

THE HERLOCK SHOLMES OF GREYFRIARS!

A Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.

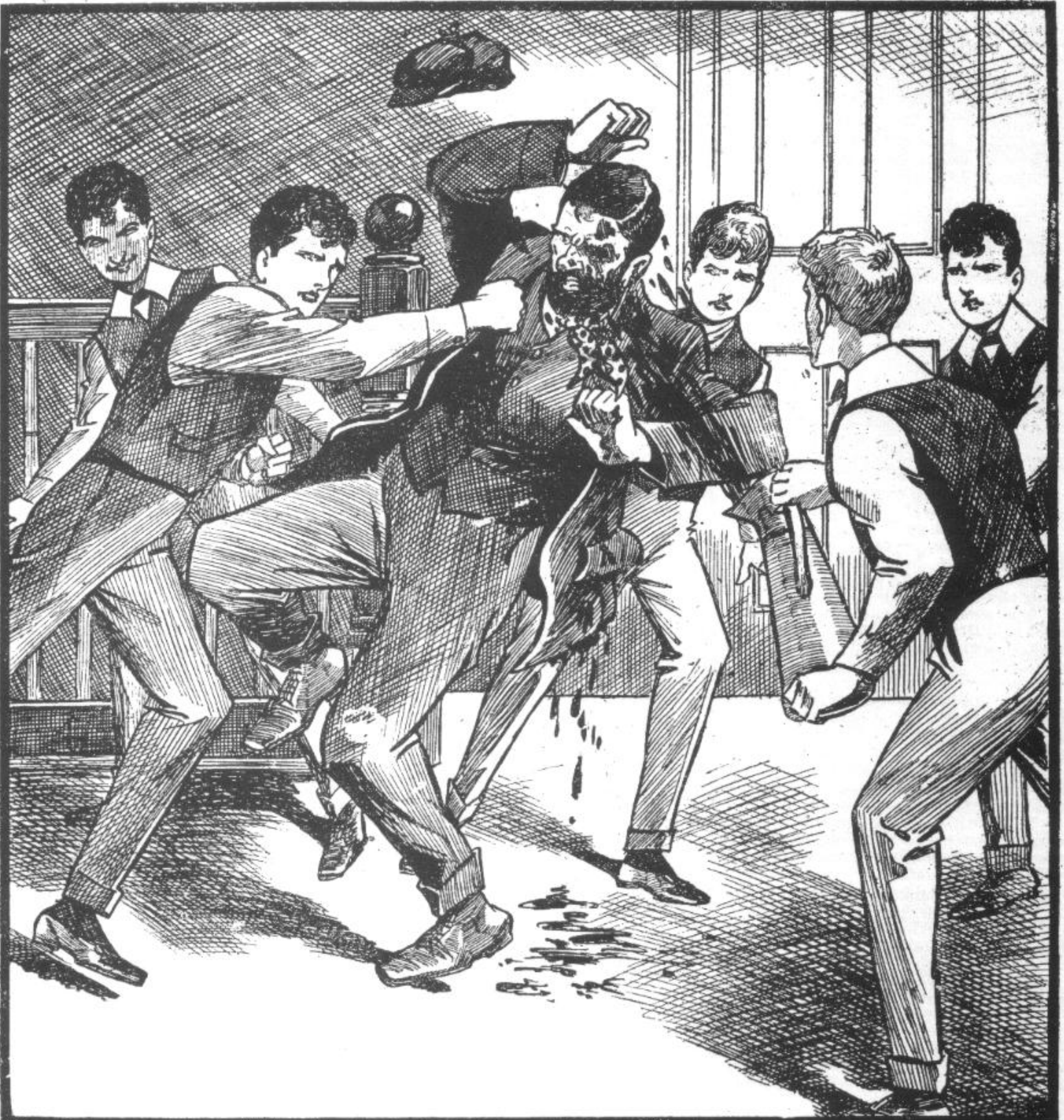


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A WARM RECEPTION FOR THE BURGLAR!

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THE HERLOCK SHOLMES OF GREYFRIARS!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Midnight Raid!

"YOU fellows awake?"

Bob Cherry sat up in bed in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars, yawned, and asked that question in sleepy tones.

There was no reply save a deep, unmusical snore from Billy Bunter's bed.

Midnight had struck, and all Greyfriars was plunged in silence and slumber. The Remove were sleeping the sleep of the just.

Bob Cherry yawned again, and turned out of bed.

"Wharton!"

"Hallo!" came a sleepy voice from the captain of the Remove.

"Time, you ass! You've been to sleep!" said Bob indignantly.

Harry Wharton sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"I believe I have," he admitted.

"And I believe the other fellows have, too," said Bob. "I'll soon wake 'em up. Shall I freshen you up a bit with this sponge?"

"No, fathead!" Harry Wharton turned hastily out of bed, and made a dive in the dark for his clothes. "Jolly cold! Grooh!"

Bob Cherry groped his way to Johnny Bull's bed, and squeezed a wet sponge over the sleeper's head. There was a muffled roar from Johnny Bull.

"Grooh! What's that?"

"Only little me!" chuckled Bob.

"You silly ass!"

"Time to get up."

"You — you — you jabberwock!" gasped Johnny Bull, rubbing his eyes.

"Couldn't you call a chap, you burbling chump? You wait till I get out!"

"You awake, Nugent?"

"Yes, fathead! Don't bring that sponge near me, or I'll give you my bolster!"

"You awake, Inky?"

"The wakefulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, getting hurriedly out of bed. "Keep away, you esteemed idiot!"

"All awake!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that? Who's got hold of me? Leggo!"

"I have," said Johnny Bull, in sulphurous tones. "I'll jolly well teach you to swamp cold water over a chap!"

"Yaroooh!"

Pommel! Pommel! Pommel!

"Shut up, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in alarm. "Do you want to wake the house?"

"Shut up, Bob!" gasped Nugent.

"I've got his head in chancery," said Johnny Bull grimly.

"Ha, ha, ha! Chuck it!"

Bump!

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull rolled on the dormitory floor together. Their chums rushed to separate them. It was no time for a scrap.

"Stop it, you silly asses!"

"Chuck it, you duffers!"

"Lemme get at him!" gasped Bob.

"I'll—"

"You'll keep quiet, you fathead!" exclaimed Wharton, dragging him back.

"Do you want Quelch up here with a cane?"

"Blow Quelch!"

"What the dickens is the matter?" came Squiff's voice. "What are you fat-heads doing out of bed?"

"I say; you fellows, is it a Zepp?" came an alarmed voice from Billy Bunter.

"Dozens of 'em!" said Nugent. "There's one coming in at the window at this very minute, and a submarine after it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Even Billy Bunter was not alarmed by that statement.

"What's the little game?" asked Vernon-Smith. "Have you chaps got up in the middle of the night to scrap with one another?"

"No fear! We're going to see Coker," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Keep quiet, Bob. You'll spoil the whole game."

Bob Cherry granted. After his kindness in waking Johnny Bull so effectively it was hard lines to have his head taken into chancery.

"Well, come on!" he growled.

"What on earth are you going to see Coker for?" asked Tom Brown.

"Just a surprise visit," said Wharton. "Coker was cuffing young Vivian this afternoon. Fifth Formers aren't allowed to cuff the Remove."

"Hear, hear!"

"Old Prout came along when we were going to his study to talk to him about it, and we had to clear. So we're going to see him in the dorm. Have you got the jug, Bob?"

"I've got it," said Bob, with a chuckle.

"What on earth have you got in the jug?" asked Hazeldene.

"Ink!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And gum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And treacle!"

"Poor old Coker! Ha, ha!"

"It isn't, everybody who gives away ink and gum and treacle for nothing, in war-time," remarked Bob Cherry. "Coker ought to be grateful. I don't suppose he will be, as a matter of absolute fact—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fellows ready?"

"The readyfulness is terrific."

"Then, come on," said Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five, half-dressed and with rubber shoes on their feet, crept quietly to the door, and passed out into the passage. Some of the Removites settled themselves down to sleep again, while the others remained awake to hear the end of the raid. There was certainly excitement to be expected in the Fifth Form dormitory when Horace Coker received the contents of Bob Cherry's jug.

It was time, according to the views of the Remove Co., for Coker of the Fifth to be taken down a peg or two.

Coker of the Fifth had what he called a short way with fags. Coker rather prided himself upon it. But naturally,

the fags did not regard it with any great admiration. It was a difference in the point of view, which was quite natural in the circumstances.

Coker's opinion was that the more fags were licked, the better it was for them. He regarded it as a duty to do his best for them in that line; and he never failed in doing his duty whenever an opportunity came along. Hence the midnight expedition to the Fifth Form dormitory, and the awful mixture which the Famous Five had prepared at their own expense, solely for Coker's benefit.

It was pitchy dark in the passages, and the Famous Five groped their way along very carefully to the Fifth Form quarters.

It was necessary to be very cautious; for if Mr. Quelch, their Form-master, had awakened, there would have been serious trouble. Mr. Quelch would have failed utterly to see the matter from the Remove point of view.

Without a sound save their suppressed breathing, the Famous Five crept along the passages.

Suddenly Harry Wharton stopped.

"Hold on," he breathed.

"What's the matter?" whispered Nugent.

"I heard something."

"Only the wind."

"Hold on, I say!"

The five juniors stopped, blinking about in the darkness, and listening intently. From the direction of the staircase came a faint sound, that made their hearts jump in the darkness and silence.

Click!

Fainter still was the sound of an opening window. They could see nothing in the deep gloom; but they knew, as well as if they had seen it, that the hall casement had opened. There was another sound—the sound of something that dropped lightly. Someone—who they could not guess—had dropped in at the opened window into the dark hall.

The hearts of the juniors were thumping now. They caught their breath as they listened.

From Wharton came a faint, tense whisper.

"Burglars!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Thief in the Night!

BURGLARS!

The chums of the Remove breathed hard in the darkness as they stared down the black staircase.

There could be no doubt.

Someone had opened the hall window from the outside, and dropped into the hall, at that dead hour of the night when the whole school was sleeping.

The juniors were not thinking of the raid on the Fifth-Form dormitory now. They had forgotten all about Coker. With thumping hearts, they listened for some further sound from the intruder.

There was deep silence for a minute or more, and they knew that the unseen man was listening. Then a faint sound of cautious footfalls. The sound died away.

"My hat!" Bob Cherry's whisper was shaky with excitement. "He's gone down the passage to the Head's study!"

"Knows where the safe is!" murmured Nugent.

"Better call Quelch!"

"I—I suppose so."

Mr. Quelch was pretty certain to want to know later what the Removites had been doing out of their dormitory at that hour. But it was no time to think of that. The housebreaker could not be allowed to proceed with his nefarious work.

The juniors crept back towards Mr. Quelch's room, which they had passed with great caution a few minutes before.

Harry Wharton groped for the door-handle, and opened the door softly.

"Mr. Quelch!" he breathed.

There was only a sound of steady breathing in the room. The Remove-master was a sound sleeper.

Wharton could not venture to call out without alarming the cracksmen below. He whispered again, but the Form-master did not wake.

"Better shake him!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"H'm!"

Wharton stepped lightly into the room.

"Mr. Quelch!" he said, in a louder whisper.

There was the sound of a sudden movement.

"What—what is that?"

It was a startled voice from the dark bed.

"It's I, sir—Wharton!"

"Bless my soul! What are you doing here, Wharton?"

"There are burglars in the House, sir!"

"Wha-a-a-at!"

"At least, one burglar, sir. He's just got in at the hall window, and he's gone along to the Head's study."

Mr. Quelch sat up in bed.

"Is it possible? If this is an ill-timed joke, Wharton—"

"We heard him, sir," said Bob Cherry. "The rotter's at work in the Head's study this blessed minute!"

"Wait in the passage, and do not make a sound," said Mr. Quelch quietly.

"Yes, sir!"

The juniors waited in the passage. They heard Mr. Quelch groping for dressing-gown and slippers in the dark. He joined them in less than a minute.

"Remain here," he said, in a low voice. "I shall ascertain whether the window is open. Do not come down."

"We could lend a hand, sir."

"Remain here!"

Mr. Quelch went quietly down the staircase. A chill draught from the hall casement showed that it was open. The Form-master tried it with his hand, and it moved. He had no further doubt of the Removites' story.

"We're jolly well not going to be left out of it!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The burglar can have this mixture instead of Coker if we get near him!"

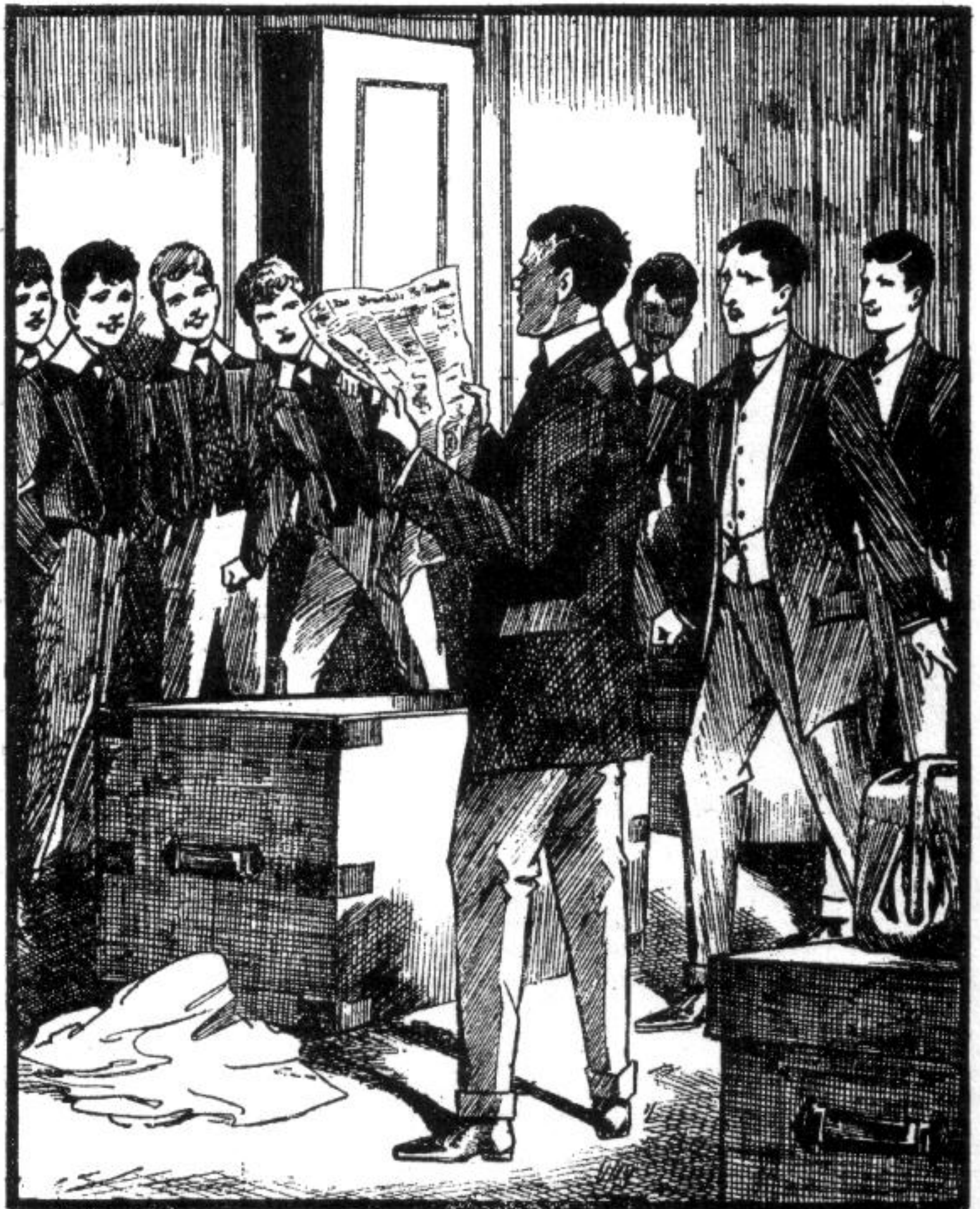
"What the dickens is Quelch doing?"

"Calling the prefects, most likely," said Johnny Bull.

The Removites listened intently. There was a faint sound of opening doors in the passage below. Evidently Mr. Quelch was awakening some of the Sixth Form to help him in dealing with the midnight intruder.

But for the Form-master's command, the juniors would have hurried down to lend assistance, quite convinced that they would be as useful as anybody in the Sixth. But the Form-master's word was law, and they had to remain in the upper passage, chafing with impatience.

They could hear footfalls now, and a muttering of voices. Wingate, Gwynne,



Coker's eyes blazed with excitement as he held the newspaper up. "Look at that!" he gasped. (See Chapter 6.)

Loder, and Carne of the Sixth had turned out at the Form-master's call, and gathered in the lower passage, armed with cricket-bats or pokers. Mr. Quelch himself had taken a poker. Thus prepared for the fray, the whole body moved along to Dr. Locke's study. Under the study door there was a faint glimmer of light.

