HACKER paced his study that evening with a dark and wrinkled brow.

It was the hour of prep, but various sounds, from various parts of the House, reached the new headmaster of Greyfriars, and apprised him that a good many fellows were not bothering about preparation.

When Hacker had first taken Dr. Locke's place, a single sound would have drawn him out of his study, like a lion from his lair. Now he affected to hear nothing. His hands were full, with trouble he did not know how to deal with, and he rather dreaded the idea of adding more.

Everything was at sixes and sevens. Sixth Form prefects turned a blind eye on disorder. That was not to be wondered at, when Hacker had sentenced the head prefect, Wingate, to expulsion, and threatened to cane Walker, another prefect, and talked to the whole august body of them as if they were fags of the Second Form. Only Carne, his pet prefect, gave him support—and even Carne was getting slack.

The Fifth Form openly disregarded him. He had "dismissed" Mr. Prout, their Form-master; but Prout stood his ground, and the Fifth had actually pushed Hacker out of their Form-room. Even his own Form, the Shell, showed signs of unrest. Fourth and Third and Second were only restrained by their own Form-masters from following the example of the Remove and breaking out into rebellion—and Hacker knew what the result would be if he interfered with those Forms, as he had interfered in the Remove.

Interference and petty domineering were Hacker's chief failings, but he mistook them for a sense of duty and firmness of character, with the unfortunate result that whatever he did was right in his own eyes.

Being, as he firmly believed, right, he could not give way; moreover, he was as obstinate as the most stubborn mule. He was not going to yield an inch. But what he was going to do was a troublesome problem.

He had tried every imaginable means of reducing the Remove to obedience—even to the extent of hiring a mob of tramps to root them out of their stronghold. Everything had failed.

Not his authority, but the authority of other masters, kept the rebellion from spreading to other Forms. His own authority, supreme as it was, was disregarded on all sides. He had interfered, and meddled, and domineered, till the whole school was set against him as one man!

More and more severity was Hacker's only idea of dealing with trouble caused by over-severity! But how was it to be exercised? He had started to cane Coker in the Fifth Form Room, and Coker had sent him sprawling on the

Form-room floor. Expelled for that exploit, Coker was still there. He could not even deal with Coker, let alone the rest of the Fifth, and the rest of the school.

The bare idea of Coker lifting a finger against the old Head was ludicrous. But he had lifted a whole fist against Hacker. This might really have taught Hacker that he lacked some quality necessary to a headmaster. But Hacker was not the man to learn.

With the school against him, and the staff against him, and nothing to rely upon but the doubtful support of Carne, the bully of the Sixth, Mr. Hacker was up to his neck in difficulty and doubt.

But he was not thinking of retreat.

The seven members of the Remove whom he had "sacked" had to go. Coker had to go! Wingate had to go! Prout had to go! But how?

Meanwhile, time was pressing.

The Governing Board of Greyfriars loomed on the horizon like a threatening cloud. They had appointed him to carry on while Dr. Locke was away—little dreaming of the outcome. As soon as they knew——

Hacker did not feel that he was to blame in any way. But he had a misgiving that the governors might think so. He could not help admitting that the present remarkable state of affairs had arisen under his rule, and that it was unimaginable under Dr. Locke's rule.

And his hope of crushing the rebellion, before the governors could hear of it, was delusive. One governor, who resided in the neighbourhood, had already butted in—Sir Hilton Popper, of Popper Court. And Mr. Hacker's temper having failed him, he had pushed Sir Hilton back into his car, and ordered him off—as he considered he was entitled to do. Only by a vote of the Board could he be displaced from his position—he was not going to take orders from Sir Hilton Popper!

Still, he realised that it was unfortunate. The lord of Popper Court was certain to make a tremendous fuss about it. The whole body of governors would take it up. What was the outcome going to be?

If they found Greyfriars still in a state of riot and rebellion when they investigated the matter, how were they going to judge him? Mr. Hacker gritted his teeth as he thought of that. The Remove had to be overcome and put down—severely dealt with, with an unsparring hand—and that would be an example to the rest of the school. If only he knew how——

Buzzzzzz! rang the telephone-bell.

Mr. Hacker stopped his restless pacing and grabbed the receiver. He tapped into the telephone.

"Hello! What——"

"Is that Mr. Hacker?" It was the gruff bark of Sir Hilton Popper that came through.

Hacker's eyes glittered at the instrument.

"Yes!" he snapped. "Speaking!"

"One word with you, Mr. Hacker! Your unheard-of insolence to me, a governor of Greyfriars, has been reported to the Board. You may expect to be displaced from your present position very shortly."

"Is that all?" snarled Mr. Hacker.

"No, sir!" barked the voice from Popper Court. "That is not all! I shall attend the meeting of the Governing Board. I shall insist upon your dismissal, not only from your present position as temporary headmaster, but altogether!"

"Bah!" snapped Mr. Hacker.

"Unless a written apology reaches me, sir, before I attend the meeting,



Skinner and Snoop were pushed into the coal-cellar, one after another. Vernon-Smith made an effort to escape, but failed. He went whirling into the coal-cellar, crashing on Skinner and sending that youth staggering back over the coals. "Ow! Yow! Wow!" howled Skinner, as he sprawled.

you may expect to be dismissed from your post at Greyfriars School!" barked Sir Hilton Popper. "And I warn you that you have little time to lose."

Mr. Hacker jammed the receiver back on the hooks. He seemed to have had enough conversation from Popper Court.

He resumed his pacing, with a black brow. He was certainly in no mood to placate Sir Hilton Popper with an apology, written or unwritten. But clearly there was no time to lose. Greyfriars School had to be restored to order before the governing board moved in the matter. That was the only thing that could possibly see him through.

Mr. Hacker rang the bell at last, and sent Trotter for Carne of the Sixth. Carne arrived in the study looking anything but enthusiastic. It suited him to stand well with Hacker; but Hacker's favouritism had earned him more kicks than halfpennies so far. He did not want any more dealings with the rebel Remove.

"You sent for me, sir?" mumbled Carne.

"Yes, Carne!" said Mr. Hacker. "You are aware that last night some of the Remove boys must have entered the House, to play tricks in my Form-room—Are you laughing, Carne?"

"Oh! No, sir!" gasped Carne, composing his features at once. That jape with the electric bell was the talk of Greyfriars, and it had caused merriment all over the school. Hacker, evidently, did not see anything funny in it.

Hacker gave him a suspicious glare. However, he went on:

"I think it probable, Carne, that the unruly young rascals may repeat their action—I think very likely some of them may attempt to enter the House

again to-night to play some other disrespectful trick—"

"Yes, sir!" said Carne. He thought it very likely, too. The Removeites had started carrying the war into the enemy's country, and it was far from improbable that they would continue so to do. "Pretty certain, I think, sir."

"Quite so!" said Mr. Hacker. "I desire you not to go to bed to-night, Carne, but to remain up on the watch—"

"Oh!" gasped Carne.

"You are willing to do so, I presume?" yapped Mr. Hacker, with another glare at the prefect.

"Oh, yes, sir! Quite!" said Carne. He reflected that it would be easy enough to slip off to bed after Hacker had turned in.

"Very good!" said Mr. Hacker. "I shall remain up also—"

"Eh?"

"We shall keep watch together!"

"Oh!"

Carne saw that chance of slipping off quietly to bed vanish. There would be no slipping off to bed for Carne if Hacker stayed up also.

"I have little doubt," resumed Mr. Hacker, "that some of them will enter the House. Possibly some young rascal in sympathy with them may open a door or a window—or one may be left unfastened. In such an event, Carne, the Remove boys who enter must not be allowed to escape."

"I—I see, sir."

"I shall make an example of any boys who fall into my hands!" said Mr. Hacker, with a glint in his cold eyes. "I shall make such an example of them, that I have no doubt it will produce a proper effect."

Even Carne felt a moment's compassion for any Remove man who might fall into Hacker's hands that night!

"This may have the effect of ending this deplorable state of affairs, Carne," said the master of the Shell. "I trust so, at all events. We shall see. Kindly remain up, Carne, and I will call you when required."

"Very well, sir!"

Carne of the Sixth left the study, less enthusiastic than when he had entered it. He began to wish that he was not Hacker's favourite prefect.

But there was no help for it; and that night, while the rest of Greyfriars slumbered, two wakeful figures waited and watched—Carne rubbing his eyes and painfully suppressing his yawns—Hacker sleepless, watchful, and wary as a cat. They waited in the dark; for obviously the Remove raiders, if they came, would not come while a light was burning. And Hacker, as he gripped his cane and waited, hoped that they would come!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Night Raiders!

"SMITHY!"

"Leave me out!" growled the Bounder.

"My dear chap—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Don't be an ass, Smithy!" suggested Harry Wharton.

"Go and eat coke!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith, clearly, was not in a mood of sweet reasonableness. Ever since he had been let out of "punny" in the coal-cellar, Smithy had been like a bear with a sore head.

Skinner and Snoop, if they sulked, sulked submissively. They did not want any more. But the Bounder was made of different stuff. He sulked

(Continued on page 16.)

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The PRISONER of the STRONGHOLD!



(Continued from page 13.)

aggressively and made himself extremely unpleasant.

Only one thing prevented him from starting a "scrap" with the commander-in-chief of the rebel Remove. That was the certainty that at the first sign of mutiny he would be collared, batted, and pitched into the coal-cellar again to cool his heels there till he was in a more reasonable frame of mind.

In his angry resentment the Bounder had thought of clearing off and throwing up the whole thing. But he hated the idea of being classed with fellows like Bunter and Pissy and Skinner. He could not do that.

But he was prepared to resist, with utter recklessness, if Mauleverer gave him another order.

Lord Mauleverer, however, was blessed with more tact than Mr. Hacker in a position of command. He had not the slightest desire to throw his weight about. He could make allowance for even a wrong-headed fellow who fancied that he had cause to get his back up. Mutiny he was prepared to deal with, with a heavy hand; but he was not going to provoke it.

It was a late hour now. Most of the rebel garrison were in bed in the attic over the building. But a dozen fellows—the choice spirits of the Remove—were up in the big front room over the shop. Mr. Hacker was right in guessing that another raid was planned for that night. Like Scipio of old, Mauly was bent on carrying the war into Africa.

Three fellows were going—Mauly, Wharton, and another. He called on Vernon-Smith for the third, partly because the Bounder was just the man for such an adventure, partly as an olive-branch to the disgruntled fellow. But Herbert Vernon-Smith seemed to have no use for olive-branches.

He was up with the others; and he certainly was keen on taking a hand in any adventure, the more reckless the better. But he was not going to do anything that Mauly told him to do. And that was that!

Lord Mauleverer regarded him thoughtfully in the glimmer of starlight that came through the boarded windows. Smithy gave him a defiant scowl in return, lounging with his hands in his pockets.

"You'd better come, old bean!" said Mauleverer gently.

"Well, I won't!"

"Cold feet, old thing?" asked Johnny Bull.

The Bounder's eyes gleamed at Johnny.

"Look here, Smithy, you ass!" said Frank Nugent. "You've got to line up with the rest of us and obey orders. What's the good of playing the goat?"

"The playfulness of the goat is terrifically absurd, my esteemed Smithy!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Bounder sneered.

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"Let that tackadaisical fool give me an order and see whether I'll obey it or not!" he snapped.

"Go it, Mauly!" said Peter Todd. "We'll jolly soon make the silly ass toe the line, if you give the word."

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"I'm not givin' Smithy orders just now!" he said. "Volunteers required for a stunt like this—no good a fellow comin' if he's not keen. Stay where you are, Smithy—go to bed, if you like."

The Bounder scowled angrily. He was resolved not to follow Mauleverer's lead; but his resolution nearly failed him at that. He was keen enough—as keen as anybody—only determined to be obstinate and self-willed. He scowled; but he said nothing.

"Up to you, Inky!" said his lordship.

"The pleasurefulness will be preposterous!" assented the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Lord Mauleverer looked from the window. The House, across the quad, was a black mass against a steely sky. Not a light glimmered in any window. It was long past bed-time for all Greyfriars.

"Looks all right!" said Harry Wharton, glancing over Mauly's shoulder.

"Yaas! And Hobby's promised to leave the lobby door unfastened for us. Anyhow, we'll get in. Get going!"

One of the boards was removed from the window to allow a passage. A thick knotted rope was secured at one end and dropped out. Lord Mauleverer was the first to go. Harry Wharton followed him, and then Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. The other fellows were to watch and wait for their return; and render aid if they came back pursued.

Herbert Vernon-Smith stood at the window, scowling. He watched three figures flit away into the darkness and disappear.

He was still angry, and still sulky; but he was already regretting that he had refused to take part in the raid. It was not the Bounder's way to hang back when other fellows faced risks.

Likely enough, after what had happened the previous night, Hacker might have an eye open—or the prefects might be up. Any fellow caught was certain to suffer the keenest edge of Hacker's bitter temper. The more risky the adventure was, the more it appealed to the Bounder. He could have kicked himself for being left out. But he was not going to follow Mauly's lead.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you up to, Smithy?" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly, peering at the Bounder in the shadowy room.

Vernon-Smith did not answer.

He was pushing out of the open space at the window. Bob made a quick step towards him. But Smithy was outside on the window-sill, and holding on to the knotted rope that hung from it.

"Come back, you ass!" breathed Bob. "Mauly doesn't want a crowd—"

"Hang Mauly!"

"You fatheaded clump!" hooted Bob. "You wouldn't go when you were asked, now you're not going—see?"

"Rats to you!"

Bob reached out as the Bounder swung himself on the rope. He grabbed Herbert Vernon-Smith by the collar.

"Now come in again, you silly sweep!" he growled. "I'll jolly well yank you in by the neck if you don't! I'll—Whoooooop!"

Bob gave a yell as the Bounder released one hand and punched. That punch landed on Bob's nose, and he let go Smithy's collar. As he started back

the back of his head banged on a board across the window, and he gave another howl.

The next instant the Bounder had slithered down the rope and vanished. A mocking chuckle floated back, and Smithy was gone.

"By gum!" gasped Bob. He rubbed his nose with one hand, the back of his head with the other. "I've a jolly good mind to go after him and mop up the quad with him. I—"

"And wake all Greyfriars, fathead!" said Frank Nugent. "Smithy will keep!"

