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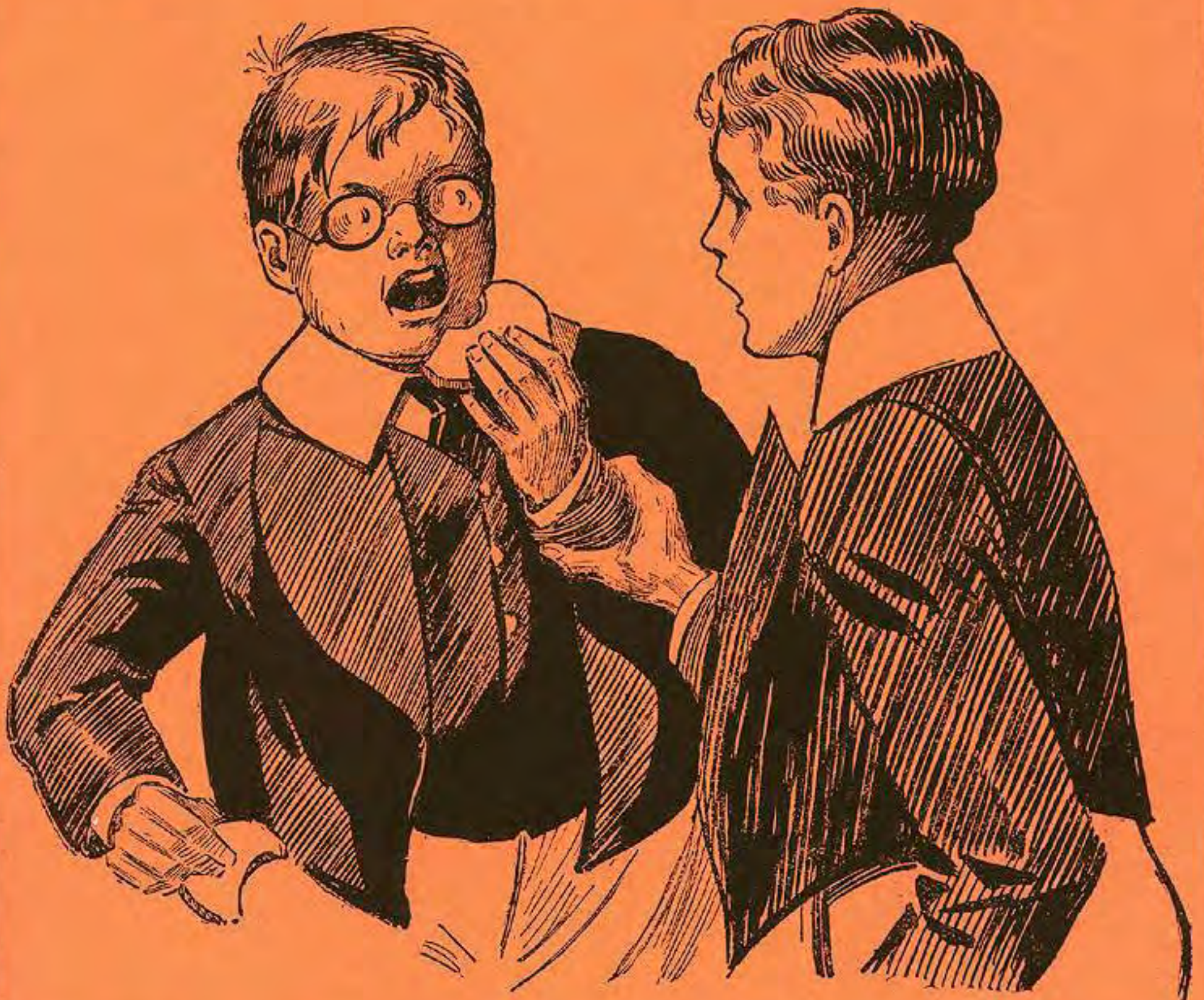
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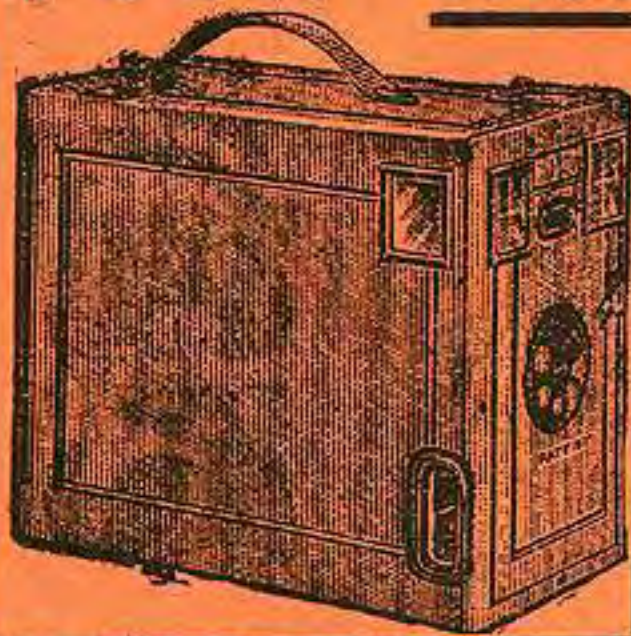
The
TRIUMPH OF THE REMOVE.

By
**FRANK
RICHARDS**



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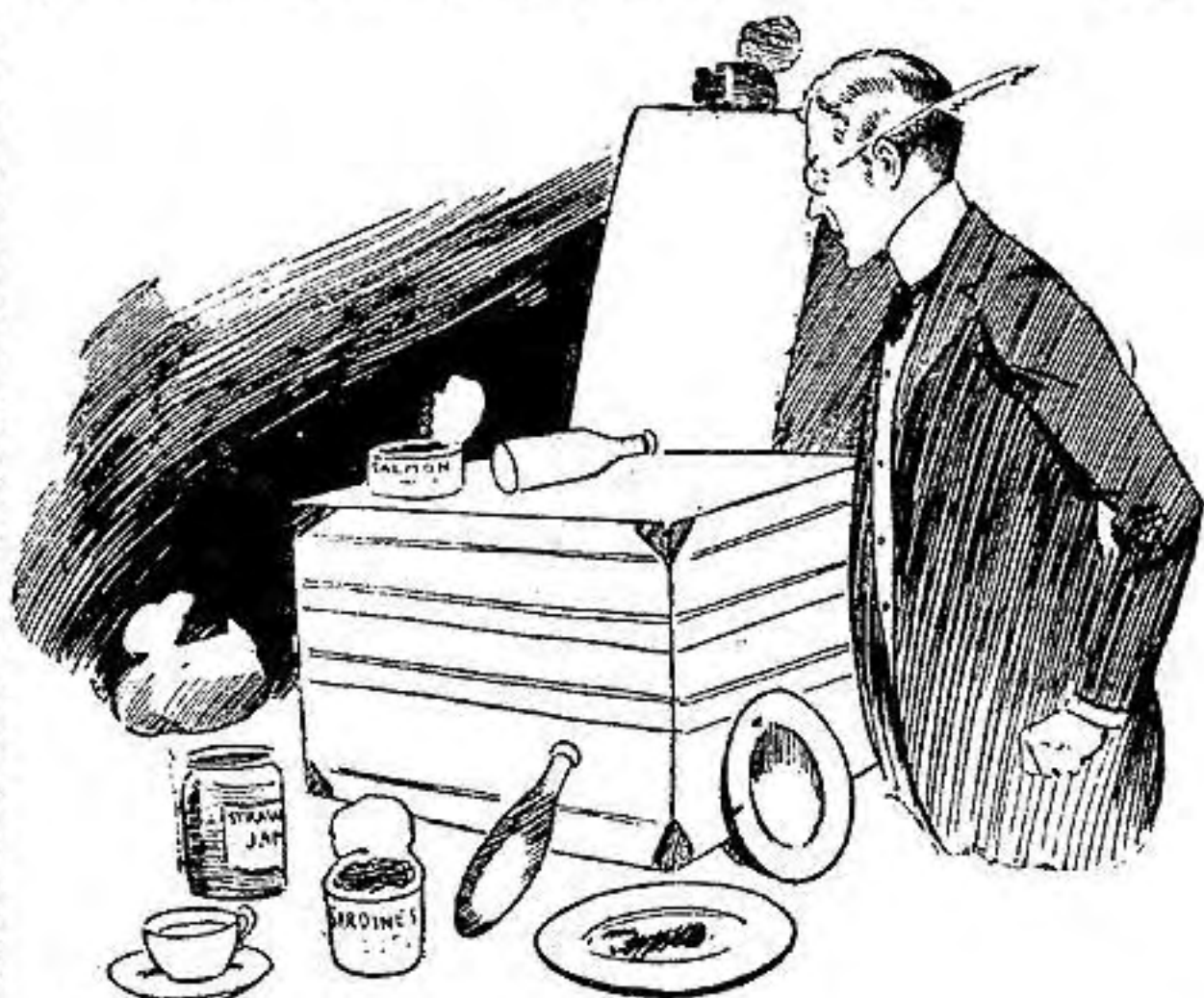
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THE TRIUMPH OF THE REMOVE.



A Grand Long,
Complete Tale of

GREYFRIARS COLLEGE.

BY

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Form Meeting.

"GENTLEMEN—"
"Hear, hear!"
"Gentlemen of the Remove—"
"Hear, hear!"
"Gentlemen of the Greyfriars Remove, I rise to address you upon this important occasion—"
"Hear, hear!"
"Upon this important occasion, which—"
"Bravo!"

The cheer that rang through the Remove-room at Greyfriars was deafening, and it was quite impossible for Harry Wharton to proceed.

It was a Form meeting, after school hours, in the Form-room, and every member of the Remove—the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars—was present, and the enthusiasm was immense.

Harry Wharton, the youthful captain of the Form, was on his feet, standing on a chair to address the meeting. His chums were grouped round him to loyally support him—Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Micky Desmond and Hazoldens were there supporting him,

too, and Billy Bunter stood with the group, though as he was eating a jam-tart he was unable to join in the cheering.

"Bravo!"
"Buck up, Wharton!"
Harry Wharton waited patiently. There was no chance for him to "buck up" till the enthusiasm had subsided, and the juniors were greatly excited. They had met together upon what Wharton correctly described as an important occasion, and they seemed bent upon letting the rest of Greyfriars know it.

"Gentlemen—"
"Hurrah!"
"If you will allow me to proceed—"
"Hear, hear!"
"Order!"
"Silence for the chair!"
"Go it, Wharton!"
"On the ball, old chap!"

The cheers died down at last, and there was a partial silence, and the young captain of the Greyfriars Remove proceeded.

"Gentlemen of the Greyfriars Remove, I rise to address you upon an important occasion. We shall get to business all the quicker if you don't interrupt."

"Hear, hear!"

"You all know the cause of this meeting. You all know the grievance we labour under, and the wrongs we have suffered—"

"Yes, rather!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The wrongfulness is great," said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head, "and the sufferfulness of the esteemed Remove has been terrific."

"We have now met together," said Harry Wharton, "to quietly discuss the matter, and decide upon a remedy."

"Bravo!"

"If this is quietly discussing the matter," murmured Nugent, "I only hope the chaps won't decide to make a row about it."

"You all know," pursued Harry Wharton, warming up to his subject, and growing more and more eloquent as he proceeded—"you all know what we have put up with at the hands of our present Form master. The late lamented Quelch—"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, Quelch isn't late lamented!" interrupted Bob Cherry. "He's not off the roll, you know. He's only ill."

"I know he is."

"Then what do you call him late lamented for?"

"Because he is late lamented as far as we are concerned," replied the orator. "Don't you be hypercritical, Bob Cherry. The late lamented Quelch was the revered and respected master of this great Form—"

"Hear, hear!"

"But an attack of illness caused him to retire for a time from the scenes of his labours and scholastic triumphs—"

"Good!"

"And in the interim—"

"In the what?"

"In the meantime a new master took his place to take charge temporarily of the Remove. No, we have no objection to a new master on principle, so long as he behaves himself—"

"Hear, hear!"

"But the new master, known among us as the Chesham ass, has not behaved himself. I put it to you, has he played up in a manner worthy of a master of this great Form?"

"No!" roared the Remove.

"Can he be considered to have played the game?"

"No!"

"Certainly not!" purred the nabob. "There has been a terrific lackfulness on his part of the honourable playfulness of the game."

"For the sake of the late lamented Quelch, we have been very kind to the new master," went on Harry Wharton. "Quelch asked us to be good, and, in my humble opinion, we have been very good."

"Good!" said the Removites.

"But it has had no effect upon the Chesham ass, except to encourage him in his ways. With all the respect due to a Form master, I must say that he is a chump!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And a silly ass!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And a shrieking idiot!"

"Bravo!"

"I don't want to run him down in any way, but I must say that more sensible chaps have been shut up in lunatic asylums—"

"Ha, ha!"

"And, without wishing to detract in any way, I am forced to state that the sooner he is put into Colney Hatch, the sooner he will get into his proper sphere."

"Hear, hear!"

"We have put up with his funny ways with exemplary—"

"Well, that's a good word!" murmured Hazeldene.

"With exemplary patience," went on Wharton, unheeding. "For the sake of the late lamented Quelch we have been very gentle and kind. Consider what we have put up with. He is a faddist of the faddists. If all the other faddists in the kingdom were to pool their fads, they wouldn't make up more than the Chesham ass has to himself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He has cut down our grub for the sake of our health—"

There was a general groan from the Remove; and for a moment Billy Bunter left off eating jam-tarts to join with all the force of his lungs in that deep groan of disapproval.