"They're going for him!" murmured Wharton, who had ventured down far enough to peer over the banisters.

"Silly asses not to let us chip in!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The silly assfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Rain Singh. "The esteemed Remove is required on this job!"

"Hark!"

There was a sudden uproar from below. The light had been turned on downstairs, and Mr. Quelch had thrown open the door of the Head's study. The Removites would have given a good deal to be on the scene, but they could only listen.

"Surrender, you rascal!"

"That's Quelch!" muttered Nugent.

"Oh, my hat! Listen!"

There was the sound of a struggle below. Evidently the burglar was resisting. The struggle was brief. It was followed by a rapid patter of footsteps as the rascal came racing out of the study, and down the passage to the hall.

"He's got away!" ejaculated Bob.

"The duffers!"

"After him!" It was Wingate's voice.

"After him!"

Then came the tramp of rushing footsteps. The fleeing housebreaker had reached the hall window, and was plunging out headlong. Wingate of the Sixth was close upon him, however, and he grasped the rascal from behind and dragged him back. The captain of Greyfriars and the struggling rascal went to the floor together.

"Back up!" roared Wingate.

The others were rushing to his aid. But the burglar—evidently a powerful fellow—hurled Wingate off, and sprang up, glaring about him furiously. The electric light glared on him as he stood, and the juniors on the stairs caught a glimpse of a rough, bearded face.

Mr. Quelch was rushing on, with his poker uplifted, as the desperate rascal glared about him. He had no time to escape by the window—Wingate was already grasping at him again—and the passage was blocked by the prefects. The rascal turned to the stairs, and raced up them, with Wingate's outstretched hand only a few inches behind.

Harry Wharton & Co. had hardly realised that the ruffian was coming in their direction when he was upon them.

In the darkness on the landing the juniors were invisible, and the fleeing cracksmen rushed into them without seeing them.

He gave a startled gasp as he collided with the five.

Nugent and the nabob went reeling over, but Harry Wharton struck out, and his clenched fist was driven into the

bearded face. The ruffian staggered back, and as he did so Bob Cherry dashed the jug of mixture fairly in his face. A wild and spluttering gasp came from the burglar as ink and gum and treacle splashed into his eyes and nose and mouth.

"Gurrrrrgggg!"

"Collar him!" roared Johnny Bull.

The burglar staggered against the wall, gouging wildly at his eyes. He was blinded for the moment by Bob's mixture.

The juniors rushed on him, and collared him on all sides. But he shook them off with savage strength, and dashed along the passage. In the dark someone rushed into Bob Cherry, and Bob promptly collared him.

"Got him!" yelled Bob. "Lead a hand!"

"Hold on to him!"

"Down with the rotter!"

"Yaroo! Leggo, you mad young idiots!" It was George Wingate's voice.

"Lemme gerrup, hang you!"

"Oh, my hat, it's Wingate!"

The juniors released their prisoner. They had unfortunately captured the captain of Greyfriars in the dark.

"Sorry, Wingate! I thought—"

Mr. Quelch switched on the light in the passage. He gave an exclamation as his slippers squelched into the spilt mixture.

"What—what is this? But no matter! Where is the man?"

"What's the matter?"

Fellows were crowding out of the dormitories now, in amazement and alarm.

"After him!" panted Wingate. "He's headed for the box-room, I think."

The Sixth Formers rushed on in pursuit. Harry Wharton & Co. were following them, when Mr. Quelch's voice called them to order:

"You juniors go back to your dormitory at once!"

"Oh, sir!"

"At once, I say!"

And Mr. Quelch followed the seniors up the passage. The pursuers arrived in the box-room. The window was wide open, and the cold wind blew in sharply.

"Gone!" said Wingate, in great disappointment.

He stared from the window into the darkness. It was a black night, and he could not see a yard from the window. Further pursuit was evidently hopeless.

"Perhaps it is just as well," said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard. "Close the window, Wingate, and secure it!"

"Yes, sir."

"I will telephone at once to the police-station, and the rascal will be searched for!" said Mr. Quelch.

And as there was nothing further to be done, Wingate & Co., after closing the window, returned to bed. Mr. Quelch did not go back to bed at once, however. He went to the Remove dormitory. He had some questions to put to the Famous Five.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Is Alarmed!

COKER of the Fifth met Mr. Quelch in the passage. Coker was in his pyjamas, with a cricket-bat in his hand, and looked warlike.

"Is it burglars, sir?" he exclaimed.

"There has been a burglar here, Coker, but he is gone. You may go back to bed!"

"Sure he's gone, sir?"

"Yes, quite sure. Kindly return to your dormitory!"

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Coker hesitated. Coker always had a fixed belief that nothing would go quite right unless he had a hand in it.

"Perhaps I'd better search the House, sir?" he suggested. "It would be safer!"

"Perhaps you had better do nothing of the sort, Coker!" said Mr. Quelch tartly. "Kindly go back to bed at once!"

Coker gave a grunt, and retreated. He had been very anxious to get to close quarters with the burglar, and to use his cricket-bat. He snorted emphatically as he went back into the Fifth-Form dormitory.

"What was it—burglars?" yawned Potter.

"Yes," grunted Coker.

"Are they gone?" asked Greene sleepily.

"Quelch says they're gone. Very likely he's mistaken. But he's told me to go back to bed," snorted Coker.

"Well, it won't be my fault if the House is burgled to-night. I wash my hands of it!"

Some of the Fifth-Formers chuckled, and Coker snorted again, more emphatically than before, and turned in.

Meanwhile, Mr. Quelch arrived in the Remove dormitory, and found that cheery Form very wide awake. Bob Cherry was cleaning off the portion of the mixture which had not gone on the burglar.

Mr. Quelch eyed the Famous Five sternly.

"I am indebted to you for giving the alarm," he said. "Undoubtedly a robbery has been prevented. But may I inquire how you came to be out of your dormitory at such an hour of the night?"

"Ahem!"

"What is that on your hands, Cherry?"

"H'm! Ink, sir!"

"What were you doing with ink at this hour, Cherry?"

"I—I—I had it in a jug, sir."

"You had ink in a jug!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Ye-es, sir. And—and gum. I—I chucked it over the burglar, sir. I thought he ought to have it!"

"And what were you going to do with a jug of ink and gum at twelve o'clock at night, Cherry?"

Bob Cherry coughed. Really, that matter did require some explaining!

"We—we were going to see Coker, sir," stammered Wharton.

"For what reason?"

"It was a present for Coker, sir," murmured Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"You mean, I presume, that you were going to play a foolish trick on Coker of the Fifth Form in the middle of the night?" he exclaimed.

"Ye-e-e-es, sir."

"A very foolish and reckless proceeding! I should cane you severely——"

"Oh!"

"But for the fortunate chance that you discovered the burglar by being out of your dormitory!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "As it is, you will take two hundred lines each! Now go to bed, and do not let there be any repetition of this nonsense!"

"Yes, sir," mumbled the Famous Five.

"Is the burglar gone, sir?" asked Peter Todd.

"He is gone, Todd. Unfortunately, he escaped by the box-room window," said Mr. Quelch. "You need not be under any uneasiness. All is safe now. Good-night, my boys!"

"Good-night, sir!"

Mr. Quelch turned out the light and left the dormitory. Bob Cherry was

left to finish towelling himself in the dark.

"Well, that's gratitude!" ejaculated Nugent. "Two hundred lines! We'll let the next burglar rip, I think!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, you were asses to let him get away, you know," said Billy Bunter. "Why didn't you call me?"

"Fathead!"

"I should have laid him by the heels, you know," said Bunter confidently. "You can cackle, you silly asses! If he hadn't gone, I'd jolly well show you!"

"Perhaps he hasn't gone," said Frank Nugent. "Now I come to think of it, he may have dodged into a dormitory—into this one, perhaps."

"Quite possible," said Bob Cherry, with great seriousness. "Might be hiding under a bed at this very minute!"

"You—you rotters, you—you're spoofing!" stuttered Bunter. "You know jolly well he isn't here!"

"Did you hear a sound, Wharton?" asked Nugent, in a thrilling whisper.

"Yes."

"Seemed to come from Bunter's bed, didn't it?"

"I thought so."

Billy Bunter sat up, palpitating.

"He—he isn't here!" he stammered. "You know he isn't! You—you didn't hear anything, you beasts!"

"I certainly heard a sound from your bed, Bunter," said Peter Todd.

He was alluding to Bunter's voice, but he did not explain that detail.

"Yow-ow! L-look under my bed, Bob!"

"No fear! You look under it!"

"I say, Bolsover, look under my bed!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Squiff, old chap, you've got more pluck than those funks—look under my bed!" mumbled Bunter.

"Oh, all right!" said Sampson Quincy Ifley Field, turning out. "Anything to oblige!"

Squiff came groping towards Bunter's bed, and stooped down beside it. Billy Bunter blinked at him in the darkness.

"Oh, crumbs!" ejaculated Squiff.

"Wha-a-at is it?"

"I felt something!" gasped Squiff.

"Yaroo! What was it?"

"A—a—a foot!" gasped Squiff; and he jumped away from the bed.

A howl of terror came from Billy Bunter. He bounded out of bed, and rolled on the floor, tangled in blankets.

"Help! Yaroo! Burglars! Yow-ow!"

"Shut up, you ass!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You'll have Quelch's back here!"

"Yaroo! Help!" shrieked Bunter.

"Dry up! There isn't a burglar!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Yow! Help! He's got hold of me!"

"I've got hold of you, you fat idiot!" growled Peter Todd. "And I'll bang your silly head on the floor if you make another sound!"

"Grooh! Keep him off, Toddy!"

"There isn't any him, you fat duffer! Get into bed," said Peter. "If Quelch comes back I'll pulverise you!"

"B-b-but Wharton heard something from my bed!"

"Only your voice, you owl!" said Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" howled Bunter. "B-b-but Squiff felt a foot there; he said so!"

"It was my own foot," explained Sampson Quincy Ifley Field.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you spoofing beast!" yelled Bunter. "Of—of course, I knew

you were spoofing all the time. I—I'll bet you thought I was frightened, too!"

"We jolly well did!" chuckled Bob.

"And so you were, you fat Owl!"

Billy Bunter, quite reassured now, crawled back into bed.

"I say, you fellows, I knew you were spoofing," he remarked. "I just played up, you know! He, he, he!"

"Shut up, you fat Prussian!"

"And I think it was jolly funky of you to let the burglar get away!" said Bunter calmly. "If I had been there——"

Whiz! A boot whirled through the air, and there was a howl from the Owl of the Remove.

"Yaroo! What beast chucked that boot at me?"

"I did!" growled Johnny Bull. "And if you don't stop gassing, you'll get the other!"

"Beast!"

And Billy Bunter settled down to sleep, and was soon snoring. Most of the Removites went to sleep also, but Harry Wharton remained awake. A strange thought was in the mind of the captain of the Remove, and he could not resign himself to slumber.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Tracked Down!

"BOB!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" mumbled Bob Cherry.

"Wake up, old chap!"

"Yaw-aw! I'm awake! Wharrer marrer?"

"Burglars again?" came a yawn from Frank Nugent.

"I don't know."

That reply from Harry Wharton made Bob and Nugent sit up and rub their eyes. They peered towards the bed of the captain of the Remove. The rest of the juniors were fast asleep.

"Heard something?" asked Bob.

"No; I've been thinking."

"Oh, my hat! Leave it till to-morrow. 'Tain't the time for thinking now."

"About that rotter, Bob. They supposed he cleared off because the box-room window was open and they didn't see him."

"Well, he did clear off, didn't he?"

"Suppose he didn't?"

"Suppose your merry grandmother!" grunted Bob Cherry. "Of course he did! Give up supposing, and go to sleep! We shan't want to turn out at rising-bell at this rate!"

"I don't know that he's gone," said Harry quietly. "Spoofing Bunter put it into my head. He could easily have opened the window, and then dodged into some corner."

"Well, I suppose he could," admitted Bob.

"They didn't see him, you know. He had vanished before they got to the box-room after him. He seemed to be a desperate sort of rotter, and he might have dodged behind something."

"They must have looked round the box-room."

"He might even have dodged into an empty box. Some of them are big enough. Mauly's whacking big trunk, for instance."

"Well, I suppose he might."

"I don't say he has," said Harry. "But it's possible, at least, that the rotter is still in the house. And Quelch has gone back to bed. What price looking into it?"

"Ahem!"

"I don't mean searching the house from top to bottom, of course. But you remember you bunged the mixture on him. I fancy he can't move about with-

out leaving signs of it. If he's been hiding, and he's in the house, we shall find some signs of the mixture in the box-room."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Well, that's so," he agreed. "It won't take many minutes to get a squint into the box-room. Better get some matches."

"I'll borrow Smithy's electric torch—it's on his washstand," said Harry, slipping out of bed. "No need to wake the others."

"Right-ho!"

The three juniors hastily put on their trousers and jackets. It was possible, at least, that Wharton's suspicion was well-founded, and it was uncomfortable to think of settling down to sleep with a desperate ruffian perhaps still lurking in the rambling old building.

Wharton opened the dormitory door quietly, and the three juniors stepped out into the dark passage. They listened for a few moments, but there was no sound. Evidently Mr. Quelch had gone back to bed.

With the Bounder's electric torch in his hand ready to turn on the light, the captain of the Remove led the way to the box-room.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Listen! Somebody else up!"

From somewhere in the darkness came the sound of a loud whisper.

"Don't make a row, Greene, you ass!"

"Look here, Coker——"

"And don't you jaw, Potter!"

"I don't want to jaw! I want to get back to bed!" came Potter's surly voice.

"And leave the giddy burglar to burgle the safe if he's still in the house!" sneered Coker.

"He ain't in the house, fathead!"

"Well, my opinion is that he very likely is," said Coker. "I don't place much reliance on those Sixth Form chaps. They're all duffers!"

"Oh, rats!"

"If you're funky, Potter——"

"I'm not funky, you silly chump! But my feet are jolly nearly freezing!"

"Oh, blow your feet!"

The chums of the Remove chuckled silently. Horace Coker of the Fifth evidently shared their suspicion that the housebreaker might still be on the premises. His reason was not exactly the same as theirs, as it was merely founded upon a distrust of the judgment of everybody but Horace Coker. The determined Horace had only waited for Mr. Quelch to go back to his room, and then he had routed out his reluctant chums to join in a search of the house.

"They're coming this way!" murmured Nugent. "The silly asses are jawing enough to alarm all the burglars in Kent!"

"Come on!" muttered Wharton.

The three Removites hurried on silently to the box-room, Coker & Co. groping their way more slowly in the same direction.

Wharton opened the box-room door and flashed on the electric torch.

The room, with its empty boxes and trunks and lumber, was dark and silent. But traces of the inky and treachy mixture were plainly visible on the floor as Wharton flashed the light downwards.

The chums of the Remove blinked round them rather uneasily. There was one trunk, at least, that had ample space for a burglar to be hidden in it—a gigantic structure that belonged to Lord Mauleverer. Bob Cherry uttered a suppressed exclamation.

He pointed to the big trunk. There was a smear of the mixture on the lid, quite visible now that Wharton held the light close.

The juniors exchanged quick glances.

The big trunk did not lie in the way from the door to the window. If the ruffian had fled at once by the window, as his pursuers had supposed, how came that stain on the trunk? Evidently the burglar's hand, stained by the streaming mixture, had touched it. A thrill ran through the juniors as they realised that the ruffian was probably at that very moment concealed in the trunk, under their eyes!

From the landing outside a sudden exclamation was heard.

"There's a light! He's there, Potter!"

"Great Scott!"

It was Wharton's light Coker had seen from the passage.

Wharton stepped quickly to the door. If the burglar was really there, the presence of the Fifth-Formers would be useful.

"There he is!" panted Coker. "Rush him!"

"My hat!"

"Coker, you ass——"

"Wharton!" ejaculated Coker. "You confounded young ass, what are you doing here?"

"Quiet!" said Harry, in hurried tones. "I think the burglar's still here, Coker."

"I feel pretty certain of it!" growled Coker.

"What rot!" growled Potter.

"Look here, I'm going back to bed!" said Greene sulkily. "I'm not going chasing about the house with a gang of fags!"

"Those fags are going back to their dorm!" said Coker darkly. "I'll lick 'em if they don't! Now, then, you young rascals——"

"Oh, do shut up!" said Wharton. "Come in quietly! I think very likely the burglar's hidden in that trunk."

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Coker. "Burglars don't hide in trunks! Search round the room, you chaps, and keep those stumps handy."

"Stand round the trunk while I open it," said Wharton.

"Rot!"

"You silly ass, Coker!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "We've tracked the merry burglar to this trunk, and—— My hat!"

Probably the voices had reached the interior of the closed trunk. The lid flew up suddenly while Bob was speaking, and a crouching form leaped up.

"Look out!" yelled Wharton.

"M-m-my hat!" stuttered Coker, in amazement.