"Won't I jolly well punch him when he comes back!" breathed Bob.

And the Remove fellows waited and watched—Bob Cherry rubbing two damaged spots and grimly resolved to give Smithy a dozen or so of the same when he came back.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter in the Dark!

BILLY BUNTER gave a dismal groan.

At that hour of the night Billy Bunter was generally fast asleep, and announcing the same by a deep, resonant, and continuous snore.

But on this particular night there was no sleep for Bunter.

Bunter was hungry.

He had not even finished his tea when Coker had happened in Study No. 7. Since then he had, so to speak, used no other! Vast spaces within Bunter's ample circumference were empty as a drum.

He had not dared to venture out of the Remove box-room again. He dreaded the heavy hand, and heavier boot, of Coker of the Fifth. Sur-reptitious grub-raiding was a chicken that would no longer fight, now that Bunter's presence in the House was known. Not till the House was slumbering could the fat Owl think of venturing out in search of provender. Even after the fellows had gone to their dormitories Bunter hesitated to make the venture. In fact, he would not have ventured to make it at all, had there been any other resource. But a fellow had to eat. He had not so much as a crumb in his hiding-place.

Bunter had made up a bed in the box-room of rugs and coats and other things snaffled here and there. But it was in vain that he deposited his fat limbs on that bed and wooed slumber. Sleep would not come.

He closed his eyes and opened them again umpteen times. He mumbled, he grumbled, and he groaned. And at last, when he could stand it no longer, he resolved to make the venture. If he failed to find provender he could, at all events, get out of the House and get back to the rebels' stronghold. The thinnest rations were better than an aching void.

Silently the fat Owl opened the box-room door, and crept down to the Remove passage in the dark. There was nothing in the Remove studies—he had to go farther afield.

He thought of Coker's study in the Fifth, but it was not likely that Coker & Co. had left much in that hamper. Temple of the Fourth often had something good in his study cupboard. There was a chance that something had been left overnight.

So Cecil Reginald Temple's study was honoured by Bunter's first visit.

He found the study, and the cupboard, in the dark. But he found nothing therein. When he got there the cupboard was bare, and so, as it were, the poor dog had none. Two or three

other Fourth Form studies were drawn blank.

Then Bunter crept down the main staircase. The larder, probably, was locked, but Bunter was prepared to deal with the lock in a drastic manner if he got at it. He was so hungry by this time that he could almost have gnawed his way in like a rat!

But at the foot of the staircase Billy Bunter suddenly stopped, with a startled palpitation of his fat heart.

There was a sound in the darkness. The darkness was intense; Bunter was creeping and groping his way. He was cautious, but he stumbled and bumped every now and then. He made more than noise enough to reach listening ears—if any were listening. And there were sharp ears abroad that night.

The Owl of the Remove stopped dead. He tried to suppress his breathing. The thought of burglars rushed into his mind at once. He palpitated.

The sound was repeated. It was a shuffling footstep. Then, after a pause, came a whispering voice:

"Did you hear anything, Carne?" Bunter jumped.

It was Mr. Hacker's voice. It was no burglar—but it was, if possible, worse. It was Hacker. The fat Owl crouched against the banisters in terror.

"I think I heard some sound upstairs, sir!" Carne's voice answered in sleepy, yawning tones.

"It was on the stairs, I think, Carne! Possibly they may have entered by an upstairs window."

"I don't think it was anything, sir! I—"

"Nonsense! Listen!" Billy Bunter groped for the stairs. Even the lure of food had no influence over him now—now that he was within six feet of Horace Hacker!

Bunter's one idea was to bolt back to his hiding-place and lie low there till Hacker had gone to bed. Why he was up in the middle of the night was a mystery to Bunter.

Bunter got back to the staircase. But in the dark, and in his haste, he missed a step as he plunged upward. He came down on the stairs with a bump, and rolled off them, with a gasping howl.

"Wooooooogh!" "Ha!" It was a sharp exclamation from Hacker. "You hear that, Carne! The light—quick!"

A flashlamp flashed out. Its gleaming beam revealed a fat figure, sprawling at the foot of the staircase.

"Bunter!" roared Hacker. "One of the Remove—Bunter! Others, no doubt, are here—"

He rushed at Bunter. The fat Owl bounded to his feet like a plump kangaroo and dodged. He barely eluded Hacker's clutch, and fled frantically.

Carne made a grasp at him, and Bunter, hardly knowing what he did in his terror, kicked out at Carne. Luckily—for Bunter, not for Carne—his boot landed on a shin!

Carne of the Sixth gave a fearful yell, staggered back, and dropped the flashlamp. He yelled and yelled.

Bunter flew on in the dark. "Carne, show the light instantly!" roared Hacker, as he rushed after Bunter.

Bump! It really was not safe to rush about in impenetrable darkness. Hacker crashed into the staggering prefect, sent him sprawling headlong, and stumbled over him.

Instantly his clutch closed on Carne. Apparently he fancied that he had got

hold of Bunter. His clutch was vice-like.

"You young rascal!" he panted. "If you dare to resist—"

"Wurrgh!" gurgled Carne, struggling. "Urrrrgh! I say—Urrrrgh!"

"Show the light, Carne!" shouted Mr. Hacker, grasping his unseen prisoner. "Do you hear me? Show the light at once and look for the others! I have caught this young rascal—Bunter, if you dare to resist, I shall—"

Smack, smack, smack! Hacker smacked an unseen head hard and heavy. Fearful yells came from the hapless Carne.

Smack, smack! "Yaroooh! Stop it, you old fool!" shrieked Carne, struggling madly. "Wharrer you punching me for, you silly idiot? Yaroooh!"

"What—what—Carne!" stuttered Mr. Hacker.

"Leggo! Ow! Leggo!" Mr. Hacker released the prefect and glared at him in the dark.

"I—I—I thought—" he gasped. "Carne, what did you call me? Did I hear you say fool—old fool, Carne?"

"I—I—" stammered Carne. Inadvertently, in the excitement of the moment, he had let out what he really thought of Hacker.

"I shall refer to this later, Carne! Where is Bunter?"

"I don't know! I—" "Pah!"

Mr. Hacker groped to a switch, and flashed on the electric light. He glared round for Bunter. But Bunter had vanished from sight.

From a distance floated a sound of fleeing footsteps, and a bump, as the fleeing Owl barged into a wall in the dark. Then a howl floated back.

Guided by the sound, Mr. Hacker rushed in pursuit. Carne did not follow him. Carne was more interested, at that moment, in his hacked shin and his smacked head. He had pains in both.

Hacker scudded after the vanished Owl. He tracked him—by ear—up Master's passage, round by Common-room, and then to the Sixth Form passage. He hung on his trail like a bloodhound.

Bunter did not even know where he was going. All he knew was that he wanted to get to a distance from Hacker. In the dark, he bumped on a door—and opened it, hoping for refuge in the room within.

A startled voice from an awakened sleeper greeted him.

"Hallo! What—who's that?" It was Wingate's voice. Bunter had barged into a Sixth Form Room. He backed out hurriedly.

But he knew where he was now—and he remembered the lobby at the end of the Sixth Form passage. The lobby door gave on to the quad—that was the way to escape. He tore down the Sixth Form passage.

Behind him, sounded the pursuing footsteps of Hacker.

Breathless, gasping, the fat Owl barged into the lobby. He barged right across it to the door. He hoped that he had time to unlock it and get out, before the clutching hand behind grasped him.

With amazement he saw that the door, which should have been closed and locked, stood wide open.

Glimmering starlight from without showed its outline. But before he had time to think he crashed. Unseen figures were in front of him.

Who they were, and what on earth they were doing there, Billy Bunter had not the faintest, remotest idea. All he knew was that he crashed into two or

three fellows, and rolled over from the shock. In a dazed and dizzy state he rolled out into the quad through the open doorway, squeaking.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Where Is Mauly?

"O H, gad!" gasped Lord Maul-everer.

"Who—" gasped Harry Wharton.

"What—" stuttered Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Bunter was surprised by that unexpected meeting. But he was not so surprised as the three night-raiders of the Remove.

Up to that moment all had gone well. Lord Mauleverer, Harry Wharton and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, had reached the door of the Sixth Form lobby. Hobson of the Shell had undertaken to leave it unlocked for them, and Hobby had contrived to do so. It opened to Maul-everer's hand, and the three juniors stepped in.

In the darkness, inside, they stopped to listen, before proceeding further. Some sort of sound seemed to be audible in the stillness of the sleeping House. It was necessary to be cautious on such a risky expedition, and they listened, to ascertain whether anybody was up. Then Bunter happened—with surprising and startling suddenness.

Lord Mauleverer got the chief benefit of Bunter's charge. He went over headlong, with every ounce of breath knocked out of him. Harry Wharton staggered to the right, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh to the left. Bunter rolled out into the quad, and scrambled up, spluttering.

Before the three juniors could begin to guess what was happening, there was a rush of footsteps from the dark passage into the dark lobby. Horace Hacker had arrived.

Wharton and Hurree Singh glimpsed a shadowy figure and dodged. Hacker glimpsed them, but he did not see Maul-everer sprawling breathless on the floor. He trod on Mauleverer, and came down with a bump on his gasping lordship.

Instantly he clutched. A few minutes ago he had clutched Carne of the Sixth in mistake for Bunter. Now he clutched Mauleverer. In the dark all cats are grey, and Hacker could see nothing.

Unaware that Bunter had been hiding in the House, Hacker had no doubt that the fat Owl was one of a raiding party. So he was not surprised to glimpse other figures in the gloom. He fancied that he had Bunter—but he could see that there were others.

"Carne!" he shouted. "Carne! Hurry! They are here! Carne!"

"Oh, my esteemed hat!" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Hacker!" panted Wharton. "Cut!"

It was Hacker, and they had no doubt that Carne was at hand, and probably other prefects. Evidently that raid was a frost, and prompt retreat was indicated. Wharton and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh jumped out of the open doorway.

"Mauly!" called out Wharton.

Mauleverer, crunched under Hacker, in Hacker's grip, gurgled. Neither of his comrades would have dreamed of deserting him; they were not going without Mauly, if there had been a hundred Hackers on the spot. But they could not see in the dark, and were quite unaware that Mauleverer was sprawling

breathless under the sprawling Hacker, with a grip of steel on him.

As they paused outside the doorway, they spotted a figure running ahead of them. It was only a glimpse in the dark, but it was enough.

Knowing nothing of Bunter's presence on the spot, they supposed that it was Mauleverer.

"Come on!" panted Harry. "Put it on, Mauly!"

Who had run into them in the dark the juniors had no idea, unless it was Carne of the Sixth. They certainly were not thinking of Billy Bunter.

That running figure ahead of them in the dark quad, was enough. Three had come, and three were running. Wharton and Hurree Singh took it for granted that the fellow ahead was Mauleverer, who had got out first. And that figure was heading at top speed for the school shop across the quad.

It was, of course, Bunter—and he was heading for the rebel stronghold as his last and only refuge.

Wharton and Hurree Singh cut after him.

In the dark the three lost sight of one another. Harry Wharton was the first to reach the school shop, panting and breathless.

He grasped the rope hanging from the window. Bob Cherry looked out from above. Half a dozen other fellows stared down.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" called Bob. "You're back early!"

"Hacker was up!" panted Wharton. "We hardly got clear! Hacker and Carne—they must have been watching for us—we had to cut—"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came panting up.

"Here's Inky!" said Peter Todd, from the window. "Better come up—Mauly will want the rope when he gets here and he may be in a hurry, old beans, if he's got Hacker after him."

Wharton clambered up the knotted rope, and after him the Nabob of Bhanipur. They joined the fellows inside, waiting and watching for Lord Mauleverer. That Mauleverer had got away with them they had not the slightest doubt, and they expected to see him every moment. But he did not arrive.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter had discovered that his wild adventures that night were not at an end. Bunter had started the race ahead of the other two, but having bumped into a tree, rolled over, scrambled up, and taken the wrong direction when he re-started after the interval, Bunter lost ground. He was barging about blindly in the dark, when a sudden grip fell on his fat shoulder, and he gave a squeal of terror.

"Owl! Leggo! It wasn't me! I say— Oh crikey! I—I say—"

"Shut up, you fat fool!"

"Oh! Is that you, Smithy?" gasped Bunter.

He blinked at the Bounder, in the deep gloom. Herbert Vernon-Smith peered at him.

"What's up?" snapped Smithy.

"Eh? Hacker was!" gasped Bunter. "The beast nearly got me! You see, I had to come down from the box-room and look for some grub, and that beast Hacker, and that other beast Carne— Oh lor'!"

"Hacker was up, was he?"

"Yes, and Carne, and—"

"Where's Mauleverer?"

"Eh? How should I know?"

"You fat idiot!" snapped Vernon-Smith. "There were three of them, and Wharton and Inky got away—I saw
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them cutting off. Did Mauly get away?"

"Blessed if I know! I never saw him, or anybody else! I ran into somebody—I don't know who!" gasped Bunter. "I say, leggo, Smithy—Hacker may be after me. I tell you he nearly got me—"

Billy Bunter jerked his fat shoulder free, and barged off again, this time in the right direction.

Herbert Vernon-Smith remained where he was, a sour grin on his face.

The Remove raid had been a ghastly frost and it looked to Smithy as if one of the raiders had failed to get away. And that one, if he was right, was Lord Mauleverer, who had ordered him to be batted, and given him three hours of "punny" in the coal-cellar.

The Bounder laughed.

He made a movement to follow Bunter home, the sour grin still on his face. But he paused—hesitated, and changed his direction, and cut away towards the House.

At the school shop, a dozen fellows were watching anxiously from the window, in expectation of seeing Lord Mauleverer. There was a general exclamation of relief, when a panting figure came gasping up in the gloom.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Here he is!"

"Oh crikey! I say, you fellows!" came a breathless squeak from below.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "That's not Mauly! Bunter!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, lemme in!" squeaked Bunter. "I say, Hacker's after me, I say, I've come back to join up, I say, help! Owl! Rescue! Wow!"

"That blithering owl!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "Where the dickens is Mauly? Have you seen Mauly, Bunter?"