"He has started giving us morning baths at different temperatures, and every chap seems to get the temperature he likes least. I have to take a warm bath instead of a cold one, and Hazeldene has to take a cold one instead of a warm one. Bulstrode has to take a bath when he doesn't want to have one at all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We are ordered to wear nightcaps to keep our heads warm. We don't wear them, of course, but we have to put them on when we go to bed."

The Remove groaned again.

"Instead of a little grub at eleven o'clock, we have horrible tabloids served out to us that taste like burnt glue—"

Groans again.

"We have been ordered to take exercise with skipping-ropes in the Close, with the Upper Fourth cackling at us all the time, and calling us a girls' school—"

A deeper groan than ever!

"And now," pursued Harry Wharton, "the worm has turned."

"Hurrah!"

"As a great statesman once remarked, there is a limit to human endurance. Besides, the Remove has a reputation to keep up. We can't let the Upper Fourth go on cackling at us for ever. We have stuck it out, hoping that Quelch would return; but he doesn't seem to be coming back."

"He mayn't be back this week at all," said Nugent.

"Possibly not next," observed Bob Cherry.

"It is possible. I think the whole Form is agreed that we can't stand the Chesham ass for another week."

"Never!"

"The only question is, how are we to muzzle him?" went on Wharton. "We can't revolt, and make a general row on the subject. I don't mean because some of us might be flogged or expelled. I think we're all game to risk that—"

"Hear, hear!"

"But we don't want to drag the Head into it; and we as good as promised Quelch that there shouldn't be anything of the kind. But there are other ways of managing matters."

"Go it!"

"Are you willing to follow my lead?"

"Rather!"

"We've been waiting long enough for you to lead," said Bulstrode, with a sneer. "If I had been captain of the Form, we shouldn't have put up with the Chesham ass so long as we have, I can assure you."

"Well, we're not going to put up with him any longer," said Wharton quietly. "I thought it was only due to Quelch to do our best, as he asked us to when he went away ill."

"Quite right!" said Nugent warmly.

"The rightfulness is terrific!"

"Only now," resumed Harry, "we've done our best, and we can't stand it any longer."

"Hear, hear!"

"I'm willing to lead, if you're willing to follow. Only understand, it will mean trouble."

"Sure, and who cares?" exclaimed Micky Desmond.

"Sure, and trouble is what we are lookin' for, darling!"

"Good!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"It may mean risk, too, and some painful experiences for all of us," said Harry Wharton. "If you're willing to follow, well and good. But I don't want any chap to yell 'Hear, hear!' now, and back out when the pinch comes."

"We'll back you up!"

"Very well, then. Now, Chesham has cut down our grub—"

"I've been in a state of famine for days," said Billy Bunter.

"And he has stopped tea in the studies—one of the oldest and most cherished institutions at Greyfriars—"

The Remove groaned.

"We have to have our tea in Hall now, and it's a measly feed—weak tea, bread-and-scrape, and not much of that."

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"I say, you fellows—"
 "It's getting near tea-time now. I propose—"
 "I say, you fellows—"
 "Shut up, Bunter!"
 "But I say, you fellows, I think the first step ought to be to devise some means of getting some grub in—"
 "Cheese it! Go on, Wharton."
 "I propose that, as an active revolt is out of the question, we take up the part of passive resisters," said Harry Wharton. "Passive resistance is rather fashionable now, or was some time back, and I don't see why we shouldn't passively resist as well as anybody else. We have got to go in to tea—well, we'll boycott the tea."
 "What?"
 "We won't eat or drink anything—"
 "Eh?"
 "That's what I mean by passive resistance. Chesham will have to give in, and let us have something decent, for fear of our getting ill."
 "I say, you fellows—"
 "Good wheeze!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I'm with you for one."
 "And I," said Nugent.
 "Rather!" said Hazeldene heartily.
 "The ratherfulness is terrific," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.
 "I say, you fellows, it's a rotten idea! It's bad enough to be starved by Chesham, but there's no sense in starving ourselves, too."
 "Shut up, Bunter!"
 "I'm not going to shut up! I think it's a rotten idea, and I know I'm jolly well not going to be a passive resister."
 "Shut up!"
 "But I say, you fellows—"
 "Of course, we shall have to manage to get some grub in somehow," said Harry Wharton. "My idea is that the whole Form pools cash for that object, and that we make purchases in the village and smuggle them into the school."
 "Now you're talking!" exclaimed Billy Bunter emphatically, and his fat face cleared. "Why couldn't you say that at first, Wharton?"
 "It's a good wheeze," said Bob Cherry. "I don't see why we couldn't manage it easily enough, too."
 "The wheeziness of the idea is terrific."
 "I don't mind doing the shopping for you, too," said Billy Bunter. "You can trust me to lay out the money to the best advantage."
 "And to eat most of the grub before you get it to the school," said Skinner.
 "Really, Skinner—"
 "There goes the tea-bell," said Nugent. "Come in! It's time to start the passive resistance dodge."
 "Right-ho!"
 "I say, you fellows—"
 "Yes, let's all go in," said Harry Wharton. "Mind, the wheeze is to be very quiet and good, and perfectly respectful, so that the Chesham ass won't have anything to take hold of. He can't make us eat if we don't want to."
 "Ha, ha! No."
 "I say, you fellows—"
 "We mustn't be late, either. We are going to be a model Form—that's the cream of the joke in passive resisters, you know—they're so meek and mild that they make the other party get awfully waxy."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I say, you fellows—"
 "Shut up, Bunter, and come along!"
 "But I say, it's important, you know. It's no good beginning at the wrong end of a jape, and putting the cart before the horse, you know!" exclaimed Bunter, blinking anxiously through his big spectacles. "Before starting the passive resistance at meal-times, we ought to get the grub in from the village."
 "No time now."
 "Then let's leave the passive resistance till to-morrow."
 "My hat! And the young cormorant has just been stuffing jam tarts, too," said Nugent. "Now he's thirsting for the bread-and-scrape."
 "Not at all, Nugent; only I'm afraid that if I go hungry it may have a serious effect upon my constitution."
 "You'll have to risk that, Billy. Come on!"
 "But I say, you fellows—"
 But no one was listening to Bunter. The Remove, full of the new idea, crowded out of the Form-room and made their way to the big dining-hall. Billy Bunter followed, still mumbling protests.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. The Passive Resisters.

MR. CHESHAM was in his place at the head of the Remove table, and there was a mild and gentle smile upon his face. Mr. Chesham—quite ignorant of the fact that he was generally known at Greyfriars as "the Chesham ass"—was beginning to feel at home at the

school. Things were getting into good order in the Remove—in the opinion of the new Form master.

Mr. Chesham was a man with ideas. No one would have objected to that, if he had kept his ideas to himself. But that was not his way.

It is seldom the way with a faddist. He felt so much better himself for the rules he laid down for his own guidance, that he simply could not help wanting to confer the same benefits on others. He didn't want to exactly interfere with anybody. He wanted everyone to share the benefits of his experience, that was all. He forgot the important fact that all human beings are not cast in the same mould, and that what may suit one person may be totally unsuitable to another. That is a very important point which the true faddist generally contrives to forget.

The Remove had writhed under the reign of the faddist. They had looked to Harry Wharton, as their recognised leader, to "do something," though precisely what he was to do no one could specify. Harry, for good reasons, had been slow to move. But now, at last, he was moving with a vengeance. The Form meeting meant the beginning of a new campaign, the Remove against Chesham; and there was no telling yet where it would end.

Mr. Chesham nodded pleasantly to the Removites as they came in, hardly a minute late—a record for the Remove. He was a mild, little, kind-hearted man, and would probably have been very much liked if he had only let the boys alone. But a fussy little man with fads was the last man in the world to get on with a set of healthy, athletic, and somewhat rough and reckless lads.

Harry Wharton glanced along the table. It was a custom at Greyfriars for the boys to have tea in their studies if they liked, provided they obtained the fare at their own cost. Fellows who did not like the trouble of getting tea themselves took the meal in Hall, but they usually provided relishes from the tuckshop—jam or marmalade, eggs or pickles, and ham and sausages, and so forth. The school tea was plain bread-and-butter and cake, with sometimes lettuce or watercress.

Mr. Chesham had put his foot down heavily in this direction. Tea in the studies was stopped, and all relishes were forbidden at the tea-table. The juniors could have what the school provided and nothing more, excepting something in the shape of tabloids, provided generously by the Form master himself.

Mr. Chesham declared—quite correctly, as far as that went—that tea in the studies meant the consumption of large quantities of unwholesome pastries, and in some cases even of tinned meat, and that the juniors would have a healthier diet under his immediate eye.

But he forgot that the appetite of a healthy lad of fifteen or so was a rather more serious affair than that of a quiet little gentleman of forty-five.

The table was as sparsely set as usual. Bread-and-butter and watercress—and a small allowance of that.

It really did not need much self-denial on the part of the Remove to enter into the passive resistance scheme.

Mr. Chesham commenced his tea. The other tables were busy, and the Upper Fourth fellows were grinning over their cake and jam and eggs and herrings. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were enjoying the discomfiture of the rival Form, and their wish towards Mr. Chesham was that he would continue to reign over the unhappy Lower Fourth for the rest of the term. There was subdued amusement at the long senior table, too, where the Fifth and Sixth were having their tea, their board being still more plentifully supplied. The Head of Greyfriars did not dine in Hall, and he was still in blissful unconsciousness of the vagaries of the new Form master.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Chesham. "You are not having your tea, my boys."

The Remove were silent.

"Why do you not pass the bread-and-butter, Cherry?"

"Shall I do so, sir?"

"Certainly."

"Very well, sir."

Bob Cherry passed the bread-and-butter. It was passed down the side of the table, the juniors, with solemn visages, handing it on, till it reached the bottom of the row. Not a single slice had been taken. Billy Bunter looked at the plate with yearning eyes, but Nugent was looking at Billy Bunter with the glare of a basilisk, and Bunter did not venture.

The plate reached the end of the row, and then came up the other side of the table again. It was restored to its place without a single slice having been removed. And still the boys were as grave and solemn as owls.

Mr. Chesham had watched the curious proceeding with

growing amazement. He looked at the plate, and he looked at the row of boys, and the row of empty plates before them on the white cloth.

"Dear me!" he said. "What is the matter? Is there anything wrong with the bread-and-butter, my lads?"

There was no reply. Stony silence and solemn visages—that was all. Mr. Chesham looked more and more amazed.

"Boys! Dear me! Wharton!"

"Yes, sir."

"You have not taken any bread-and-butter."

"No, sir."

"Are you not hungry?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why do you not eat?"

"I do not care for bread-and-butter, sir."

"Eh?"

"I do not care for bread-and-butter, sir."

Mr. Chesham's eyes began to gleam. He understood at last.

"Then this is a pre-arranged scheme," he said, his voice rising. "You have all agreed, it appears, to refuse your food."

Stony silence.

"Is that the case, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are hungry, and you will not eat."

"We are ready to eat the usual fare, sir."

"I am the judge of what is to be consumed at this table, Wharton."

"Very well, sir."

"There will be nothing else provided, I assure you."

"As you please, sir."

"You will get nothing else if you refuse this good and wholesome food."

Silence.

"Come," said the Form master, controlling his annoyance, "let us have no more of this nonsense. Pass the bread-and-butter along the table."

"Certainly, sir."

The great plate laden with what the boys of the Remove called bread-and-scrape was solemnly passed down the table again, and solemnly passed up the other side. Not a slice was taken. Mr. Chesham's face became very pink as the plate was restored to its place still piled with bread-and-butter.

"Then I am to understand that you are determined to keep this foolery up!" he said harshly. "Is that so?"

There was no reply. The Form master was addressing nobody in particular, and nobody in particular felt called upon to reply.

"Is that so, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well," said Mr. Chesham passionately, "you have chosen to act in this disrespectful manner, and you will take the consequences. I dare say you will be hungry enough by supper-time to have become more reasonable. Leave the table."

The Remove rose, and walked out.

The fellows at the other tables stared at them in surprise now. They saw that the Lower Fourth had eaten nothing, and they did not know what to make of it. Mr. Chesham left the dining-hall with a heightened colour.

In the close the Removites grinned at one another.

"We've started the ball rolling, anyway," said Nugent.

"Yes, rather," grinned Bob Cherry, "and Chesham doesn't know how to handle us, either. We're so beastly orderly and respectful that he can't lam us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"I fancy Quelch would find a way of dealing with us," Hazeldene remarked.

"Possibly," said Harry Wharton, with a laugh. "But Quelch isn't a faddist, and so the situation couldn't have arisen with him."

"That is true."

"And Chesham isn't Quelch's weight, you know. As a matter of fact, he's not up to the Remove's weight, either, if we get our backs up."

"And the upfulness of our honourable backs is now terrific," the nabob remarked.

"I say, you fellows—"

"What's the matter with you, Bunter?"

"I'm hungry."

"Then go and eat coke!"

The fat junior walked away disconsolately. The Remove were all hungry, but the passive resistance "wheeze" was extremely popular. There was only one dissentient, and that was Billy Bunter. But in a case like this, Billy Bunter did not count.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Temple, Dabney, and Co., to the Rescue.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What do you want?"

It was Bob Cherry who asked the question. The chums of the Remove had met in Study No. 1 to discuss the commissariat question, and while they were busily engaged in discussion, a tap came at the door, and Temple, Dabney, and Fry, of the Upper Fourth, walked in.

