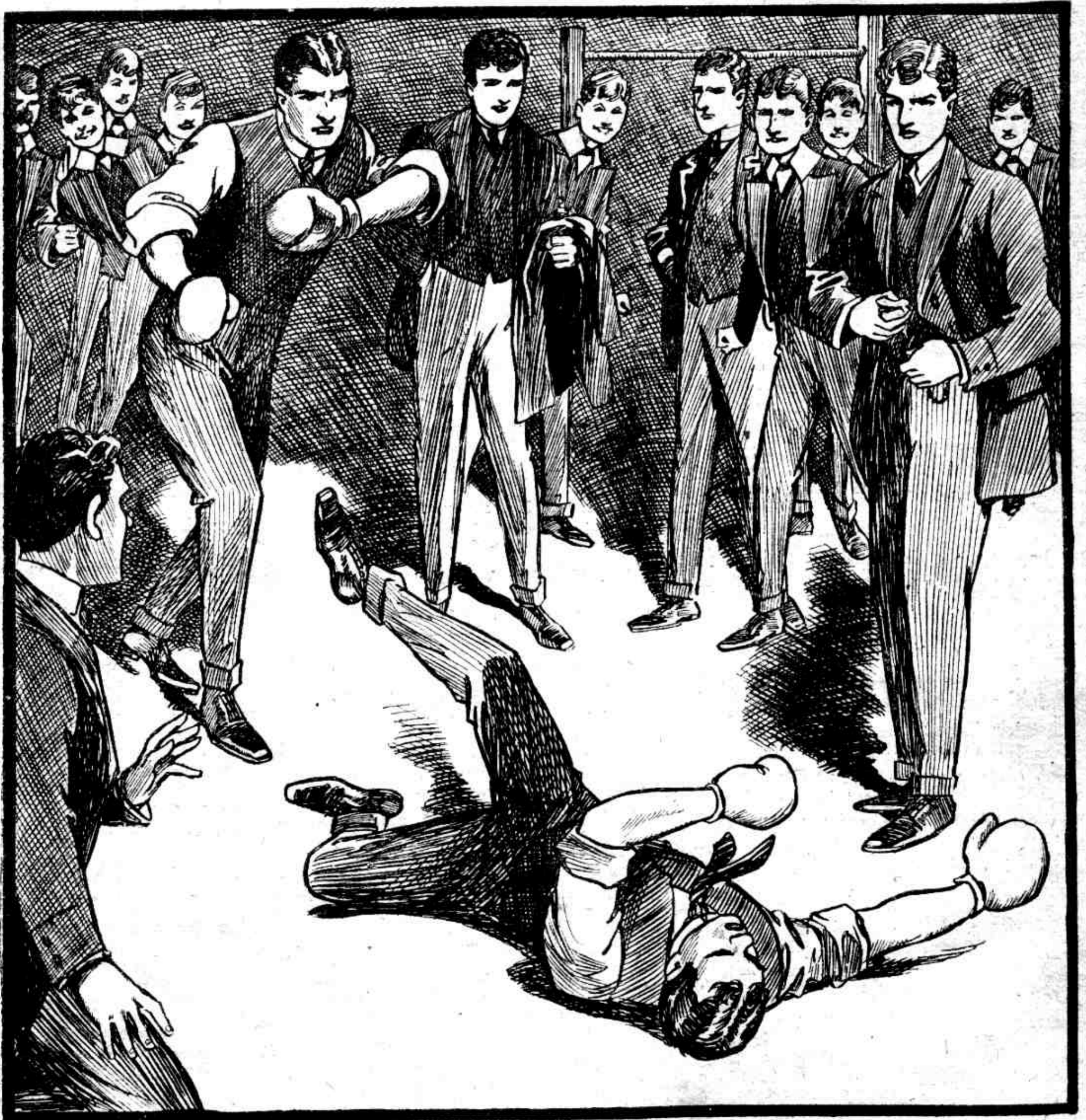




The **Magnet**  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d.  
WAR TIME PRICE.  
Library  
No. 551. Vol. XIII.