"Ooogh! No! I say, let me in, I say, you fellows—"

"You can climb up the rope, you burbling bandersnatch, if you like!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

"Eh? Where is it?" gasped the fat Owl.

"Just under your nose, you fathead!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter grasped the rope and clambered. In his fat and terrified imagination, the dark quad behind him swarmed with Hackers, with glinting eyes and brandished canes.

Climbing was not Billy Bunter's long suit. He had too much avoirdupois to lift. But he negotiated the rope, gasping and gurgling and guggling in terror of being grabbed by a fat ankle as he climbed.

His fat face and glimmering spectacles appeared over the window-sill at last.

"I—I say, you fellows, help me in!" gurgled Bunter. "Get hold, and pull me in, quick! Yow! Don't get hold of my ears, you silly idiots, leggo my hair, you beasts—groooogh—led go by dose—owl! Yow! Yow! Owl! Ooooooh!"

Grasped in many places, the fat Owl was hauled in. He rolled on the floor and spluttered for breath.

"Owl! Beasts! Grabbing a fellow's ears—wow! Dragging a fellow's hair out by the—ooogh!—roots. Beasts! Owl!"

Billy Bunter spluttered unheeded. Harry Wharton & Co. watched from the window anxiously for Mauleverer. How and why Bunter had turned up at that moment they neither knew nor cared. Their thoughts were concentrated on Mauly.

"Sure he got clear?" asked Bob uneasily.

"Yes, he was ahead of us at first, but we missed him in the dark," answered Harry. "He's out in the quad somewhere!"

"Might have taken cover if they're after him!" said Frank Nugent. "I wish he'd turn up."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I say, what about grub?"

"Nothing about grub! Shut up!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm fearfully hungry! Faminished! I say—"

"Brekker in the morning, if you're still here!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "Now shut up!"

"If you think I can wait till brekker, when I'm frightfully hungry now—"

howled Bunter.

"Kick him!"

"Beast! Owl! Stop it! Rotter!"

Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, and, like Iser in the poem, he rolled rapidly, the pressing problem of provender still unsolved. And so far from realising how serious the matter was, when Billy Bunter was hungry, Harry Wharton & Co. forgot his fat existence, as they watched the shadowy quad anxiously for Lord Mauleverer.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Held By The Enemy!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH grinned—a sardonic grin.

He was standing in the dark, by the window of the Sixth Form lobby. Within, the light was now on, and Smithy could see into the interior.

The door had been shut again, and locked, and Lord Mauleverer, as the Bounder could see now, was on the wrong side of it. Mauleverer was standing up, gasping for breath, his face crimson, and his collar torn, his neck-tie was over one shoulder, and his hair like a mop. Usually spick and span, clean and neat as a new pin, Mauly did not look his own serene self just now.

Mr. Hacker's grip was on his shoulder. Carne of the Sixth had arrived at last in response to Hacker's repeated hoots, and he had switched on the light, and shut and locked the door. One of the Removites was a prisoner, and as soon as the light was on, Mr. Hacker saw that it was not Bunter, as he had supposed, but a much more valuable capture.

The ringleader of the Greyfriars strike, the chief offender, as Mr. Hacker regarded him, was in his hands. Hacker's long, thin fingers almost dug into Mauleverer's shoulder in the tenacity of his grip. He was not going to take any risk of that prisoner escaping.

"The others seem to be gone, sir!" said Carne. He spoke rather sulkily. He was a little apprehensive of what might be the result of the outspoken opinion of Hacker, which he had involuntarily uttered while his head was being smacked. Also his head rather ached from the smacking.

"That matters little, Carne." Hacker's tone was almost genial. "This boy, Mauleverer, is the worst of all, the most reckless and insolent of all offenders. I am very glad he has fallen into my hands. Mauleverer!"

"Yass, sir!" said Mauly. He was recovering his calmness. "Would you mind lettin' go my shoulder, sir? Your fingers are rather bony—"



Vernon-Smith stood transfixed, staring at Hacker, who was lashing at Mauleverer with all the strength of his arm. Next moment the Bounder rushed forward, and his clenched fist took the tyrant Head full in the face. Bliff! "Ooooooogh!" gasped Hacker, toppling backwards.

"What?"

"Bit like being nipped by a lobster, sir, if you don't mind my mentionin' it!" said his lordship.

Hacker's eyes gleamed at him. He did not release his lordship's shoulder. He did not relax that steely grip for a moment.

"This insolence will make matters no better for you, Mauleverer!" he snapped acidly. "You are the ring-leader in this rebellion! You are the worst of all. It was you began the whole thing. You are most of all to blame."

"Not at all, sir!" said Mauleverer cheerfully. "A stay-in strike was my idea certainly, but, of course, I expected you to see sense before the thing went as far as all this. Your own fault entirely, sir! You're to blame."

The Bounder, peering in from the dark outside, caught the words spoken in the lobby, and he grinned, rather less sardonically than before. Mauly was a prisoner in the enemy's hands, but his spirit evidently was unsubdued.

There was nothing insolent in his manner. But he was quiet and self-possessed, and not in the least perturbed or dismayed by the position he found himself in. As Hacker did not release him, Mauly proceeded to smooth his ruffled hair, and put his collar and tie straight, still with that vice-like grip on his shoulder.

Hacker's eyes were glinting at his placid lordship.

"I understand, Mauleverer, that you have been elected leader by those rebellious young rascals, though Wharton is captain of the Form!" he said.

"Yaas, sir."

"You are under sentence of expulsion, Mauleverer! Nothing will induce me to rescind that sentence."

"I fancy the Head will when he comes back, sir!" said Mauleverer. "I'm chancin' it, anyhow!"

Hacker compressed his lips hard.

"You will be gone from Greyfriars long before Dr. Locke returns!" he said, with bitter emphasis. "You will be locked in the punishment-room to-night, Mauleverer, and sent home in the morning."

"Carry on, sir!" said Mauleverer resignedly. "You've got the trumps at the present moment."

"It was my intention, Mauleverer, to inflict a severe flogging before sending you away from the school."

"Then I hope you've changed your mind, sir!" said Mauleverer amiably. "I admit that I don't like the idea."

"I shall excuse you that punishment, Mauleverer, on one condition, and one condition only!" said Mr Hacker grimly.

"Cough it up, sir!" said Mauleverer encouragingly.

"As you are the leader of those young rebels, you doubtless have some influence over them!" said Mr. Hacker. "You will use that influence, Mauleverer, to induce them to return to their duty. The present state of affairs must come to an end at once, and if you give me your assistance, I shall deal with you as leniently as possible. I shall take you to the building in which they have so impudently barricaded themselves and you will call upon them to admit me."

Lord Mauleverer gazed at him without replying.

"As an added inducement to them to cease this riot, you may explain that you will be severely caned if they do not consent, and that your punishment will be repeated, with more and more severity so long as their defiance continues!" went on Mr. Hacker.

Mauly still looked at him thoughtfully, as if considering. Carne of the Sixth gave him a sidelong glance.

Hacker's face was set in an expression of cold and unrelenting harshness. Lord Mauleverer he regarded as the chief cause of all the trouble that had happened during his brief headmastership. His feeling towards Mauly was one of the bitterest dislike. His expression now was absolutely ruthless. Mauleverer was in his hands, and Mauleverer was going to pay scot-and-lot for the whole Remove unless and until they gave in. That was Hacker's latest scheme, and he considered that it was a winner. With time pressing, and his own position at stake, he was not likely to err on the side of mercy.

"Answer me, boy!" snapped Mr. Hacker.

"Yaas, sir! So far as I can see the trouble with you is that you're no gentleman, sir!" said Mauleverer calmly.

"What?" gasped Mr. Hacker.

"I suppose," said Mauleverer reflectively, "that you fancy you're in the right in this shindy, and don't see that you're an obstinate, pig-headed ass. That's all right, so far. But may I point out to you, sir, that this sort of thing is outside the limit? I'm not at all sure that the fellows would do as I asked if I called on them to give in, but I'm jolly certain that I'm not going to ask them. You wouldn't even suggest it, sir, if you weren't a frightful cad, the very outside edge. What beats me is how a bounder like you ever wedged into Dr. Locke's staff."

Carne of the Sixth turned his face away so that Hacker should not see the grin on it. The Bounder, outside the little window, saw the grin, and he

grinned, too. As for Hacker, he glared speechlessly at the schoolboy earl.

"If you refuse, Mauleverer—"

"No 'if' about it, sir!" said Mauleverer cheerfully. "Take that as read!" Hacker's lips tightened.

"You may change your mind, Mauleverer, after you have received the punishment you so richly deserve!" he said venomously. "I shall have no mercy upon an insolent boy who has defied authority, and caused a riotous rebellion in the school. I shall deal with you, Mauleverer, with the utmost severity."

"You would!" said his lordship, with a nod.

"Come with me!" said Mr. Hacker grimly, and he led Mauleverer away, gripping his shoulder. "Come, you may extinguish the light, and then go to bed. I shall not require you any longer."

"Yes, sir!" muttered Carne.

Bully as he was, Arthur Carne felt sorry for Mauleverer as he was led away in Hacker's grip.

The light in the lobby was shut off. Vernon-Smith saw nothing more. He stood there in the dark, with knitted brows. But a few moments later, light glimmered from the window of Mr. Hacker's study. It was there, evidently, that he had taken Lord Mauleverer.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders. It was nothing to do with him, he told himself. That lackadaisical ass, Mauleverer, had had him batted and locked in the coal-cellar! All day long, his chief desire had been to punch Mauleverer's face. He had followed the raiders that night, with a half-formed idea in his mind of playing some trick on them, and "dishing" the raid, as a knock back at Mauleverer. The raid had been dished without any assistance from him, and Mauleverer was a prisoner, with a painful prospect before him. Smithy shrugged his shoulders, and shrugged them again, with a sneering face. Let the fellow take what was coming to him!

Yet the Bounder did not leave the spot.

He paused a long minute, and another minute, standing where he was, with a sneering, scowling face. Then he stepped closer to the little lobby window, and jammed an elbow at the pane. There was a tinkle of falling glass. Hacker's study was too far away for him to hear a sound; and Carne was gone. Vernon-Smith reached through the gap and unfastened the catch of the little window.

He pushed up the sash, and clambered in.

The Bounder's bark was always worse than his bite. He sneered, and he scowled; but he groped away in the dark in the direction of Mr. Hacker's study.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER:

Just Like Smithy!

LORD MAULEVERER stood facing Mr. Hacker. He rubbed his shoulder gently where the bony fingers had gripped it like a vice.

Mr. Hacker stood with his back to the door, eyeing him. His face was set as hard as iron. It did not even occur to Hacker's narrow mind that there was anything tyrannical or cruel in the line he was now taking—that it proved, beyond cavil, that he was totally unfit for a headmaster's position. This boy defied him, and this boy was going to be subdued. That was all that Mr. Hacker thought or cared about.

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He swished a cane in his hand. He pointed to the table with the cane.

"Bend over that table, Mauleverer!" he said.

Lord Mauleverer did not move.

"Will you obey me?" hissed Hacker. "Hardly!"

Mr. Hacker smiled bitterly. Defiance could be lashed out of a defiant fellow with the cane; at least, Hacker believed that it could. He was going to try his hardest, at all events.

He strode straight at Mauleverer to grasp him.

Lord Mauleverer skipped back.

"Hold on a minute, sir!" he said coolly. "I hate the idea of punchin' a beak, but I warn you I shall resist if you touch me."

Mr. Hacker made no reply to that. He followed Mauleverer up and cornered him by the window. Then he grasped at him again.

Mauleverer was as good as his word. He knew that there was a terrific thrashing to come; and he was not taking it tamely.

He hit out with all his force, and his fist crashed on Hacker's chest. The master of the Shell gasped, and staggered for a moment. Then, with a flaming face, he fairly hurled himself on Mauleverer.

In such a struggle the junior had not the ghost of a chance. He struggled gamely, but he was grasped by the collar and dragged bodily to the table. On that table, his face was jammed down, with Hacker's grip-like iron on the back of his collar.

He wriggled, and struggled, and kicked; but he was pinned hard and fast. The cane rose and fell, the lashes coming down like rain.

Swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe!

With all his easy and leisurely ways, Mauleverer was made of sturdy stuff. He set his teeth, and uttered no sound.

Swipe, swipe, swipe! rang the cane.

Mr. Hacker had completely lost his temper and his self-control. That punch on the chest had given his bitter rage the finishing touch. He lashed and lashed with all the strength of his arm.

Mauleverer had made up his mind to endure what could not be helped in silence. But it was more than flesh and blood could bear in silence, and as the cane lashed and lashed gasping cries came from him.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

"Oh! Ow! You dashed ruffian, stop it!" panted Mauleverer, struggling frantically. "Are you mad, you old donkey? Oh gad! Ow!"

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

Had Mr. Hacker been cool, he would never have laid it on like that. But he was not cool—he was foaming with rage. He lashed and lashed with a ruthless hand, and Mauleverer wriggled and yelled.

Neither of them saw, or heard, the study door open. Mauleverer's face was squashed on the table; Hacker's eyes were fixed on the junior he was caning. The door opened silently, a few inches, and Herbert Vernon-Smith looked in.

He stared at what he saw.

He had expected to find Mauleverer going through it. But he had not expected this. He stared for a second in astonishment and horror. Hacker had not only lost his temper—he seemed almost to have lost his senses!

For a second the Bounder stood transfixed, staring. But only for a second. Then the door was thrown wide open, and Vernon-Smith rushed in.

He rushed right at Hacker! The master of the Shell heard him, and turned his head—just in time to receive

Vernon-Smith's clenched fists full in the face. Into that smashing onslaught, the Bounder put all his beef—and he had a good deal.

"Oooogh!" gasped Mr. Hacker.

He went over as if he had been shot. One of his eyes shut, and there was a spurt of crimson from his nose.

"Mauly!" panted the Bounder.

Lord Mauleverer, released from Hacker's grip, straightened up. He looked round at Smithy with a face as white as a sheet. He reeled, and leaned heavily on the table, gasping for breath.

"Smithy!" he breathed. "Thank goodness, old man! Oh gad!"