There was a keen rivalry between Lower and Upper Fourth at Greyfriars, and the chums of the Remove seldom met Temple, Dabney & Co. without exchanging badinage, and sometimes fisticuffs, too. Consequently, this unexpected invasion made the four Removites jump up very quickly. Harry Wharton reached out his hand to a ruler, Hurree Singh grasped an inkpot, and Nugent made a careless step backwards to place himself within reach of a cricket-bat that stood against the wall. Temple and Dabney grinned as they saw these defensive preparations.

"Hold on," said Temple, "it's pax."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"That's it," said Fry. "We're not hitting fellows when they're down, you know. We've come here with friendly intentions."

"Exactly," said Temple. "I'll do the talking, if you don't mind, Fry."

"It would be better to talk sense; but I don't mind, run on if you like," said Fry, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Look here, Fry—"

"Oh, run on!"

"Well, you see, Wharton, we've come here—"

"Yes, I can see that," assented Harry Wharton politely.

"I noticed it when you came in."

Temple turned red.

"Oh, don't be funny!" he exclaimed. "We've come here with the idea of giving you a helping hand. We've had a good many rows with you, and given you a good many lickings—"

"This is the first I've heard of it."

"Ratherfully," remarked the nabob. "As a matter of exact factfulness, the case is a boot on the other foot."

Temple grinned.

"Well, never mind the lickings. We've had rows—"

"That's true enough."

"But just now we're willing to leave off ragging. That funny beast Chesham amused us at first, but now you've taken to going without grub, matters are getting serious."

"I should say so," said Billy Bunter pathetically. "I'm afraid this will result in injury to my constitution, which may be permanent. Do you happen to have any toffee about you, Temple?"

"My idea is that we'll lend you a hand in this affair," said Temple. "I hear that you're stopped having tea in the study."

"Quite correctful, my worthy friend."

"And you're not allowed to buy anything in the school shop."

"Not without a written permit from Mr. Chesham," said Harry ruefully.

"Then you're in a fix."

"Something like that."

"Well, I'll tell you what. We're not barred from the school shop," said Temple. "If you like to hand us any cash you may happen to have for the purpose, we'll get in the grub for you, to any quantity, and shove it into a box-room or somewhere where you can feed unknown to the Chesham ass."

The chums of the Remove looked at one another. Billy Bunter gave a crow of relief. This was, indeed, a tempting offer.

"Well, I can only say that we're awfully obliged, Temple," said Harry Wharton. "After the rows we've had, it's decent of you to come to the rescue in this way."

"Oh, that's all right! You'd do as much for us."

"True. Still, it's ripping of you, and we're very much obliged. We were going to break bounds and get to the village shop; but we'd rather not, of course, if it can be helped. We don't want to give Chesham anything to use against us."

"Good. Write down a list of what you want, and we'll get it as soon as you like, and put it into the upper box-room. Nobody ever goes there, and you'll be safe."

"Ripping!" said Nugent heartily.

"I'll help you make up the list, Wharton," said Bunter anxiously. "Shall we be able to light a fire in the box-room and do some cooking, do you think?"

"Too risky."

"Some fried bacon and sausages and poached eggs would be very nice."

"But Chesham coming in and confiscating them wouldn't be so nice, Billy."

Bunter shuddered.

"No, indeed. I think it would break my heart. I say, you fellows, you'd better let me make up the list. Mind you don't let Mrs. Mimble work off any of her stale rabbit-pies on you, Temple."

"I'll be careful."

"Jolly hard cheese that I can't do the shopping," murmured Bunter. "Mrs. Mimble is a terror for working off stale things on you when you're not looking. She's never been able to take me in, but you fellows—"

"I'll sniff at everything," said Temple, laughing. "I'll take my microscope and examine them from end to end."

"Well, be careful, that's all. I'm sincerely sorry to have to trouble you like this, but Mrs. Mimble is such a cough-drop, you know. She always keeps about a dozen stale pies and tarts to work off on any chap who's unwary. I saw young Price eating one the other day that I could have sworn had been made a fortnight before. It was simply talking."

"Rabbit-pies, one dozen," said Harry Wharton. "Any other pies that are fresh, and six dozen tarts."

"Good," said Bunter. "Don't forget the sausages. She has them ready cooked, cold, you know. They're not so nice as I do myself, but they're better than nothing. Better get a dozen loaves and three pounds of butter. Remember, there will be over thirty chaps to the feed, Wharton."

"Right! Cakes—must be fresh—ad lib. Buns, six dozen. Cheese—must be decent—two pounds. A dozen tins of salmon—"

"Good. Better not have any tinned meat, though. You never know what it's made of. May as well have some apples and bananas. Inky likes bananas."

"That is very thoughtful of you, my esteemed Bunterful chum."

"Yes, I'm a chap who's always thoughtful for others," said Bunter. "I like bananas, too. You can often find room for a banana when you're too full up for another tart or bun. I've noticed that."

"Well, you ought to know," said Harry Wharton. "Anything else?"

"Yes. We must have something to drink. We sha'n't be able to make tea without a fire, especially for so many. Three dozen gingerbeer."

Temple whistled.

"By Jove, you fellows must be pretty flush of money, to stand all that," he remarked.

"The whole Form has clubbed together over this," explained Harry Wharton. "It's a matter where the Remove stand shoulder to shoulder, and those who have are sharing with those who haven't."

"We are lining up both heartfully and cashfully," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Don't forget pineapples, Wharton."

"I don't know if it will run to pineapples."

"Well, I'm very fond of them, so you had better have one. It's no good trying to get pineapples for the whole Form, of course."

"Next item," said Harry.

"You haven't put down the pineapple yet."

"And I'm not going to. Next item."

"But the pineapple—"

"I think that's about all."

"No, it isn't," said Billy Bunter hastily. "There's cake—seed and currant, and buns, and cream-puffs."

"Very well."

"And a few other things. Let me see."

"Never mind, these will do for one occasion."

"Good," said Temple, as he took the list. "We'll have these things in the box-room upstairs in less than a quarter of an hour."

"Much obliged. I hope you three chaps will join us in the feed."

Temple shook his head.

"Thanks, we won't."

"We'd really like you to."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

But the captain of the Upper Fourth shook his head again decidedly.

"No, thanks all the same, but we won't come," he said.

"We're going to have tea in our study, for one thing, and we won't spoil the effect by sharing in the feed, for another. Some of your chaps might say we obliged you for the sake of the feed. I know you wouldn't, but Bulstrode might, or Vaseline. We won't come. Ta-ta!"

"Much obliged, all the same," said Dabney.

"Very much," said Fry.

And the chums of the Upper Fourth quitted the study. They left smiles of satisfaction on the faces of the Removites.

"I say, you fellows—"

"We must pass the word round to the chaps," said Wharton. "It won't do for them to come along to the box-room in a body you know. It might excite suspicion."

Bob Cherry grinned.

"I imagine it would."

"Twos and threes is the idea. Go out now, and let the

fellows know, on the quiet, and caution them not to give the show away."

"I say, you fellows, perhaps I had better go and meet Temple and Dabney as they go to the box-room, and help them to carry the things."

"That you won't!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, seizing the fat junior by the arm. "You'll keep with me till I get to the box-room, you young cormorant."

"Of course, I didn't mean to sample the stuff—"

"Of course you didn't! But you'll keep with me, all the same."

"I might have taken a snack—"

"Yes, I think that's very probable."

"The probableness is terrific."

"I'm fearfully hungry!"

"Never mind; you'll get used to that in time, especially if the Chesham regime lasts much longer."

"But I say, you fellows—"

"Come on, Fatty! Get a move on you, porpoise. Take my arm, Falstaff. Time we were gone, young Peckham!"

"I wish you wouldn't call me names, Bob Cherry; I don't like it. If I don't get a snack, I'm afraid I shall be ill, and then—"

"Then we shall save your whack in the feed, about a quarter of the lot, I expect," said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Anyway, you're not going to leave the shadow of my wing, my pippin. Come on!"

And Billy Bunter was marched off with his arm linked in that of the inexorable Bob. The news of the planned feed was soon spread through the Remove, and all was eagerness and suppressed excitement. Twenty minutes later, Temple tapped Harry Wharton on the arm in the passage. Harry looked at him inquiringly.

"It's all right."

"All right? In the upper box-room?"

"Yes."

"Thanks, old fellow!"

"Here's your change. You'll find the stuff all right."

"Thanks again—"

"Cave! There's Chesham looking at us."

Temple put his hands in his pockets, and sauntered away whistling, with an air of exaggerated carelessness. Harry Wharton was about to walk away also, when Mr. Chesham signed to him to stop, and came across to him. Inwardly chafing, Harry Wharton waited with all the patience he could muster to hear what the Remove master had to say.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. A Feed in the Box-Room.

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, sir?"

"I wish to speak to you," said Mr. Chesham mildly. "I am sorry for the stand you have taken up, and I cannot help seeing that you are the leader of the Form in this mischief—for that is what it is. You have set yourself up in opposition to me, although you know I have your best interests at heart."

Harry Wharton was silent.

It was useless to argue with a confirmed faddist, he knew, even if it had been respectful to speak out candidly to a Form master.

"Now, Wharton, if you choose to abandon this position you have taken up, I am willing to overlook the occurrence, and I will instruct the housekeeper to supply you—"

"With what we usually have for tea, sir?"

"With what you refused at the tea-table," said Mr. Chesham, raising his voice a little.

"You need not trouble, sir."

"Does that mean that you are determined to keep on as you have begun?"

"We have not broken any rule of the school that I know of, sir," said Wharton quietly. "We have been ordered to come into Hall to tea, and we have done so. There is no law to make us eat if we don't want to."

"I see that my kindness is wasted upon you, Wharton. You are determined to oppose me, and to lead the rest of the Remove into insubordination. But mind, you cannot deceive me—"

Harry Wharton knitted his brows.

"I have never attempted to deceive you, sir," he said coldly.

"What I mean is, you cannot make me believe that you intend to go without food for the rest of the day. You hope to obtain some elsewhere. Is this not the case?"

Wharton did not reply.

"Will you answer my question, Wharton?"

"I have nothing to say, sir."

"That is as good as an admission. I presume that the Upper Fourth boy with whom I saw you talking has asked

you to tea in his study. Well, I forbid you to go, Wharton!"

"He has not asked me."

"I forbid you, or any of the others, to accept invitations to meals from boys in any other Form in the school."

"Very well, sir."

Mr. Chesham walked away with a frowning face. Harry Wharton rejoined his chums in the upper corridor. Bob Cherry gave him an anxious look.

"What did the Chesham beast want?" he asked.

"He thinks we're going to have tea with the Upper Fourth, and he's forbidden it!" said Harry, with a laugh.

"Ha, ha!"

"Better get along to the box-room before he spots us," suggested Nugent.

"Ratherfully!"

Harry Wharton nodded, and the chums of the Remove went upstairs to the upper box-room. It was a part of the most ancient remnant of the old building of Greyfriars, and was used only for lumber. It was a very spacious room, and on one side was a boarded-up door, which, when open, gave access to a passage leading through subterranean depths to an old priory in Friardale Wood. The windows were thick with dust and cobwebs, and in late afternoon the room was dim. But that did not affect the juniors of Greyfriars. Harry found nearly half the Form already there, and they were opening the packages deposited in the box-room by Temple, Dabney, and Fry.

Exclamations of delight broke from the hungry Removites as the good things came to view. The juniors were still dropping in in twos and threes and singly, and the room, extensive as it was, was growing crowded.

"Faith, and this is all right intirely!" exclaimed Micky Desmond. "Sure, and they say stolen fruits are the sweetest, me boys!"

"These things are not stolen," said Billy Bunter, looking up from a tin of salmon he was opening with a pocket-knife. "They're bought and paid for."

"Sure, and it's a figure of speech, ye gossoon!"

"I say, you fellows, have you got a tin-opener? I'm spoiling Nugent's knife, and I can't get the tin open anyway."

"My knife!" howled Nugent. "Is that my knife you are hacking at that tin with, you young brigand?"

"Well, I suppose we want the tin opened, don't we?" said Billy Bunter, with an injured air. "Do be reasonable, Nugent!"

"Cherry's pocket-knife has a tin-opener in it," said Hazeldene.

"Yes, I know it has; but I've lost Cherry's knife——"

"Lost my knife!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"I'm sincerely sorry, Cherry, but it went through a hole in my pocket the day after you lent it to me!"

"But I didn't lend it to you!" howled Bob Cherry.

"Well, I borrowed it, which amounts to the same thing. Now, don't shake me, Cherry. It upsets my nerves, especially when I'm hungry, and you may make my glasses fall off; and if you break them I shall expect you to pay for them."

"You young rascal——"

"I wish you wouldn't call me names. Ow! What are you doing, Nugent?"

"Only wiping the salmon-juice off my knife on your back-hair, Billy."

"Well, I think that is a beastly trick, Nugent!"

"Is it as beastly as using a chap's pocket-knife to open a tin with?"

"Well, the tins have got to be opened. I don't see why one of you fellows couldn't have brought a tin-opener. What are you jabbing at me for, Russell?"

"It isn't Russell, ass! I'm Skinner!"

"Are you?" blinked the short-sighted owl of the Remove.

"Well, whoever you are, I wish you wouldn't jab that thing into my ribs, whatever it is."

"It's a tin-opener, ass!"

"Oh, is it? Thank you, Skinner."

"These rabbit-pies," said Hazeldene, who was half through one, "are ripping; but I think you have to miss your tea to fully appreciate how ripping they are."