# COKER'S CAMPAIGN!



**THE KNOCK-OUT FOR COKER!**

*Copyright in the United States of America.*

31-8-18



# COKER'S CAMPAIGN!

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

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

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Coker Means Business!

**R**OT!" That brief but emphatic statement was made by Horace Coker of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars.

Coker was speaking to his study-mates, Potter and Greene. But at least a dozen fellows heard him. Coker was standing in the quadrangle, his hands driven deep into his pockets, and his brows knitted. His booming voice could be heard for a considerable distance, and fellows looked round. Coker did not mind. He had no objection to all Greyfriars hearing his remarks if they liked. In fact, he preferred it. He had a fixed opinion that his remarks were worth listening to.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Coker's on the bawl again!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stopped on their way to Little Side.

Coker looked excited, and they were interested. Potter and Greene did not look interested, however. They merely looked tired. Coker frequently had that effect upon his study-mates.

"Now, look here, old chap—" murmured Potter.

"Rot!"

Coker repeated that telling monosyllable with still greater emphasis.

"But—" began Greene feebly.

"Rot!"

It was a shout.

"What a conversationalist!" remarked Frank Nugent. "I should like to share old Coker's study—I don't think!"

And Hurree Janset Ram Singh remarked that the "don't thinkfulness was terrific."

"Rot!" said Coker once more, victoriously.

"Coker, old chap, chuck it!" implored Potter. "There's those fags listening to you!"

"Let 'em listen!"

"Wingate's looking out of his window—"

"Let him look!"

"It's about time we went in to tea," remarked Greene, in a casual sort of way.

"Never mind tea!" said Coker. "Now, I was saying—"

"But, look here—"

"Rot!"

Greene gave it up.

"Give a fellow a chance to speak!" went on Coker warmly. "I was saying that I've stood it long enough, and I'm not standing it any longer. That's plain English, isn't it?"

Coker paused, but not, like Brutus, for a reply. He went on without giving Potter or Greene a chance of replying.

"A chap expects to be backed up in his own study. I count on you two fellows. I rely on you. That's enough! Wingate's got to have it put to him plainly. As I was saying when you interrupted me with your idiotic remarks, Potter, there's too much Wingate in this school."

"Too much Coker, if you ask me," murmured Bob Cherry.

Coker did not ask him, however. Coker did not even hear him. He went on, in his powerful tones, audible at quite a distance.

"You needn't tell me that Wingate's head of the Sixth and captain of the school. I know that. I've said, and say it again, that Greyfriars wants a new captain. The fellows don't seem to agree with me."

"They don't, for a cert!" admitted Potter.

"Well, if they're asses enough to want a skipper who doesn't know a good cricketer when he sees one, let 'em have him!" said Coker generously. "I sha'n't interfere."

"You couldn't very well, could you?" ventured Greene.

"Don't be a chump, William Greene!"

"Ahem!"

"But," continued Coker, having crushed Greene—"but there's a 'but.' Wingate may remain captain of Greyfriars till the school goes to the bow-wows for all I care; I sha'n't interfere. But when it comes to interfering with me, then I get my back up!"

"This way, gents!" called Bob Cherry.

"This way to see Coker with his back up! No charge!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker bestowed a frown on the Famous Five, and went on:

"Look at me! I ask you, George Potter, as you know something about the game, did you ever see a cricketer quite like me?"

"Never!" said Potter fervently. "In all the wide world, Coker, there isn't a cricketer quite like you! There never will be, unless Charlie Chaplin takes up cricket."

"What?" roared Coker.

"I—I mean—"

"I may as well say, Potter, that I don't want any of your idiotic jokes on a serious subject. Now, as I was saying, I'm a cricketer. I don't brag of it, but there it is! Few fellows understand the game as I do. Few—very few—play it as I do!"

"The fewfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh.

"Yet—I call on you as witnesses—yet I'm consistently left out of the cricket—never given a chance in the First Eleven," said Coker. "That's the kind of skipper we've got in George Wingate. Well, I'm not the chap to shove myself forward in any way—"

"No?" ejaculated Potter.