The burly form darted for the doorway, which was wide open. The juniors sprang after it, and Coker dashed forward at the same moment and blundered into them. There was a crash as they rolled to the floor together, and loud yells. The cracksman darted out of the box-room and fled.

"Yow-ow! Gerroff my chest!" howled Coker.

"You silly ass!"

"After him!"

"It—it—it's the burglar, after all!" stuttered Greene.

"After him!" bellowed Coker scrambling up. "You silly fags, to get in my way!"

"You howling ass, you got in our way!" roared Bob.

"Oh, my hat!"

"After him!"

Fifth-Formers and juniors rushed out of the box-room together. They could hear the fleeing ruffian pounding and panting along in the darkness.

"He's gone downstairs!" roared Coker. "Come on!"

"What is it? What is this?" It was Mr. Quelch's voice.

"The burglar, sir!"

Crash!

There was a terrific sound of smashing glass below.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

They rushed down the stairs. But they arrived too late. The hall window was smashed, and Wharton's light gleamed for a moment upon a dark figure that tumbled out, and vanished into the shadows of the quadrangle. The burglar was really gone this time!

Coker came to a halt at the window, panting.

"What rotten luck! He's gone!"
"Bless my soul!" Mr. Quelch was amazed. "Was—was the man still in the House? Is it possible?"

"I thought he might be, sir," said Coker loftily. "I made Potter and Greene come out and look for him. We found him in a trunk in the box-room."

"You did?" murmured Bob Cherry. "My hat!"

"Dear me, you juniors are up again!" said Mr. Quelch.

"We found the burglar, sir," said Harry. "It occurred to me that he might have hidden in a trunk, after opening the window, to make believe he had gone."

"Bless my soul! That was very thoughtful of you, Wharton. I confess that it did not occur to me," said Mr. Quelch. "You should have come to me, however—you might have been seriously hurt. Go back to your dormitory now. No, I am not angry with you, but, please, go back to bed at once! I shall telephone for an officer to be sent here at once."

"Yes, sir!"
"I'd better stay up till the police come, sir," said Coker.

"Not at all, Coker. I will call Wingate."

"Wingate hasn't much sense, sir," said Coker anxiously. "I'm really a more suitable chap for a job like this—"

"Go to bed, Coker, please!"

"Come on!" growled Potter, taking Horace Coker by the arm and dragging him away. And Coker, snorting emphatically, went.

Harry Wharton & Co. returned to the Remove dormitory, to find the room in a buzz.

"More burglars?" asked Peter Todd.
"No—same chap," said Harry. And he explained.

"Why didn't you call us?" growled Johnny Bull. "Now you've let him get away again—unless he's hidden once more."

"No; he smashed the window, and we saw him bolt."

"I say, you fellows"—Bunter sat up—"you might really have called me! If I'd got near him, I'd have given him one blow—"

"Look out!" shrieked Bob Cherry. "Here he comes—in at the door, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter gave a wild yell and dived under the bedclothes. The Removites, clunking, settled down to sleep, while Bunter palpitated under the blankets. About five minutes later a quavering voice was heard:

"I—I—I say, you fellows, is he gone?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You spoofing rotters—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Billy Bunter grunted, and laid his head on the pillow, reassured. And that eventful night finished without any further alarm.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A New Role for Horace!

THERE was only one topic among the Greyfriars fellows the following morning.

That was the attempted burglary at the school.

Police-constable Tozer, of Friardale, had been to Greyfriars in the small hours, and had made notes, and departed. That was all Mr. Tozer had done, so far.

The housebreaker had made good his escape. After the trouble and alarm he had caused, his escape was exasperating enough. And although Mr. Tozer and Inspector Grimes, who came over later, held out hopes of his capture, there seemed to be no immediate prospect of it.

The Remove fellows rather prided themselves on that night's events. It was certainly due to the Remove that a burglary had been prevented.

Coker of the Fifth, however, did not take that view. By means of some mental process comprehensive only to himself, the great Horace had worked it out, to his own satisfaction, that he was the fellow to whom credit was due.

Coker's opinion of himself was always good; but that morning it was higher than ever. Potter and Greene were treated to Coker's views on the subject at great length, till they were bored almost to tears.

Coker wore a very thoughtful look when the Fifth Form came out after dinner. He stopped to inspect the broken Hall window, upon which a man from Friardale was already busy. Potter and Greene would gladly have escaped, but Coker called to them.

"Come here, you chaps! Look at this!"

"We were going to get some footer before dinner," Potter remarked.

Coker snorted.

"In fact, Blundell wants us," said Greene.

Another snort from Coker. The wants of Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, were a very small matter in Coker's estimation. Indeed, if distinctions went by merit, Coker himself would have been captain of the Fifth—at least, he was firmly assured of that.

"Never mind Blundell," said Coker. "There's something more important than Blundell to think about, and something more important than footer! Talk about Julius Cæsar fiddling while Carthage was burning!"

Potter and Greene chortled.

"I don't remember talking about Julius Cæsar fiddling while Carthage was burning," said Greene. "I suppose you mean Napoleon fiddling while Athens was burning, don't you?"

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Coker. "This is a serious matter. Look at that window!"

"It's broken," said Potter, inspecting it.

"The burglar smashed it last night, shoving through," said Coker. "I think he must have cut himself a bit."

"Shouldn't wonder. Serve him right!"

"I should think he would want some sticking-plaster," remarked Potter. "Serve the cad right! Chap oughtn't to burgle in war time."

"He jolly nearly robbed the school!" said Coker. "Might have cleared off

with the Greyfriars plate, and the Head's war bonds, and things."

"He would have done it if those Remove kids hadn't been up," said Potter. "I've heard the cheeky little brutes coming to our dorm, with a jug of ink for somebody."

"I wonder whom," grinned Greene. "Still, it was lucky they were up, as it turns out. They prevented a robbery."

Coker snorted more emphatically than before.

"Try to talk sense!" he suggested. "I prevented the robbery!"

"You did!" ejaculated Potter and Greene together.

"Yes. If I hadn't routed you fellows out and discovered that ruffian hidden in the trunk—"

"You discovered him?"

"Yes. Why, you were present—you know I did!"

"I—I thought it was the Remove kids—"

"Don't be an ass, George Potter!"

"Why, you cackled at them for suggesting that the rotter was hidden in the trunk!" exclaimed Greene.

"I might have treated them with contempt, as they deserved," said Coker calmly. "I believe in keeping fags in their places. But the fact remains that I discovered the burglar, and should have caught him if those young duffers hadn't got in my way!"

"I thought you rushed into them."

"I suppose you can't help being an ass, Green—"

"Eh?"

"But you needn't shout it out. No need to tell all Greyfriars!" said Coker crushingly.

"Well, my hat! Of all the—"

"I'm going to take this matter in hand," said Coker. "That old ass Tozer can't do anything. Grimes can't, either. I haven't much faith in the police. Grimes is a silly fool, too—I happen to know that."

"How do you happen to know that?" inquired Potter.

"I asked him why he wasn't in khaki, as he's of military age," explained Coker.

"Instead of giving me a sensible reply, he said he would report me to the Head for being impertinent to an official. Me impertinent, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to cackle at. It comes to this—that a burglar has tried to burgle Greyfriars, and got away, and he may try again. He seems to be a very determined beggar, to judge by the way he stuck to it last night. Well, I'm not going to have the school burgled. It's up to me!" said Coker impressively.

"What's up to you?" asked Greene, with a stare.

"Catching that burglar!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"That rather surprises you—what?" asked Coker, with some complacency.

"Yes, a bit. I thought I knew every kind of ass you were—"

"What?" roared Coker.

"I—I mean, it's a jolly good idea!" said Potter hastily, as Coker pushed back his cuffs. "How are you going to do it? Put some salt on his tail? I've heard that that's a way."

"I'm going to catch him," said Coker.

"You chaps can help me. I may want some help at the finish; he might be too much for me in a tussle. Of course, you won't be able to help me in the investigations; that requires brains. But you can take a hand, and it may do you good to study my methods."

"Your—your methods?" said Potter faintly.

"My methods," said Coker, with a nod.

"I've often thought that a chap with my clear insight, keen penetration, and con-

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centration of mind is simply cut out for a detective."

"A—a—a—a detective?"

"Certainly! Not that I should care to be a detective; rather too sneaky a business, going round watching people, and all that. But this case is different. Here's a beastly thief tries to rob the school—the school I belong to. The police can't catch him; I know that."

"How do you know it?"

"I do know it," said Coker, in a tone of finality. "What a chap you are for arguing, Potter! Blessed if you wouldn't argue the hind leg off a mule! The police can't touch the man, and he may burgle Greyfriars again. I consider that, under the circumstances, I am justified in tracking him down."

"Tut-tut-tracking him down?" stammered Potter.

"And laying him by the heels."

"Oh, great Joseph!"

"You can back me up," said Coker condescendingly. "You can improve your minds by studying my methods—same as Dr. Watson does with Sherlock Holmes, you know."

Potter and Greene chuckled.

"I see. We say 'Wonderful!' or 'Marvellous!' every time you jaw," remarked Greene. "Sort of faithful echo."

Coker did not heed.

"I'm not a chap to brag," he continued.

"You're not!" ejaculated Potter, in astonishment.

"No!" roared Coker.

"My mistake," said Potter blandly. "Go on!"

"I'm not a chap to brag," said Coker, with a glare at Potter, "but I must say that a job like this requires a fellow with brains, plenty of brains, keen insight, and all that. And I'm the fellow. I wouldn't think of boasting, but there are few things I couldn't do if I set my mind to them. I've met with a lot of jealousy because of that. You know why Wingate keeps me out of the First Eleven?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"They never give me a chance of speaking in the debating society, either. Sheer jealousy!" said Coker. "I've no doubt that there'll be a lot of cackling when it gets out that I'm tracking down this burglar —"

"Ha, ha!" roared Potter. "There will; no mistake about that."

"I shall regard it with contempt. I'm used to that kind of thing."

"You ought to be by this time," agreed Potter.

"I shall simply keep on, regardless, and when I catch that burgling rotter, the fellows will cackle the other side of their mouths."

"When!" murmured Greene.

"And I'm taking the matter up at once," said Coker briskly. "Come on!"

"On the track already?" grinned Potter.

"Well, not exactly on the track. I'm going to look for clues. You come along, and don't jaw!" said Coker.

Coker marched off upstairs, and Potter and Greene, exchanging a wink, followed him. They were used to Coker, and had fancied that they knew every kind of duffer the great Horace was; but he had succeeded in surprising them once more.

Coker in his new role seemed likely to prove entertaining, and his loyal chums decided to give him his head and study his "methods."

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Clue!

HORACE COKER marched into the box-room, with a countenance that was serious, not to say solemn. His look contrasted with that of Potter and Greene, who were neither serious nor solemn. But Coker, as he had said, was accustomed to light-minded hilarity from inferior intellects.

Coker had lately been reading of the weird and wonderful exploits of Sherlock Holmes, and his opinion was that he could play Holmes at his own game and beat him hollow. Indeed, there were few things Coker could not do, if his own estimation of his powers was to be taken as correct. Coker's programme was mapped out. While the police were seeking after the burglar in their usual blundering way, Coker was to bring his mighty brain to bear upon the matter, detect the criminal, collar him, and hand him over, much to the astonishment of the police. He would do it in a careless sort of way, with scarcely an effort, as it were. In his mind's eye he could see the surprise, chagrin, and envy in Inspector Grimes' face when the burglar was handed over. It would be a fitting punishment for the inspector's rude reply to Coker's innocent question as to why he wasn't in khaki.

There were some of the Remove in the box-room when Coker & Co. arrived, and Coker eyed them with great disfavour. The Famous Five happened to be there, packing a box for the Front, and they were very busy.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Come to lend a hand, Coker? Sit on this box while we cord it, will you?"

Coker frowned.

"You fags clear out!" he commanded.

"Bow-wow!"

"I've come here to work," said Coker. "I can't be bothered by fags hanging about. Are you going, or do you want to be booted out?"

Harry Wharton & Co. chortled.

"You'd better boot us out, I think, Coker," remarked Wharton.

"Go ahead!" said Johnny Bull. "Perhaps the boot will be on the other leg by the time you've finished."

"Perhaps the bootfulness will be terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "Pile infully my esteemed and ludicrous Coker!"

The Famous Five lined up all ready to be booted out. Coker paused, however. The booting out did not seem likely to be an easy task. Coker decided that he hadn't any time to waste on fags.

"Well, shut up!" he said. "Don't jaw while I'm at work here."

"What the dickens work are you going to do in our box-room?" said Nugent.

"There's another box-room in your passage. Buzz off there!"

"Dry up!"

"Don't interrupt Coker," said Potter, with great gravity. "Coker is looking for clues. He is going to track down the burglar."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

"Shut up!" roared Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker turned his back on the juniors with a snort. It was said of old that a prophet is un-honoured in his own country, and certainly nobody at

Greyfriars ever seemed inclined to take the great Coker seriously. Even these cheeky fags appeared to look upon Coker's new role as a gigantic joke.

But Horace was in deadly earnest. Taking no further heed of the Remove, he proceeded to work. Harry Wharton & Co. left the parcel for the Front unfinished. They determined to watch Coker, and let the parcel wait a little. Coker as a detective was, as Bob remarked, as good as anything in "Chuckles."

Coker's purpose was set. His programme was mapped out, but perhaps a little vaguely. He seemed slightly at a loss how to begin. He looked round the box-room, and looked round it again, knitting his brows in deep thought. Potter and Greene and the juniors watched him with great interest.

Coker crossed to the window at last and examined it with minute attention. He shook his head as he turned from it.

"No fingermarks," he observed.

"Awfully careless of the burglar," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Nothing here but a daub of ink," said Coker, scanning the window again. He turned away from it, in deep thought.

The juniors chuckled. The daub of ink on the window had been made by the inky hand of the burglar, reeking with Bob Cherry's mixture. That detail had not occurred to Coker's mighty brain.

Coker next examined the big trunk in which the marauder had hidden himself.

"Blessed if there isn't a smudge of ink on this!" he exclaimed. "Have you fags been playing tricks here? You ought to leave everything quite undisturbed, you young idiots. My hat, if there isn't ink in the trunk, too!" exclaimed Coker, as he raised the lid.

"Now, I wonder how that ink can have got there?" said Bob Cherry.

"The burglar must have been inked somehow," said Nugent. "That's a clue, Coker. Look for a burglar who goes about inky—"

"Shut up!" growled Coker. "Oh, my hat!"

Coker fairly pounced upon the trunk as he uttered that exclamation. He jerked out something that was lying in the bottom of the trunk. It was a folded newspaper. Coker's eyes blazed with excitement as he held it up.

"Look at that!" he gasped.

"An old newspaper," said Greene.

"It's a clue."

"A which?"

"A clue!" said Coker. "The burglar must have dropped that when he was crouching in the trunk."

The Famous Five looked curiously at the newspaper. It was an old number of the "Friardale Gazette," a local paper. It was greasy and dirty, and looked as if it had been used for wrapping sandwiches.

"My hat!" said Johnny Bull. "The burglar may have left that there. Somebody must have. It doesn't belong to Mauly."

"Grimes looked at the trunk when he was here," remarked Wharton.

"Oh, Grimes!" said Coker contemptuously. "You wouldn't expect a policeman to see a clue like this. I dare say he thought the newspaper had been used for packing something in the trunk, and belonged to the owner. You should hear the way Sherlock Holmes talks about the police. In the books, I mean, of course. Grimes has overlooked this—a most important clue."

"The importance is terrific," remarked the nabob. "It is clearful as daylight that the burglar is a reader of the 'Friardale Gazette.' All the esteemed Coker has to do is to call on all readers

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of that esteemed paper, and pick out the man."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker did not heed. He was examining the paper with scrupulous care. He gave a sudden yell of delight.

"Hurrah!"

"Another clue, Coker?"

Coker, too excited to speak, pointed to a pencil scrawl on the margin of the paper. It was a name and an address, scrawled in pencil.

"J. Clinker, Priory Lane."

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Comes in Useful!

COKER'S eyes fairly danced. He had felt instinctively that he was more fitted by Nature to handle this difficult case than a common or garden police-inspector. His instinct had been true. In ten minutes he had found a clue, which had escaped the eyes of the professionals, though it lay under their very noses.

There was the old newspaper, which had evidently fallen from the burglar's pocket while he was squeezed in the trunk. There was the name and address written on it. No wonder Coker's heart was thumping with excitement! No wonder his eyes danced!

"Well, my hat!" said Potter, with a little more respect in his manner. "You really have found something, Coker."

"Didn't I tell you so?" chortled Coker. "My hat! Old Grimes will look yellow and green when I nail that ruffian and march him into the police-station! Fancy Grimes overlooking a clue like this!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry. "Three cheers for Sherlock Coker! What a thoughtful chap the burglar was, to write down his name and address and leave it here! I didn't know burglars were so jolly careful as all that."

"I dare say he hadn't a visiting-card with him," remarked Wharton. "This was the next best thing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker gave a sniff.

"That may be the burglar's name, or it mayn't," he said. "More likely the name of some confederate, that he's jotted down to remember it. It's one of the gang, though; that's clear enough."