"This veal and ham is exquisite," said Bob Cherry. "I always liked veal and ham, and I've got a hunger on me now that I wouldn't take ten pounds for."

"Wire in!" said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "I think we're nearly all here now. But there's enough for all, late-comers included."

"I think I will have a samplefulness of the honourable bananas," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "I regardfully consider them as ripping."

"Go it, Inky! Won't you have some pork-pies?" said Bulstrode, with a grin.

The nabob flushed under his dark skin.

"I do not eat the porkful pie, my worthy chum, and I should advisefully counsel you to leave it alone, as your eating the honourable pork is really cannibalism!"

"Why, you inky ass," exclaimed Bulstrode, as a chuckle

went through the feasters, "if you want me to pulverise your black mug——"

"Shut up, Bulstrode!" said Harry Wharton quietly; and the bully of the Remove thought he had better shut up.

"Rotten if the Chesham ass were to hop in now," Russell remarked, in a moment's interval between two jam-tarts.

"Oh, don't croak, old chap!"

"Well, he might come nosing round, looking after our precious health."

"If he does, we'll chuck him out," said Bulstrode.

There was a step in the passage.

"Tonner!" exclaimed Fritz Hoffman. "Tat sounds like te step of te Chesham tonkey, ain't it, pefore?"

The Remove paused in the feast in utter dismay. Hands stopped half way to mouths. Billy Bunter was the first to regain his presence of mind. If the feast was to be interrupted, the more he had within him the better, before what was left was confiscated. And Billy tucked into the salmon at express speed.

"It's only another chap coming," muttered Skinner.

"We're all here."

The footstep came straight to the door of the box-room. Harry Wharton stepped quietly to the door, and turned the key in the lock swiftly and silently. He made a sign to the Removites to be silent.

They hardly needed it. With bated breath they waited, and the only sound that broke the silence of the box-room was the champing of the jaws of the hungry Bunter. Bob Cherry seized his wrist, and stopped the next mouthful going in.

"Quiet!" he whispered fiercely.

"I say, I——"

Bob jammed his hand over Bunter's mouth. At the same moment the handle of the door was tried from without.

The juniors sat as still as mice.

The handle turned and turned again. Then the door was shaken. Then a voice was heard in the passage outside.

"Open this door!"

The Removites were silent. It was the voice of Mr. Chesham, and there was no doubt that he had missed the Remove from their usual haunts, and, guessing how they were occupied, had tracked them to the box-room.

But the juniors had no intention of opening the door.

"Wharton!"

Still silence.

"Wharton, are you there?"

No answer.

"Wharton, I command you to answer me if you are there!"

Harry remained grimly silent. The time had gone by for Mr. Chesham to expect to be obeyed at a word.

"Very well," said Mr. Chesham, through the keyhole.

"I have a book with me, fortunately, and I shall sit on the stairs under the stair-window and read—and wait. You can remain in the box-room as long as you like, but every boy who has disobeyed me shall be severely punished. For the last time, I command you to open this door!"

"Better open it," said Bulstrode.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"What are you going to do, then?"

"Finish the feed."

And Harry Wharton sat down and took up the cold steak-pie upon which he had been busy when the alarm was given.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Levlson is Not Lucky.

THERE was a painful silence in the box-room. The juniors were free to go on with the feast, but they seemed to have lost their appetites.

In the silence they heard Mr. Chesham descend the narrow stairs as far as the dusty little window, and there they heard him stop. He evidently meant to carry out his threat: There was no means of escape from the box-room, and the juniors were hopelessly caught. If Mr. Chesham had the patience to wait, they were, as Bob Cherry put it, "done in." And, as Bob further remarked, he was a patient beast.

"Looks to me like a frost," said Bulstrode. "I suppose you know, Wharton, that this means about three hundred lines each?"

"Possibly."

"We can't stick here all night."

"I know that."

"Chesham is certain to stick it out."

"The certainfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Singh, with a doleful shake of the head.

"Then we're done in. We may as well give in now, and get out of the impot."

"Is that your advice, Bulstrode?" asked Wharton quietly.

"Yes, it is," said Bulstrode, in a blustering tone; "and I expect most of the fellows here agree with me!"

Harry Wharton looked round.

"Is that the case?" he asked. "Are there any other rotten funks here?"

Bulstrode turned crimson.

"Are you calling me a funk, Wharton?"

"Yes, I am. We agreed to go into this thing, and to face the music if there was a row. At the Form meeting I gave you all a chance to back out if you liked. I didn't want to force anybody into the game. You all came in of your own accord, and now it's too late to retreat."

"Too late! What do you mean?"

"I mean that nobody is going to give in without having a fight on his hands," said Harry Wharton determinedly. "I think there are enough fellows here with pluck to back me up. We're going to finish this feed, and then go out in a body and face the music—shoulder to shoulder—whatever it is. That's what I say."

"Good wheeze!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "And there's one here who will back you up, tooth and toe-nail, to the last shot in the locker!"

"And there's another here," said Nugent.

"And I add my honourable voice to the esteemed chorus," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "I shall backfully support my honourable chum to the full extentfulness of my power."

"Rather!" said a dozen voices. "We're all backing you up, Wharton! We're not going to funk it!"

"Sure, and the Remove wouldn't funk anythin'!" exclaimed Micky Desmond. "Say the worrud, Wharton, darling, and, sure, we'll go out and chuck the spalpeen down the stairs!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I don't think we'll go so far as that, Micky! But we're going to finish the feed! I advise you chaps to make a good meal. We sha'n't have any supper or any breakfast; keep that in mind!"

"By Jove, yes!" said Turner. "We had better tuck in, and whatever is left we can hide in our togs, to be eaten later!"

"Bunter's doing that already!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Bunter coloured. His fat person was looking very bulgy in places, where various comestibles were stowed away. There were apples and a bag of tarts under his waistcoat, and pork-pies in his pockets, and bananas up his sleeve. He grinned uncomfortably.

"I wouldn't have been in such a hurry to pack up, if I had known we were going to finish the feed," he remarked. "I was preparing for a bolt. Still, it's all right; I don't see how I can carry any more!"

"You could put a steak-pie down the back of your neck," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Or some jam-tarts in the legs of your trousers."

"Really—"

"He's got enough inside him to last any ordinary cormorant a couple of weeks," said Hazeldene. "My hat; he's starting on a fresh pie!"

Billy Bunter looked up indignantly.

"You heard what Wharton said, Vaseline—we're not going to have any supper or breakfast? I think I ought to be allowed to have a feed now. I say, you fellows, stop that ass! Don't let him open the door till we're done, or the Chesham pig will confiscate the grub!"

Harry Wharton sprang to his feet. It was Levison, the new boy in the Remove, who had stopped to the door. He had his hand on the key when Harry Wharton laid a grasp of iron on his shoulder and dragged him away.

"What are you doing?" exclaimed Harry angrily.

"I'm going out."

"You heard what I said?"

Levison shrugged his shoulders in an extremely irritating way.

"Oh, yes, I know your little game!"

"What do you mean?"

"I suppose, as a matter of fact, you don't want to be spotted as ringleader in this business, that's all, and you don't care if we get gated for half a dozen holidays," said Levison. "I've got an appointment for next half-holiday, and I'm not going to be detained in the class-room writing out Latin lines."

"What do you want to do?"

"I'm going out, that's all. If you want to feed, go on feeding. I don't want to interfere with you. I don't see why I should stay here if I don't want to."

"I have given you a good reason."

"It doesn't satisfy me, anyway," said Levison. "You're not going to drag me into a row which may end in a fellow getting expelled. I'm out of it!"

"You've had your share of the feed, anyway, you cad," said Bob Cherry.

"I've paid for it."

"The playfulness of the game is an unknown quantity to the esteemed rotter Levison," remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "My advicefulness would be to give him an esteemed dot upon his august nose."

"Let me alone, Wharton!"

"You are not going out of this room till we all go."

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE HALFPENNY.

"When father says 'Turn,' we all turn," sneered Bulstrode. "Don't take any notice of him, Levison, old man!"

"I'm not going to," said Levison, jerking his shoulder away from Harry's grip, and suddenly unlocking the door before he could be prevented; "I'm going out!"

"You're not," said Wharton, between his teeth.

"Let me go!"

"I won't!"

Wharton gripped Levison by the collar. The new boy clenched his fist and struck. The blow fell upon Wharton's cheek.

"Knock him down, Harry!" shouted Bob Cherry, jumping up. "Pulverise the cad!"

Levison tore the door open. Harry dragged him back; but he clung to the door, and, with a sudden twist, tore himself loose, and struck again. Harry's temper was never of the most patient kind, and less than a blow was required to rouse it to white heat. His eyes blazed, and his fist lashed out like a piston, and Levison went through the open doorway in a heap.

The landing was a narrow one. There was room for Levison to fall in the passage; but, as it happened, he fell towards the stairs. He made a desperate effort to recover his balance, and failed. Then he went rolling down the stairs, right upon a sitting form in the light of the little stair-window.

"My hat!" gasped Wharton.

Bob Cherry gave a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! He'll be on the Chesham ass! My only hat!"

There was a crash on the stairs, and two forms instead of one rolled down. Mr. Chesham picked himself up at the bottom of the stair in wrath and amazement. Levison lay gasping on the linoleum.

"Get up!" shouted Mr. Chesham, more enraged than any of the Removites had ever seen him before. "Get up immediately!"

Levison staggered to his feet. He was very much shaken, but not otherwise hurt. His face was savage and sullen as he rubbed his bruises. But his rage was as nothing to that of Mr. Chesham. The Form master had not the slightest doubt that Levison had fallen over him on purpose; having no suspicion that it was a blow straight from the shoulder that had sent the new boy rolling off the landing.

"Boy!" Mr. Chesham's voice trembled with anger.

"Boy! How dare you?"

"I—"

"This is carrying insolence too far! Come with me!"

"If you please, sir," gasped Levison, "I—"

"Not a word! Come with me!"

"But I—"

Mr. Chesham grasped the junior by the shoulder, and hurried him along the passage. Bob Cherry chuckled as he saw them go.

"Rough on Levison!" he remarked. "The Chesham ass is taking him to his study to give him a licking, and serye him jolly well right! Where are you going, Wharton?"

"I'd better own up to Chesham."

"Nothing of the sort! Hold him, kids!"

The grinning Removites held Wharton back.

"Let me go, I tell you!"

"Rats! You're not going!"

"Look here, Bob Cherry—"

"I'm looking, and I can see a duffer!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Levison got himself in for that licking by his caddishness, and you're not going to have a licking, too, if I can stop it! It's too late now, anyway; they're in his study, and Levison is catching it!"

"The catchfulness is well deserved, and it is to be hoped that it will be terrific," murmured the nabob.

Harry Wharton laughed shortly.

"Well, I suppose it serves him right," he said. "It was his own fault. It was a cad's game to want to go back on the Form."

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent. "But, I say, we've got a chance of getting clear while our respected asinine Form master is laying into Levison! Let's bunk!"

"Good wheeze!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"The speedfulness should be terrific, before the returnfulness of the honourable and ludicrous teacher sahib."

"Get a move on, chaps!"

"I say, you fellows! Don't leave any of the grub here! I can't carry any more—"

"Inside, or out?" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton.

The juniors, carrying the uneaten portion of the feed in their pockets, or under their arms, beat a hasty retreat

NEXT TUESDAY: "THE GREYFRIARS SLEEPWALKER."

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from the box-room. They scudded along the passage, and doubled along the lower corridor, and escaped into the Close, leaving the coast clear for the return of Mr. Chesham. Two figures issued from the Remove master's study as the juniors were hurrying into the Close—Mr. Chesham, stern and wrathful, and Levison, wriggling and holding his hands under his arms.

"I hope that will be a lesson to you!" said Mr. Chesham sternly. "This insolence is without parallel; but I think I have adequately punished you."

Levison appeared to think so, too. He twisted his hands about under his arms in a most uncomfortable manner.

"And now," said Mr. Chesham, "I suppose there were a great many of your Form-fellows in the box-room with you, Levison?"

The new boy in the Remove was silent. He was smarting with the application of the cane, and seething with the spitefulness of a cat against everybody in Greyfriars at that moment. But even then he did not venture to turn sneak. His life would not have been worth living in the Remove afterwards—and he knew it. He said nothing, only his brow grew more sullen and savage.

Mr. Chesham looked at him for a moment, and then turned away. The boy had been punished enough, and even the faddist could respect an honourable scruple.

"I shall soon ascertain," he said.

He returned quickly to the narrow stair leading to the upper box-room. The door above was open. Mr. Chesham stepped into the box-room without let or hindrance this time—but it was silent and deserted.

The Form master looked round with a stern brow. Empty salmon-tins and fragments of various kinds of eatables, empty lemonade and gingerbeer-bottles, were plain enough traces of what had taken place. But the culprits were gone, and it was pretty certain that any questioning of the Remove would be met by a stony silence, whatever punishment might be inflicted.

Mr. Chesham left the room. He was not, as a matter of fact, thinking of punishment. He was a kind-hearted man in the main, though led astray by whims and fancies.

"Foolish and unfortunate lads!" he murmured. "The result of this reckless feeding upon their health may be positively terrible. The only remedy is to administer medicine to them all to-night in the dormitory. Fortunately, I have a large supply of a very efficacious remedy, and I shall not grudge it to them, in spite of their careless ingratitude."

And Mr. Chesham's face cleared somewhat.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Medicine That Was Not Taken.

"I SAY, you fellows, that was ripping!" said Billy Bunter, with a sigh. "But when shall we get another?"