"The brute!" hissed the Bounder. "The rotten brute!" All Mauly's offences, real or imaginary, were forgotten by Smithy at that moment. The sight of the white-faced junior, leaning on the table, twisting with pain, was more than enough for Smithy. "The brute! To treat any chap like that! I'll—"

Mr. Hacker, dazed by the smashing fists in his face, was staggering to his feet dizzily.

The Bounder turned on him like a tiger. The cane was still in Hacker's hand, and the Bounder snatched it away, whirled it in the air, and brought it down with a crash on Hacker.

"Oh gad!" gasped Mauleverer.

There was a yell from Hacker. He bounded to his feet, but he jumped back as the Bounder lashed out fiercely with the cane again, barely saving his face from the lash. Vernon-Smith followed him up, lashing again and again with all his force, and Mr. Hacker found himself driven across the study, under a shower of furious blows.

"Vernon-Smith!" he panted. "You—you—"

"You rotten brute!" shouted the Bounder. "Take that—and that—and that! Oh, you rotter! Take that!"

Five or six lashes had landed on Hacker when he put up his arm, caught the cane on it, and rushed at the Bounder, and grasped him.

Vernon-Smith fought fiercely and savagely in his grip.

Lord Mauleverer, panting, turned to his aid. As Hacker bore the Bounder backwards, Mauleverer grasped him by the collar behind, and wrenched him over. Mr. Hacker stumbled sideways under that wrench, and bumped on his study carpet. The Bounder dragged himself loose.

"Kick the brute out!" he panted. "Go it, Mauly!"

"Yaas, old bean!" gasped Mauly.

Hacker, as he struggled up, was grasped by both the Removites. They crashed him over, and pitched him headlong out of the doorway. Neither of them, alone, would have had much chance; but together they were too strong for Hacker. He went into the doorway with a crash; and as he sprawled there, the Bounder kicked him till he rolled into the passage.

Smithy slammed the door, and turned the key. A voice was heard calling from somewhere—the uproar, at that late hour, had been heard. There was no time for the two juniors to lose. Hacker was shouting in the passage—shouting to Carne of the Sixth.

"The window!" breathed the Bounder.

Mauleverer nodded. They dragged the blinds aside, and pushed up the sash. Vernon-Smith slithered out actively; Mauleverer followed him, more slowly, gasping as he went. The Bounder gave him a hand down to the ground.

"Come on!" he breathed. There was a sound of a door opening. "If Hacker and Carne get us before we get clear—"

"Put it on!" gasped Mauly. They raced away in the dark. But Mauleverer dropped behind the Bounder. That terrific thrashing in Hacker's study had knocked his lordship out, and he stumbled as he ran.

Smithy cast a quick look back. He doubted whether any of the prefects except Carne would turn out at Hacker's call. But there was pursuit behind. A sharp voice was heard shouting:

"Follow me, Carne! Follow me at once!"

Vernon-Smith cut back to Mauleverer. He grasped him by the arm.

"Buck up!" he panted. "If they get us now—"

He dragged Mauleverer onward. Maul stumbled blindly.

"You cut off!" he gasped. "Don't let them get you—cut off—"

"Fathead!"

"I've not got a run in me—cut off, you ass—"

"Idiot!"

Vernon-Smith grasped his lordship, bodily, and dragged him off his feet. Smithy was a sinewy fellow, and Mauly was slim and a light-weight. The Bounder dragged him on his back like a sack of coal, and plunged onward with him.

"Oh gad!" gasped Mauleverer. "You ass—"

"Shut up!"

The Bounder plunged desperately on. Behind him, a light flashed in the darkness. A voice shouted:

"There they are!"

Hurrying feet awoke the echoes. Herbert Vernon-Smith made a desperate effort and reached the school shop, panting and stumbling under his burden. He reeled against the building, and Mauleverer slipped from his back.

"Get on that rope!" snarled the Bounder. He shoved the knotted rope into Mauleverer's hands and turned with blazing eyes and clenched fists to face the pursuers as they came speeding up.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Remove to the Rescue!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry.

He leaned over the window-sill, staring down.

Mauleverer was hanging on to the knotted rope. But he was too spent to climb; he hung there, panting. A flashing light came from the shadowy quad, and Mr. Hacker dashed up with Carne of the Sixth at his heels. The Bounder was between them and Mauleverer, and they rushed on him together.

Bob plunged headlong through the window, grasped the rope, and shot down. Harry Wharton followed fast.

"Come on!" he panted, as he went.

A boot clumped on Lord Mauleverer's head, and he jumped out of the way. Bob Cherry landed, and leaped to the aid of the Bounder.

He needed aid. Carne of the Sixth had grasped him, and Smithy, though he fought fiercely, had little chance in the Sixth Form man's grip. Mr. Hacker was reaching at Mauleverer. Bob Cherry jumped at Carne and grabbed him; Harry Wharton charged at Hacker and sent him staggering. A few moments more, and Nugent,

Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh were slithering down the rope, one after another, and piling in. After them came Toddy and Squiff, Tom Brown and Ogilvy, and five or six more fellows.

Carne, for the moment, had had the upper hand—but as the Removites piled on him, he let go the Bounder and backed away. A rush of the juniors

overwhelmed him, and he went over in the quadrangle.

"Boot him!" panted Vernon-Smith. Carne picked himself up, and ran. He had had more than enough. Heedless of Hacker's calling voice, he vanished into the shadows.

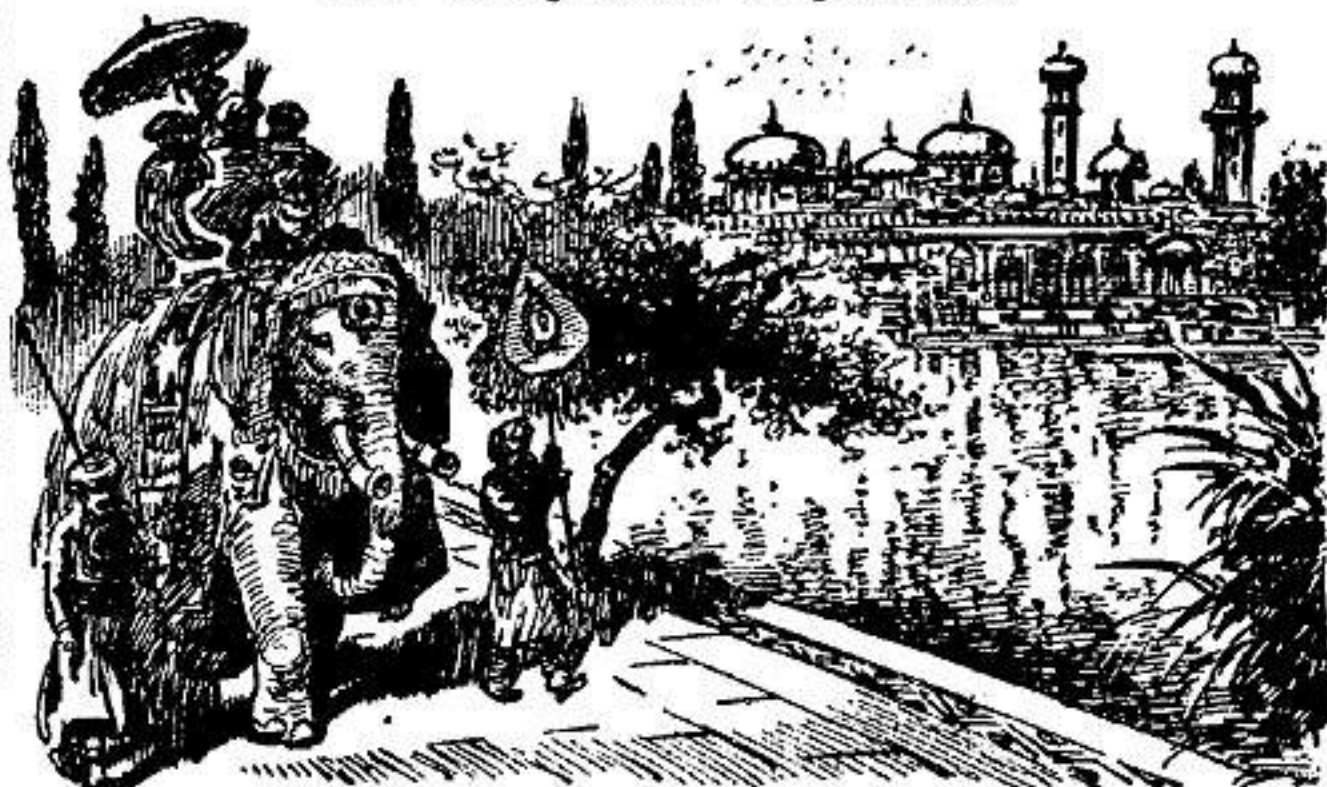
Hacker had a cane in his hand. He lashed right and left at the shadowy
(Continued on next page.)

The STATELY HOMES of GREYFRIARS

THE PALACE OF BHANIPUR

By

The Greyfriars Rhymester



At Greyfriars School, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh is nothing more nor less than a common or garden Removite. But in India, he's the Prince and Ruler of Bhanipur.

(1)

The spicy breezes, coral strand,
And jungles wild and famous,
Of India's green and sunny land
In this week's issue claim us.
Where elephants and motor-cars
And bullock-ekkas mingle,
And pedlars tramp the gay bazaars
With jars and pots a-jingle.

(3)

Out in the open, so it's said,
Whene'er the sun shines nicely,
You'll see it toast a piece of bread
In half a tick precisely!
It toasted Inky years ago,
He's now "done brown" completely,
A pleasant, dusky brown, you know,
Which suits his fizzog neatly!

(5)

Sometimes his Highness and his court
Will go out tiger hunting,
And then you'll hear a hefty snort
(His elephant is grunting!).
Upon this beefy blighter's back
In state he's always mounted,
And you should hear his rifle crack!
A deadly shot he's counted.

(7)

When Inky's dressed in robes of state,
Of gorgeous green and yellow,
We couldn't hail that potentate
As "Inky" or "old fellow"!
The Head, and Mr. Queleh, as well,
Would hardly feel in clover
If they were then obliged to tell
His Highness to bend over!

(2)

The widespread state of Bhanipur
Is beautiful and wealthy,
And Inky says, you may be sure,
The air is very healthy
And he should know, as I admit,
For he's the prince and ruler,
But all the same, I think that it
Could be a trifle cooler.

(4)

Beside a lake his palace stands,
Among the crystal fountains,
Not far from spreading jungle-lands
And mighty snow-capped mountains.
You see its dome from far and near,
Like golden toffee apples,
While little bells ring soft and clear
From hidden shrines and chapels.

(6)

The tiger always hopes he'll miss!
Says he, in tiger lingo:
"I know of healthier spots than this!
I'll visit them, by jingo!"
So off goes Mr. Stripes to keep
Appointments very pressing,
Till Inky sends him off to sleep—
Which I should call a blessing!

(8)

At Greyfriars all this kind of thing
Is hardly worth the mention;
To think of Inky as a king
Is past our comprehension.
We know that he's a ripping sort,
And that is all we worry!
So here's to him and all his court—
His Majesty King Hurree!

Next week: TODDY OF BLOOMSBURY.

figures that surrounded him in the gloom.

"Carne!" he shouted. "Where are you, Carne? Call the other prefects! Do you hear me, Carne?"

If Arthur Carne had heard him, he would have studied the ancient gladiator, and heeded not. Carne was heading at a run for the House, and when he reached it, he bolted in, and headed for his study. What Carne of the Sixth wanted was to steer clear of the Greyfriars strikers, and go to bed! And that was what he did.

Mr. Hacker was left to it.

Boiling with rage, the master of the Shell lashed round him with the cane, still grasping Lord Mauleverer by the shoulder. He was feeling rather like a tiger in peril of losing his prey.

Having overtaken the fugitives, Hacker had not counted on the rebels swarming to the rescue. Really, he might have expected it, but he had not. Now he did not look like recapturing his prisoner.

The juniors jumped back from the lashing cane. But one of them, Monty Newland, had brought a mop down with him. He charged at Mr. Hacker with the mop, and caught the master of the Shell full in the middle of his features with it. Mr. Hacker gave a spluttering gasp, and went over backwards.

"Good man!" yelled Bob Cherry.

Mr. Hacker sat up, dizzily. That mop had seen service, and it was wet, and far from clean. Hacker spluttered and choked.

"Have another, sir?" said Newland, and he made another lunge, catching the master of the Shell under the chin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrrrggh!" spluttered Mr. Hacker.

He scrambled to his feet, and backed away. He gave a glare round for Carne, but Carne had long vanished. He backed farther away, Monty Newland following him up, thrusting with the mop.

"Collar him!" shouted the Bounder. "Collar Hacker! We've got him now! Duck him in the fountain!"

"Good egg!"

"Bag him!"

"Snaffle him!"

Mr. Hacker backed away more rapidly—more and more rapidly. There was a rush of the Removites after him. Mr. Hacker's retreat accelerated, till it became a flight.

He disappeared into the night, panting.

"After him!" yelled the excited Bounder.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We don't want to run into the prefects. Hold on, Smithy!"

Across the quad, a wide-open doorway could be seen, with light streaming out, and half a dozen figures showing in the light.

Hacker's voice could be heard shouting to them. He was on the worst of terms with the prefects, but they were not likely to refuse him their aid. The Removites crowded back to the shop.

"Get in, you men!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

And the Greyfriars strikers clambered up the knotted rope, one after another, and in at the window. The light had been turned on, and it streamed from the window over the quad. All the juniors were safe inside when Mr. Hacker reappeared—with five or six half-dressed prefects after him. Bob Cherry waved his hand from the window.

"Come on, Hacker!" he called out.

"There is a rope!" Hacker pointed with his cane. "Loder, ascend by that!"

rope—follow him, Walker—and you, Gwynne—"

"I'm not an acrobat, sir!" said Gwynne of the Sixth.

"I order you—"

"Dear me!" said Gwynne. And he turned and walked back to the House.

The other prefects exchanged glances and walked after him. They had come to Hacker's assistance, but they were not going to enter into a combat with the Greyfriars strikers—especially as the attempt would have been a hopeless one.

"Why don't you come up, Hacker?" jeered the Bounder. "Why don't you give them a lead, old bean?"

"Waiting for you, Hacker!" grinned Johnny Bull.