"I shouldn't wonder," assented Greene.

Both Potter and Greene felt that they had not quite done Coker justice. It could not be denied that Coker had found that paper, when the inspector from Courtfield hadn't. It was curious enough that Inspector Grimes had missed it, but evidently he must have missed it, or it wouldn't have been still there. Perhaps it was a case of "fool's luck"; but, still, there was no denying the fact that Coker had found the clue, and that Inspector Grimes hadn't.

Coker's hands were trembling with excitement as he scrutinised the paper, turning it over and inside out, scanning every corner of it. But it held no further clue.

"This is pretty good to begin on," said Coker, at last. "Mr. J. Clinker, of Priory Lane, will get rather a surprise shortly, I fancy! Come on, you fellows!"

Coker & Co. quitted the box-room.

"Good old Coker!" said Bob Cherry. "I wonder who left the paper in the trunk."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Queer about that name being written on it, though," said Nugent.

"Ahem! I believe it's a custom for

newsagents to write addresses on the margin of a paper, to make delivery easy," said Bob. "The Head's 'Times' always comes here with 'Greyfriars' scrawled on the top."

"Why, of course it does! And Prout's 'Morning Post' always has 'Mr. Prout' written on the top of the front page!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Still, the burglar may have written down his name and address specially for Coker. He may have foreseen that Coker was going to take up the Sherlock Holmes bizney. If he's a good-natured burglar, he wouldn't like to disappoint Coker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five finished fastening up the box, and carried it away with them. As they came along the Remove passage, they met Squiff, who had a cricket-stump in his hand, and a wrathful frown on his brow.

"Seen Bunter?" demanded Squiff.

"No. What's the row?"

"Some rotter has raided my sandwiches," growled Squiff. "I had them done up all ready in my study, and I thought they were safe in the cupboard. I gave Mrs. Mible two bob for those sandwiches. I'm going up the cliffs this afternoon with Browney and Delarey, and we wanted them. Now I've got to get a fresh lot. I'm going to slaughter Bunter first. Of course it was Bunter!"

And the Australian junior proceeded to look for Bunter and for vengeance. The Famous Five went on their way. They met Billy Bunter as they came out of the school gates. The fat junior blinked at them uneasily through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, have you seen Squiff?" he asked.

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"Is he looking for me?"

"Yes—with a cricket-stump," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ow! I—I say, did he say anything about sandwiches?" stammered Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha! He did!"

"Skinner said he was looking for me, about some sandwiches," mumbled the Owl of the Remove. "Of course, I don't know anything about his sandwiches. As if I'd touch his rotten sandwiches! Besides, I was awfully hungry—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I had to have a snack, and and I happened to look into his cupboard, and—and—I mean, of course, that I don't know anything about the matter at all. That's what I meant to say."

"You'd better explain that to Squiff," grinned Bob.

"I—I don't think I shall go in for a bit," said Bunter. "I hope the beast is going out. I say, what's in that box, Wharton?"

"Grub!" said Wharton.

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

"If you're going on a picnic, I don't mind coming with you, old fellow. Rather cold weather for a picnic, but never mind. I'll come!"

"Fathead! We're taking this box down to the post-office. Can't you see it's labelled?"

"Isn't that rather a waste in war-time?" asked Bunter.

"Waste—sending tommy to the Front?" exclaimed Bob indignantly.

"Nunno; of course not! What I meant to say was, I'll carry the box for you, if you like," said Bunter. "Don't you chaps worry about going to the post-office. It's a long walk, you know, and I know you'd rather be at footer. I'll take it for you like a bird."

"That's awfully good of you, Bunter,"

said Bob Cherry, with a wink to his chums that the short-sighted Owl did not observe.

"Well, the fact is, I'd do anything for old pals like you chaps," said Bunter affectionately. "I don't mind the trouble, especially as it's for the Tommies. Hand me the box, Wharton, old fellow!"

"It's rather heavy," said Wharton.

"I don't mind a bit."

Bunter eyed the box almost wolfishly. It was less than an hour since dinner, but Bunter was ready for another meal; he was always ready for a meal. If that box of tuck had been entrusted to Bunter's greedy hands, it was exceedingly doubtful if any portion of its contents would have travelled very far on the way to Flanders; or, rather, it was quite certain that it wouldn't. Not that Bunter would have thought of scoffing tuck intended for the soldiers. He would have intended fully to make it up out of his next postal-order. He would have kept the box very carefully, with the express intention of re-filling it and posting it when his postal-order arrived.

"Sure you don't mind?" asked Harry.

"Not a bit."

"Here you are, then!"

Wharton handed over the box. It weighed seven pounds, which was quite enough for Bunter if he had to carry it far. But Bunter would have been pleased if it had weighed half a hundred-weight. He did not intend to carry it far; only far enough out of sight of the owners.

His eyes almost bulged through his spectacles with greedy satisfaction as he took the box. He could scarcely believe in his good luck.

"Not too heavy for you?" asked Bob.

"Not a bit!"

"It's rather a long walk to the post-office, you know."

"Oh, I'm a good walker!"

"Well, if you can manage it all right—"

"Right as rain!"

"Off you go, then!"

Billy Bunter shouldered the box, and started down the lane. To his surprise and annoyance, the Famous Five strolled along with him. Bunter halted, and blinked at them.

"Ain't you fellows going to footer?" he asked.

"Not at all. We're going to Friardale."

"No need for you to come, if I take this box to the post-office."

"Oh, we're going, anyway!" said Bob sweetly.

Billy Bunter's fat face was a study for some moments. The Famous Five chortled in chorus.

"You — you — you —" stammered Bunter. "Look here, I don't want you to come!"

"I dare say you don't," smiled Bob. "but we're coming, all the same! Get along with the box!"

"You're coming all the way to the post-office?" bawled Bunter.

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Then you can jolly well carry your blessed box yourself!" growled Bunter.

"I'm not going to carry it for you! Here you are!"

"You are going to carry it!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You offered to, and you're going to do it! You'll make us believe that you had designs on that box, Bunter."

"Nunno! But—but—"

"Get along!"

"Look here, I'm not going to carry this box!" roared Bunter. "Besides, it's a long way to Friardale. I don't like long walks!"

"You should have thought of that a bit sooner. my fat pippin! Get a move on!"

"Look here——"

"Don't put the box down, Bunter. If you do you'll get bumped!"

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"A bumping every time you put the box down," said Cherry cheerfully, "and a kick every time you stop—like that!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Or like that!"

"Yow-owooooop!"

"Hadn't you better be getting along, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter gave the humorous Bob a glare which almost cracked his spectacles. But Bob was raising his heavy boot again, and the Owl of the Remove decided that he had better be getting along. He got along.

With a face like a Hun, Billy Bunter rolled down the lane, with the box on his fat shoulder. The box weighed only seven pounds, but it seemed to grow heavier and heavier as the fat junior proceeded. Bunter was not a good walker, neither was he an athlete. He halted at last, and turned a furious and perspiring face upon the grinning Removites.

"Look here, you rotters—— Yaroooh! Keep your feet away from me, Cherry, you beast!"

"Go it, you chaps!" said Bob. "Don't leave it all to me."

"Yaroooh! Leave off! I'm going on, ain't I?" yelled Bunter.

And he went on.

Bunter was in a state of perspiration and fury by the time the village post-office was reached. There Bob Cherry kindly relieved him of the box.

"Thanks awfully, Bunter! You've done your good turn for to-day," said Bob genially. "We're bringing another box down to-morrow; you can carry that, too, if you like."

Billy Bunter did not reply. He had no breath to reply with. He gave Bob Cherry a look that Von Tirpitz might have envied, and rolled, gasping, away. It was not probable that he would turn up on the morrow to carry the next box for the Front. Bunter was fed-up with boxes for the Front.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Inky Has an Idea!

THERE was quite a thoughtful expression upon the dusky face of the Nabob of Bhanipur as the Famous Five came out of the post office. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh had been thinking.

"My esteemed chums," he remarked, "it is a half-holiday this merry afternoon, and I have a wheezy good idea for improving the shineful hour."

"Go it, Inky!"

"The esteemed and ludicrous Coker has found a clue to the disgusting burglar. He is certain to follow up that clue this afternoon."

The juniors chuckled.

"Quite certain," said Bob. "He will be tracking down J. Clinker, of Priory Lane, whoever he may happen to be. I know where Priory Lane is, but I've never heard of J. Clinker."

"What's the idea, Inky?" asked Wharton. "If it's a jape on cheery old Horace we're on! He was born to have his leg pulled!"

"The wheezy scheme is to find out Mr. Clinker before the esteemed Coker gets there," explained Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "I do not think that Mr. Clinker is really the esteemed burglar——"

"Ha, ha! Of course he isn't!"

"He's the chap that copy of the 'Friardale Gazette' was delivered to,"

grinned Bob. "I dare say he chucked it away, and somebody used it as waste paper. But what are we going to do with J. Clinker?"

"We shall discoverfully find what kind of a sahib the esteemed Clinker is, and if we think he is not the burglar——"

"Of course he isn't, fathead! Get on!"

"Then we will rag him a little——"

"Rag him! What for?"

"To make him in an esteemed infuriated temper by the time the noble Coker comes along to track him down. Then the excellent Horace will meet with a warmful reception, and perhaps have his august nose punched!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Which will be valuable to him lessonfully," explained the nabob. "It will teach the esteemed Coker not to play the giddy ox!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, we couldn't spend a half-holiday better than in pulling Coker's leg," he remarked. "Let's go and see what sort of a merchant Clinker is, anyway. We can soon find that out."

Having decided upon that excellent method of improving the shining hour, the chums of the Remove walked away to Priory Lane. Priory Lane ran out of the old High Street of Friardale for a length of over a mile in the direction of the Priory Wood. There were houses on both sides near the village, but further on it was bordered by open fields, with a cottage here and there.

It was not a difficult task to find out where Mr. Clinker lived. In a small community like Friardale everybody knew everybody else. There was a dairy at the corner of the street, and Wharton entered and asked the dairyman if he could tell him where Mr. J. Clinker lived.

"Yes, sir; we serve him," was the reply. "No. 46."

"Thank you very much!" said Harry.

He rejoined his chums in the street.

"No. 46," he said. "That's about half-way to the Priory. I wonder whether Coker is heading for the place yet? He's bound to go there."

"He hadn't left Greyfriars when we started," said Bob, with a chuckle. "I dare say it will take his mighty brain some time to think it out. Anyway, we're first in the field."

The Famous Five walked quickly up the lane, and reached No. 46. It was a small house, standing by itself, a hundred yards from any other building. The building was surrounded by a large, ill-kept garden, mostly planted with vegetables. A man with a thick, bushy beard and a somewhat forbidding face was hoeing in the garden. The juniors observed him from a distance.

"I wonder whether that's J. Clinker?" murmured Nugent. "He doesn't look a very agreeable chap to call on."

"We'll soon see," said Harry. "You chaps keep out of sight."

"Right-oh!"

The juniors kept in cover of a clump of trees near the road, while Wharton went on to the house. He lifted the latch of the garden gate, and the click caused the gardener to look up. He scowled at the sight of the junior.

"Clear off!" he called out, in a rasping voice.

Wharton looked at him.

"Are you Mr. Clinker?" he asked.

"You know I am!" growled the gardener. "And if I 'ave to come over to you I'll lay this 'oe round you!"

It was not a polite reception. Mr. Clinker was evidently a gentleman whose education had been neglected so far as manners were concerned. It was quite apparent that he did not like boys.

"Anything the matter?" asked Harry.

"I'll matter you! I dessay it was you who stole my cabbages!" growled Mr. Clinker. "Don't talk to me, you young thief!"

"Why, you cheeky old duffer!" exclaimed Wharton indignantly.

It was a little exasperating to be accused of stealing Mr. Clinker's cabbages when he had never even seen the man before. Some of the village youths had doubtless made a raid on Mr. Clinker's garden, and Mr. Clinker was prepared to see a cabbage-raider in anything in the shape of a boy.

Mr. Clinker glared, took a businesslike grip on the hoe, and came towards the Greyfriars junior. As he came closer Wharton could see that the man had been drinking. Probably that partly accounted for his exceedingly ratty temper. Wharton eyed him as he came up grimly.

"Keep that hoe to yourself, Mr. Clinker," he said quietly.

"Out you go, you young thief!"

"You silly old ass, do you think I've got an eye on your rotten cabbages," exclaimed Wharton, in great exasperation. "Oh, my hat! Great Scott!"

He jumped back as Mr. Clinker lunged at him with the hoe. He just escaped a terrific drive.

"You silly chump!" he roared. "What are you doing?"

Mr. Clinker did not explain what he was doing. He simply went on doing it. He made another drive with the hoe, and Wharton jumped back into the road. The crusty old gentleman rushed after him, lunging recklessly with the hoe, and the junior dodged and ran. There was no arguing with a hoe at close quarters, in the hands of a rough and reckless man who was under the influence of drink.

Mr. Clinker brandished the hoe in the air, shouted some expressive expressions after the junior, and returned, grunting, to the garden. Wharton joined his chums under the trees in rather a breathless state.

"Well?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"That's Clinker," said Harry. "A savage old Hun, and no mistake! He went for me with the hoe. You saw him. I hadn't said a word. Somebody's been stealing his cabbages."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ragfulness would be the proper caper," remarked the nabob.

Wharton nodded.

"I think that old boulder wants ragging, if anybody ever did," he said. "He's started it, and we'll keep it up. By the time Coker gets here, Mr. Clinker will be in a bad temper, I rather think."

And the chums of the Remove proceeded to lay their plans for the exasperation of the obnoxious Mr. Clinker—all ready for Coker of the Fifth, when he came along investigating.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Getting Ready for Coker!

MR. CLINKER was hoeing again, and grunting savagely over his work, when Johnny Bull stopped at the gate. Johnny did not enter. He had too much respect for the hoe. He leaned on the gate, and called out:

"Hallo!"

Mr. Clinker looked round.

"Clear off!" he roared.

"Are you Mr. Clinker?"

"I'll show you whether I'm Mr. Clinker or not, if I get near you with this 'ere 'oe!" exclaimed the gardener.

"I only want to ask you a question," said Johnny Bull pacifically.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 473.

"Wot is it, drat you?"
 "Do you read the 'Friardale Gazette'?"
 "Eh? Yes. Wot about it?"
 "Have you paid for your last copy?"
 "Wot?"
 "Have you paid for your last copy?"
 asked Johnny Bull. "I'm not satisfied with you, Mr. Clinker."

Mr. Clinker gave a glare, and made a rush. Johnny Bull skipped back into the road, and Mr. Clinker brandished the hoe over the gate.

"Let me git near you!" he roared.
 "Thanks, I'd rather not, Clinker!"
 "I'll smash you!" roared Mr. Clinker.
 "Go hon!"

The exasperated gardener opened the gate, and Johnny Bull beat a strategic retreat. Mr. Clinker shook a knuckly fist after him, and returned to his hoeing in a furious temper.

But he had not been at work five minutes when Frank Nugent strolled along and stopped at the gate.

"Hallo!" he called out.
 "Go away, drat you!" yelled the gardener.

"Are you Mr. Clinker?"
 "I—I—I—"

"Have you been drinking, Clinker?"
 Nugent dodged, and ran after he had asked that question. Mr. Clinker was chasing him with the hoe.

Mr. Clinker was breathing hard when he returned to his cabbage-patch. He had often been chivvied by the village urchins, and it had not improved his temper. He gave a snort like a war-horse as another youth came along the road and stopped at the gate. It was Bob Cherry this time.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" called out Bob genially.

"Drat you! I'll—I'll—"

"Anything the matter, Mr. Clinker?"
 "I'll show you in a minute."

"I've got a message for you, Mr. Clinker."

Mr. Clinker paused. Bob was not one of his previous visitors; and he decided to hear the message before he started with the hoe.

"Well, wot is it?" he asked
 "It's a very important message," said Bob. "You can hear it or not, just as you like."

"Give me the message, and get off, bang you!"

"Sure you want to hear it?"
 "Drat you, yes!" growled Mr. Clinker. "You're wasting my time."

"Well, here it is," said Bob, eyeing him warily. "Hadn't you better go easy on the gin at the Cross Keys?"

"Wot!" yelled Mr. Clinker.
 "Remember, it's war-time," said Bob. "If the war lasts ninety years, the result may depend on the last noggin of gin. Is it patriotic, Mr. Clinker, to be wasting gin at this crisis in the nation's history?"

Mr. Clinker did not reply to that question. He rushed at Bob like a wild bull. Bob just dodged the hoe, and fled.

"Drat you!" roared Mr. Clinker, after the fleeing junior. "You come round 'ere again, and I'll smash you, I will! Drat you!"

Bob disappeared down the lane, and Mr. Clinker, enorting with fury, returned to his work. He kept an eye on the gate after that, and the sight of another fellow approaching it made his eyes gleam. He was ready for the next visitor. He had learned that he could not get near the elusive youths in time with the hoe, and he stooped, and his hand closed upon a loose cabbage. With the cabbage in his hand, he kept a gleaming eye upon Hurree Janset Ram Singh, as the smiling nabob came up to the gate.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 473.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Clinker," purred the nabob.