Bunter was referring to the feed in the box-room. In spite of Mr. Chesham's theories, the Removites felt all the better for that surreptitious feast.

"Thinking about the next feed already?" said Bob Cherry. "And you haven't got over this one yet."

"Well, I can't help thinking that the Chesham ass will be on the watch now," said Billy Bunter; "and he'll take jolly good care that we don't have any more feeds in the box-room."

"The carefulness will be terrific!"

"Then what are we going to do?"

"My hat!" said Nugent. "The young cormorant has eaten enough for a regiment of dragoons, and now he's worrying over the next meal!"

"Well, you see, you have to think of these things—"

"Well, you can think of them. I'm going down to the cricket."

The chums of the Remove spent a pleasant hour at the nets until the waning light stopped cricket practice.

Mr. Chesham looked at them very curiously when they came in. He knew that most—if not all—of the Form had been in the box-room when he knocked at the door. But he made no remark. The sins of the Remove had been visited upon Levison, and the Form master's anger had expended itself upon the involuntary scapegoat. Besides, Mr. Chesham was busy now thinking of the remedy he meant to administer to the rebellious Removites.

There was more passive resistance at the supper-table. A single slice of bread and butter, and a paring of cheese was the supper allotted to each junior by the vigilant master. The morsels were not touched. Every plate was left as it stood; but the abstinence required no effort on the part of the Remove. They had been feasting during the evening on the remains of the box-room spread.

At bedtime the Remove went up to the dormitory in a rather gleeful mood. They had passively resisted the

obnoxious Form master, and had enjoyed a good spread. They were inclined to gloat, as Bob Cherry expressed it. But their gloating was speedily brought to an end.

Mr. Chesham saw lights out himself in the Remove dormitory, instead of leaving the task to a prefect. When he came in to extinguish the gas, the Form master was carrying a large green bottle in one hand, and a table-spoon in the other.

The Remove stared at him. The juniors were wearing their nightcaps, by order of the faddist. Mr. Chesham knew perfectly well that when lights were turned out, the nightcaps would be hurled away; but there was no preventing that. Very curious the boys looked in the white nightcaps, as they eyed the Form master with uneasy glances.

"I have a little medicine for you here, my boys," said Mr. Chesham, beaming at the uneasy juniors. "It will counteract the effect of any reckless gorging upon unwholesome food."

There was a general gasp from the Remove.

"The—the utter beast!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is to make us sit up for that feed in the box-room!"

"I'm not going to take any of his rotten medicine!" growled Bulstrode.

The whole Form looked towards Harry Wharton, waiting for a word from their leader. The Remove were in a dangerous temper—as they had been for some time past. At a word from Harry Wharton they would have refused to take the medicine, and, indeed, would probably have hustled the faddist out of the dormitory.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir!" stammered Billy Bunter, hastily thrusting a pork-pie out of sight under his pillow.

"You will require a large dose. It is easy to see from your appearance that you have recently been eating—"

"Only a mere snack, sir—"

"Open your mouth!"

"My—er—my mouth, sir?"

"Yes; and at once!"

Mr. Chesham uncorked the bottle, and poured out a teaspoonful of a thick, greenish liquid.

Billy Bunter eyed it in utter dismay. He had been eating very heartily, and had in fact, almost finished up the provisions he had saved from the feed. He felt that if he swallowed that horrible-looking compound the results might be serious.

"Am I—I—to—to take that, sir?" he stammered.

"Yes, certainly! You will take three tablespoonfuls—"

"Eh? Three? Three tablespoonfuls?"

"That is the dose required to meet your case, as you are of a heavy, lethargic disposition, partly caused by over-feeding—"

"But really, sir—"

"The dose for the average boy is one tablespoonful. Bulstrode will require two—"

"Shall I?" murmured Bulstrode.

"You will need three, Bunter! This will quite counteract the effects of over-feeding. Open your mouth!"

"But—but—but—"

"Open your mouth immediately!"

"D-d-d-d-does it taste nasty, sir?"

"Pooh! It is mere nonsense to care whether medicine tastes unpleasantly. Be a man, Bunter—be a man!"

"If I were a man I'd jam it down your own throat, you beast!" murmured Bunter.

"What did you say, Bunter?"

"Nothing, sir. I feel awfully well, sir; simply glowing with health, and not in the least in need of medicine of any sort—"

"Open your mouth immediately!"

"You see, sir—"

"If you do not obey me instantly, I shall cane you!"

There was no help for it. Billy Bunter opened his mouth and gasped like a fish as the tablespoonful approached his lips. Another second, and the compound—whatever it was—would have been in his mouth. But in that second a pillow whizzed through the air from one of the beds behind Mr. Chesham, and caught him on the back of the neck.

"Oh!" gasped the Form master.

The sudden shock hurled him forward upon Bunter, and he embraced the fat junior round the neck. The tablespoon dropped into the open neck of Bunter's night-shirt, and he gave a squeak as the sticky liquid trickled down his chest.

The bottle of medicine dropped from Mr. Chesham's hand, and crashed upon the floor, and was instantly smashed into a dozen pieces.

The Form master embraced the wriggling Bunter for a moment, and then disengaged himself, and turned a furious face round upon the grinning juniors.

In a moment every grin had given place to an expression of almost preternatural solemnity.



There was a crash on the stairs, and two forms instead of one rolled down. "My hat!" gasped Harry Wharton from above,

"Wh-wh-a-what?" gasped Mr. Chesham. "What? Someone has hurled a pillow at me—it smote me with great force. Who hurled that pillow?"

Silence.

"Who threw that pillow?"

Still silence.

Mr. Chesham looked at the grim faces of the Remove, then at the smashed bottle of medicine, and then at Bunter, who was rubbing the stickiness off his bare chest with a corner of the blanket.

"Boys! I demand to know the name of the perpetrator of this—this outrage. The medicine has been wholly wasted before a single dose has been taken—and I have no more in the school. It has to be procured in London at a considerable expense."

"Jolly good thing, too!" said a voice.

Mr. Chesham looked round quickly.

"Who said that?"

Silence.

The Form master turned red. He realised that the position was ridiculous, and that he was making himself absurd. It was useless to ask questions when every boy present was determined not to answer. It was a contest of will between master and pupils—a contest which ought never to have arisen, and never would have arisen but for the tactlessness of the master.

"I demand to know the name of the boy who assaulted me!" said the Form master, deeply incensed. "I ask you once more to give it to me!"

Stony silence.

"Was it you, Levison?"

"No; it wasn't!" growled Levison.

"Was it you, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton did not speak.

"I order you to reply, Wharton!"

"I have nothing to say, sir!"

"Did you throw that pillow?"

Harry Wharton set his lips tight together.

"Very well!" said the Form master. "I take silence as a confession of guilt. You will take a thousand lines, Wharton, and remain in after school for two hours every afternoon till they are written out."

"Very well, sir," said Wharton quietly.

"That you won't!" broke out Bob Cherry. "If you please, sir, it was I who threw—"

"Shut up, Bob!"

"Shan't! It was I who threw the pillow, sir."

"Oh, it was you, Cherry! I am glad you have had the courage to own up to your fault—"

"I don't consider it a fault, sir. I owned up because Wharton was punished."

"Silence, Cherry! Wharton, you are excused from the imposition, which will fall to Cherry instead. The medicine having been wasted, I can give you nothing to-night, but I will procure some more from London as soon as possible. Good night!"

And the Form master turned out the light and abruptly quitted the dormitory.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
The Remove Stand Together.

ROTTER!"
"Ass!"
"Chump!"
"Beast!"

These were a few of the epithets that followed the master of the Remove as he closed the door of the dormitory. But many of the juniors were chuckling. Punishment had fallen heavily upon Bob Cherry, but the faddist had been baffled, and the dreaded medicine lay in a sticky mass beside Bunter's bed.

"I'm sorry, Bob," said Harry Wharton. "The rotter would have had my bolster in another tick, but your pillow went first."

Bob Cherry laughed.

"That's all right. I can do the lines——"

"That you won't!" said Nugent. "We'll all do our whack."

"No good, my son. Chesham will be up to that dodge, and he knows my handwriting. I shall have to do them."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Well, the medicine's gone, that's one good thing!" remarked Hazeldene. "It made me turn cold inside, the look of it."

"I wonder what it was?"

"Something beastly."

"It's roughful on our esteemed friend Cherry to be detained every afternoon in the honourable class-room," remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "The detainfulness will interfere with the cricketful practice and the riverful rowing."

"Can't be helped," said Bob Cherry. "I can stand it—and it was worth it, to bowl that ass over with his giddy medicine."

"I say, Cherry, I wish you hadn't made him spill it on my chest, though. I can't get it all off, and it's as sticky as anything."

"I suppose you'd rather have it outside than inside, Billy?"

"Well, yes, rather."

"Then don't grumble. If you had a thousand lines to do you might growl."

"We're all standing by Bob in this," said Harry Wharton quietly. "It's the second move in the game, that's all. We shall all be detained with Bob in the class-room, and wait there while he does his lines."

"Precious good idea that is!" sneered Bulstrode. "What's the good of being detained?"

"It will show that the whole Form is standing together in the matter. Any punishment falling on one will be shared by all the rest—that's settled. Besides, I imagine that Chesham will be rather staggered at the whole class detaining itself, and will perhaps see reason."

"I think so," said Nugent, with a chuckle.

"Catch me staying in!" grunted Bulstrode.

"You will do as the rest do, Bulstrode. Any fellow deserting the Form in this fight will be sent to Coventry."

"Right!" exclaimed a score of voices. And Bulstrode was silent.

The following morning the Remove came down with their meekest manners to the fore. They sat down solemnly at the breakfast table, and, at Mr. Chesham's orders, the plates were passed, but nothing was taken. The Form master's brow contracted, but he had learned that it was useless to argue with the Greyfriars Remove. The boys had a right to refuse to eat if they chose, and there could be no coercion. But the Form master knew that they intended to obtain surreptitious supplies of food, and he became more watchful. As Bunter had foreseen, in his anxiety on the subject, it would not be easy to escape the master's eye a second time.

In the morning recess tabloids were served out to the hungry juniors. The tabloids were supposed by Mr. Chesham to contain as much nutriment as a pound of rump steak, but Bunter pathetically remarked that he would rather have had an ounce of the latter. The tabloids had never been eaten yet, and Mr. Chesham was growing suspicious on that point.

"You will put the tabloids in your mouths as I give them to you," he said.

The juniors obeyed. They put the tabloids in their mouths, as there was no help for it, but they did not allow them to dissolve. The tabloids remained there till they went out into the Close, and then there was a general ejection of the unpalatable morsels. The juniors formed in line for the usual exercise under the supervision of the Form master. Mr. Chesham looked at them and frowned.

"You have not brought out the skipping-ropes," he said severely.

The Remove were silent. They had had enough of

skipping in the Close. It might be a good exercise, and probably was, but for the Remove to skip in a row like a girl's school was too humiliating.

"Wharton!" rapped out Mr. Chesham.

"Yes, sir."

"Go and fetch the skipping-ropes immediately from the box in the class-room."

"Yes, sir."

Harry Wharton went into the house. He came out in a couple of minutes, but his hands were empty, and his face quite expressionless.

"Well, where are the skipping-ropes, Wharton?"

"I do not know, sir."

"I told you to get them out of the box."

"They are not there, sir."

"Then they have been removed by some member of the Form," said Mr. Chesham. "Did you remove them, Wharton?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know who did?"

Harry Wharton did not reply.

"Do you know who removed the skipping-ropes from their place, Wharton?"

The boy's lips set hard, and no word came from them.

"Very well," said Mr. Chesham, biting his lips. "I shall find out who the culprit is and severely punish him. You may now go through the customary exercises."

The Remove were quite willing to do that. They were grinning as they re-entered the class-room. The skipping-ropes had been removed by Saunders, the quietest-looking boy in the Form, as the least likely to be questioned about it, and Harry Wharton had been able to say quite truthfully that he did not know where they were. He only knew that they had been safely disposed of. As a matter of fact, they were reposing at the bottom of a deep ditch outside the walls of Greyfriars.

Lessons for the rest of that day went off very grimly in the Remove room. The Form master was in a bad temper; the passive resistance of the Remove was beginning to worry him. The boys were by no means good-tempered. They had eaten nothing at the dinner-table, and were hungry. The last fragments from the previous day's feed had been eaten, and nothing was left. It was impossible to obtain supplies from the school shop, and Mr. Chesham was too watchful for anything to be obtained again by the kind assistance of the Upper Fourth fellows. It was a curious situation, and no one knew exactly what would come of it; but it was evidently beginning to weigh on Mr. Chesham's mind, and that fact was encouraging to the Remove.

A few of the Form were grumbling. Bulstrode was in a vile temper, Levison was in a sneering mood, and Billy Bunter was pathetic. Most of the fellows, however, were solid in backing up their leader, and Harry Wharton was grimly determined. If any Removeite had deserted his colours the sentences of Coventry would have been rigidly carried out, and the faint-hearted ones knew it. And so the discontented ones did not go further than grumbling.

The clock indicated the half-hour, and Mr. Chesham closed his book. The Remove had a rather expectant look.

"You are dismissed," said Mr. Chesham coldly. "Cherry will remain for two hours and write out lines from the first book of the *Æneid*."

He turned away. The Remove did not rise. Each boy took his pen and dipped it into the ink, and began to write on impot paper.

The Form master glanced round.

"You are dismissed," he said, raising his voice.