But Hacker didn't! He disappeared again, after the prefects. Rope-climbing, with the enemy waiting for him at the top of the rope, did not seem to appeal to Horace Hacker.

"Our win!" said Bob. "But that jolly old raid seems to have been a frost. But why didn't you come back with the other chaps, Mauly?"

"Hacker got me!" gasped Mauly. "Ow! I've had a whopping—wow! I can tell you that Hacker laid it on! He got me in the lobby—wow!"

"But we saw you cutting off, when we cleared!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You were ahead of us!"

"Wish I had been!" said his lordship, with a painful wriggle. "Hacker was sprawling on my face when you fellows got away. Ow! I knew you thought I was clear, of course, or you wouldn't have gone, but I wasn't—wow!"

"But we saw—" said Harry blankly.

"The sawfulness was terrific."

"I say, you fellows"—Billy Bunter blinked into the room—"I say, I can't find anything to eat. You've got it all locked up, you beasts! I say, if you think you're going to starve me—"

"Bunter!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, a light breaking on his mind. "Was it that fat idiot we saw, and took him for Mauly in the dark? Did you get out of the lobby door when you came here, Bunter, you blithering owl?"

"Eh? Yes! I ran into somebody there, in the dark," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I don't know who it was—"

"I do!" granted Lord Mauleverer. "You winded me, you fat owl, and then Hacker got me."

"Did he?" said Bunter. "I say, though, what about some grub?"

"That terrific fat chump!" exclaimed Harroo Janset Ram Singh. "My esteemed Mauly, the thinkfulness was terrific that you had got away—"

"I know, old bean! But I hadn't! Hacker marched me off to his study and handed out a few with the cane." Mauleverer wriggled. "Wow! He hadn't finished when Smithy barged in."

"Smithy!" exclaimed Bob.

"Smithy got me away! Wow! Thanks, Smithy, old bean! You're nothin' like the rotter you make yourself out to be."

"Fathead!" said the Bounder.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Beast! I say—"

"Smithy got you away, did he?" said Bob Cherry. "I was going to biff you right and left when you got back, Smithy—"

"You can get on with it, if you like!" said the Bounder, shrugging his shoulders.

"Well, I don't like!" said Bob.

"I'll biff Bunter instead! That blithering idiot seems to have caused all the trouble, and a biffing will do him good! Come here and be biffed, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter did not come—he went!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Way In!

"PLEASE, sir—"

Mr. Hacker started.

And he stared.

It was the next morning.

The breakfast-bell was ringing, and the Greyfriars fellows—with the exception of the Remove—were going in to brekker.

Mr. Hacker was not thinking, at the moment, of breakfast. He was in the quad, his bitter glance fixed on the school shop in the distance.

That day, Mr. Hacker dreaded, might see the result of Sir Hilton Popper's intervention in the Greyfriars strike. Whether the governors of the school came along in a body, or whether the chairman came, or whether Dr. Locke was informed of the state of affairs, and returned before the date originally fixed, it was all the same to Hacker—it meant disaster.

Firmly as he was convinced that he was in the right all along the line, he felt, or, rather, knew, that nobody else would take the same view.

The blow was coming—and as likely as not it would fall that very day; and the Remove were still barricaded in the school shop, the strike going on stronger than ever, and Hacker was absolutely at the end of his resources.

He stood there, rubbing every now and then a damaged nose. There were very visible traces on his face of the Bounder's punches of the night before. His nose was red and swollen, and there was a dark shade round one eye. He presented an appearance such as headmasters seldom or never presented.

Then, suddenly, Fisher T. Fish dawned on him.

Fishy did not come very near. He addressed Hacker from a safe distance, watching him warily.

Fisher T. Fish had long been fed up with the strike. He had been waiting and watching for a chance to desert. During the excitement of the previous night he had found that chance. While the shindy was going on, the artful Fishy had removed a board from a back window, unseen, unheard, and unnoticed. He had dropped out of that window and replaced the board after him, leaving it to all appearance as it was before. After which, Fishy had hung about till morning, with an eye open for Mr. Hacker.

The astute Fishy knew that he had to be very wary with Hacker. If he could make his peace, well and good; but if it was going to be a record whopping, Fishy did not want any. In that case, he was going to bolt, before Hacker could grab him, and cut back to the strikers' stronghold. He had cunningly left himself a way in, if needed.

"Fish!" said Mr. Hacker.

He could hardly believe his eyes at the sudden and unexpected sight of a Remove fellow appearing from behind a tree.

"Yep!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I mean, yes, sir! I guess I never wanted to go on strike with them boneheads, sir—they grabbed me and ran me into it. I got away as soon as I could, sir."

Mr. Hacker's cold eyes gleamed at



Bolling with rage, Hacker lashed out right and left, and the schoolboy strikers jumped back from the lashing cane. Monty Newland, however, was armed with a mop, and he charged at Hacker and caught the temporary headmaster in the middle of his features with it. "Good man!" yelled Bob Cherry, as Hacker gave a spluttering gasp and went over backwards.

him. Billy Bunter had told him the same story when he deserted. Bunter had been rewarded with the thrashing of his fat life. From Mr. Hacker's expression, it looked as if the same reward was coming to Fisher T. Fish.

Hacker had a cane under his arm. He slipped it down into his hand.

"Come here, Fish!" he said.

Fisher T. Fish did not come there. Fisher T. Fish knew a trick worth two of that. He backed away, instead of approaching.

Mr. Hacker stepped towards him. Fisher T. Fish backed again. Carefully he kept up the distance between himself and the temporary headmaster of Greyfriars.

"Mebbe you'll let a guy explain, sir!" pleaded Fishy, as he backed. "It's a sure cinch that I never wanted to jine in that doggoned strike, sir! I'll tell a man, I've tried to get away before, but they cinched me, and—"

"Stop!" said Mr. Hacker, advancing.

Fisher T. Fish did not stop. He hopped backward again.

"I guess I'm ready to toe the line, sir!" he pleaded. "I'm shouting out that I never had a hand in the game, sir! You let up on a guy, and I'll feed out of your hand, sir!"

Fishy watched more warily than ever. Fishy, in his deep artfulness, had guessed, reckoned, and calculated that Hacker, openly and obviously beaten by the strikers, would be glad of even a sign of surrender—glad to welcome back even one member of the rebel Form to obedience.

But he had not calculated on the narrow-minded obstinacy of an obtuse man who did not know how to make concessions, howsoever necessary.

All that Hacker saw was one of the rebellious young rascals at his mercy; and that young rascal was going to get

what Hacker was convinced they all deserved. Hacker advanced more rapidly on the retreating Fishy.

Fisher T. Fish accelerated backwards.

It was dawning on him that it was useless to talk sense to Hacker. He was more than glad that he had left himself a way of retreat open.

"But I say, sir, if you'd listen—" he expostulated.

Mr. Hacker made a rush.

Fisher T. Fish ceased to retreat crab-like. He turned and ran. That doggoned old bonthead, instead of welcoming a deserter, as any spry guy would have done, was going to take it out of Fishy—if he could! Not, however, if Fisher T. Fish could help it!

Fisher T. Fish scudded. After him rushed Hacker, with cane uplifted. Fishy's feet scarcely touched the ground as he flew.

But Hacker put on a burst of speed. There was a loud crack as his cane came down across Fishy's bony shoulders.

"Aw, wake snakes!" howled Fisher T. Fish in anguish.

"Now stop!" thundered Mr. Hacker.

Fisher T. Fish did not stop. He fairly bounded. Another swipe missed him by an inch. With Hacker at his heels, the American junior fled round the school shop building, heading for the back window by which he had left—and by which he wished, from the bottom of his transatlantic heart, that he never had left!

He put on a spurt and reached the window. A shove of his bony fist sent the loose board toppling from its place.

It crashed on the floor within. Fisher T. Fish did a nose-dive through the open space.

At the same moment, Hacker

reached him, with lifted cane. The cane came down like a flail on Fishy's trousers.

"Yowrrrooop!" howled Fishy, as he got it.

Whack, whack!

Twice again the lashing cane landed, and then Fisher T. Fish was through, tumbling headlong on the floor. He picked himself up and fled.

Mr. Hacker stopped, panting, and glared in.

Fisher T. Fish vanished up a passage, howling. Hacker's hard face had a gloating look. The way was open before him—at last, at long last, unexpectedly, like a sudden windfall, he had his chance of getting at the Greyfriars strikers! Hacker's eyes fairly danced!

He was going to drive the strikers out of the building with his cane, like a flock of sheep. In the first days of his headmastership he had caned the whole Form, and they had taken it like lambs. Hacker did not understand that it was that, and similar acts of harsh tyranny, that had caused the rebellion of the Remove, and that authority, once broken, was not easily mended.

Sure of himself, as he always was, Hacker saw the whole game in his hands now. He had only to get at the young rascals. Now he was able to get at them—and all was well.

Head and shoulders went Hacker through the window. He dropped on the floor inside. Fisher T. Fish, no doubt, had given the alarm, and in a few minutes the barricade would have been secured again. Hacker allowed the young rascals no time for that. He entered almost at the heels of the fleeing Fish.

Cane in hand, with a grim brow, he strode up the passage. It led into the kitchens of the building, where the

Greyfriars strikers were gathering for breakfast. Grim as a gorgon, Mr. Hacker strode in, under a sea of staring eyes.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

In the Lions' Den!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stared at Mr. Hacker.

He stared at them.

They had been sitting down to breakfast, when Fisher T. Fish suddenly came bolting in. Fishy scudded across the kitchen, and vanished by the other door. As Fisher T. Fish had not been missed yet, his sudden appearance startled the juniors. But they had no time to bother about Fishy. A few moments later, Hacker appeared, and all attention was concentrated on Hacker.

The juniors were all on their feet. Fishy had surprised them—Hacker astonished them. They blinked at him.

"I say, you fellows, look out!" gasped Billy Bunter.

A moment before, Billy Bunter had been grumbling dolorously over a meagre breakfast. At the sight of Hacker he forgot brekker. He jumped away, and vanished after Fishy. Skinner and Snoop moved off in the same direction. But nobody else did.

"Oh gad!" said Lord Mauleverer. Surprised as he was, his lordship did not forget his manners. He bowed politely to Mr. Hacker. "Good-morning, sir!"

Hacker's jaw squared, and his cold eyes glittered.

He was gloating. All at last, was well! If authoritative persons arrived at Greyfriars that day, they would not find the school in a state of riot and rebellion. They would find the Remove in a state of submission—reduced to that happy state by unsparing canings—and minus the seven members of the Form who were sacked. That was the happy prospect envisaged by Mr. Hacker.

"Now—" began Mr. Hacker grimly.

"How did that bony old bargee shove in?" asked Vernon-Smith. "Somebody must have let him in. A window—"

"Cut along that passage and see, Wharton!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Right-ho!"

"Stay where you are, Wharton!" thundered Mr. Hacker. "I am here to enforce my authority as headmaster of Greyfriars! Mauleverer!"

"Yaas," drawled Mauly.

"You, and the rest, will remove the barricade in the shop immediately. Open the door without delay!"

"That all, sir?" asked Mauleverer politely.

Some of the juniors laughed. Harry Wharton, heedless of Hacker, cut round him, and ran up the passage. He found the open window, and promptly replaced the missing plank, and the clang of a hammer told that he was nailing it there.

"Wharton!" shouted Mr. Hacker.

Bang, bang! answered the hammer in Wharton's hand. But there came no other answer from the captain of the Remove.

"Mauleverer!" thundered Mr. Hacker.

"Yaas, sir. Carry on! If you've dropped in to make terms, we're jolly glad to see you!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Don't shy that can at him, Newland, till we know what he wants. Put down that cushion, Smithy, please."

"I have told you that I am here to enforce my authority!" said Mr. Hacker, with unbending grimness. "All

of you will immediately proceed to the House. I shall give you five minutes—no more—then I shall cane every boy who remains in this building."

"Go it!" grinned the Bounder.

Evidently Hacker had learned nothing. He did not even understand that it was only Mauleverer's authority over the schoolboy strikers that prevented them from collaring him, where he stood, and up-ending him.

What had happened the previous night might have been a lesson to the tyrant of Greyfriars, had he been able to learn. But Mr. Hacker simply could not get it into his head that, face to face with the juniors, the cane in his hand, they would venture to disobey his commands, and dispute his authority. It was clear that he had not the slightest doubt that he was master of the situation.

"The seven members of this Form who have been expelled, will leave the school this morning!" went on Mr. Hacker. "Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Bull, Hurree Singh, Vernon-Smith, and you, Mauleverer. The rest will be flogged in Hall, in the presence of the whole school. I shall allow the matter to rest there, if there is no further disobedience. But I warn you that the slightest sign of rebellion, the most trifling disregard of my authority, will be visited with the most condign punishment."

"That the lot?" asked Mauleverer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Now, this instant—"

Mr. Hacker was interrupted.

Smithy's hand went up, with the cushion in it. This time, Lord Mauleverer did not say him nay. Hacker had asked for it—indeed, earnestly begged for it—and he had to have it. The cushion flew across the kitchen with deadly aim.

Hacker caught it, suddenly, with his chin. He sat down, with a startling bump.

"Good shot!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Pin him," drawled Mauleverer. "Do it gently, dear men. Don't punch the good man—just pin him!"

Mr. Hacker, staggering to his feet, was grasped by the arms by Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull. Vernon-Smith and Redwing grabbed his wrists. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh closed a dusky grip on his collar. The master of the Shell struggled and wrenched.

"Release me! Your punishment shall be more severe for this!" he roared.

"Dear old bean!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "Still dreamin' about punishin' fellows! It's rather time for him to wake up."

"Shall I pull his nose, and wake him up?" asked Ogilvy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you—" Hacker spluttered. "Take your hands off—release me! I will flog you, every boy here—every single member of the Form!"

"Dry up, old bean!" said the Bounder. "Can't you really understand that you're nobody in particular, you old ass? Do you think any fellow here cares a brass button for your gas?"

"Vernon-Smith! I—I will—"

"You'll shut up!" said Smithy. "Now, then, hold your tongue, Hacker!"

Mr. Hacker gazed at him, speechless. There was a roar of laughter from the Greyfriars strikers. The expression on Hacker's face made them howl.