"Arternoon," said Mr. Clinker, with deadly quiet.

"The niceness of the esteemed weather is terrific, my worthy Clinker."

"Eh? ejaculated Mr. Clinker. He had never heard Hurree Singh's variety of the English language before.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh smiled expressively.

"The esteemed Clinker, like the busy bee, is improving the shineful hour," he remarked. "How are the noble cabbages coming on, my august Clinker?"

"The cabbages is all right," said Mr. Clinker.

"I have an esteemed message for you."

"Oh, you've got a message, 'ave yer?" said Mr. Clinker, keeping the cabbage behind him while he measured the distance with his eye.

"Yes. As the esteemed Shakespeare remarks, it is fatheaded to put an enemy in the mouth to steal away the brains. Is it not the proper caper in war-time to go easy on the cup which cheers and intoxicates?" asked the nabob solemnly.

"You wait a tick!" murmured Mr. Clinker.

"The esteemed Clinker is spoiling his complexion and his excellent temper by the reckless indulgence in the inebriating liquid," pursued the nabob, "and—

Yaroooh!"
 Whiz!

Hurree Janset Ram Singh was prepared for the hoe, but not for the cabbage. The cabbage flew with deadly aim, and it caught the nabob of Bhani-par fairly in his dusky face. Hurree Singh staggered back, and sat in the road with a bump and a wild yell.

"Ha, ha!" yelled Mr. Clinker. "Got you!"

"Yaroooh!"

The delighted Mr. Clinker came rushing out of the gate. His horny hands grasped the nabob as he struggled to his feet. Thump! Thump! Thump!

"Yow-ow-ow! Rescue, Remove!" yelled the unfortunate nabob. "Yow-woop!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Pile in, Greyfriars!" roared Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton & Co. came up the lane with a rush. Mr. Clinker was grasped and dragged away from his victim.

Wharton grasped Inky's arm, and rushed him away. Mr. Clinker bounded into the garden for his hoe; but the juniors were a good distance down the road by the time he came out, and the crusty gentlemen could only brandish the weapon and utter dire threats.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, as the juniors slackened down. "What a cheery old gent! Are you hurt, Inky?"

"Yow-ow-ow! The hurtfulness is terrific," groaned the nabob. "My esteemed chivvy is damagefully injured."

"Why didn't you keep an eye open?" grinned Johnny Bull. "Never mind. Coker will get the same when he comes along."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they are!"

Coker and Potter and Greene came in sight on the road from the direction of the village.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh ceased to groan, and grinned. There was comfort and consolation in the reflection that Coker of the Fifth was about to interview Mr. Clinker in his present state of mind.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Coker Completes His Case!

HORACE COKER was looking grim, determined, and thoughtful.

Potter and Greene were looking rather bored.

Coker was following up his clue, and he had insisted upon his chums following him.

As Coker explained, he was fairly on the track of the burglar, and he might need assistance in securing him, if he actually ran him down—or, rather, when he ran him down. There was no "if" in Coker's calculations.

Potter and Greene quite agreed that Coker would need assistance if he ran down the burglar. Their doubts were as to whether he would run him down.

Still, it couldn't be denied that Coker had a clue, and Potter and Greene were willing to see what came of it. Coker frowned majestically as he met the Famous Five on the road. They saluted the great Coker very respectfully.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Caught him yet?" asked Bob Cherry.

Coker paused.
 "Not yet," he replied. "I'm on the track, however. You kids can cut off!"

"Don't you want us to help?" asked Wharton gravely.

The great man of the Fifth shook his head.

"You fags wouldn't be any good," he replied. "You'd only be in the way. I can't be bothered with fags!"

"But we'd like a chance of studying your methods, you know," urged Nugent.

Potter and Greene grinned; but Horace Coker never could see when his leg was being pulled. He nodded quite genially.

"I dare say you would," he assented. "But I can't be bothered with a gang of fags. You'd only be in the way!"

"But you're on the track!" asked Johnny Bull. "Have you found out where that fellow Clinker is?"

"I don't mind telling you that," said Coker graciously. As a matter of fact, Coker was glad of an audience to listen to and admire his masterly deductions.

Potter did not quite come up to his expectations as an amateur Dr. Watson. "I've found out about Clinker. Priory Lane, his address, is this very road!"

"You don't say so?" ejaculated Bob.
 "But I do," said Coker; "and Clinker lives at No. 46."

"You deduced that from the newspaper?" asked Bob. "Were there finger-marks on it?"

The Five maintained an owl-like gravity while Bob asked that question, as if they fully believed in Coker's power to deduce a man's address from his finger-marks. But Coker shook his head. Coker wasn't the fellow to claim credit where credit was not due.

"I couldn't find his address from his finger-marks, you young fathead!" he said. "Even Sherlock Holmes couldn't do that!"

"But you're different," said Bob. "I should have thought you could, Coker!"

"Well, no," said Coker, flattered and nothing doubting. "I simply couldn't. But I've found him out, all the same. I inquired at the post-office. They send groceries to Clinker, and they gave me his number!"

"Wonderful!"

"Ob, that isn't wonderful!" said Coker airily. "Of course, not every body would have thought of it. I did, that's all!"

"Marvellous!" said Nugent solemnly.

Coker was quite genial now. The Famous Five, cheeky fags as they were,

seemed to have a higher appreciation of his great powers than his own chums had, and he could not see why Potter and Greene were smiling.

"And you're going to arrest him now?" asked Bob.

"Not exactly arrest him," said Coker. "I'm not sure yet whether Clinker is the burglar, or merely an accomplice. An accomplice, most likely. The burglar wouldn't write his own address down on the newspaper. It was the address of a confederate, I should say."

"Wonderful!"

"I'm going to see Clinker now, and draw my own deductions," said Coker. "I shall be diplomatic, of course!"

"You'll ask him whether he is a burglar?" asked Bob innocently.

"Of course not, you young donkey! That wouldn't be diplomatic. I shall talk to him, and—weigh him up," said Coker. "I haven't the slightest doubt that I shall be able to deduce exactly what connection he has with the burglar. That's what I'm going there for!"

"If he's guilty, he may take the alarm, and go for you!" suggested Wharton. "Suppose he went for you with a hoe, for example?"

"All the better. That would be proof positive of his guilt," said Coker. "Why should he go for me if he's innocent?"

"The esteemed echo answers 'why?'" said the nabob gravely.

"I hardly think he'll come out into the open like that," said Coker. "That's rather too much to expect. I expect he'll be cunning, and on his guard. Come on, you chaps! We're wasting time!"

Coker & Co. walked on, leaving the Famous Five grinning gleefully.

"I rather think Clinker will be violent, all the same," murmured Bob Cherry. "I don't think he's a burglar, but I think he'll be violent!"

And the juniors chuckled.

Potter and Greene were looking rather uneasy as they walked on towards No. 46. They were not quite so unsuspecting as Horace Coker.

"Those fags have been up to something," said Potter.

"Never mind them, Potter. No time to worry about fags now," said Coker. "They seemed to me to be rather sensible, for once!"

"They were pulling your leg, of course!" granted Greene.

Coker bestowed a glare upon Greene.

"If you think a fag could pull my leg, Greene, it only shows the kind of silly ass you are," he said crashingly.

"The fact is, those kids showed a lot more sense than you two! Don't jaw here we are!"

The amateur detective had arrived.

Mr. Clinker was hoeing away industriously, but he turned an evil eye in the direction of the gate as the three Greyfriars fellows stopped there. Mr. Clinker was like a volcano on the point of eruption.

Coker scanned the house and the garden, apparently making mental notes. Nothing escaped Coker's eagle eye.

"Just as I expected!" he murmured.

"What did you expect?" asked Potter sarcastically.

"The house stands by itself——"

"Have you just deduced that?" asked Greene, with crashing sarcasm.

But sarcasm was lost upon Horace Coker.

"No need to deduce it, Greene, when you can see it with the naked eye," he replied. "You're rather an ass, old chap! The house stands alone—just the place where a burglar could meet his confederate safely. I haven't the slightest doubt that the burglar buzzed back here, after getting away from

Greyfriars last night. Most likely he's on the premises this very minute. That savage-looking Johnny may be the very man. Look how he's watching us!"

"Is he watching us?" yawned Greene.

"Look at him, and see. He's giving us sidelong looks, in a suspicious sort of way," said Coker. "Look at him!"

Potter and Greene looked, and they had to admit the truth of Coker's observation.

Mr. Clinker was undoubtedly giving them sidelong looks, in a suspicious way. Mr. Clinker had his own reasons for being suspicious of youthful callers just then, but Coker, of course, was not aware of that.

"Doesn't he look like a man who's on his guard?" asked Coker triumphantly.

as he came up. He noted the bushy beard, and he remembered that the burglar at the school had had a thick beard—probably false. Was this man the burglar, or was he merely the burglar's confederate?

That was the problem before Coker. Fortunately, Mr. Clinker could not guess what was passing in Coker's mind. If he had guessed it, the hoe would probably have started operations at once on the amateur detective.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Coker genially.

Politeness was rather wasted on a burglar, or a burglar's confederate; but Coker intended to be diplomatic.

"Whatcher want?" demanded Mr. Clinker surlily.



Mr. Clinker whirled up the hoe, with the evident intention of bringing it down on Coker's head. (See Chapter 10.)

"Well, he does," admitted Greene. "Perhaps somebody has been chucking stones, or something!"

"For goodness' sake try to talk sense, William Greene!" said Coker testily.

"The man is on his guard because he's got a guilty conscience, of course. Come in with me. I may need assistance!"

Coker opened the garden gate, and entered boldly. Potter and Greene followed him, a little uneasily. They did not like the look of the man in the garden.

He looked like a man in a savage temper, as indeed he was, and the way he gripped the handle of the hoe was not reassuring. Potter and Greene decided to keep a wary eye on that hoe.

But Coker was not thinking about hoes. He eyed Mr. Clinker narrowly

"Are you Mr. Clinker?"

"You knows I am, drat you!" exclaimed Mr. Clinker angrily.

Coker gave his companions a sidelong smile of triumph. The man was turning rusty at the most harmless question. Not much further evidence of his guilt was needed for Coker.

"Well, I didn't know till you told me, of course," said Coker agreeably.

"Don't tell me lies!" said Mr. Clinker. "You knowed it, and you come 'ere to worrit me. P'r'aps you've got a message—hey?"

"Not exactly a message," said Coker, rather surprised by the question. Was this rascal expecting a message from the other rascal? he wondered.

"Well, watcher want?" growled Mr. Clinker.

Clinker, handling the hoe, and staring aggressively at Coker & Co.

Potter and Greene retreated a few paces. Whether Mr. Clinker was a burglar or not, he was plainly a gentleman of somewhat violent disposition. He really looked as if he might break out at any moment.

Coker was rather at a loss for a moment or two. He had not thought out an excuse for his call. He had intended to size up Mr. Clinker and draw deductions; but there did not seem much to deduce, except that Mr. Clinker was a very ill-tempered gentleman, and smelt of spirits.

"I arsk yer," said Mr. Clinker, "watcher want? Do yer want this 'oe round yer 'ead? If you don't, get outer my garding—"

"Look here, my man—"

"I ain't your man," said Mr. Clinker surlily. "I dessay it was you stole my cabbages. You look that sort."

Potter and Greene grinned a little. They had already made up their minds that Mr. Clinker wasn't a burglar. But Coker was more suspicious than ever.

"No violence, my man!" said Coker, raising his hand. "That will only make matters worse for you."

"Hey?"

"Have you ever seen this before?"

Coker suddenly produced the old, greasy "Friardale Gazette" which he had unearthed in Lord Mauleverer's trunk at Greyfriars. He held it out for Mr. Clinker's inspection, watching his face narrowly. It was a dramatic surprise worthy of Sherlock Holmes at his very best. If Mr. Clinker was the burglar, he was certain to betray himself now.

The man stared blankly at the paper. "I dessay I seen it," he said. "Watcher getting at?"

Coker felt disappointed.

"Your name is written on it," he said. "S'pose it is?" said Mr. Clinker.

He stared at the scrawl on the margin of the paper. He did not seem alarmed, however.

"There was a burglar at our school last night," said Coker, still with his eyes fixed scrutinisingly upon Mr. Clinker's purplish face.

"Wot's that got to do with me?" said Mr. Clinker rudely.

"The burglar left this paper behind him."

"S'pose he did?"

"With your name and address written on it," said Coker impressively. "I may as well warn you, my man, that the game's up! You had better confess!"

"Wot?"

"I—I say, Coker, old man!" murmured Greene.

Mr. Clinker breathed hard.

"I been worried this arfternoon," he said, "by a gang of young escamps. I stood all I'm going to stand! I thought you was another of 'em, and now I knows it. And now I'll teach you to come and worrit a 'ardworkin' man!"

"Look out, Coker!" yelled Potter.

"Yarough!" yelled Coker, as the hoe clumped on his chest. "My hat! Pile in! Collar him! Yow-ow-ow!"

Potter and Greene didn't pile in, and they didn't collar Mr. Clinker. They had their doubts about the legality of collaring a citizen in his own garden. And the hoe looked dangerous. They backed way in a hurried manner, and Mr. Clinker began on Coker with his boots.

Coker dodged and wriggled away, and jumped up.

"Back up!" he yelled excitedly, and he rushed recklessly at Mr. Clinker. He was sure of the ruffian's guilt now. Only a guilty conscience and fear of detection could be the reason of this violence—at all events, according to Coker's theory.

Coker's fierce rush was stopped by the hoe clumping on his chest again. He staggered back, and Mr. Clinker whirled up the hoe, with the evident intention of bringing it down on Coker's head.

"I un for it!" shrieked Greene.

Coker dodged, hesitated, and ran. His fists, big as they were, were not much use against a hoe in reckless hands. Potter and Greene were already streaking out at the gate. Coker followed them with a bound.

The hoe missed him by about a foot. Mr. Clinker rushed in pursuit, and jabbed it into Coker's back as he ran.

"Yarough!" yelled Coker.

He put on a spurt, and went thundering down the road after Potter and Greene. After them came Mr. Clinker, at the topmost pitch of fury, brandishing his hoe.

"Lemme get near yer!" he roared. "I'll brain yer! Stealing my cabbages, and worriting a man! Lemme get at yer!"

That was just what Coker & Co. didn't intend to do. Mr. Clinker was a little

too dangerous at close quarters. They dashed on as if for a wager, and shortness of breath compelled Mr. Clinker to abandon the pursuit. He stopped in the road, shook his knucky fist, and pumped in breath. Then he stamped back to his garden, feeling that he had done for that afternoon with the "gang" who had been "worriting" him.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" "Got him!" "Where's the merry burglar?"

The Famous Five, with smiling faces, met Coker & Co. at the bend in the lane. They had watched the scene from a distance—a safe distance. Coker's progress in his detective work had afforded them considerable entertainment.

The three Fifth-Formers halted, panting.

"Haven't you caught him?" ejaculated Bob. "You surely haven't let him go, Coker?"

"Wonderful!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He became violent," gasped Coker. "He's guilty, right enough. I haven't the slightest doubt now that he's got the burglar hidden in the house. Come on, you fellows, there isn't a moment to waste!"

"Oh, dear!" gasped Potter. "You silly ass, Coker! The fellow might have punctured us with that blessed hoe."

"Come on! We've got to get to the police-station!" panted Coker.

"The which?"

"The police-station. Old Tozer will have to come and arrest him now, now we've got proof—"

"Proof!" yelled Potter. "Proof of what?"

"That he's hiding the burglar there!"

"You burbling jabberwock!" howled Potter. "Can't you see that he's got nothing to do with any burglars? He went for us because he thought we'd come there chivvying him!"

"Anybody but a born idiot would see that!" gasped Greene.

Coker gave his followers a withering look.

"You howling asses!" said Coker, in measured tones. "The thing's as plain as daylight—plain enough for a Scotland Yard detective to see!"

BROOKS' NEW CURE

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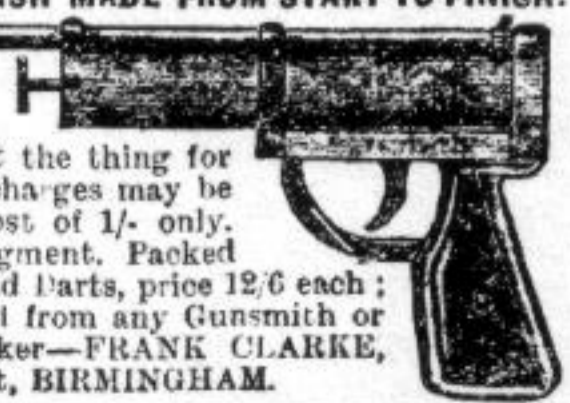
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"Good old Sherlock Holmes!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Wonderful!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I knew the man would become violent, if he was guilty, when he found we were on the track," said Coker crushingly. "He's acted just as I expected. I deduced the whole thing. Now we've got to call in the police, and have him arrested."