"No!" roared Coker. "Not at all! I stand out of the cricket, and let the matches go to rack and ruin. But that isn't all. I look on it as my duty to keep the fags in order. It's not my fault that the Head doesn't appoint prefects from the Fifth Form. I can manage fags better than any Sixth Form prefect. I know that. But—you'd hardly believe it—Wingate chipped in when I was chastising young Tubb. He calls it bullying. Bullying!" repeated Coker, more in

sorrow than in anger.

"Well, wasn't it?" asked Greene.

"No, it wasn't, you ass! Certainly not, you chump! And that isn't all. I'm not complaining personally; but, as a patriotic Greyfriars chap, I'm not satisfied with Wingate. I disapprove of him and all his methods. He doesn't act in the least as I should if I were captain of Greyfriars."

"I say, what about tea?"

"Do shut up about tea a minute, Greene! You're like a sheep's head—all jaw, you know!" said Coker. "You never give a fellow a chance to speak."

"Oh, my hat!" said Greene.

That was all he could say.

"Now, I can't sack Wingate from the captaincy; I could if the fellows would back me up, but they won't," said Coker. "But I feel it my duty to take a stand on the subject. Henceforth—"

"That's a good word!" said Bob Cherry.

"Henceforth I refuse to recognise Wingate as captain of Greyfriars!" announced Coker. "I disregard him; I look upon him as if he isn't there! I go on my way regardless of him! That's the programme!"

Quite twenty fellows had gathered round by this time to listen to Coker. He seemed rather pleased to have an audience. Evidently indignation had long been smouldering in the breast of Horace Coker, and he was glad that Greyfriars should learn at last what his opinion really was.

"What a blessed chump!" said Harry Wharton in wonder. "If the idiot begins bucking against old Wingate he will get it in the neck!"

"And the sooner the better!" growled Johnny Bull.

Potter and Greene looked very unhappy. They could not escape from Coker; and they realised that the great Horace was making an ass of himself, though Coker was far from seeing it. Wingate's position was not likely to be shaken by the disapproval of the champion of the Fifth. If Coker had approved of Wingate's ways the fellows would have wondered what was the matter with them. Coker's disapproval was a testimonial in itself.

The fact that his audience were grinning did not disconcert Coker in the least. He was not unaccustomed to fellows grinning when he delivered his opinions.

"That's the programme," repeated Coker. "And, as fair play's a jewel, I'm going to tell Wingate plainly how the matter stands. I'm going to explain to him that, so far as I'm concerned, he doesn't exist. If he doesn't like it, he can lump it! Let him change his ways, and I'll see what can be done. Until he changes his ways I simply wipe him off the slate. That's what I'm going to tell him. I want you fellows to come with me and hear me tell him off!"

"You—you're really going to say all that to Wingate?" moaned Potter.

"I am!"

"Suppose he chucks you out of the study?"



"Don't be an idiot, Potter!"  
 "Ahem!"  
 "Follow me!" said Coker loftily.  
 "But, I say——"  
 "Rot!"  
 "Look here, Coker——"  
 "Rot!"

With that crushing rejoinder Horace Coker started for the School House, followed by a loud chortle from the audience. Potter and Greene exchanged a glance, and started, too—in the opposite direction. They certainly did not intend to accompany Coker, and witness that great man hurling his defiance into the teeth of the captain of Greyfriars.

But Coker did not lack a following. The Famous Five gave up all thought of cricket just then; they were much more interested in Coker than in cricket. They followed Coker, prepared to enjoy the scene when he quitted Wingate's study on his neck. Temple of the Fourth joined up, with Dabney and Fry, and a crowd more of the Remove and the Fourth. Even Billy Bunter rolled along in the procession after Coker.

In the big doorway Coker glanced round, and was surprised to discover that Potter and Greene had vanished. He gave an indignant snort. Even his own study was not backing him up in his declaration of independence.

"Go it, Coker!" called out Peter Todd.

"Pile in, Coker!"  
 "Shall I fetch you a cushion to fall on, Coker?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 Another snort from Coker as he strode into the House. After him marched the army of juniors, and the sacred precincts of the Sixth Form passage echoed to the sound of many chortles.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Coker's Defiance!