"Now, what are we goin' to do with this cheeky ass?" asked Smithy. "Lock him in the coal-cellar, what?"

"If—if—if you dare!" gasped Mr. Hacker.

It was dawning on Hacker's narrow, obstinate mind that he was helpless in the hands of the Philistines.

So far from crumpling up at the terror of his glance, and the swish of his cane, the schoolboy strikers handled him as unceremoniously as they might have handled Carne of the Sixth. Much water had passed under the bridges since the day he had canded the whole Remove, and got away with it. He did not look like getting away with any such performance now.

"What about giving him six with his own cane?" asked Bolsover major.

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

"I say, you fellows"—Billy Bunter blinked in through the doorway, noted that Hacker was safely held, and rolled in—"I say, I'm jolly well going to kick him. He whopped me fearfully the other day. You fellows hold him while I kick him. Don't let him loose—that's important!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Kick Bunter, somebody!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Yaroooh!"

"Now, Mr. Hacker," went on his lordship, "you've butted in while we're at breakfast. Sit down and keep quiet, please, and we'll deal with you when we've finished. Give him a chair, you fellows!"

Frank Nugent placed a chair. Mr. Hacker was led to it, vainly resisting. He refused to sit down, till the Bounder coolly kicked his legs from under him, and then he sat on the chair quite suddenly. He sat and glared.

"You needn't hold him," said Mauleverer. "Take that frying-pan, Cherry. Give him a lick with it if he shifts. Keep quiet, Hacker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Immediately he was released, Mr. Hacker bounded up from the chair like a jack-in-the-box. As he bounded, Bob Cherry swiped with the frying-pan. There was a loud bang, and a louder yell from Hacker.

He made a desperate jump back towards the passage. But a dozen fellows grasped him, and jammed him on the chair again, crimson and panting.

"Sit there, old bean," said Lord Mauleverer gently. "You're under orders here, Hacker. You're a whale on having orders obeyed, you know, so you can't grumble. Just keep quiet."

"I—I—I will—" spluttered Hacker. "Ring off!"

Mr. Hacker was released. But he did not jump up again. Bob Cherry had the frying-pan ready for another lick, and Hacker understood by this time that escape was impossible. He sat and panted with rage.

Harry Wharton came back, having nailed up the window.

"All serene," he said. "Fishy must have opened that window to get out—though he seems to have changed his mind and come back. Where is Fishy?"

"About somewhere!" said Lord Mauleverer. "We'll deal with Fishy after brekker. Don't scowl like that, Mr. Hacker. You take a fellow's appetite away."

Mr. Hacker scowled still more than derously. But with the juniors all round him, and the frying-pan ready, he did not venture to move. He wondered dizzily how this was going to end.

He had not beaten the Remove. They had beaten him. He had not marched them off, in a state of submission, to the House; they were keeping him a prisoner in their stronghold. It was quite a painful reversal of the programme, for Horace Hacker.

In a state of fury to which no words could have done justice, Mr. Hacker sat and scowled while the cheeky Removites finished their breakfast.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Washing-Up!

"SIX!"
"I guess—"
"With the frying-pan—"
"I calculate—"
"And lay them on hard!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Say, bo," gasped Fisher T. Fish, "I guess I wasn't deserting! I'll say I only went out to scout! I'll tell a man—"

"And six extra for telling crammers!" said Lord Mauleverer placidly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Aw, wako snakes!" groaned Fisher T. Fish.

After breakfast, it was time to deal with Fisher T. Fish. He was dealt with promptly, efficaciously, and drastically. With his bony arms pinned, he was marched to the kitchen table, and bent over the same.

He wriggled and squirmed with apprehension, as Bob Cherry wielded the frying-pan. His apprehension was well-founded. The frying-pan came down with a terrific whop!

Fishy's yell rang far and wide.

Bang, bang, bang! came the frying-pan, and howl after howl rang from Fisher T. Fish.

Mr. Hacker made a movement—perhaps hoping to get away while the attention of the rebels was occupied with Fishy. But Bob had an eye on him. As Hacker moved, he ceased to bang Fisher T. Fish, and swept the frying-pan round. Mr. Hacker gave a frantic yell and sat down again.

After that he sat it out!

A dozen times the frying-pan landed on Fisher T. Fish's trousers, and Fishy wriggled and roared. Then he was allowed to wriggle away. It was nothing like what Mr. Hacker would have given him, if that was any comfort; but it was rather severe, and the miserable Fish guessed that it was sure fierce, and then some! It was the bee's knee, if not the elephant's side-whiskers! But Fisher T. Fish wriggled and groaned unheeded. Attention was now concentrated on Hacker.

The Bounder's idea was to lock him in the coal-cellar, and keep him there. Other fellows fancied giving him six with his own cane. Others, again, rather favoured decorating him with soot, or holding his head under a tap. But it was for Mauleverer to decide. His lordship regarded Hacker with a thoughtful brow.

"Well, what's the verdict, Mauly?"

asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"We've got him!" said Mauleverer thoughtfully. "He's walked in and asked for it, and now we've got him. We've given him every chance of doing the sensible thing, but he appears to be a born fool—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No good expecting him to see sense," went on Mauleverer. "As we've got him, we'll keep him. Keep him out of mischief. The school will be better without a headmaster than with a beak like Hacker. We're sticking to him!"

"The stickfulness will be terrific!"

"The coal-cellar—" said Smithy.

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Look at him!" he said. "Would any of you fellows, lookin' at him, call him ornamental?"

"Hardly!"

"Well, if a man can't be ornamental, he ought to be useful. We'll make him useful!"

"Eh? How?"

Lord Mauleverer waved a hand to the kitchen table, laden with the debris of breakfast.

"Look at all that washin' up!" he said. "Nobody here likes washin' up! You fellows will admit that I've taken my share with the rest; but it's no good my makin' out that I like it—I don't! Perhaps Hacker does! Anyhow, he's goin' to do it!"

There was a shriek of laughter. The idea of employing the captured headmaster as a washer-up took the Greyfriars strikers by storm. They yelled.

"Oh, good egg!" gasped the Bounder.

"Go it, Hacker! Make yourself useful! You'll admit yourself that you're not ornamental—especially with that nose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep an eye on him," said Lord Mauleverer, as Hacker glared at him in speechless fury. "He looks to me as if he doesn't like his job, though he's come here and asked for it."

"You—you—you insolent young knave—" panted Mr. Hacker.

"Go it, Hacker!"

"You're under orders here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wash-up, old bean!" chortled the Bounder. "And don't break any of the crocks, or you'll get whopped!"

"Yas," assented Lord Mauleverer.

"He looks sulky, and if he starts breakin' things, he will have to learn to keep his temper. It's his rotten temper that's caused all this trouble and given us the tag of goin' on strike! Keep your temper, Hacker! It's for your own good, you know!"

"If—if you think for one moment—" gasped Mr. Hacker.

"I don't think—I know!" said Mauleverer gently. "Set him to work, dear men! Bang him with that frying pan till he gets going, Cherry!"

"You bet!" said Bob.

Mr. Hacker stood in the midst of a grinning, chortling crowd. Whatever he had expected at the hands of the rebels, he had not expected this! But this was what he was going to get!

Bang! came the frying-pan, and Hacker jumped. He turned on Bob Cherry with clawing hands, and five or six fellows collared him at once. He was dragged to the table and bent over it, as Fisher T. Fish had been.

"If—if you dare—" shrieked Mr. Hacker, wriggling madly.

"Are you goin' to obey orders, Hacker?"

"No! Never! I—"

Bang!

The frying-pan came down, hard and heavy.

"Ow! Ow! Stop it!" raved Mr. Hacker. "You young villains—you young demons! I will flog you! I will expel the whole Form! I will—"

Bang!

"Yarooooooy!"

Bang!

"Oh! Ow! Stop! I—I—I will—will wash up!" shrieked Hacker. "I—I will—will certainly do so! Wow!"

"Oh, have a few more!" said Bob.

"I'll keep this up as long as you like."

"You young villain, stoppit! Oh Wow!"

"Give him a chance!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Pile in, Hacker, and make yourself useful! Whop him again if he breaks anythin', Cherry!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Bob.

Mr. Hacker was released. He stood panting, crimson.

For a moment he seemed about to run amok. But Bob Cherry flourished the frying-pan, and he changed his mind in quite a hurry. Grimacing faces surrounded him; dozens of hands were ready to grasp him. Hacker had to wash-up, or fare worse! He decided to wash-up!

Johnny Bull filled an immense basin with hot water. Nugent handed over a washing-mop. Peter Todd fetched other necessities. Hacker was provided with all he needed for his task.

With an expression on his face that was absolutely indescribable, the temporary headmaster of Greyfriars—now washer-up for the Remove—set to work.

Lord Mauleverer strolled away, his hands in his pockets, and left him to it. But most of the fellows remained on the spot, greatly entertained by the spectacle of a headmaster employed as a washer-up.

There was an enormous pile of crockery to be worked through. Washing-up was the least attractive of the tasks that fell to the schoolboy strikers, fending for themselves. Every fellow was glad to leave it to Hacker.

(Continued on next page.)

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With his sleeves rolled up and fury in his face, Hacker washed and washed, and dried and dried, labouring through his almost interminable task.

His impulse was to hurl the crocks right and left among the grinning juniors. But he did not venture to do so. He had had more than enough of the frying-pan. There was a morning's work ahead of Horace Hacker, and he had no choice but to get down to it. Plenty of fellows remained on the spot to see that he did not slack!

Lord Mauleverer, with a cheery smile on his face, gazed from the windows of the room over the shop into the quad. Shell fellows could be seen in the distance. Other Forms had gone into the Form-rooms; but the Shell were waiting for their Form-master.

Hobson cut across to the school shop, at last, and called up:

"Seen anything of Hacker?"

"Yaas," answered Lord Mauleverer, with a nod.

"Can't find him anywhere," said Hobson. "Glad to miss him, if you come to that—but where the dickens is he?"

"We've got him here!"

"You've got him?" yelled Hobby.

"Yaas!"

"What is he doing, then?" gasped Hobby.

"Washin' up!"

"W-w-w-washing-up!" stammered Hobby. "Oh, my hat! Oh, my only summer bonnet! Oh, my Aunt Jemima! Ha, ha, ha!"

Hobson of the Shell rushed away with the news. A little later Wingate of the Sixth came along, and stared up at Mauleverer's smiling face.

"Is it true that you've got Hacker there?" he demanded.

"Yaas."

"You'd better let him out, then."

"Thanks for your advice, old bean!" said Mauleverer amiably. "But we're keepin' Hacker. He's not a good-tempered man, or nice company; but he's

frightfully useful at washin' up, and we're goin' to give him a job. We're keepin' him on as washer-up as long as this strike lasts."

"Oh!" gasped the Greyfriars captain.

He stared at Mauleverer, laughed, and walked away, laughing. That morning there was an almost incessant sound of laughter all over Greyfriars School. Even the beaks smiled. In fact, the only person at Greyfriars who did not laugh, or smile, or chuckle, or chortle that morning was Horace Hacker. Labouring through endless washing-up, Hacker seemed to be under-studying that ancient king who never smiled again.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Blow Falls!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"The Head!" shouted Bunter.

"What?"

There was a rush of the schoolboy strikers to the windows.

It was after dinner, and Billy Bunter was standing there, blinking out into the quad through his big spectacles. Bunter was reflecting upon a subject of the deepest import.

Dinner had been this—decidedly thin. Bunter had had hardly enough for one fellow, and he wanted enough for six, and a little over. Now that Hacker was a prisoner in the hands of the strikers, Bunter debated, in his fat mind, whether he should venture back to the House, and ample food supplies. It was tempting, though. On the other hand, Hacker might get away, and then, it was certain, Bunter's last state would be worse than his first.

It was quite a perplexing problem; and Bunter was giving it the deep and serious reflection it deserved, when a car rolled in at the gates. And as Billy Bunter's eyes and spectacles

spotted that car in the distance, he forgot even the food problem in his excitement, and yelled.

A silver-haired gentleman, with a rather pale face under his silk hat, sat in the car. Beside him sat a rather angular man with a grim brow and a square jaw.

The first was Dr. Locke, headmaster of Greyfriars; the second was Mr. Quelch, master of the Remove. And at that sudden, unexpected, and surprising sight, Bunter yelled, and the Removites rushed to the windows to look.

"The Head!" exclaimed Harry Wharton blankly.

"The jolly old Head!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"And dear old Quelch!" grinned the Bounder.

"Tweedledee and Tweedledum both coming home together!" said Skinner.

"Oh, gad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"This is good!"

The car passed in the distance, the two gentlemen sitting in it in clear view. Both of them had been away ill, and both of them had been expected to stay away longer. Nobody had expected them back at Greyfriars so soon, and it was easy to see that, though they had evidently recovered from the flu, they were not yet restored to their usual health. The period of convalescence had been cut short—obviously on account of news they had received of the parlous state of affairs at the school.

Harry Wharton & Co. had had no doubt that the Governing Board would take the matter up without delay, now that they knew, from Sir Hilton Popper, what was going on. The only question was—what move would they make? This evidently was the move. Dr. Locke had been communicated with, and, as he had sufficiently recovered to return, here he was.

The car rolled on to the House, and halted. Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch were seen to alight. Wingate of the Sixth rushed out to greet them; Mr. Prout was only a moment later. They went into the House, Quelch casting a keen, grim glance in the direction of the school shop as he went. Clearly Quelch knew where his Form were, and what they were up to.

"I guess this puts paid to it," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"I say, you fellows, we shall have the Head down on us now," said Billy Bunter. "I say, don't you forget to tell him that I had nothing to do with it."

Lord Mauleverer glanced round.

"Smithy! Wharton!" he murmured.

"Yes, old bean!"

"Kick Fishy! Kick Bunter!"

"Yurrooop! I guess—Whoop!"

"Owl! Beast! Wow!"

"Now," said Lord Mauleverer reflectively, "I think we can depend on the Head to see justice done. That's what we've been striking for. Anyhow, the Head's the Head, and it would be frightfully bad form to check him. This strike is over, dear men."

The Bounder looked rather rebellious.

"We've got to get terms first," he said.