"You can call in the police, and the soldiers, too, if you like!" snorted Potter. "You won't catch me playing the giddy ox at the police-station. Come on, Greeney—I'm fed up with this!"

"Same here!" said Greene. "I'm off!"

"I tell you——" roared Coker.

Potter and Greene did not stay for anything Coker had to tell them. They had had enough detective work for that afternoon, and more than enough of Mr. Clinker and his hoe. They turned a deaf ear to Horace Coker, and started for Greyfriars.

"Of all the silly chumps!" gasped Coker, in angry astonishment. "Fancy backing out of it like that, when I've got proofs right down to the last detail!"

"This looks suspicious to me," said Bob Cherry, with a solemn shake of the head.

"Eh? What looks suspicious?"

"It looks to me as if this is blacker than we thought," said Bob. "Potter and Greene are in it, too!"

"Eh? Potter and Greene?"

"Yes. You see, my dear Watson," said Bob, assuming the Sherlock Holmes manner, "this eagerness on the part of Potter and Greene to get out of the matter, and hush it up, is a sure proof of complicity on their part. I deduce from this that Patter and Greene are confederates of the burglar——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Removites.

"And I think we'd better go to the station at once," continued Bob, "and apply for search-warrants to search their study at Greyfriars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Coker was able to perceive that the humorous Bob was making fun of him. He made a rush at Bob Cherry, who promptly dodged away.

"You cheeky young sweep!" roared Coker.

"No violence!" said Bob warningly. "This violence on your part, Coker, is suspicious!"

"I'll—I'll——" Coker spluttered.

"I deduce from it, Coker, that you were the man who burgled Greyfriars last night," said Bob. "Only a sense of guilt could cause this violence——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker made another rush, and Bob had to dodge again.

"Come on, you fellows! Let's get to the police-station and denounce Coker!" said Bob. "We've got as much proof against him as he's got against Clinker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five trotted off, leaving Horace Coker crimson with rage. Coker shook his fist after them, and started for the village. The Famous Five headed for Greyfriars, but Coker's destination was the police-station in Friardale. Coker had no doubts; and all that remained, now that he had worked up the case in so masterly a manner, was to call in the regular police to make the arrest, as Sherlock Holmes always did.

Mr. Tozer was dozing in the little village police-station when Coker arrived, breathless and excited.

Mr. Tozer woke up and looked in surprise at the excited Greyfriars Fifth-Former.

Coker, in his eagerness, caught him by the arm.

"Come on!" he exclaimed.

"Hey?"

"Come on! I've run down the burglar!"

Coker expected to see astonishment and envy dawn in Mr. Tozer's fat face. As a matter of fact, nothing of the kind dawned there. Mr. Tozer shook off Coker's hand, and resettled himself in his seat.

"None of your little jokes!" he said.

Coker quivered with impatience.

"I'm not joking, Tozer! I've found out the burglar who burgled Greyfriars last night!"

"Werry clever of you, Mr. Coker," said Mr. Tozer, quite unmoved—"werry clever indeed! But I ain't taking any."

"I'm giving you information!" said Coker. "You're bound to act upon it! Come with me!"

"I ain't bound to be took in by a schoolboy that I knows on," said Mr. Tozer calmly. "Run away, Mr. Coker, and don't be silly!"

Coker fairly snorted. After running down the criminal in a way that Sherlock Holmes himself could not have excelled, all he received from the regular police was not eager assistance and admiration, but an admonition not to be silly! It was more than enough to exasperate any amateur detective!

"I tell you I've got the man!" he roared.

"In yer trousis' pocket?" asked Mr. Tozer humorously.

"I can tell you exactly where he is. I've found his confederate—a man named Clinker, No. 46, Priory Lane!" howled Coker.

Mr. Tozer grinned.

"Jer mean Jim Clinker?" he asked.

"I dare say his name's Jim—the initial J.," said Coker. "Is he known to the police already?"

"I dunno 'bout known to the perlice, speakin' in gineral," smiled Mr. Tozer. "He's suttingly known to me. He sells me cabbages."

"S-s-sells you cabbages?" ejaculated Coker, taken aback.

"Suttingly," said Mr. Tozer. "And you'd better not let 'im hear you calling 'im names. He ain't good-tempered, Jim Clinker ain't."

"I tell you he's the confederate of the burglar, and I've got proof of it!" panted Coker.

"Go it!" said Mr. Tozer.

"Look at this newspaper!" shrieked Coker. "That's his name and address! That newspaper was left behind by the burglar last night!"

"Werry careless burglar to leave 'is noospapers about, especially in these 'ard times," remarked Mr. Tozer.

"That name and address——"

"I suppose you wrote it, Mr. Coker?"

"You silly ass!" roared Coker, out of all patience.

Mr. Tozer rose majestically.

"You clear hout, Mr. Coker!" he said.

"I shall report this 'ere to your head-master! Outside, or I shall turn you out!"

"You refuse to come with me?"

"I rather think so," said Mr. Tozer, with a grin. "Go and tell your little joke to the Marines, Mr. Coker. Outside, please!"

Mr. Tozer fairly hustled Coker out into the street.

Horace Coker stood on the pavement and gasped. He shared Sherlock Holmes' contempt for the mental powers of the regular police, but he had never expected this. Mr. Tozer actually refused to arrest the criminal now that Coker had run him down!

Coker stood for some minutes in an

uncertain frame of mind, and then started for Greyfriars. Every minute was precious, yet there was nothing to be done. Coker as a detective was not taken seriously. He had a strong suspicion that if he went to Courtfield with his astounding story Inspector Grimes would display the same amazing obtuseness as Mr. Tozer. In all the stories Coker had read, no amateur detective had ever been faced by such difficulties as this. But Coker did not mean to give in. The criminal had to be arrested, and Mr. Tozer covered with confusion.

"I'll see Prout, and get him to talk to the silly idiot!" gasped Coker. "Fancy the burglar actually escaping because that old fool won't listen to me! My hat! No wonder Holmes was down on the police! It fairly takes the cake!"

And Coker started at a run for Greyfriars.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

BILLY BUNTER met the Famous Five as they came in at the school gates in a merry mood. Bunter was hanging about the quadrangle with a worried expression on his fat face.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Looking for another box to carry?" asked Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Seen Squiff yet?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"I—I want you fellows to back me up," said Bunter. "That beast Squiff is still looking for me. All because of a few measly sandwiches, you know. I—I thought he'd have forgotten it when he came in, but—but he chased me across the quad, and—and I only just dodged him. He's waiting for me to go in, and—and he's got a cricket-stump."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I've been waiting for you fellows. I think you might back me up, after I carried that box for you, too. You could lick Field, Bob."

"Go hon!"

"I'll hold your jacket, you know!" said Bunter eagerly.

"I'll hold your ear instead!" said Bob.

"Yow-ow! Leggo, you beast! I say, Wharton, you could lick Squiff, and you ought to back me up; you know, as captain of the Remove. I rely on you."

"Is it a Form captain's business to back up a fat owl who steals sandwiches?" asked Wharton.

"I—I was hungry, you know; and, of course, I'm going to get Squiff a fresh lot when my postal-order comes. It was really a temporary loan."

"You'd better ask Squiff next time you want his grub as a temporary loan," grinned Bob Cherry.

"It wasn't anything to make a fuss about!" growled Bunter. "Half a dozen measly sandwiches wrapped in an old newspaper! He can have the newspaper back if he likes. I—I say, you fellows, can I come in with you?"

"Certainly!"

"You'll keep that beast off?" said Bunter anxiously.

"No fear! We'll help him on!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Look here, lend me a bob or two, and I'll get a fresh lot for Squiff. I'll settle up out of my postal-order—it's practically certain to come to-morrow morning. Don't walk away while I'm talking to you, you rotters! Look here, I shall have to go in for call-over soon, and that beast's waiting for me with a cricket-stump!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Coker!"

Coker of the Fifth came breathlessly across the quad. He had run nearly all the way from Friardale. There was no time to be lost, and Coker realised that clearly.

"Got him safe under lock and key?" called out Bob as the Fifth-Former rushed by.

Coker did not trouble to reply. He rushed into the house, and headed for his Form-master's study. There was a chortle from the Removites.

"Coker doesn't seem to have had any luck with Tozer," remarked Nugent. "Fancy Tozer missing a chance like that!"

"I say, you fellows——"

The Famous Five followed Coker in. Billy Bunter toddled in after them, with a wary eye open for Sampson Quincy Ifley Field. Bunter felt that it was extremely unreasonable of Squiff to be keeping trouble alive like this. The sandwiches were eaten and done with, and Bunter was quite prepared to let the matter drop, and let bygones be bygones. Unfortunately, Squiff wasn't. The fact that the raided sandwiches had been Squiff's perhaps accounted for the difference in the point of view.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Squiff, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, as the juniors came up to the Remove passage.

"You fat burglar!" roared Squiff. "Where are my sandwiches?"

Bunter dodged behind Bob Cherry.

"Yaroo! Keep him off! I don't know anything about your rotten sandwiches! I—I haven't seen them. I—I didn't take them from the cupboard, and I never ate them in the box-room. Yaroo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Squiff made a terrific drive at Bunter with the stump, and hit the wall about a yard from the fat junior with a crash. Billy Bunter was under the impression that a deadly blow had missed him by about an inch, and he yelled.

"Yaroo! Keep him off! I tell you I haven't had any sandwiches, and I'm going to get you a new lot, you rotter, when my postal-order comes!"

"Well, that's generous, as you never had them," remarked Bob Cherry.

Crash! The stump missed Bunter again by another yard, and the fat junior roared. The juniors howled with laughter. Squiff's deadly swipes at the wall of the Remove passage did not damage Bunter, but the yell he gave might have given the impression that he was being subjected to Field Punishment No. 1.

"I—I say, you fellows, keep him off!"

"Own up, you fat rotter!" said Squiff.

"Did you scoff the sandwiches?"

"I—I was hungry," said Bunter pathetically. "We have to wait such a jolly long time for dinner. I—I knew you wouldn't mind, old chap. I don't see why you should pick on me like this. It might have been Fishy. He's in your study."

"You see, I know you," said Squiff.

"Or Bull; very likely it was Bull."

"What!" roared Johnny.

"I—I mean it wasn't Bull," gasped Bunter. "That's what I really meant to say. Besides, there were only six, and I'm going to pay for them when my postal-order comes, and—and I didn't like them——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You bagged them from my study, and took them to the box-room and scoffed them!" said Squiff sternly.

"I—I didn't know you saw me, you beast!" gasped Bunter. "I shut the door of the box-room before I ate them; I know that. I—I mean, I never touched them."

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"Why, you fat rotter, you've just let out that you ate them in the box-room!" exclaimed Squiff.

"That—that was only a figure of speech," groaned Bunter. "I never meant to mention the box-room at all."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly, as a new and illuminating idea came into his mind. "Were your sandwiches wrapped in an old number of the 'Friardale Gazette,' Squiff?"

The Australian junior nodded.

"Yes; Mrs. Mimble wrapped them up for me," he said, "all ready to take out on the cliffs this afternoon."

"Oh, my hat! Bunter, you fat Owl, what did you do with the newspaper after you scoffed the sandwiches?"

"I didn't scoff them."

"Fathead! What did you do with the newspaper?" roared Bob.

"I—I shoved it in a trunk," stuttered Bunter. "No harm in that, I suppose? I—I thought I'd better put it out of sight, in case that beast should——"

"In case I should spot you, you fat bouncer!" growled Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five yelled. Bunter's confession let in a new light on Coker's celebrated clue. Billy Bunter, having bagged Squiff's sandwiches, had taken the packet to the box-room to devour in safety, and he had thrown the wrapping-paper into a trunk to hide his tracks, as it were. He had not left a sign of his surreptitious feed; it was only because of his reputation that Squiff had spotted him as the purloiner. And Coker of the Fifth, looking for clues, had found that old newspaper in the trunk. It was no longer surprising that Inspector Grimes of Courtfield had not discovered it. It was during morning lessons that the inspector had visited the school. It was after morning lessons, naturally, that Bunter had devoured the sandwiches in the box-room and hidden the wrapping in the trunk. And after dinner Horace Coker had arrived on the scene and discovered the clue.

All was quite clear now. Coker's little mistake was due to the fact that Mrs. Mimble bought up old newspapers to use as wrapping-paper in the school shop. It was probable that there were dozens of names and addresses pencilled by the newagent on the old papers that Mrs. Mimble used for wrapping parcels.

Billy Bunter blinked at the Removites,

quite unaware of the cause of the outburst of merriment. Squiff looked perplexed, too.

"What's the merry joke?" he asked. "Nothing funny in Bunter sticking the newspaper in a trunk, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha!" roared Bob. "It was Mauly's trunk, wasn't it, Bunter?"

"Eh? Yes, I believe so," said Bunter. "What the dickens——"

"Bunty, old man, you earned those sandwiches," said Bob, wiping his eyes. "It's all right, Squiff. If Bunter hadn't boned your sandwiches, Coker would never have had a chance as a detective."

"What the dickens——"

Bob Cherry gasped out an explanation, and Squiff roared. Even Billy Bunter gave a fat chuckle. Loder of the Sixth came up the stairs.

"You're wanted," he said—"Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Bull, and Hurree Singh, in Mr. Prout's study. Get along."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What does Prouty want, I wonder?" said Bob. "He's not our Form-master, but I suppose we'd better go."

The Famous Five went downstairs and made their way to Mr. Prout's study, somewhat puzzled by the summons. Coker of the Fifth was in the study, looking very red and excited. The Fifth Form master, however, was frowning.

"You sent for us, sir?" said Wharton.

"Yes," said Mr. Prout. "Coker has told me a most extraordinary story. He declares that you can confirm it."

"Oh!"

"They were present, sir," said Coker. "Potter and Greene were there, too, but they haven't come in. They'd tell you at once. They deserted me——"

"That will do, Coker. Wharton, Coker informs me that he found an old newspaper in the trunk in which the burglar concealed himself last night—there is nothing to laugh at in this, Cherry—and he has shown me the newspaper. It has a name and address pencilled on it, which Coker, for some reason I cannot fathom, supposes to be the name and address of an accomplice of the burglar."

"Yes, sir!" gasped Wharton.

"It is very surprising that Inspector Grimes did not find the paper there, if it was there," said Mr. Prout, eyeing the juniors very suspiciously. "I have come to the conclusion that it was probably

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placed there by way of a practical joke. I believe Coker's obtuseness—"

"Wha-a-at?" ejaculated Coker.

Mr. Prout made a gesture, and the indignant Horace relapsed into silence.

"I believe Coker's obtuseness leads the juniors at times to play tricks on him," said Mr. Prout severely. "I think it is very probable that you can explain how that paper came to be in the trunk, as you were there at the time. In short, is it some foolish prank on Coker?"

"Nunno, sir!" gasped Wharton. "Not exactly."

"You did not place the paper in the trunk, with the intention of inducing Coker to act even more stupidly than usual?"

"My hat!" murmured Coker. He was getting his Form-master's plain, unvarnished opinion of his wonderful mental powers with a vengeance.

"Nunno, sir. But—but we happen to have found out how the paper got there," stammered Wharton. "It's just come out that a Remove chap had some sandwiches in the box-room after morning lessons, and he threw the newspaper into Mauleverer's trunk—the paper they were wrapped in."

"And that was the newspaper Coker discovered?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good. I was quite sure that Coker's extraordinary story had some such foundation," said Mr. Prout, with a sniff. "You may go."

The juniors went.

Coker's face was a study. For the next five minutes he had the pleasure of being talked to by the Fifth Form master, not at all in complimentary phrases. Mr. Prout not only refused to take the matter up and induce the police to listen to Coker's great discoveries, but he told

Coker he was the stupidest boy at Greyfriars, that his obtuseness was extraordinary, indeed almost miraculous, and wound up by giving him a hundred lines and dismissing him.

Coker came out of the study almost in a dazed state. He glared at the Famous Five in the passage.

"Sorry to rob you of your clue, old chap," said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle.

"Do you think I believe that yarn?" said Coker scornfully. "I'm sorry to see you descend to prevarication; I really thought better of you. Of course, the newspaper was left there by the burglar; that's quite clear."

"Oh, my hat!"

Horace Coker stalked on with great dignity, leaving the juniors staring. The amateur detective of Greyfriars was not to be deprived of his clue. Coker went sulkily to his study to think the matter out. Potter and Greene came in about an hour later, and found him still thinking it out.

"Got your man safe?" asked Potter, with a grin.

Coker snorted.

"Tozer wouldn't act on my information," he said. "I've been to Prout, and Prout won't take any notice. Those juniors have made up a yarn that the newspaper was put in the trunk by a kid who ate sandwiches in the box-room, and old Prout believes it—actually believes it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle!" said Coker crossly. "The question is, had I better chance it with Grimes at Courtfield? Will he have sense enough to listen to me?"