WINGATE of the Sixth was in his study, chatting with Gwynne, when Horace Coker thumped at the door. The captain of Greyfriars had, as a matter of fact, heard Coker's loud voice from the quad, so he was not unaware of the great Horace's programme. Gwynne was grinning, but Wingate looked rather serious. He rapped out "Come in!" as Coker thumped.

The door opened, and Coker of the Fifth marched in.

He left the door open behind him. There were two or three dozen juniors in the passage, and Coker was not unwilling to let them see him beard the lion in his den, so to speak.

Wingate fixed his eyes grimly on the Fifth-Former.

"Well?" he snapped.

Coker struck an attitude of defiant independence. He wanted to make it clear that he did not tremble at the Greyfriars captain's frown.

"I've got something to say to you, Wingate!" he announced.

"Say it, then, and clear!"

"No hurry," answered Coker. "Don't think you can frighten me with glaring, Wingate. You can't! This is rather an important matter. I've been thinking over it for some time."

"You have, bedad?" exclaimed Gwynne.

"Yes, I have!"

"Sure, I'm glad to hear it!" said Gwynne genially. "I wasn't aware intirely that you could think at all, Coker. We live and learn."

"You shut up!" said Coker, raising his hand.

"Phwat?"



Enter Coker! (See Chapter 2.)

"I don't want any cheek!"

"Cheek!" repeated Gwynne.

"Yes. I don't stand cheek from the Sixth, any more than from the Second!" said Coker. "There's a lot too much Sixth Form in this school, in my opinion. I don't think much of the Sixth. Some silly ass in a book said the Sixth Form was the giddy palladium of a public school. That's rot! Utter rot! To be candid, Gwynne, I think the Sixth Form is very small beer."

"Oh, bedad!" said Wynno.

"Is that what you came here to say, Coker?" asked Wingate.

"Yes, and some more.

"Don't trouble about the more. That will do. Shut the door after you."

"I've not finished yet," said Coker calmly. "I'm going to give you a plain tip, Wingate. I never beat about the bush. I'm a plain chap."

"You are!" came a voice from the passage.

"The plainfulness is terrific, my-esteemed Coker!"

Coker did not heed those still, small voices from behind.

"I don't think you are any good as captain of the school, Wingate," he went on. "I think you're a well-meaning chap enough in your way; but you're dense. You don't know a good cricketer when you see one, for one thing. You don't understand how to manage fags. You don't understand anything, in fact. You think too much of your blessed Sixth Form! You're too Sixth-Formy by half! You don't mind my speaking plainly, do you?"

"Not at all!" said Wingate.

"As a matter of fact, it would be all the same if you did. I'm speaking from a sense of duty. Personally it doesn't concern me, really; but I've a sense of duty as a Greyfriars chap—a prominent member of the Fifth Form. I'm not satisfied with you as captain of the school, Wingate!"

"Thanks!"

"I don't agree with any of your methods!"

"Thanks again!"

"Of course, I don't want to hurt your feelings," said Coker kindly. "I feel bound to speak out plainly."

"My dear man, you don't hurt my feelings by paying me compliments," said Wingate.

"Eh? I'm not paying you compliments!" ejaculated Coker in surprise.

"Yes, you are. Is there anything about me that you approve of?" asked Wingate.

"Nothing!"

"Nothing I do that you'd do in my place?"

"Nothing at all!"

"Good! It's very kind of you, Coker, to come here and give me a testimonial like that!" said Wingate heartily.

There was a chuckle in the passage, and Coker looked bewildered. His mighty brain worked rather slowly.

"You don't seem to understand, Wingate!" he said. "As I've remarked, you're a bit dense. I disapprove of you in every way as captain of the school. If the fellows would back me up, I'd shift you out of the job. They won't! But having thought it over, I feel that I can't allow the present state of affairs to continue. The school is going to the dogs. From this moment, Wingate, I warn you that you're not captain of the school, so far as I'm concerned. I disregard you, and regard you with indifference!"

"You disregard me and regard me at the same time? Only you can do these things, Coker," remarked Wingate.