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Man can't back up against his headmaster," he said. "Awful bad form. Hacker's nobody, or rather less, but Dr. Locke's the Head."

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"Right!" said Harry Wharton, with a nod.

"The rightfulness is terrific."

"Suppose he backs up Hacker, and turfs us out?" demanded Vernon-Smith.

"He won't! But if he does, I shall toe the line, for one!" said Mauleverer.

"There are certain things that are not done, old bean, and checking the headmaster is one of them. When the Head says jump, we jump!"

"What about Hacker?" asked Bob.

"The Head will want to see him now he's back. He may be sort of surprised if he finds we've got him here washing-up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll let Hacker cut," said Lord Mauleverer. "There won't be any more washing-up now the strike's over. And I can't say I'm satisfied with Hacker, either. He's bad-tempered and sulky, and hardly worth his keep."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer went down the stairs, the other fellows following him. Mr. Hacker was in the kitchen.

He had finished washing-up after dinner. It had been a long and laborious task, and Hacker was quite tired. He was sitting down to rest in his shirtsleeves, damp and greasy. Nobody, looking at him, would have taken Horace Hacker for a headmaster, even a temporary one.

He gave the juniors a glare of bitter malevolence as they crowded in. All the pugnacity had been taken out of Hacker by hard work, and a liberal application of the frying-pan. But he was as bitter and acid as ever—in fact, more so. If looks could have slain, there would have been heavy casualties in the Greyfriars Remove.

"Get the door open, you men!" said Lord Mauleverer.

A dozen fellows began to drag away the barricade at the shop door.

Mr. Hacker gave a start, and his eyes gleamed. He knew nothing, so far, of the Head's return, but he could see that there was a change. He rose quickly to his feet.

"We're letting you run, old bony bean," said the Bounder, with a grin. "No more washing-up for you, Hacker. Strike called off."

Mr. Hacker breathed hard. This had only one meaning to him—that the rebels had taken fright, and were going to toe the line. In which case, submission came too late to save them from Hacker's unsparing wrath.

"So you have decided to return to your duty?" he said, in a grinding voice.

"Yaas."

"Very good!" said Mr. Hacker bitterly. "I am glad that you have, at least, common sense enough to know that this could not last. The seven boys whom I have expelled will leave to-day—"

"Eh?"

"The rest will be flogged, and with the greatest severity!" added Mr. Hacker.

The Removites stared at him. Then there was a roar:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Isn't he nice?" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "Isn't he a nice, kind, gentle, reasonable sort of man?"

"You old ass!" said the Bounder. "Think we'd call off the strike, if you were going to be top dog any longer? Kick him out!"

"If you dare——" roared Hacker.

"Oh, shut up, fathead!" said Smithy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door of the school shop was opened. Mr. Hacker was hustled to it by a dozen fellows, with a lunge

from two or three boots. He was, at all events, glad to get away.

Just as he was, untidy and greasy, in his shirtsleeves, Horace Hacker was pushed out at the door. He started for the House. A crowd of fellows in the quad stared at him and chortled.

"Here comes the washer-up!" roared Coker of the Fifth.

"He wants washing himself!" chortled Temple of the Fourth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why don't you wash yourself up, Hacker?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Hacker, with a crimson face, hurried into the House. Carne of the Sixth met him at the doorway. Carne stared at the startling sight of a master in his shirtsleeves, with a greasy and dirty face.

"Mr. Hacker!" gasped Carne.

"Carne, call the other prefects together at once! There is now an opportunity of overcoming those young rascals; for some reason they have removed the barricade, and——"

"If you please, sir——" gasped Carne.

"Lose no time!" snarled Hacker. "If any prefect refuses to give his aid, I shall expel him from the school on the spot! Tell them so, and——"

"But——"

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAMME

The stay-in strike series having come to an end this week, you fellows will be anxious to know what I have got in store for you in next week's MAGNET? Something good, as usual, you can rest assured on that!

Keen as mustard, convinced that he is the best footballer at Greyfriars, bar none, Horace Coker makes a final appeal to Wingate to give him a chance with the first eleven. Not wishing to make St. Jim's a present of the match, the Greyfriars skipper refuses Coker's request. Fed up to the back teeth with injustice, the duffer of the Fifth takes the law into his own hands in somewhat drastic fashion. What actually happens is told in Frank Richards' best style in:

"COKER THE KIDNAPPER!"

next Saturday's grand yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars. Having sampled this treat, you will be able to enjoy the splendid edition of "The Greyfriars Herald" with its amusing and amazing yarn of St. Sam's, and the topical articles written by the Greyfriars juniors themselves. Of course, I mustn't leave out the Greyfriars Rhymester's contribution.

Looking forward to next Saturday's issue of the MAGNET? I'll bet you are!

YOUR EDITOR.

"You are wasting time, Carne! Do you desire to be expelled yourself?" roared Hacker.

"The Head——"

"Silence! I tell you——"

"The Head wants to see you!" howled Carne.

Hacker jumped.

"The Head! What do you mean? What——"

"The Head's come back, and he's in his study, with Mr. Quelch and Prout and Wingate, and he wants you——"

Mr. Hacker stood as if petrified. For a long moment he stared blankly at Carne, and then he almost tottered away in the direction of the Head's study.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

The Head Sits In Judgment!

DR. LOCKE sat at his table in his study, with a stern frown upon his face. Mr. Quelch stood beside the table; Mr. Prout stood in front of it; Wingate of the Sixth near the door.

First of all, the Head had asked to see Mr. Hacker; but Mr. Hacker was not immediately available, and Prout had lost no time. Prout was overjoyed by the Head's return. Everybody at Greyfriars was delighted to see him, but most of all, Prout. The Fifth Form master was talking. That was Prout's usual state. Now he was more voluble than ever.

"I need hardly say, sir, how glad, how relieved, I am to see you here, sir!" boomed Prout. "Even, sir, if I go, I am glad, sir, very happy, to greet you once more, sir, before I leave this scholastic establishment, where I have passed so many years, happy years—perhaps I may say useful years——"

"You are not leaving us, Mr. Prout?" exclaimed the Head.

"I trust not, sir—I trust not!" boomed Prout. "I trust in the justice, sir, and the good sense of a chief whom I respect, sir! But Hacker—Mr. Hacker, sir, has taken it upon himself to dismiss me from my post, sir——"

"Goodness gracious!"

"I have refused, sir, to take heed of that—that—that man's impudence!" said Prout. "The matter, sir, is in your hands! I leave it there with confidence."

"You may do so without hesitation, Mr. Prout," said Dr. Locke. "Nothing would induce me to part with so trusted and honoured a member of my staff!"

"Sir," said Prout, his fruity voice trembling with emotion—"sir, I hoped, I trusted, to hear such words from you! That man, sir——"

"Quite so, Mr. Prout," said the Head soothingly. "Mr. Hacker has evidently made a hasty and foolish mistake, of which I beg you, sir, to take no further notice."

"I thank you, sir!" said Prout, with dignity. "I thank you, Dr. Locke! May I mention, sir, that Hacker has expelled a boy of my Form—the boy Coker—quite unjustifiably, sir, and that—in your absence—I advised the boy to remain till your return——"

"Bless my soul! If it is your opinion, as his Form-master, that Coker should remain, Mr. Prout, the sentence will certainly be cancelled."

"I thank you once more, sir! No doubt you will take the same view with regard to Wingate of the Sixth Form," said Mr. Prout, with a wave of a plump hand towards the captain of Greyfriars.

The Head gave a start. Mr. Quelch jumped.

"You do not mean——" exclaimed both together.

"Speak for yourself, Wingate," said Mr. Prout.

"I wished to speak to you, sir," said Wingate, looking at the Head. "Mr. Hacker has expelled me, but, in the circumstances, I thought that I was justified in remaining until you could inquire into the matter——"

"I need no inquiry, Wingate! The sentence is, of course, cancelled!" said Dr. Locke. "I am quite at a loss to imagine Mr. Hacker's motives."

"Thank you, sir!"

Wingate left the study, with a smile on his face. Mr. Prout followed him, beaming.

Dr. Locke looked at Mr. Quelch as the door closed after them.

"What can this possibly mean,"

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Quelch?" asked the Head. "Your Form, it appears, is in a state of rebellion. Obviously, this would not have been the case, but for your absence from the school—"

"Scarcely, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

"Unfortunately, I was too ill to be consulted when the governors appointed Mr. Hacker to carry on. I should not have approved. Hacker is a well-meaning man, but quite unsuitable for such authority. But I should never have dreamed of such a state of affairs as this. Dismissing Mr. Prout! Expelling Wingate! The thing is absurd! I am told that seven Remove boys have been sentenced to expulsion!"

"Absurd!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I quite agree. But—"

There was a tap at the door.

Mr. Hacker entered.

The two masters gazed at him. In his present state, they hardly recognised the master of the Shell.

"Who—" began the Head.

"Is—is that Mr. Hacker?" exclaimed Quelch.

"Mr. Hacker! Good gracious!" ejaculated Dr. Locke. "What—what is—"

"I—I have just been told of your return, sir!" gasped Mr. Hacker. "I—I regret to present myself in such a state! I have been held a prisoner, sir—"

"Eh?"

"In the hands of the rebellious boys of Mr. Quelch's Form!" said Hacker, with a bitter look at the frowning, contemptuous face of the Remove master. "From the state you see me in, sir, you can judge of the conduct of those mutinous and lawless young reprobates, sir!"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, gazing at him.

His look indicated that he was judging Mr. Hacker rather than the rebellious Removites.

"Now that you are here, sir, I trust—I have no doubt—that you will support the measures I have taken?" said Mr. Hacker.

"Indeed!" said the Head dryly.

"I have expelled certain boys in the Remove—Mauleverer, Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Bull, Hurree Singh—"

Mr. Hacker was interrupted.

"The best boys in my Form!" said Mr. Quelch in a grinding voice. "Dr. Locke, this is merely ridiculous!"

"Sir!" hooted Mr. Hacker.

"Sir!" hooted back Mr. Quelch.

"Allow me!" said the Head. "Mr. Quelch, I leave you, as master of the Remove, to deal with this matter entirely according to your own judgment."

"Thank you, sir!" said Mr. Quelch, with a glare at Hacker.

"Dr. Locke—" exclaimed Hacker, with a glare at Quelch.

"Perhaps you will proceed immediately, Mr. Quelch, to bring this deplorable state of affairs to an end," said the Head.

"Immediately, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. He left the study.

"Sir—" began Mr. Hacker.

Dr. Locke held up a hand.

"Pray listen to me, Mr. Hacker! I

have no doubt that your intentions were good, but the state of the school speaks for itself. I shall not blame you for failing in a task beyond your powers, but—"

"Sir!" gasped Hacker. He was still quite unaware that the task he had taken on was beyond his powers, neither did he consider himself a failure.

"But," said Dr. Locke, "this deplorable state of affairs must be brought to an end at once. In the circumstances, Mr. Hacker, I shall give you leave for the remainder of this term—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"A holiday, sir, will be beneficial after your—ahem!—somewhat exciting experiences during my absence," said the Head. "Please take a holiday for the remainder of the term, Mr. Hacker. Next term, I trust, all this will be forgotten. If you could make it convenient to leave for your holiday to-day, sir, I should take it as a favour."

Mr. Hacker gave his chief a long, long look; then, without another word, he left the headmaster's study. A few hours later Mr. Hacker left Greyfriars School on a long leave—which, perhaps, he did not enjoy very much.

SHOULD SCHOOLBOYS WEAR SANDALS?

See this week's amazing and amusing story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, in the

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THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Strike Called Off!

"I SAY, you fellows, here comes Quelch!"

"Same old gargoyle," remarked the Bounder.

"Shut up, Smithy!"

Smithy gave a grunt. Most of the Remove fellows were glad to see things getting back to normal, but the Bounder enjoyed a shindy, and would have been glad to carry on. Perhaps he even nourished a faint hope that Quelch might repeat Hacker's mistakes and give cause for continued rebellion.

Certainly Mr. Quelch's look was not promising as he came across to the strikers' stronghold.

Fortunately for the Remove, Quelch took the view that Hacker was chiefly, if not wholly, to blame. Still, he was a whale on discipline, and the battered state of the school shop could hardly please his stern eye—or the sight of his Form in a state of revolt.

But the strikers were not in their stronghold now. Lord Mauleverer had given his last orders as commander-in-

chief, and they had been obeyed, even the reckless Bounder lining up with the rest.

Barricades were down, and the Remove were gathered in a body outside the building, waiting for the arrival of their Form-master. This indicated submission to proper authority, and no doubt had a placating effect on Quelch. His grim face relaxed a little as he came up.

At a sign from Lord Mauleverer the Remove "capped" their Form-master; like one man the juniors saluted him respectfully.

"Glad to see you back, sir!" said Lord Mauleverer politely. "I hope we see you well, sir."

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"Hem! I am sufficiently recovered to take charge of my Form again, at all events," he said. "You will now go to the House. You will attend class as usual this afternoon."

"Some of us are sacked, sir," said Vernon-Smith.

Mr. Quelch glanced at him.

"All expulsions are cancelled," he said. "I shall look into this matter more at my leisure and ascertain what measures may be required to be taken. In the meantime, I expect the most implicit obedience from my Form."

"Certainly, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

"If anybody's goin' to be flogged—" began the Bounder.

"Shut up, Smithy!"

"Silence!" said Mr. Quelch icily. "I will excuse you, Vernon-Smith, for once, but another word of impertinence, and I shall cane you. Now return to the House."

The Bounder's eyes gleamed for a moment, but Tom Redwing caught at his chum's arm and drew him away. The Remove walked off to the House, followed by Mr. Quelch.

The "stay-in" strike at Greyfriars School was over.

That afternoon the Remove were in class, as of old under the eye of their old Form-master.

They heard nothing more of the "measures" that might have been taken. With rare tact, Mr. Quelch allowed the matter to slide into oblivion. Nobody was punished; punishment was not even mentioned. And if any fiery spirits in the Remove felt disposed to carry on the war with their old enemy Hacker there was nothing doing, for Mr. Hacker was gone for the rest of the term. So matters fell back into their normal groove, which was satisfactory to everybody—even to the Bounder, when he reflected on it.

THE END.