"I fancy not," grinned Potter. "You see, we've just come from Courtfield, and we dropped in to see Grimes, to see if anything had been done. And they've got the man."

Coker jumped.

"G-g-got the m-m-m-an?"

"Yes. He was pretty badly cut by the broken glass last night, and that's how he was spotted," said Potter. "Grimes rounded him up this afternoon."

Horace Coker blinked at his chums. He did not say anything. He couldn't. While he had been tracking down Mr. Clinker that afternoon, Inspector Grimes had caught the burglar. Evidently the Sherlock Holmes theory was not precisely applicable to real life; the police did not seem really in dire need of assistance from amateur detectives. Coker's expression for some moments was extraordinary.

"My hat!" he said at last.

That was all Coker said. But when he came to think of it, he was glad, very glad, that Mr. Tozer had declined to act upon his valuable information. It was really very fortunate that Mr. Clinker had not been arrested at Coker's behest.

Coker was fed up with the amateur detective business. He let it drop. But, unfortunately for Coker, the rest of Greyfriars did not let it drop. The story of Coker's adventures as a detective was told in the studies and the common-rooms, and seniors and juniors howled over it till Coker of the Fifth would have given a whole term's pocket-money never to have thought of that brilliant idea of understudying Sherlock Holmes.

THE END.

(Don't miss "VISCOUNT BUNTER!"—next Monday's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"VISCOUNT BUNTER!"

By Frank Richards.

Bunter has so long hed about his titled relatives that it must have come as quite a shock—though a pleasant one—to him to learn that there was a prospect of his father's proving himself the rightful holder of an earl's title. Or, at least, that an expert—so-called—said that there was a prospect of it—which is not quite the same thing. But it seems the same to Bunter. He cannot wait until the claim is admitted. He begins at once to pose as "Viscount Bunter," the eldest son of an earl. Of course, he had had an elder brother a few weeks before, but as that elder brother had been proved to be mere spoof it was not worth while to trouble about him! So W. G. B. poses as a nobleman—imitates the aristocratic manners and even the lisp of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, tries to chum up with Mauly, shows deep contempt for "mere commoners," and, in general, carries on for all he is worth in the swanking line. And the end of it all is—

SEE NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE!

AMATEUR MAGAZINES.

From the Birmingham district another reader writes to tell me of his success with a small amateur magazine—but again the journal is not a printed one; and I have yet to hear of a case in which one of this kind proved a sound proposi-

tion financially. My correspondent bought a duplicator for about 7s. 6d. This article was not a graph, but more nearly resembled plasticine. It washes easily, he says, and lasts for years. For paper he used typewriter foolscap, folded in halves. The cover was of pink foolscap. He gave sixteen pages, and the cost of paper for fifty copies was 2s. 6d. The staff was paid a penny a page "of two sides"—this is not very plainly put, for a page cannot have two sides, a page itself being one side of a leaf. I take it he means one penny per leaf; certainly not an excessively high rate, but then the staff had not a living to earn! A printer clipped the copies together at a charge of 3d. for the fifty. The cost of an issue thus worked out at 5s. 1d., apart from the cost of the duplicator. The paper was sold at 2d. per copy.

Thus on the debit side he had, "cost of duplicator and ink," 9s.; "cost of paper for twelve issues," £1 10s.; "charge for clipping copies," 3s.; "payment of staff at 2s. 4d. per issue," £1 8s. Total, £3 10s.

The sale of fifty copies per month, at 2d. each, produced £5, leaving a profit of £1 10s.

I am not going to say, "Go thou and do likewise!" I am not sure that many of you can do it. But there is no reason why, if you have the money to spare for the expenses of the first month or two, you should not try. Fifty copies is not a huge circulation, and four or five of you working together might manage that among your friends; but don't be too sure about their all keeping up their interest in your work. And don't go hunting round after advertisements—that will only be lost time.

I will let anyone who is curious know the name of the firm which supplies these duplicators.

A MAGNIFICENT OFFER.

No doubt many readers of THE MAGNET LIBRARY possess one of those magnificent plates presented with "The Penny Popular" some weeks ago, entitled "The Chums of Greyfriars." Possibly some of you have framed the plate and hung it up in your own room!

I wonder how many of you would like to possess the original painting of that famous plate, framed in excellent style!

Now, every reader of THE MAGNET LIBRARY has a chance of securing this framed painting. Full particulars of my magnificent offer appear in this Friday's issue of our companion paper, "The Penny Popular."

Order your copy of next Friday's "Penny Pop." at once.

MY BEST THANKS.

I have much pleasure in informing all my readers that since I started publishing in "The Penny Popular" stories dealing with the early adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. this little companion paper of ours has increased its circulation by leaps and bounds.

I realise that this success is due to the fact that readers of THE MAGNET LIBRARY have worked hard to get new supporters for "The Penny Pop.," and I thank them most heartily for all they have done.

Your Editor

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 8.—FRANK NUGENT.



Frank Nugent

FRANK NUGENT was the first of the Famous Five at Greyfriars. He was there when Harry Wharton came, in the days when Bulstrode ruled the roost in the Remove. Bob Cherry arrived a little later than Wharton. Hurrce Janset Ram Singh came along with the foreign school which for a time was a neighbour of Greyfriars, but did not go when it left. The advent of Johnny Bull was later still.

Nugent was Harry Wharton's first chum, and has always been his nearest and dearest one. They quarrelled at the start—Wharton was ready to row with anyone in those days, quick to take offence where none was intended, eager to stand up for his own rights, and passionate. Frank Nugent could see his faults easily enough. But Harry saved Frank's life, and in return Nugent did for him more than he realised at the time, perhaps. For it meant very much to a fellow of Harry's nature to be able to depend on at least one chum who cared for him, in spite of his faults—who was not to be removed from his loyalty by such queries as: "What could he possibly see in the sulky beast?"

It was not long before Wharton took the lead and kept it. That was to be expected. Between the two boys there are certain likenesses, but the differences are at least as marked as the likenesses. Both are proud and sensitive, but Wharton's sensitiveness is less gentle than Nugent's. Both are capable of sulking; but nowadays Nugent, if his sulkiness is less black than his chum's, is likely to keep it up longer.

In the fine story which appeared a week or two ago—"The Fellow Who Funked"—we have an illustration of this weakness. Nugent was too proud to explain. He held that his chums should have known that to funk was impossible to him.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 473.

So they did. But what seems absolute knowledge may be upset by what seems certain proof. On the face of it, and by all the evidence available, Nugent had funked; there was no getting away from that. The evidence was not complete. A word from the fellow accused would have put things right. He would not speak that word, because he held, in his high pride, that these chums who knew him so well had no right to doubt him.

Of course, he had never lacked pluck. Time and time again he had shown himself as good as the best in that respect. He went with Bob Cherry in that perilous journey over the roof to rescue Harry and the Head's little daughter when the school was in flames. Their danger was no less than Wharton's. What they did required every bit as much nerve, perhaps even more. And, though Nugent has not fought so often as some of his chums, he is a plucky fighter, as well as a clever boxer. He surprised the Form by knocking out Vernon-Smith on one occasion.

Naturally he was one of those whom the Bounder hated bitterly at that time, just as he is now one of those whom the Bounder likes best. He was the first of the four who were sentenced to expulsion through the wiles of their enemy. Bull, Wharton, and Bob Cherry were also victims, though Bob refused to go. Mark Linley was got out of the way by trickery, not actually sacked.

Frank, with Wharton and Johnny Bull, came back to aid Bob and Inky in holding the fort. It was through his troublesome younger brother, Dicky Nugent, that the Bounder had worked his plot. More than a little trouble has Frank had with Dicky, who appeared likely at one time to turn out a thorough young scamp. The whole story of Frank's anxieties with regard to his minor is too long to tell here; but among our older readers there must be many who recall the fine

yarn in which—"For His Mother's Sake"—Frank took the burden of the foolish youngster's guilt upon his own shoulders, and was ready even to submit to expulsion rather than have Mrs. Nugent's heart broken by the disgrace of the son whom she idolised.

There was more than trouble concerning her sons to worry Mrs. Nugent just then. She had quarrelled with her husband, and had left him. She took Dicky away for a time; the story got out, and the Bounder turned it to malicious use with his original play of "The Grass-Widower; or, Why Henry Left Home." That was a time of torture for sensitive, highly-strung Frank Nugent; but his chums stood by him, as did the best fellows among the seniors, and the great drama was never allowed to be acted. Then his father and mother came together again over what might well have been Frank's deathbed, and so, after all, the trouble blew over.

Handsome in a somewhat girlish way, Frank Nugent has never been a molly-coddle. He is good at games; when resolution is needed he is not found wanting—physical resolution, that is. He has less moral resolution. He is, for all his real charm, for all his lovable qualities, essentially the weakest of that little brotherhood of five.

In a moral crisis he is far more apt to fail than any one of the others. It was deplorably weak of him to let Snoop have the funds which he—Frank—had in charge as treasurer, so that a fellow who deserved the worst that might happen to him should be saved from his fate. Generous—yes, but in the wrong way. For others' sake as well as for his own he should never have trusted one he knew to be unworthy of trust. It was weak of him to get Harry to promise that he would not fight Bulstrode while he—Frank—was in sanny, whereof arose no small trouble for Wharton. But through all these instances of weakness—and more might be quoted—there runs the golden thread of unselfishness and chivalry; and, like his chums, we find ourselves none the less fond of him for this defect in his character.

He is more romantic by far than the average boy. Johnny Bull could never have such dreams as some of Frank's waking imaginations. Johnny is matter of fact always. He would not have fallen in love with the fascinating Conchita, old enough to be his mother. Frank did, and the story of this affair is one of the most interesting and the most sympathetic of all in which he plays a leading part.

But best of them all one likes "A Spit in the Study." Among all Mr. Richards' fine yarns, few are better than that. Nugent shows up at his best there—patient and long-suffering, a friend in a thousand!

Very different as they are in some respects, Nugent and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of St. Jim's are very much alike in others. They have the same high pride, the same susceptibility to the romantic, the same essential gentleness. "Gentlemanliness" is not the word; a fellow may be a gentleman, and yet lack the particular quality one means—a quality which springs from softness of heart, uncontrolled by hardness of head.

But Frank has not Gussy's craze for setting the world right, nor has he Gussy's rooted belief in the superiority of his own tact and judgment.

EXTRACTS FROM
THE GREYFRIARS HERALD.

HOW I WUN THE MATCH!

By **HORACE COKER:**

(Editor's Note.—We have taken the liberty of making certain alterations in the spelling of this contribution. Although we seek originality, one can have too much of a good thing, and Coker's orthography is a little too original. As a sample of what Coker can do, we have left the title as written by him, and we have consented to let the author express his views in the note which follows the story.—HARRY WHARTON.)

THIS is a jolly good story of a football match, won by me, practically off my own bat. It is rather a come-down for a Fifth-Form chap to write for a rag edited by juniors in the Lower Fourth, but my idea is that Greyfriars ought to know about this match, and Wingate, who is rather an ass, won't put it in the Sixth Form magazine. I had some words with Wingate about that, and if anybody says that I was chucked out of his study it's a whopper—the truth being that I walked out entirely of my own accord, but was in rather a hurry at the time, as I remembered that I had forgotten an appointment.

I have always been a first-rate footballer. When I was in the Shell, I considered myself equal to any player at Greyfriars. I know Hobson doesn't admit it, but Hobson has never got over my passing into the Fifth over his head. This was entirely due to my own abilities, and it is all rot about my Aunt Judy ragging the Head to put me in the Fifth, and the story that she hit him with her umbrella is utterly unfounded. I suspect that this was invented by Hobson. I know I gave him a thick ear for it, anyway.

The match I am going to describe was not played at Greyfriars. It would hardly be believed by anybody who doesn't know the jealousy that is rife in football matters in this school, but it is a fact that I have never been given a place in the first eleven. This was not due to false modesty on my part, as I have pointed out to Wingate time and again that he simply cannot afford to leave out a player like me. The last time, he said he would put me in when he played hop-scotch with a girls' school. Since then I have declined to play for him.

Having been kept out of school football by the jealousy of certain persons—I won't mention any names, but if Wingate doesn't like that statement, he can lump it—I naturally looked forward a good deal to a game or two in the holidays. Potter and Greene came home with me for the vac. They are not much at footer, though you play in the Form Eleven, and sometimes in the First Eleven. Their style of play is quite different from mine. The first thing I said when we got down to Aunt Judy's place was:

"We're going to get some footer here!"

Potter and Greene were against it. They are not really keen on footer—real

footer, I mean, not the kind of fumbling that Wingate calls footer. But of course I had my way. I make it a point to have my way. Although they were my guests for the vac, I was quite prepared to lick them if they gave me any rot, and I told them so quite plainly. I always speak plainly; for I believe in it. Not that they were offended: for Potter remarked at the time that what he liked about me was my manners, and Greene said that I reminded him of Lord Chesterfield.

Well, I didn't lose any time. I was up early in the morning. Potter and Greene were going to slack in bed; but I soon routed them out. I told them plainly that I wasn't going to have any slacking. That's not my way.

Aunt Judy cottoned to the idea at once. She knows a lot about footer; she likes to see me play, and always understands when I tell her about the fellows getting in my way and preventing me scoring. Aunt Judy could give Wingate a lot of tips about the game, if he only knew it. We had the goal-posts up that morning, and I kept Potter and Greene pretty hard at practice. My idea was to get an eleven together, and play the village team, and lick them, of course. I told Potter and Greene plainly that it was going to be footer all the time till we had licked Gander's Green Football Club. They groused a good bit, but I had my way.

It wasn't so jolly easy to get an eleven together. Several fellows I knew wouldn't play under my lead; there is a lot of jealousy in footer. But I did it in the long run. Aunt Judy kept open house for my friends, and there was no end of tuck, and Potter says that that had something to do with it: but I don't believe anything of the sort. The chaps joined my eleven simply because they recognised in me a first-rate skipper. Some fellows are born to command. I don't want to boast, of course, but in fairness to myself I must say that I am one of that sort.

Well, we played Gander's Green one Saturday afternoon, and, owing to Potter getting in my way just as I was going to score, they beat us. I talked to Potter jolly plainly about that. He said it was my fault, and we had a bit of a row. Of course, I wasn't going to take any of his rot, after he had lost us the match.

The next week, when I was routing them out to practice, Greene said they were fed up with footer. They wanted a holiday. I told them plainly that until we had beaten Gander's Green there wasn't going to be any holiday. After that, I told them, I'd be willing to give footer a rest, and we could have the motor-car trips and so on. But it was up to us to beat Gander's Green. We had a long jaw about it, and Potter said he was jolly well going home, then! I told him he could jolly well go home and be blowed, if he liked!

But he came round. Potter isn't really a bad chap, only a bit obstinate, and a rather poor footballer. It was agreed

that we should keep up the footer until we had beaten Gander's Green, and after that it was to drop. Potter and Greene were quite cheerful about it; in fact, I often saw them laughing together, and when I asked what was the joke, they told me they were laughing at the way we were going to beat Gander's Green. I was glad to see them taking it so ripingly, and it showed, too, that I was quite right to insist on having my way.

They got very chummy with the Gander's Green chaps, especially Snooks. I had to call them up to time pretty sharply sometimes, for neglecting footer practice to go about with this chap Snooks. I remember one day going down to Snooks' place to rout them out, and Snooks was saying, as I came up: "Well, I don't mind, just for once, to please you chaps, and I suppose the fathead would never smell a rat?" Potter looked rather startled when he saw me, I thought. I suppose it was on his conscience about missing the practice. He explained that they were talking about a chap Snooks knew, who fancied he could play footer.

"That's all very well," I said. "But this won't do. We've got to keep up practice, and you've jolly well got to toe the line."

"We shall beat Gander's Green next Saturday," Potter said. "I feel it. My idea is that, after licking them, we might give the chaps a bit of a treat. What about taking the whole crowd along with us for the motor-car picnic?"

I said it was a jolly good idea, but we were jolly well going to beat them before we wasted time on motor-car trips and picnics. "Business first" is my motto. Snooks was a good deal taken with the idea of a day in the car, and a whacking picnic. He said he'd be jolly glad to arrange it with his friends, if I could manage about an extra car. Of course, there was no difficulty about that. Aunt Judy would have got a whole fleet of motor-cars for the day if I'd asked her. But I talked to Potter and Greene pretty plainly as we were going back.

"No more of this slacking," I said. "It's all right to be on pally terms with your opponents—it's sporting. But the business in hand is to beat Gander's Green at footer, and that's what we've got to think about. And I tell you plainly that if we don't beat Gander's Green on Saturday, that motor run and that picnic won't come off on Monday."

"Snooks is awfully keen on it," Greene said.

"I said: 'Blow Snooks!'"

Potter said: "We'll beat them all right. This time we'll leave most of the game to you, Coker. You look after the halves and the backs as well as the front line, and give a little help in goal occasionally, and we shall pull through."