"I mean——"

"Never mind what you mean. There's a door behind you, Coker."

"Eh? I know that. What about it?"

"Get on the other side of it."

"I've not finished yet. I'm going to buck up against you all along the line, Wingate. I'm going to try to bring the fellows to their senses. I offer you the chance of resigning the captaincy. I give you till to-morrow."

"My hat!"

"If you don't, I'm against you, all along the line."

"Is that all?"

"I'm going to raise the Fifth Form," said Coker. "I'm going to buck up the whole school, in fact. I'm not going to rest till Greyfriars has a captain the fellows can have confidence in. And in

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 551.



any case, Wingate, I warn you not to come the captain over me. I'm done with you!"

"Oh, you're done at last, are you?" said Wingate, unmoved. "Well, the door's still there."

"And I don't want any Sixth Form swank!" roared Coker.

Wingate rose to his feet.

"Would you mind walking out of this study, Coker?" he asked, with elaborate politeness.

"I'll do that when I choose!"

"You prefer to go on your neck?"

"If you can put me out on my neck you're welcome to do it!" said Coker with a disdainful snort.

"I'll try," said Wingate.

Coker pushed back his cuffs.

"Come on!" he said. "I've thought for a good time, Wingate, that a jolly good licking would do you good. I'm ready to give you one!"

There was a gasp in the passage. Even the egregious Coker had not been expected to go to the length of challenging the head of the Sixth to a scrap. Wingate stared at him.

"Are you quite out of your senses, Coker?" he asked quietly.

"Rot!"

"Get out of this study!" snapped Wingate. "You can't help being a funny ass, Coker, but I'm fed up. Travel!"

"Rats!"

Wingate gave Gwynne a glance, and the Irish Sixth-Former jumped up. It was quite miles below the dignity of the captain of the school to enter into a scrap like a fag of the Fourth or the Remove. Horace Coker had no sense of the fitness of things.

The two prefects advanced on Coker with grim looks.

"Ready!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Look out, you fellows! Give Coker room to fall!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker put up his hands.

"One at a time!" he exclaimed indignantly. "Do you call this fair play?"

"You don't seem to understand, Coker," said Wingate. "You can't fight the captain of the school; that's not allowed. You can't cheek the Sixth; that's not allowed, either. I can make allowances for a born idiot, but you pass the limit. You're going out on your neck!"

"I'll jolly well— Oh! Ah! Yah!"

The two Sixth-Formers collared Coker before he could finish.

Burly as Coker was, he had no chance.

He was swept off his feet, and tossed into the passage like a sack of coke. He came down there with a heavy bump, the juniors crowding back to give him room.

"Yaroooh!" roared Coker.

He sat up in a dazed state. The door of Wingate's study closed on him.

Coker staggered to his feet.

"Ow! Wow!" he mumbled. "What are you cackling at, you cheeky fags? Ow!"

"Do it again, Coker!" chortled Squiff.

Coker gasped.

"I've been chucked out!" he spluttered.

"Me! Well, you watch me, and see me sling Wingate out on his neck, and Gwynne after him! You watch!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"The watchfulness will be terrific."

"Go it, Coker!"

"Chuck 'em out, Coker!" yelled Bob Cherry. "We'll wait here and count 'em as they fall."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker evidently meant business. He tore open the door of Wingate's study and rushed in.

There was the sound of a scuffle in

the study. Then a whirling form came hurtling through the doorway, landing with a crash.

"One!" counted Bob Cherry.

"Yarooop!"

"Why, it's Coker!" exclaimed Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was Coker!

He sprawled in the passage, gasping. The Greyfriars captain's door was closed again. Coker struggled up.

"Do it again, Coker!" yelled the juniors.

But this time they were disappointed. Coker was a warlike fellow, but those two terrific bumps in the passage had taken some of the truculence out of him. He had a variety of aches all over his burly person.

Instead of charging into Wingate's study again, Horace Coker turned and limped away. A howl of laughter followed him. The entertainment was evidently over.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Only Way!

"YOW-O-WOW!"