There was no sound in reply save the scratching of pens. Mr. Chesham turned crimson.

"Boys! What does this mean? Answer me—you, Wharton."

"We are detained, sir," said Wharton.

"You are not detained by me."

"We are detaining ourselves, sir."

"Are you mad, Wharton? What does this mean?"

"We prefer to share Cherry's punishment, sir."

The Form master bit his lips.

"Very well," he said. "As you prefer to share his punishment, you shall do so. The whole Form will remain here and write from the *Æneid* for two hours."

And Mr. Chesham quitted the room, and closed the door with unnecessary force. But the bang of the door was inspiring to the chums of the Remove. It showed that the Form master was getting wound up, as Bob Cherry expressed it.

The activity of the pens ceased as soon as Mr. Chesham was gone. Bob Cherry went on writing, but the rest of the Remove gave it up. Bulstrode looked across savagely at Harry Wharton.

"Nice mess you've got us into!" he growled. "Now

we've got to stick here for a couple of hours with nothing to do."

"Oh, you can write out lines from Virgil."

"Hang Virgil!"

"No choice about missing tea this evening," grunted Nugent. "I say, the Chesham ass is beginning to get roused."

"But what are we going to do?" said Billy Bunter. "I'm famished."

"Famish quietly," said Bob Cherry.

"You'd be sorry if I dropped down dead on this form, Bob Cherry."

"You'd better not drop down dead on this form while I'm writing here," said Bob Cherry. "If you make me drop any blots I shall have to do the thing over again. If you want to drop down dead, go and do it on the next form."

"I regard you as utterly heartless——"

"Oh, cheese it! I'm busy."

"I say, you fellows, I'm awfully hungry——"

"So are we all," said Wharton. "It's no good grumbling, Billy, old chap. We've got to stick it out."

"Blessed if I can see any sense in it," growled Levison.

"Oh, you shut up!"

There was a buzz of voices in the Remove room for the next hour. The juniors were horribly bored, and some of them wrote out lines from sheer weariness of doing nothing. Mr. Chesham had probably done his worst in taking the Form at their word. The Remove were heartily tired of it before an hour was gone, though the majority of the Form still backed up their leader unflinchingly. But, as it happened, the buzz of voices from the class-room caught the ear of Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, as he came along the passage at about half-past five.

The Head looked into the class-room in some amazement. There was an instant silence at the sight of the familiar figure in cap and gown, and thirty odd pens scratched away industriously.

Scratch, scratch, scratch went the pens, while the Head stared at the industrious Remove in astonishment. Scratch, scratch, scratch!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Chesham is Kind to Bunter.

DR. LOCKE looked at the Remove in silence for some moments, and then came further into the class-room. He was evidently very much surprised.

"Wharton!"

Harry Wharton looked up.

"I believe you are head boy in this Form?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is the meaning of this? Is the whole Form detained?"

"Yes, sir."

"By order of your Form master?"

Wharton hesitated for a moment. He did not wish to explain the circumstances to the Head, but at the same time anything like prevarication was impossible to a boy of his nature.

"Yes, sir," he said at length. "Mr. Chesham has instructed us all to remain here for two hours; but, as a matter of fact, we chose to remain with Cherry, who was detained."

"What? Cherry was detained, and the whole Form chose to be detained along with him?" ejaculated the doctor.

"Yes, sir."

"This surprises me very much, Wharton. I must say that I do not understand it. I will speak to your Form master."

And the doctor abruptly quitted the room. Bob Cherry whistled.

"The fat's in the fire now!" he remarked. "The Chesham ass will have to explain, and that means climbing down."

The Remove waited for what would transpire. In a few minutes Mr. Chesham entered the room, and his face was very flushed.

"You are dismissed, boys!" he said.

"All of us, sir?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes."

The Remove exchanged glances of satisfaction. Whatever explanation had passed between the Head and the Form master, Mr. Chesham thought it advisable to let Bob Cherry off his punishment. It was a victory for the Form, and the Remove were crowing as they marched out.

"We've done the faddist!" grinned Nugent, as they discussed matters in the Close. "And I imagine that the Head will be rather on his track after this. He's bound to suspect that something is wrong."

"And the suspectfulness may be followed by the inter-ferefulness," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I shouldn't be surprised," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "We don't want to get the Chesham ass into hot water with the Head. We can fight our own battles. The

Remove can stand up for its own rights. All the same, if the Head takes a hand in the matter, it's the faddist's own look-out."

"We can't help his troubles, certainly."

"I say, you fellows, I'm fearfully hungry. What's to be done?"

"Nothing."

"Think Temple or Dabney could get something for us?"

"The Chesham ass is too watchful," said Nugent. "He means to starve us out, I think. He looks worried about it, though."

"He's a kind-hearted chump, you see. He means no harm, only he's got to be restrained. A nice padded cell is what he really needs."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, don't keep on, Billy!"

"I'm sincerely sorry, Cherry, but I'm hungry. I was only going to say that if you've got some cash I'll try to get some grub. Temple would get it, and I'm willing to stand the risk of Chesham confiscating it."

"Not much risk for you to stand, if it's somebody else's tin."

"Well, you see, I'm stony," said Billy Bunter. "I was expecting a postal-order this morning, but there's been some delay, and it hasn't come yet. It's pretty certain to turn up in the morning, and then I'll square up."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"There's a bob, Billy, if that's any good, and never mind the postal-order. It's worth a bob to get you to shut up for a bit."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Cut along."

Billy Bunter scudded off. He found Temple and Dabney in the Close. They had just had their tea. Bunter tapped Temple on the arm.

"I say, Dabney——"

"I'm not Dabney; I'm Temple."

"Oh, yes, so you are!" blinked the Owl of the Remove. "My mistake. I say, Temple, will you get us some more grub in the school shop? I've got a bob——"

"Sorry, Bunter——"

"I'm not asking you to lend me any tin!" said the Owl, with great dignity. "I've got a bob. Here it is."

"Sorry, Bunter——"

"Oh, don't be a pig, you know! I'm simply famished."

"Do let me finish! I'm sorry, but it can't be done. Mr. Chesham has spoken to our Form master about it, and Cap-per's ordered us not to do anything of the kind. He's made us promise not to, else he was going to tell Mrs. Mumble she wasn't to sell us anything at the shop."

"The beast!"

"All masters are beasts, more or less," agreed Temple. "I'm sorry. If you'd like some chocolate, kid, here you are."

"Thanks awfully, Temple! This may save my life!" said Billy Bunter, taking a bar of milk-chocolate extended by the good-natured chief of the Upper Fourth.

"May it?" said Temple, grinning. "Then I expect your study-mates will be ready to jump on me for giving it to you."

But Bunter was too glad of the chocolate to mind the little joke. He walked away eating it, and, as luck would have it, almost ran into Mr. Chesham under the elms. The master of the Remove gripped him by the shoulder.

"Lemme alone, Carberry!" grunted Bunter. "Lemme alone, I——"

"I am not Carberry," said Mr. Chesham, in a voice that made Billy Bunter quake. "What are you eating, Bunter?"

"Er—er—eating, sir?" stammered the fat junior.

"Yes. Is it chocolate?"

"I—I—I think so, sir."

"Give it to me immediately!"

"If you please, sir, I—I think you might buy your own chocolate, sir——"

"Bunter!"

"It was given to me, sir, and——"

"Do you think I could eat the stuff, you utterly stupid boy?" exclaimed Mr. Chesham, taking the chocolate and flinging it away with all the force of his arm. "Don't you know——"

"My—my chocolate!" murmured Billy Bunter, with tears in his eyes, as he tried to follow the flight of the chocolate through the air.

"Don't you know that that is a most unhealthy form of diet, you unfortunate boy? It may set up any or all of seven separate complaints in the internal organs——"

"I like it, sir."

"You like many things that are not good for you, Bunter. Do you wish to sink into an early grave a dyspeptic invalid?"

"N-n-no, sir, but—"

"You may thank your good-fortune," said Mr. Chesham, "that I came by in time to stop your eating that pernicious compound!"

And the Form master walked away. Billy Bunter looked after him with an expression which did not indicate that he was thanking his good-fortune. The chums of the Remove were at the cricket-field, and Billy disconsolately joined them there. Harry Wharton & Co. were not playing. They felt too faint from want of food for the active exertion of the cricket-field.

"Any luck?" asked Bob Cherry.

"The beast!" was Bunter's expressive reply.

"Matters are getting serious!" said Nugent thoughtfully.

"The utter ass must give in if we persist in going without grub. It will make some of the chaps ill in the long run, and we sha'n't be able to work to-morrow, I expect."

Harry Wharton's face set determinedly.

"Whatever the result, we are going to hold out," he said. "It's the Remove against the faddist, and no surrender."

"Right-ho! No surrender!"

"I think I shall probably die to-night!" said Billy Bunter pathetically. "I have a feeling that I shall expire in my bed!"

"Dear me!" said Bob Cherry, with equal pathos. "Is there anything we can do for you when you're gone, Bunt? Would you like me to plant a bunch of celery or anything on your grave?"

"Really, Cherry—"

"We're going to get some grub in to-night," said Harry Wharton quietly.

Nugent looked doubtful.

"We tried that before," he said, "and we were stopped. The German master stopped you and Cherry in the passage."

"That won't happen again; we sha'n't risk it. We can't be stopped if we leave the dormitory window on a rope."

"Good!"

"It's the only thing to be done, and we are going to do it."

And the chums of the Remove assented.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Night Expedition.

TEA in Hall was the scene of further passive resistance, and at the supper-table the passive resisters came out equally strong. The table was spread sparsely, as usual, showing that Mr. Chesham had not given way, and the juniors grimly abstained from eating.

The Form master was looking troubled. It was useless to order the juniors to eat. If they could resist the inward craving for food, an order from him was not likely to have any effect upon them.

He knew that they had not been without food the whole day. They had obtained various items of refreshment in some quarters. Sympathetic fellows in the other Forms had helped, and the housekeeper, who was far from agreeing with Mr. Chesham's views, had in several cases supplied the boys with sandwiches and cake; but it was certain that the Remove had not had sufficient sustenance for health, and the Form master was anxious.

He was anxious for the well-being of the boys, and somewhat anxious for himself. He felt that if the rebellious Form persisted, the matter must sooner or later come before the Head; and he felt, too, that the Head of Greyfriars was not likely to approve of the new regime when he knew the details of it.

Mr. Chesham thus had plenty of worries on his mind, and his temper was a little more acid than usual in consequence; but the Removites cared little for his temper.

They left their supper untasted, though Billy Bunter almost wept when he left the dining-room.

Mr. Chesham came up to see lights out, as usual. He did not bring any medicine with him this time. He glanced up and down the dormitory, and at once noticed that the night-caps were missing. His brow clouded over.

"Boys, where are your nightcaps?"

The Removites were quite silent, as usual, when Mr. Chesham addressed a question to them. Mr. Chesham repeated his inquiry, with the same result. Then, as usual, he turned to Harry Wharton.

"Wharton, where are the nightcaps?"

"I do not know, sir."

"Is that the truth?"

Wharton turned red.

"If it were not the truth I should not say it, sir!" he broke out hotly. "You have no right to doubt my word!"

"The caps have been made away with," said Mr. Chesham, taking no notice of Wharton's outburst. "Someone here

must know what has become of them. I call upon the person who made away with the caps to admit his culpability."

The person who had made away with the caps did not seem in a hurry to admit his culpability. Mr. Chesham waited in vain for an answer.

"Very well, this will be inquired into," he said. And he left the dormitory without saying good-night.

"Sure, if he had asked me I could have told him!" said Micky Desmond. "His illigant nightcaps are in the pond in the Head's garden."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, we shall tire him out in the long run!" said Harry Wharton. "By Jove, I am hungry! We're leaving here at half-past ten."

"I experience also the hungerfulness in my inward regions," said the nabob. "I shall be glad to have the foodful refreshment."

Billy Bunter groaned.

"Get back as soon as you can, Wharton, if you want to find me alive."

"I don't particularly want to," said Harry, laughing. And Billy Bunter groaned again at this heartless reply.

The preparations for the expedition were finished before half-past ten. Harry had smuggled a rope, long enough to reach from the dormitory window to the ground, into his bed, and hidden it under the mattress. It was knotted at intervals to facilitate descent. The end of it was firmly secured to a bedstead near the window, and Harry opened the window and lowered the loose end to the ground. The night was fine and starlit; the Close silent and deserted. From a window here and there a light glimmered out upon the foliage of the old elms.

"Coast clear?" whispered Nugent.

"Looks like it."

"Down you go, then! I'll follow, and then Bob."

"Right-ho!"

Wharton clambered down the rope. He had a bag slung on straps over his shoulder, and all the cash the Form could raise in his pocket. His feet touched the ground, and he gave the rope a shake to indicate that he had alighted.

The dim form of Frank Nugent swung from the sill, and came slowly down the knotted rope. He joined Harry in the Close, and then Bob Cherry followed.

"All right!" said Harry, in a subdued voice.

And the dusky hand of Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh waved from the window; the rope was drawn up, and the window shut.

"Which way?" whispered Bob Cherry.

"Through the Head's garden, over the little gate, and through the new buildings," said Harry Wharton. "We're least likely to be spotted there, and it doesn't matter if it's a bit of a way round."

"Right you are!"

The three juniors cut off in the gloom. It was easy to cross the low wall into the Head's private garden, and there a gravel path led them to the gate, beyond which lay the ancient cloisters of Greyfriars. Beyond was the new building which was being erected between the school and the river. The Removites skirted it, and gained the road to Friardale, and scudded off under the stars.