I must say that that was unusually sensible of George Potter. Well, I got them to practice, anyway, though I must say they slacked a good deal. When

Saturday came round, we went down to Gander's Green, and found Snooks and his men ready for us. Queerly enough, they were all talking about that motor run and picnic, and seemed to be thinking more about that than the game. I suppose it was rather a treat for them. They don't get much of that kind of thing in Gander's Green. I was rather pleased about it, as I thought it would be a bit of consolation for the licking they were going to get.

And they jolly well were licked, I can tell you!

From the kick-off, the game was right in my hands. I played in my usual all-round style. When the halves needed help, I was there to give it. When the backs were in danger, I was there to back them up. When the goalie looked like being beaten, I dropped in to help him out. My idea is that a good player's place is where he is needed, and I acted up to that.

The Gander's Green fellows were laughing like anything all through the match, at the way Potter and Greene were fumbling, I suppose. They did fumble, there's no mistake about that. If I had not been there, the team would have gone to pieces. They were laughing themselves, so I suppose they could see what asses they were.

Well, I don't want to swank, but I must tell the story of that match just as it happened, in justice to myself. I think Greyfriars ought to know, and if Wingate reads this, he may realise that he has made a mistake in leaving me out of the First Eleven. Approached properly, I should be willing to let bygones be bygones, and take a place in the First Eleven.

I simply walked over Gander's Green. They couldn't stand up against me. If they had been doing it on purpose, they couldn't have given me better chances. The goalie was simply nowhere. Sometimes he was laughing so much at Potter and Greene that he never even tried to stop the ball.

In the first half, I scored four goals—to nil. In the second half, I added five more, and Gander's Green never even broke their duck. When the whistle went, I was feeling a bit tired, but I could have gone on scoring. Nine goals to nil, however, was a pretty good total.

Snooks took it like a real sportsman. He told me that only a fellow like myself could have won a match like that.

On Monday we had the motor drive and the picnic, and all the Gander's Green fellows came, and they enjoyed themselves no end. There was a gorgeous spread, which must have cost Aunt Judy pounds and pounds. I was jolly glad to see Snooks and the rest enjoying themselves after licking them. I believe it was Potter's idea, in the first place, to bring them, and I must say it was very thoughtful of Potter. About the way I won the match, Potter and Greene were there, and they can say whether I have exaggerated in the slightest degree. It was simply my match from start to finish.

THE END.

(Author's Note.—The cheeky yung ass who edits this paper has taken the liberty of altering the spelling. This is puer cheek, which might be expected of a kid in the Remove. I wish it to be distinctly understood that the spelling is not mine. Also, it is a sheer libel to hint that Potter and Snook were hand-in-glove to spoof me over that match. The whole thing was perfectly genuine.—H. COKER.)

(Editor's Note.—We don't think!)

GREAT "HERALD" SCOOP!

The Truth About Julius Cæsar. Vivid Character Sketches of the First Emperors of Rome.

Emperor Vitellius Gives the Knock to William G. Bunter by Spending £7,000,000 Tuck-Money in Four Months.

J. Cæsar Gets a Bit of His Own Back on the Greek Pirates.

Cæsar Gives Pomp. the Knock-out at Pharsalia, B.C. 48.

Murder of J. Cæsar. All the Horrible Details.

Specially Contributed to the "Greyfriars Herald" from the Most Authentic Records, by our Brilliant Correspondent,

CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE (Upper Fourth).

MOST chaps think that Julius Cæsar was just an awful rotter who wrote books to worry us chaps at school, and to get us kept in when we want to get to the playing-fields.

This is not so. Julius Cæsar, besides writing books, was a sort of Roman Kitchener.

Caius Julius Cæsar was his real name. The name of Cæsar was given to the Julian family at Rome, either because one of them kept an elephant, which bears the same name in the Punic or Carthaginian tongue, or because one was born with a thick head of hair, something like Mark Linley's. (I mean that the hair was thick, not the head. Of course, Linley's got a first-rate head-piece!) This name was afterwards given to the other Roman emperors who followed C. J. Cæsar.

ROYAL ROMAN ROTTERS.

These were Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula—an awful rotter—Claudius Nero—another rotter—Galba and Otho—both rotters—Vitellius—who was a sort of William George Bunter—Vespasian—who was rather a decent sort of Johnny—Titus, who was a terrific nut, and Domitian, who was a perfectly putrid rotter.

There is nothing very particular about this string of old jossers, except that William George Bunter would perhaps be interested to hear that Vitellius grubbed largely four or five times a day, and that the whole of the Mediterranean Sea and its shores were diligently searched to provide delicacies for the emperor's table. He spent seven million pounds in four months on grub; and, at a dinner he gave his brother Lucius, there were two thousand dishes of fish and seven thousand dishes of fowl on the table!

Mother Mimble's would have been of no use to Vitellius. He could eat out any tuckshop before breakfast; and Josephus, who was a sort of history-writing johnny of those days, justly observes that if Vitellius had lived long enough, he would have eaten up the whole Roman Empire.

JULIUS PINCHED BY GREEK PIRATES.

But let us get back to Julius Cæsar. When he was quite a young chap, he went to finish his studies at Rhodes. On his way he was seized by pirates, who

offered to let him go for thirty talents. I don't want to be swanky about knowing all this, but thirty talents, in those days, was exactly £5,812 10s. Cæsar seemed to think himself worth more than this, for he gave the pirates forty talents, or £7,750, for his liberty.

But he soon got his own back, for he fitted out a ship, and captured the pirates, and crucified them all. So he probably made a bit out of the deal, as they must have had other rans in hand.

He was not much more than a kid at the time. So he must have been some knut, even in those early days.

When C. J. Cæsar had finished his education, and had passed out of the Upper Sixth at the Rhodes Grammar School, he got a job in the Roman Civil Service, where he soon proved himself a pie-hot boy.

After nearly getting the push from his job several times for cheek, they got rid of him by finding him a job in Spain, where the nuts come from, and where they grow the oranges that W. G. Bunter is so fond of.

He did all right in Spain. So he got transferred to Gaul, which is now called La Belle France. Here he started putting up trouble for future generations by writing his first book on his wars, which was called "De Bello Gallico; or, All About the French War." It was originally published in Rome in parts, with a handsome coloured plate given away in each issue, price one libella per part, or 3^d., our money.

CLOSE SHAVE FOR JULIUS.

Cæsar nearly lost this book when his ship sank in the Bay of Alexandria, and he was obliged to swim for his life, with his sword in one hand and his manuscript in the other.

Every schoolboy often wishes he had dropped the book and stuck to the sword. But they must not growl about Alexandria. There were about fifty books of Euclid stowed up there when the Caliph Omar burned the big library, which had been stored up there by the Ptolemies, those silly jugginses that you see dodging around on Egyptian monuments. They kept the fire burning six months with those books, to keep 4,000 hot baths going for the public convenience. Which was the best bit of work ever done for the British schoolboy.

When they read this article, Greyfriars will doubtless call a mass meeting and pass a hearty vote of thanks to the Caliph Omar for burning up all this tosh!

But to return to Julius Cæsar. From Gaul this great general invaded Britain. He did not do much harm, for the Ancient Britains were a beastly lot who lived in caves, and stained themselves blue instead of washing, just as the fags in the Third cover themselves with copying-ink pencil to hide the water-mark on their necks.

He also overcame the Germans, who were a dirty lot of dogs in those days, just as they are to-day. They were talking about their kultur, but J. Cæsar gave them a push in the neck, which they did not forget for many years.

Then Cæsar fell out with Pompey, his son-in-law, who wanted to get him the push from his job. He entered Italy by crossing the Rubicon, which was the boundary of his province.

Crossing the Rubicon has now become a figure of speech. William G. Bunter crosses the Rubicon every time he gets

(Continued on page 20.)



A LOYAL READER,
Blackheath, S.E.



E. FORD,
Paddington.



T. FULLER,
Southport.



R. GILLAM,
Melbourne.



CHARLES HEWSON,
Sunderland.



W. J. DAVIDSON,
co. Down.



B. BARNETT,
Stepney.



P. GRIMSHAW,
H.M.S. Gloucester.



W. DANIELS,
Abertillery.



ONE OF THE
KNUTS.



A LOYAL
READER.



C. PIPPETT,
Devonshire.



H. HOFFMAN,
Stepney.



A. NOBLE,
Bedford.



G. SUTTON,
A Staunch Reader.



AN ENFIELD
READER.



W. WENHAM,
Winnipeg, Canada.



A STAUNCH
SUPPORTER.



M. BERRY.



A LOYAL
READER.



W. E. CLEMENTSON,
Gateshead.



JAMES S. POTTS,
Sunderland.



D. TAYLOR,
Herts.



A STAUNCH
SUPPORTER.



J. G. CLEMENTSON,
Gateshead.

THE GREYFRIARS HERALD.

(Continued from page 18.)

his eighth doughnut. That means that, having hogged eight doughnuts, he can't go back till he has finished the dozen.

Cæsar beat Pompey at the Battle of Pharsalia, and Pompey bunked to Egypt. But with the help of the Boy Scouts, Cæsar tracked him, and slew him, and thus became the undisputed Emperor of Rome.

But some of his crowd thought he was too ambitious, and conspired against him. They waited for him in the Senate, or the Houses of Parliament, and stabbed him. A chap called Casca gave him the first stab, and Cæsar tried to put up a fight. But when he saw his old friend Brutus in the gang—dear old Brutus, who used to share the same study with him at school in Rhodes!—his mighty heart burst. He wrapped his mantle over his face, and exclaiming: "Et tu, Brute!"—which means: "Oh, you brute!"—fell at the base of Pompey's statue, which ran blood all the while.

(Editorial Note.—Poor old Temple! Cæsar seems to be a big trouble to him. We in the Remove fancied his Form had got further on than Caius Julius—we have, though we are supposed to be junior to them. But it looks as though they had been put back—and I dare say their Form-master knows best!)

THE MISSING MOKE.

An Adventure of Herlock Sholmes.

I.

I HAVE already referred in these chronicles to the case of the Missing Moke, the masterly handling of which by Herlock Sholmes earned my amazing friend the undying gratitude of William Sikes, Esq.

Truly, in few of the cases handled by Sholmes has his genius shone more conspicuously. It has caused a prejudice against my amazing friend to exist in the Knackers' Department of the Pipeclay Office, but to that Sholmes is indifferent. The recovery of the much-prized animal brought joy to a humble home, and that was enough for Sholmes.

Mr. William Sikes was shown into our sitting-room at Shaker Street one morning during the early months of the war. He was looking deeply troubled.

"Which I 'ope you'll hexcuse me, Mr. Sholmes," he said, "but I'll take my davy you're the only cove wot can 'elp me in this 'ere fix."

"Pray be seated," said Sholmes. "Let me have a few details. You can speak quite freely before my friend Dr. Jotson."

"It's about the moke, sir," said Mr. Sikes almost tearfully. "Neddy, I calls 'im. The best friend I've got, sir. He pulls the barrer, and wot I shall do without 'im beats me."

"Your donkey has disappeared?"

"That's it, sir. It 'appened like this 'ere. I'd been on a long 'round, and I stopped at Slushley. I'd sold all the bananas, and I stopped there for a rest, and I let Neddy loose on the common. When I came out of the Peal o' Bells there was the barrer safe and sound, but Neddy had vanished. 'Igh and low I 'unted for Neddy, sir, but he had vanished. He'd been stolen."

Herlock Sholmes made pencil-notes on his cuff.

"Did you observe any suspicious characters in the neighbourhood?"

Mr. Sikes shook his head.

"Not as I knows on, sir. There's a camp close at 'and, and the gents of the Knackers' Department 'ave their 'ead-quarters there. They're there to buy up 'orses for the Knackers' Department, you see."

"The common is an unfrequented spot?"

"Nothin' there exceptin' the 'orses bought up for the Pipeclay Office, Mr. Sholmes. There was lots of them lyin' about till they could be carried away."

"Are the horses still there, Mr. Sikes?"

"No, sir. They've been took into the camp now to be doctored."

"At what time did your moke disappear, Mr. Sikes?"

"Yesterday arternoon, sir."

"H'm!" Herlock Sholmes took a draught of cocaine, and lighted his pipe. "Have you a photograph of the missing animal, Mr. Sikes?"

"'Ere you are, sir. Took on Derby Day a year ago," said Mr. Sikes, with a sigh.

Sholmes glanced scrutinisingly at the photograph. It represented a donkey attached to a barrow in which several ladies and gentlemen were seated. The donkey's head was adorned with flowers, and its forelegs with a pair of somewhat shabby trousers. The photograph had evidently been taken upon a festive occasion.

"I shall know this donkey again," said Herlock Sholmes thoughtfully. "You may leave the case in my hands, Mr. Sikes. Call here again this arternoon, and I may have news for you."

Mr. Sikes left us, and I looked curiously at Herlock Sholmes.

"A strange case, Jotson," he remarked. "I hope we shall be able to recover the missing moke—what?"

"It does not seem an easy task," I replied. "There appears to be no clue to the animal's whereabouts."

Sholmes smiled.

"You have heard the details Mr. Sikes gave me, Jotson. You have studied my methods, yet you do not see a clue?"

"I confess I do not, Sholmes. The donkey has undoubtedly been stolen."

"Very probably."

"I see no clue to the thief, Sholmes."

"A clue to the thief, Jotson, is not so important as a clue to the donkey," said Herlock Sholmes. "It is the missing moke that Mr. Sikes wishes to find."

"True! But I do not see—"

"Neither would Scotland Yard see, if Mr. Sikes had taken the case there," smiled Sholmes. "My dear fellow, the officials of the Knackers' Department of the Pipeclay Office were on the spot buying horses for the troops."

"I do not see the connection, Sholmes."

Herlock Sholmes rose.

"I must leave you now, Jotson. No, don't trouble to come with me. Go and see your patients, my dear fellow."

"You are going—"

"To Slushley."

"To the common—"

"No; to the headquarters of the buyer for the Pipeclay Office."

Without another word Herlock Sholmes hurried away, leaving me in a state of the most profound astonishment.

II.

MR. SIKES returned early in the afternoon, while I was still waiting for Herlock Sholmes.

"Sholmes is still absent," I said. "But you may rely upon my amazing friend, Mr. Sikes. He has had great and varied experience in dealing with asses. His profession has led him into every Government department in the kingdom."

A little later there was a sound of clattering hoofs, and loud cheering came from the street. We rushed to the window.

A crowd had gathered, and we soon saw the reason. Herlock Sholmes had returned. He was mounted upon a donkey, and with that playful humour which was one of the outstanding traits of his remarkable character, he was seated with his face to the tail. His arrival caused intense interest among the more youthful habitues of Shaker Street.

Mr. Sikes gasped.

"Neddy!" he exclaimed.

Mr. Sikes rushed from the room, dropping, unheeded, his clay pipe in his delight.

Sholmes dismounted at the door, and it was pleasant to see the satisfaction in Mr. Sikes' honest, if somewhat grubby, countenance as he led away the moke.

I turned to the door as Sholmes entered, smiling.

"Sholmes! You have found the missing moke!"

"So it appears, Jotson," said Sholmes. "Rather a dramatic climax, my dear fellow—what? You know my love of effect."

He rolled the cask of cocaine from the corner, and sank into his chair.

"Sholmes," I exclaimed, "I am amazed!"

"As usual, Jotson."

"As usual, Sholmes. Before you reduce yourself to a comatose condition, my dear Sholmes, pray explain."

Sholmes smiled, and laid down the hypodermic syringe. He lighted a couple of pipes, and blew out two clouds of smoke.

"My dear Jotson, it was simple—elementary, in fact. Mr. Sikes, as he told us, let loose his donkey on Slushley Common. It was purloined as it fed on the herbage amid the equine wrecks purchased for the Pipeclay Department."

"But how—"

"Consider, my dear Jotson, the probable motive of the thief. Naturally he would wish to dispose of his plunder as quickly as possible, at a profit."

"True. But—"

"For that reason, Jotson, I paid my visit to the office of the Knackers' Department at Slushley. Upon showing my card, I was permitted to look over the horses now undergoing renovation."

"I do not see—"

Herlock Sholmes smiled.

"Among them I found Neddy, as I expected. Having his photograph, I was easily able to identify him, even to the satisfaction of Mr. Evidently Greene, the buyer for the Pipeclay Office. As I suspected, he had been palmed off as a horse upon the professional buyer for the Pipeclay Office."

"Sholmes!"

"Mr. Evidently Greene, of course, is very slightly acquainted with animals; and his vision, too, is somewhat obstructed by his eyeglass," explained Sholmes. "His usual system, in buying a horse for the Pipeclay Department, is to count its legs in order to assure himself that it is a horse. When Neddy was brought to him he followed his usual system, and, having ascertained that there was a leg at each corner, he did not doubt that the animal was a suitable purchase for the Knackers' Department of the Pipeclay Office. It was with some difficulty that I convinced him that Neddy was, in point of fact, a donkey; and he parted with the animal very unwillingly. However, I gained my point, though I fear," added Sholmes, with a smile, "that after this I shall not be 'persona grata' at the Pipeclay Office."

THE END.

3-3-17