(Look out for next Saturday's MAGNET, and another topping yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "Coker the Kidnapper!" By Frank Richards. It's the type of story you're bound to enjoy. See that you order your copy EARLY!)



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GAOLBIRD and PLOTTER!

There's a Laugh a Line in This Week's Instalment of Dicky Nugent's Hilarious Serial: "THE ST. SAM'S TREZZURE HUNT!"

THE HEAD'S ESCAPE!

"Good-morning, Sorter! Any letters for us this morning, old been?" Jack Jolly asked that cheery question as he and his pals met Sorter, the postman, at the gates.

Nearly a week had passed since the sensational arrest of Doctor Birchmell for purloining a policeman's helmet.

The Head of St. Sam's was still under lock and key.

Frankie efforts had been made by the other masters to bail him out; but still he remained in deurance vile.

The perlice said that there was still a lot of evidence to unearth. It was a very grave matter, they said, and setting the prisoner free was something which they could not undertake.

So Doctor Birchmell had to mourn for his lost liberty in a dark and dismal prison cell, while the St. Sam's fellows did their best to conker their overwhelming grief.

That they manmaged to do that fairly well, could be seen by the smiling chivvies of the heroes of the Fourth, as they stopped Sorter.

"No, there's nothink doing, I'm afeard, yung jents," said Sorter, as he glanced through his letters. "You're all unlucky."

"Hard cheddar, boys! Anything for Doctor Birchmell, Sorter?" asked an eager voice behind them, and Mr. Lickham came galloping up.

The old postman inlited his letters again. "Yessir. This 'ere one, sir."

"Ah! So Sir Gouty Greybeard duzzent know the Head's in prison!" grinned the master of the Fourth, eggssaminig the spidery scrawl on the envelope.

"This undoubtedly contains Sir Gouty's instructions regarding the second round of the trezzure hunt, boys. If the Head is still absent to-morrow, I propose to take the liberty of opening it myself and reading it out in Hall."

"Good weeze, sir!"

"And 'ere's another letter for you, sir," went on Sorter, projoocing a grimy envelope. "Three pence to pay, sir. It's unstamped."

The Fourth Form master handed over the munny for the stamps—and then gave a stamp of annoyance when he reckermised the hand-writing.

"Who do you think it's from, boys?" he growled. "It's from the Head!"

"Oh, crums!"

"Read it out, sir."

Mr. Lickham opened the envelope and read out from the grimy piece of paper he brought to light.

"Dere Lickham,—Just a few lines, hooping this finds you as it leaves me at present. I am fed-up to the teeth—and awfully hungry. Please send me a home-made cake—immediatly, if possibul.—Yores sincerely,

ALFRED BIRCHMELL.

"P.S.—Mind you put a good, strong file inside the cake."

"Oh, grate pip!" Jack Jolly & Co. fairly gasped, as Mr. Lickham read out the P.S. to the Head's letter. As for Mr. Lickham himself, he gave a violent, spasmodick start, while his eyes nearly bulged out of their sockets.

"M-m-my hat!" he said. "The Head wants a file!"

"Sounds like it, sir, duzzent it?" chuckled Frank Fearless.

"Now, I wonder what he wants a file for?" mowssed Mr. Lickham.

Jack Jolly grinned. "Perhaps he wants to trim his finger-nails, sir. You never can tell!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Lickham frowned. "I wish you wouldn't laff, boys! I don't think there's anything very funny about it. Personally, I have a strong suspicion that the Head wants that file to saw through the bars of his cell and break out of prison."

"Go hon, sir!"

"Say what you will, boys, I can't help suspecting it," said Mr. Lickham, with a serious shake of his head. "Well, well! We can only wait and see what happens."

"Are you going to send him the cake, then, sir?" asked Bright.

The master of the Fourth nodded. "I shall have to obey

the Head's orders Bright. But mind, boys, munn's the word!"

"Oh, rather!"

"Rely on us, sir!"



The GREY FRIARS HERALD

No. 229.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

February 27th, 1937.



TAP-DANCING TABOO MAKES US MAD!

Declares BOB CHERRY

Tap-dancing has been banned in the School House! If there was one thing needed to arouse the righteous wrath of the Lower School, this was it. For several terms now, quite a number of chaps have been practising tap-dancing in their studies. All that is finished. Either they do it in the gym, or they don't do it at all!

At the indignation meeting in the Rag the other evening, speaker after speaker stood up and told the crowd just what they thought of it.

Vernon-Smith, in the best speech of the evening, said that every Removite should be allowed to practise tap-dancing as much as he liked. (Cheers!) It was a jolly healthy pastime. It exercised the muscles. (Cheers and admiring cries of "Phew!") To abolish tap-dancing was an attack on their ancient liberties, and they weren't jolly well going to put up with it.

What, asked Smithy, was the excuse for this despotick act? Surely, no feeble excuse could have been invented! The excuse was that the thumping of tap-dancers in Remove studies was always bringing down the ceilings of the rooms on the floor below! Well, what if it did! What did a few paltry ceilings matter, in comparison with the health and fitness and happiness of the Remove? (Loud cheers.)

At the close of the meeting, just to show how harmless tap-dancing really was, Bolsover major gave an exhibition of it. The show was a complete vindication of the Remove's policy. After five minutes' tap-dancing the only damage he did was to wreck the platform and smash up a couple of chairs and bring down a chandelier in the room underneath the Rag!

Surely the powers that be can't go on complaining now!

COKER'S PHOTOS ARE UNIQUE!

By DICK RAKE

Coker has developed into a photographer!

Not one of your common-or-garden photographers that yank out a vest-pocket camera at picnics or bathing-parties. Oh dear no! Coker has ambitions to be a Society specialist. His camera looks like a giant accordion, and it's on a stand that looks like the trunk of an oak-tree. And when he takes a photo, he has to dive under a big black blanket and fiddle about with the works for five minutes.

Last week, as a great favour, he took a group of the Remove. We served out masks to Bunter and Skinner and Fisher T. Fish, and then sat round on chairs. Coker went through a performance that reminded me of a witch-doctor doing his ritual business. After about half an hour, he took us.

I've just seen the result. It's great! Coker says so, anyway. He says the light and shade effects are simply marvellous!

There's only one drawback to it. You can't tell which is the right way to hold it up!

JUROR WHO OBJECTED! FUNNY SCENE IN COURT

When the jurors' names were called at the Woodshed Sessions there was one absentee—Mr. Micky Desmond. Constables were promptly sent out to find him and bring him into court.

There was a stir in court when P.-c. Brown returned with the missing juror, struggling furiously.

Judge Wharton: "Where did you find him, officer?"

P.-c. Brown: "Please, your Honour, he was in the tuckshop, eating a tart."

Judge Wharton: "If he goes on like this, he'll find himself in a jam! (Laughter.) Have you any explanation to offer, Desmond?"

Desmond: "Shure, an' it's because Oi'm a conscientious objector, that's phwat it is! Oi object to capital punishment, an' Oi object to making the bhoys run the gauntlet, an' Oi object to putting 'em in prison, an' Oi object to bumping 'em, an' Oi object to tossing 'em in the blanket, an'—"

Judge Wharton: "Objection overruled! Bung him in the jury-box, officer!"

After a fierce struggle, the objecting jurymen was forcibly deposited in the jury-box. The judge then ordered the first case to be called.

Clerk of the Court, Frank Nugent, hastily dived into his pocket and brought out his list of cases to be tried. He looked at it. Then he jumped.

Judge Wharton (impatiently): "Hurry up, Frank! I want to put in a bit of footer practice before tea."

Clerk of the Court: "Ahem! Your Honour, I'm afraid the Court is in a bit of a dilemma. You see, the first case happens to be a charge of disorderly behaviour, and—"

Judge Wharton: "Well, that's all right, isn't it? Who's the giddy prisoner?"

Clerk of the Court: "That's just the point. The prisoner is the man you've just ordered to take his place in the jury—Micky Desmond!"

And now you understand why the Woodshed Sessions this week ended up before they had begun in wild howls of laughter and a Rugger scrum!

Unless they get a better system of picking juries, we can see Remove justice turning into a giddy farce before much longer!

the Head's orders Bright. But mind, boys, munn's the word!"

"Oh, rather!"

"Rely on us, sir!"

Mr. Lickham nodded and hurried off.

The next two or three hours were bizzy ones for Mr. Lickham of the Fourth. First he trotted off to the kitchen and asked the skool cook, Mrs. Buxon, to bake him a cake. Then he went along to the woodshed and nicked a strong file belonging to Fossil, the porter.

After that came the most delicate part of the job—sneaking into the kitchen when nobody was looking and putting the file into the cake mixture. In the end, he manmaged it; but it was a ticklish bizziness, and he breathed a grate sigh of releef when at last he returned to his study to await the finished cake.

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by one, they clattered to the floor.

"Like shelling peas, by Jove!" muttered the Head, as he vaulted through the winder.

A minnit later, he was galloping across the fields to St. Sam's!

DISGUISED A DONKEY!

"Jent wants to see you, sir."

Binding the page, made that annownce-ment, as he poked his head round Mr. Lickham's door, later in the day.

"What kind of a jent is he, Binding?" inquired Mr. Lickham.

"Which he looks like a forriner, sir—a blacky!"

"A blacky to see me?" Mr. Lickham stared at the page in utter amazement. "Why, I don't even know any blackies, Binding! However, you had better show him in."

Mr. Lickham handed over the letter, though he looked rather dew-bious about it as he did so.

As soon as he had the letter in his klutches, Doctor Birchmell made for the door.

"See you anyony-mously, Lickham!" he grinned. "If anyone wants to know who I am, tell 'em I'm an Indian prince named Hurree Wissle."

Then the Head hurried along to his own study. He steemed open the envelope of Sir Gouty's letter and eagerly read the wording on the scrap of paper inside it.

"St. SAM'S TREZZURE HUNT."

"ROUND TWO."

"One mark will be awarded to the first boy who brings back to St. Sam's a genuine live zebra."

"(Sined) GOUTY GREYBEARD, "Bart."

Doctor Birchmell's greenish eyes gleemed with eggssitement as he

read that criptick notiss. For a minnit or so he stood beside his desk, pondering deeply. Then, with a crafty chuckle, he sealed up the envelope again and toddled along to the Fourth Form passidge.

Serownger of the Fourth had the shock of his life when an ink-faced stranger stalked into his study. He began to give an instinctive yell of fear; but the Head silenced it by clapping a tarry hand over his mouth.

"Quiet, you silly yung idjut!" he hist. "It's me—Birchemall! Lissen, Serownger. I've broken out of jail especially to win the second round of the trezzure hunt for you."

Serownger's greedy little eye, brightened, as the Head released him.

"How are you going to do it, sir? We didn't do very well in the first round!"

"That was your fault!" snorted Doctor Birchmell. "This time, nothing can go wrong. I've found out what you have to discover, Serownger. It's a live zebra!"

"The likens it is!" eggssclaimed Serownger.

"And how do you think you're going to get hold of a zebra?"

Doctor Birchmell winked.

"Nothing could be easier, Serownger, to a man with branes. Just do what I tell you, and you'll win the round right enuff. Go to the field on the other side of the playing-fields, and get the donkey you will find grazing there. Bring him back to the skool stables and lock him up. Then go to a pot of black paint and a pot of white paint, and put them outside. Leave the rest to me—and I promises you there will be a zebra awaiting you as soon as the terms of round two are announced in the morning."

"Oh, crums!" gasped Serownger. "You're going to paint stripes on the donkey, sir? Ha, ha, ha!"

Serownger had hit on the truth! Within half-an-hour the Head was bizzily engaged in one

of the stables, painting stripes on a donkey. It was no easy task, for the donkey kept on kicking out with his hind legs. But evenhally the job was done.

After that, larfing cheerfully to himself, Doctor Birchmell went up into a loft and made himself comfortable for the nite on a ready-made bed of hay.

Serownger came back, leading an animal which looked eggssactly like a zebra. Amid terrifick eggssitement, he marched up to the Skool House steps, where Mr. Lickham greeted him with a cry of serprize.

"What! A zebra already, Serownger? Well, I'm blowed!"

"My win, sir—eh, what?" grinned Serownger.

And Mr. Lickham almost said "yes." But before he could do so, a very peku-liar thing happened.

Heavy spots of rain began to fall—and as they fell on the back of the "zebra," the cullers began to run! Streaks of white ran across the black stripes and streaks of black ran across the white ones.

There was a roar from the crowd.

"It's a frawd!"

"It's a donkey—not a zebra!"

"Bump him!"

The fiewrious crowd closed in on Serownger and fairly seragged him.

Meanwhile, Jack Jolly came galloping up on a real zebra which he had borrowed from a privit zoo near Muggleton.

"Jolly wins!" bawled Mr. Lickham above the din.

And as Doctor Birchmell sneaked away from the Skool House to seek a fresh hiding-place from the perlice, he nashed his false teeth at the thought that once more all his skeeming had come to naut!

(Another ripping instalment next week!)

IDEAL FOR YOUR STUDY.

"SAFETY LAST" OIL STOVE FOR SALE. Burns paraffin, petrol, sardine oil, hair oil or dripping. Explodes infrequently—never more than twice an hour. Gives out thick, greasy vapour guaranteed to keep out undesirable visitors. Owner will take 2ld. for quick sale. Honestly worth 3d.—Apply Robert Ogilvy, Study No. 3, Remove.

In dew corse, the skool assemblubled in Big Hall and heard all about the zebra. There was a wild rush for the gates, as the fellows tore away in search of a spessimen.

The Head larfed a gloating larf, as he observed Serownger darting off towards the skool stables.

"Go it, Serownger!" he muttered. "You'll win easily!"

In a few minnits,



NOT A SUXXESS!

Long before rising-bell on the following morning, Mr. Lickham was awakened by the sound of someone climbing in at his bed-room winder.

It was Doctor Birchmell, bringing back Sir Gouty's letter. He took the opportunity of sending Mr. Lickham skuttling downstairs in search of something for his brekker.

After he had had a jolly good feed and sent the Fourth Form master away on his daily dew-ties, the Head made himself comfortable in an armchair by the bed-room winder and waited.

His skeem for winning Sir Gouty's grate prize had gone wrong in the first round; but he felt that the second round really was going to be a winner.

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