A Splendid, Complete Tale of

SPECS, THE VENTRILOQUIST, Is in PLUCK.

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NEXT TUESDAY: "THE GREYFRIARS SLEEPWALKER."

Another Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of Harry Wharton and His Chums. By Frank Richards.

"Safe so far!" muttered Bob Cherry.
 "It's all right if the Chesham-ass doesn't pay a surprise visit to the dormitory," Nugent remarked.
 "Let's hope he won't! Now for a sprint."
 The Removites kept on the run all the way to Friardale. They arrived breathless at the village tuck-shop. It was, of course, closed, but Dame Muffins was not likely to refuse admittance to three of her best customers. At the third knock the door was opened, and the dame, who had, as a matter of fact, served Greyfriars fellows at late hours before, quietly admitted the juniors, and supplied what they wanted, without asking for explanations.

Most of the cash in Wharton's pocket passed over the counter, and the bag he carried was filled to its fullest capacity. The pockets of the chums also received a cargo, and they were pretty well loaded when they said good-night to Dame Muffins and quitted the tuck-shop.

The juniors tramped back towards the school in a satisfied mood. Their mission had been quite a success so far, and if getting in was as easy as getting out, all would have gone swimmingly.

They entered the cloisters, looking dim and lonely in the starlight. A sound from the gloom caught Harry Wharton's ear, and he stopped suddenly.

"Hold on!"
 He hardly breathed the word. Bob Cherry and Nugent stopped, breathing hard.

"What was it, Harry?" Nugent whispered.
 "I heard something—"
 "There can't be anybody here at this hour."
 "There is! Listen!"

This time all three of the juniors heard the sound. It was plainly a footfall, and it was repeated. The tread was slow and measured, and they guessed that it was the tread of a man slowly pacing the cloisters.

"Who can it be?" muttered Bob Cherry, perplexed.
 Harry gripped his arm.

"Look!"
 A form loomed up in the starlight from beyond a stone pillar. The Removites knew it at once. It was that of their Form master.

"The—the utter ass!" muttered Nugent. "What is he doing here?"

"On the watch for us," said Bob Cherry.
 "Doesn't look like it. Looks more as if he were making up poetry or something. He doesn't know we're here."

Mr. Chesham had walked towards the juniors till he was within a dozen paces, and the three crouched in the shadows. But he came no nearer. He turned round and paced back again with the same measured tread.

"Confound him!" murmured Wharton. "I remember now hearing somebody say that he was in the habit of taking a turn out of doors before going to bed. I did not know he chose the cloisters to ramble about in."

"The question is, how long is he going to stick here?"
 "Oh, the dreamy ass may be thinking something out," said Bob Cherry. "He may tramp up and down there for an hour."

"We're not going to wait here an hour."
 Harry Wharton shook his head decidedly.
 "We'll give him ten minutes," he said.
 "And if he doesn't shift by then?"
 "We'll shift him!"

Bob Cherry and Nugent chuckled silently. They waited in the shadow of the stone pillars, and watched. Mr. Chesham, unconscious of their proximity, paced up and down the silent cloisters. He had no suspicion that anyone beside himself was there, but it was impossible for the juniors to go on without being immediately discovered. In the dim light Harry Wharton glanced at his watch. Ten minutes had elapsed, and Mr. Chesham showed no signs of intending to leave the spot. The juniors were growing more and more impatient.

"We shall have to shift him!" murmured Nugent.
 "Come on, then!" said Bob Cherry. "One rush, and we shall bump him over!"

"Hold on, Bob! Bumping over a Form master may mean something serious," said Harry Wharton. "He mustn't see us, at any rate. I've got an idea. Hold on!"

Wharton picked up a loose stone, and flung it to the far end of the cloisters. It fell on the flags there with a loud clink.

Mr. Chesham started, and looked round quickly.
 "Who is there?"
 There was no reply, save the echo of the Form master's voice in the dim old cloisters. Mr. Chesham stared intently into the gloom.

"Who was that?"
 It was evident that his suspicions were aroused. He knew that the cloisters formed the easiest avenue for breaking bounds in Greyfriars, and he knew, too, that the Removites would not leave any means untried for getting provisions into their dormitory. He listened for a few seconds, and then started with hasty strides in the direction of the sound.

"Come on!" muttered Harry Wharton.

"Good egg!" murmured Bob Cherry.
 It was the Removites chance. While Mr. Chesham was investigating the cause of the sound at the end of the cloisters, the Removites had time to pass. They hoped to be safely through before he turned back.

But some slight sound caught the Form master's ear, and he turned again, just in time to see three dim forms flit past in the starlight.

"Stop!"
 Harry Wharton gritted his teeth.
 "He's seen us! Run for it!"

The three chums dashed on. There was a sound of rapid footfalls behind, and they knew that the Form master was in hot pursuit. Doubtless he guessed whom the three were, though he had seen them but dimly.

"He's after us!"
 "Buck up!"

The three juniors scrambled over the gate into the Head's garden. Several articles dropped from Harry's bag, but there was no time to pick them up. The juniors dashed on up the gravel path.

"Stop!"
 It was a sharp, clear voice—and it did not come from behind. The juniors stopped in sheer dismay. Well they knew the figure that loomed up before them in the starlight.
 "The Head!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Brought Before the Head—The Faddist's Fall.

"WHARTON! Cherry! Nugent!"
 The Head rapped out the names in quick succession, his angry glance scanning the three juniors from head to foot as they stood there in the starlight.

The Removites were silent.
 They were fairly caught; and the footsteps of the Form master, pounding through the cloisters, were coming closer.

"Wharton! You, the head of your Form, breaking bounds at night! I am shocked! I am disgusted!"

Harry was crimson with mortification. He saw that the Head placed the worst construction upon the escapade.

"I am sorry, sir—"
 "I am afraid I cannot attach much importance to sorrow shown at the moment you are caught," said the Head sarcastically.

Harry bit his lip.
 "You misunderstand me, sir. I mean I am sorry you should have apparent reason to think badly of me—"

"What can I think of a boy who breaks bounds at night? I have lately been informed that a boy wearing a Greyfriars cap was seen leaving the Green Man in the village late one night."

"Dr. Locke, you cannot think I would go there!"
 The indignation in the boy's look and tone was so genuine that the doctor softened a little.

"Then where have you been, Wharton?"
 Harry held out the bag he was carrying. The doctor glanced into it, and his face relaxed still more at the sight of the provisions with which it was crammed.

"You have been to the village shop?"
 "Yes, sir!"

"You have not acted in the blackguardly way I at first suspected, yet you have broken one of the most important rules of the school. If my first suspicion had been correct I should have expelled you. As it is, only a severe flogging will meet the case. You will come to my study to-morrow morning. Is that you, Mr. Chesham?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped the Form master, coming up breathless. "I see you have caught them!"

"Were you looking for these boys?"
 "Yes. I was taking a turn in the Cloisters, and they passed me. I was afraid they would escape before I could identify them. I am not surprised to recognise Cherry, Nugent, and Wharton."

"You may go, boys. Leave that bag here, Wharton. I cannot permit its contents to be eaten."

"I should think not," said Mr. Chesham warmly. "The contents are probably of the most unwholesome kind."

"Ahem! How did you get out of the dormitory, Wharton?"

"A rope from the window, sir," said Harry quietly.
 "Mr. Chesham, please see these boys back to their quarters, and bring the rope away. I shall punish this escapade severely. The food provided at Greyfriars is amply sufficient for the most healthy appetites, and anything extra that is required can be purchased at the school shop in the hours when it is open. There is absolutely no excuse for this flagrant breach of rules."

Mr. Chesham looked uncomfortable. The boys did not

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speak. A word would have been enough, but none of the three felt inclined to utter it. But the Form master was an honourable man, if a faddist.

"As a matter of fact, sir," he said, "I have forbidden the boys of my Form to purchase food at the school shop."

The Head started.

"Why so, Mr. Chesham?"

"For the sake of their health, sir. I discovered that they purchased unwholesome pastries and sweets, and—"

"It is hardly the province of a master to look into such matters too closely, I should think," said the Head quietly.

"However, we will speak of this matter further to-morrow morning. Please bring these three boys to my study after prayers."

And the Head turned away. Mr. Chesham and the chums of the Remove returned to the Form dormitory without a word being spoken on either side. Mr. Chesham opened the dormitory door, and a form that was leaning on the window-sill, gazing out into the dark Close, turned at the sound of it.

"Then you have returnfully arrived, my worthy chums," said the soft voice of the nabob. "I have been looking for you with unintermitting watchfulness. I hope you have successfully evaded the watchfulness of the esteemed, idiotic Chesham."

"You may get into bed, Hurree Singh," said Mr. Chesham.

The nabob gave a jump at the sound of the Form master's voice.

"My turban!" he murmured. "It is the esteemed rotter himself."

"Get into bed, boys."

The Removites obeyed. Mr. Chesham retired and closed the door. Then there was a general chorus of questioning. Harry Wharton concisely explained what had happened. Billy Bunter groaned dismally.

"I say, you fellows, did the Head confiscate the grub?"

"Yes, but—"

"Then good-bye; I feel that I shall not live till morning."

"But we had a lot of stuff in our pockets, and he never thought of that," went on Harry Wharton. "It won't be much, going all round the Form, but it's better than nothing."

"Rather!" exclaimed Bunter joyfully. "I don't care if it's only a snack. Hand it over. Don't keep me waiting any longer, for goodness' sake!"

And in a few seconds Billy Bunter was at work upon a cold steak-pie, which vanished under his efforts at a marvellous rate of speed.

The Remove looked forward with some anxiety to the following morning. There was to be an explanation of some sort, and it could hardly fail to have some result.

When the boys came down to breakfast, they took their usual places at the table, and saw that the sparseness of the "spread" had not been changed. Mr. Chesham was sticking to his guns, and the Remove consequently stuck to theirs. Not a mouthful was eaten at the Remove table.

After early chapel, Mr. Chesham signed to the three delinquents of the previous night to follow him, and led the way to the Head's study. Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Frank Nugent followed, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, Hazeldene, and Micky Desmond followed them. Then Russell, Skinner, and Price joined in; and then the whole Form. Mr. Chesham, quite unconscious of his numerous following, walked on to the Head's study, and tapped at the door.

"Come in!"

Mr. Chesham opened the door and walked in. The delinquents followed; and Mr. Chesham, looking round, started in amazement as he saw the passage blocked up by the swarming Removites.

"Wh-wh-what does this mean?" he exclaimed.

"We're all in this, sir," said Hazeldene. "We were all concerned in the affair last night, and we are standing by Wharton."

"You should not—"

"Quite right!" said Dr. Locke, rising from his seat and coming towards the Removites. "I am glad to see you owning up so frankly. Am I to understand that the whole Form was concerned in this breach of the rules?"

"Yes, sir," said nearly every voice in the Remove.

The Head looked puzzled. There were seven or eight juniors in the study, and the rest had stopped in the passage. Mr. Chesham was looking red and uncomfortable.

"This is a very strange affair," said Dr. Locke, after a pause. "Wharton, what was your motive for going to the village last night for food?"

"We couldn't get it at the school shop, sir."

"Owing to Mr. Chesham's orders there to Mrs. Mimble?"

"Yes, sir."

"But do you mean to say that you were in need of food,

and that the ordinary school fare was not sufficient for you without this wild escapade to obtain a further supply?" said the doctor sternly.

Harry Wharton coloured.

He knew instinctively that it would mean trouble for the faddist if he spoke out. He owed Mr. Chesham little consideration, yet—

"Answer me, Wharton?"

"It is my place to do that, sir," said Mr. Chesham quietly. "Wharton seems to feel a scruple about speaking, but I am quite ready to explain. There has lately been a great deal of opposition to me in the Remove, and the juniors have refrained from eating at meal times, in order to defy my new regulations."

The Head looked astounded.

"Dear me! I knew nothing of this. And how long has this been going on?"

"A couple of days, sir."

"Bless my soul! They have had no food for two days?"

"Not exactly, sir," said Harry Wharton. "We have obtained a good deal from other quarters."

"But not enough, sir," said Billy Bunter, blinking mournfully through his big spectacles. "I have been famishing. You can see how hollow my cheeks are, sir."

"They do not look hollow, Bunter," said the Head.

"Well, they feel hollow, sir; and so do I."

"But what are these new regulations, Mr. Chesham?" said the Head. "Something to do with the diet of the Form?"

"Yes, sir. I have eliminated from the diet all the articles that I considered deleterious, such as bacon and eggs—"

"Eh?"

"And all sweets and pastries—"

"What?"

"And other harmful matters which—"

"Are you serious, Mr. Chesham?"

"Certainly, sir. I regard these boys as being in my care. And I consider it my duty to see that they have baths of a temperature suited to their various states—"

"Ah! Indeed!" murmured the Head.

"And take light refreshment in the form of tabloids—"

"Excuse me, Mr. Chesham. You may go, boys. I shall have something further to say to you on this subject, but I shall say it in your class-room."

The Remove marched off. They were in a state of suppressed excitement, but some, who had been watching the doctor's face closely, declared that the faddist's day at Greyfriars was done. And they were right. When the door had closed behind the boys, Dr. Locke gently but firmly pointed out to the Form master that it really would not do. He explained that boys were boys, and required a treatment different from that required by a middle-aged gentleman of quiet disposition. He added that constant interference with lads was likely to cause more evil than it could possibly cure. He went on to hint that Mr. Chesham's theories might be of great use and value in a suitable sphere, but that that sphere was not to be found at Greyfriars.

Mr. Chesham was not convinced. A belief which springs from the heart is not likely to be affected by an argument, which is addressed only to the brain. Mr. Chesham heard the doctor out respectfully, and retained his own opinion.

"I am afraid that my views remain unaltered, sir," he replied. "But I fully understand that these views are not acceptable to you, and it is therefore impossible for me to carry them out in this school. Without acting as my conscience dictates, it would be impossible for me to remain in charge of a Form here; nor would you ask it. I therefore resign my position."

The Remove waited impatiently in their room for the Head. His face was very grave when he came in. There was a hush at once.

"I regret to have to tell you, my boys," he said quietly, "that Mr. Chesham has found it necessary to leave Greyfriars. Your own master, Mr. Quelch, will be returning at the end of the week, and until then you will take your lessons from me."

"Hurrah!"

It was an irresistible cheer from the Remove.

"Silence, please! I wish to add that any boy in the class who feels hungry may ask the housekeeper for some sandwiches. I have instructed Mrs. Jarvis to prepare some."

The Head quitted the room. Billy Bunter was about a second behind him, and the rest of the Remove were very swift after Billy Bunter. They discussed the sandwiches and the situation with equal relish. The long contest was over, and it had ended in the triumph of the Remove and the fall of the faddist.

THE END.

(Another splendid long, complete tale of the Boys of Greyfriars next Tuesday. Please order your copy of "The Magnet" Library in advance. Price 1d.)

GRAND TALE OF ARMY LIFE.

109 WORDS THAT WILL TELL YOU WHAT
HAS TAKEN PLACE.

The story opens with a review of the Redminster Cadet Corps, led by young Lieutenant Jack Dashwood. The proceedings are interrupted when the Headmaster receives a telegram asking him to send Jack home at once, as his father—Colonel Sir Harry Dashwood—is dangerously ill. Dick Vivian goes with his chum, and soon after their arrival at the house the Colonel passes away. Finding he has been practically disinherited in favour of his Uncle Dominic and Cousin Leonard, Jack enlists in the 25th Hussars under the name of Howard. He fights Bill Sloggett, a recruit, who fancies he is going to finish the business off with a tricky blow. (Now go on with the story.)

Jack's First Promotion.

But, somehow, Sloggett's feint and counter alike broke down, and, although the knock-out blow was delivered with terrific force, it came from Jack's right arm, and pitched Bill Sloggett, dazed and senseless, over the guy-ropes of the nearest tent, where he lay dead to the world, until the little knot of onlookers poured water over him, fanned him, and brought him round. Then, looking up, he saw his adversary, calm and collected, smiling down on him.

"Shake hands, Sloggett, man, and don't be a fool any more!" said Private Howard. "I have shown you who is the better man of the two; and if you take your licking properly, one of these days I'll show you how it was done."

And, as he took the reluctant hand of the prostrate pugilist, Bill Sloggett felt a hard, round substance deposited in his palm, which, on later examination, proved to be a half-crown.

"Get him into his tent, you fellows, and smarten him up against roll-call," said the corporal.

And Jack, turning on his heel, found himself face to face with another onlooker—a remarkably well-groomed individual with a remarkably well-fitting tweed suit, whose tan gloves grasped the conquering hand with a warmth that was not lost on the other beholders.

"Why, Dick, old chap, the idea of you turning up at this moment!"

"Well, I'm hanged if I could have turned up at a better!" said Dick Vivian, thrusting his arm through the blue serge and carrying our hero away with him. "Where can we go? We must have a chat. It's ages since I've seen you. Is this the way you lick your chaps into shape? Come on! Can't you get leave? Can't you do something or other? I must talk to you!"

And Dick Vivian, apparently forgetting the terrible social barrier that exists between a Sandhurst cadet and a trooper of the Hussars, literally dragged our hero down the lines.

When Bill Sloggett sat up, his eye roved from the half-crown in his swelled and bleeding hand to the figure of our hero disappearing round the angle of the tent with Dick Vivian and the corporal.

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Bill Sloggett, which was literally true, as his heaving chest bore testimony. "If he don't knock me out in three rounds, give me half-a-crown, and walk hisself off with a turf! And 'e's a turf, too; and don't let me 'ear none of you blokes say a word agen 'im any more. The chap what can use 'is dukes like Tom 'Oward is a pal o' mine, and don't you forget it!" Whereat Bill's pals smiled dubiously, knowing him of old.

Jack got leave without difficulty to absent himself from evening stables, and, leaving the cavalry lines behind them,

the two old schoolfellows strode briskly away through the white dust on to the springy, heather-covered land beyond the camp.

"Well, old chap," said Dick, for the fiftieth time, when they were out of earshot of the hum of the military hive, "and how are things with you?"

"First-rate in one way, Dick," said the young Hussar. "That chap you saw me thrash this afternoon is a bit of a thorn in my side, but I think I've stopped that. The sergeants are very good chaps, we have some decent officers in the regiment, and, what's best of all, a very keen colonel. A funny thing it would be, Dick, if when you passed out of Sandhurst you are gazetted to us. Do you know, I don't know that I should altogether like it."

"Why not?" said Dick Vivian, opening his eyes. "Why, you are such a good chap, Dick, that you'd always be trying to do little things for me, and you would give the show away before you had been in the regiment a month. I don't want any of these men to know who I am, but simply to work my way up slowly and steadily by my own merits."

"You need not have any fear on that score, Jack," said his friend. "The 25th is far too expensive a corps for me. More likely to suit somebody else I could name."

"What do you mean?" "Your cousin Leonard," said Dick. "It's perfectly marvellous what money has done for that chap. You know how lazy he was at school, but since he's come to Sandhurst he works like a nigger, and he will pass out pretty nearly at the top of the list, as sure as my name is what it is!"

Jack sat down on a hillock, and looked out over the city of white tents that lay beneath them.

The mention of his cousin revived the bitterness in our hero's heart, and Dick, as he opened his cigarette-case, regretted his remark.

"After all, I don't envy the fellow," said Jack, after a pause, taking the proffered cigarette. "The only thing that I feel is that the pater never intended the money to go as it has done. By the way, how did you get on with my Uncle Dominic?"

"Oh, we had a very lively time!" laughed Dick, lying back on the soft turf with his hands behind his head, and blowing a great blue ring skyward. "He was inclined to grow rusty at first, but your signature he could not get over. You've been getting the money all right, old man?"

"Yes, thanks to you, Dick. I don't know how it could have been worked without your help."

The money to which they alluded was an income of £200 per annum, which Jack Dashwood received under his mother's will, and which he had authorised Mr. Dominic Dashwood to pay quarterly to Dick Vivian, who, in his turn, transmitted it to his friend. It hurt Dominic Dashwood more than a little to pay up those cheques to the lad he had wronged.

The two friends had many things to discuss, and all the good old times to talk over again; and then, Dick insisting that they should go somewhere and have dinner after a civilised fashion, they marched off side by side into the town, and Jack once more tasted the delights of a white tablecloth and a serviette on his knee, the time passing all too quickly, until it was time for them to part. As they came out of the hotel Jack's sergeant passed them on his way back to the lines.

"Are you out on pass, or are you coming back with me, corporal?" said the sergeant, pausing.

"I will be with you in a moment, Clavering," said Jack. "But what do you mean by corporal?" for there was some-

thing in the sergeant's voice which showed that he was not jesting.

"Ah, my boy, if you had been at stables to-night you'd have heard yourself read out in orders 'Trooper Thomas Howard to be corporal.'"

A flush of pleasure reddened Jack's cheek. "Come along, sergeant!" said cheery Dick Vivian. "We have just time to wet that stripe!"

And wet it they did, after which Dick rushed off as hard as his legs would carry him to catch his train, and the two Hussars strode back to the cavalry lines with a great jingling of spurs.

"Very nice fellow, your pal, Howard!" said Clavering, wishing that the canteen cigars were all as good as the one that he was smoking, which had come from Dick's case. "I don't want to be inquisitive, boy, but, of course, we all know your people must have been somebody, and it's even betting that your name's not Howard."

"No it's not Howard," said Jack, smiling. "Perhaps some Jay I will tell you what it is."

"For the present we will leave it where it stands," said the sergeant, laughing. "But, luck or no luck, you can always count on Jim Clavering to give you a hand."

Then they passed the sentry, and entered the lines as the trumpeters were preparing to sound "Lights Out."

The New Lieutenant.

It was five o'clock in the morning, and the trumpeters were blowing "reveille."

"Tumble out, you chaps!" cried a sergeant, thrusting his head inside one of the tents. "Our new man's got 'the belt' to-day, and I reckon he's going to be a 'holy terror!'"

That particular tent was the slackest in the lines, and one of the slackest of its occupants was Private Alf Sligo.

He stretched himself with a yawn, sat up lazily, and inhaled the muggy atmosphere as though he liked it, until Bill Sloggett chucked a boot at him, followed by a forcible recommendation to "jolly well buck up!"

And as he proceeded to wriggle out of his blankets the sergeant's words took shape in his narrow brain, and Alf Sligo formed a base resolve.

Bill Sloggett was laying low. Private Sligo knew that. One of these days he would take a tremendous revenge for a certain little happening, some months before, behind a certain dry canteen.

If Alf Sligo could only help to bring it about there would be joy and beer. And, with a cunning smile, Mr. Sligo took a stable-fork and went over to the horse-lines to engage in that delectable performance known as "muck out."

Tom Howard had returned from a week's furlough only the night before, and it had been the happiest week he had spent since that eventful day when the telegram had reached Redminster. He had started out, clad in a brand-new pair of overalls, with the yellow worsted chevrons on his right sleeve, and had taken his ticket for Vivian Towers.

Dick Vivian had met him at the station, and Hogan, who occupied the back seat of Dick's dogcart, being installed at the Towers in some mysterious capacity specially invented for him, had wept tears from his one eye at sight of the uniform.

And then Tom Howard had become Jack Dashwood again, yet with a difference, for discipline sets a stamp on a lad which he will never shake off.

Yes, it was a grand time, that visit to the Towers, where they welcomed him so heartily.

There was music and tennis, and at sight of the breakfast-table, glittering with silver and laden with good things, the corporal's mind went back to the rations at Aldershot—the sickly, sweet, boiled, brown liquid they called "tea," the meat, newly-killed and tough as leather, or else stewed to rags.

And then the rides and the dogs, and the hot-houses full of scent and colour, and Dick's mother doing her best to make the homeless lad happy; and Dick's sister—well, I am afraid she did

her best to build up a very pretty romance, and succeeded!

Jack Dashwood never knew what had become of the button from his fatigue-cap, until he discovered it, years after, dangling, with little gold pigs and things, from Muriel Vivian's bracelet.

Then, "back to the Army again." And, after being driven to Reading Station behind a pair of splendid roan horses, he reached Aldershot, and tramped on foot to the lines of the 25th Hussars, smiling, in a half-amused, half-bitter mood, and reported himself with five hours of his furlough to the good.

Then the morning, grey and early, and all the bustle of the camp.

Touzled men in "grey-backs," and pantaloons came out of stifling tents, washed in buckets, and were soon busy with brush and currycomb, sponge and rubber.

"What's wrong?" thought Private Bill Sloggett, looking under the neck of his mare at Corporal Howard.

The corporal's face had a strange expression upon it—a drawn whiteness, so unusual that Sloggett paused, brush in hand, and stared at him.

Alf Sligo, grooming a trumpeter's grey horse behind him, saw, too, and his shifty green eyes sparkled.

The two privates were not the only ones who noticed a change in Tom Howard. Sergeant Clavering caught him by the arm as he went by, and wheeled him on his heels.

"What's wrong, old man?" said the sergeant.

"Who said there was anything wrong?" returned Howard.

But Jim Clavering saw through the attempt to brave it out, and felt the arm quiver.

"You are as white as a tent, and trembling like a leaf," said Sergeant Clavering, winking knowingly. "Anything wrong at home, eh, Tom? Never mind. I don't want to pry, only put a better face on if you can, old man. You haven't seen our new sub, and I know he'll spot you. Perfect beast, he is—goes over everything with a microscope."

Tom Howard turned away that his comrade should not see the spasm that crossed his features, but it was gone in a moment, and he looked Clavering squarely in the eyes.

"Answer me this question, Jim," he said. "Am I much altered since I joined?"

"You are browner and more hard-bitten," said Clavering. "Would a man who knew me in the old days recognise me here—if he did not expect to see me, I mean?"

"That square jaw of yours would give the show away anywhere," said Jim Clavering, a gleam of intelligence coming into his eyes.

The square jaw grew squarer, and Tom flushed scarlet under his tan.

"It's got to come," he muttered, busying himself with a picketing-rope. "But, great heavens, I wish I saw how it will all end!"

A terrible surprise had awaited Tom Howard on his return from furlough. Leonard Dashwood had passed out of Sandhurst with flying colours, and was gazetted second lieutenant in the 25th Hussars.

Now you know why the sturdy corporal of B Squadron was troubled with an exceeding great trouble. And small wonder!

When he had adjusted the picketing-rope, he straightened himself and set his teeth hard.

"I'll see it through," he said to himself. "Kismet! It is destiny. And now to buck up these fellows, and take good care that the scoundrel shall find no just cause of complaint!"

His own mare was perfectly groomed, and his kit absolutely spotless, and Tom Howard hustled among the men of his troop, pointing out a buckle awry, or something amiss, adjusting a strap here, helping a clumsy trooper there, and returning to his own place as the new lieutenant entered the lines.

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