That sound of anguish greeted Potter and Greene when they came into their study in the Fifth Form passage for tea.

Potter and Greene suppressed smiles.

Coker of the Fifth was not in every way a desirable study-mate, but there was no doubt that he added considerably to the gaiety of existence.

The great Horace was in the armchair, and he looked a little dismal. His handling in Wingate's study had not been gentle, and he had several bumps and bruises.

"Hallo! I thought you'd have tea ready, Coker!" remarked Greene.

"Wow!"

"Anything the matter?"

"Wow!"

"By the way, how did you get on with Wingate?" asked Potter blandly.

Coker glared.

"I was chucked out!" he said.

"You don't say so?"

"Yes, I do!" groaned Coker.

"Well, what the thump did you expect?" asked Greene. "A chap isn't allowed to cheek the captain of the school in his own quarters."

"I don't regard Wingate as captain of the school. So far as I'm concerned, he's sacked from that job," said Coker.

"I think so more than ever. We don't want a funk for captain of Greyfriars."

"A what?" yelled Potter and Greene together.

"A funk!" snapped Coker.

"Don't be such an idiot Coker!" said Potter impatiently. "You know Wingate isn't a funk. You'll get jolly well ragged if you say that outside this study."

"I'll say it to all Greyfriars! I challenged him, and instead of standing up to me like a man, he set on me with Gwynne, and chucked me out. What do you call that?"

"I don't see what else you could expect. He would get jolly well ragged by the Head if he started fighting like a fag."

"Rot!"

"Look here, Coker—"

"Tain't as if he was challenged by any person who doesn't count—you, for instance," said Coker. "With me, it's different."

"Oh!"

"My idea is to lick him, and bring him down off his perch," said Coker. "I think it's a good way. Well, he won't fight me. He's a funk!"

"Fathead! If he wasn't a jolly good-natured chap he would report you to the Head for your cheek!" exclaimed

Potter. "Suppose he did fight you? The Head would very likely hear about it, and what would he say to him? The head of the Sixth fighting a fellow in the Fifth, like a couple of fags in the Remove! Dr. Locke would shift him out of the captaincy pretty quick, I think."

"Well, that would be a good thing for Greyfriars. Besides, the Head need not know."

"Don't be an ass, old chap!" said Potter. "Let's have tea."

"If you call me an ass, Potter, there will be trouble in this study," said Coker. "What's happened to-day only makes me more determined. For the sake of the school, I'm going to shift Wingate out of his job. It's up to somebody, and I'm the man to do it!"

"Bow-wow!" said Greene disrespectfully.

Coker stared at his study-mates in surprise and wrath. As a rule, Potter and Greene were very careful how they managed Coker. Life was not worth living in the study unless Coker was given his head. But Coker's latest development was too much even for his study-mates, and they made no secret of their opinion. Even the worm will turn.

"So you're not backing me up?" ejaculated Coker at last.

"Against Wingate? No fear!"

"You're afraid of him, like all the rest, then?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Potter, without ceremony. "Wingate's captain of the school because he's the best chap for the job. Everybody knows it except you. You don't think so because you're a frabjous ass!"

Coker jumped up.

"That's enough, George Potter! Put up your hands!"

"Order!" murmured Greene. "No rags in the study, you fellows! I—I say, Coker, why not call a meeting of the Fifth on the subject? I'll pass the word along, if you like."

"That's a good idea," said Potter pacifically.

Coker lowered his fists.

"Well, if you're going to back me up—" he said.

"Let's have tea now."

"Never mind tea!" said Coker. "A meeting of the Fifth is a jolly good idea. I'd thought of that already. I'll address the Form, and you two fellows can support me. Let's see about it at once."

Greene closed one eye at Potter.

The two Fifth-Formers wanted their tea, and they did not want a scrap with Coker.

"Come on," said Greene. "You get into the Form-room, Coker, and we'll tell the fellows to come along."

"Now, that's what I call pally!" said Coker heartily.

Coker was ready for business, in spite of his bumps. He strode out of the study. Greene murmured a few words in Potter's ear, and they followed him.

Coker strode into the Fifth Form-room, deserted at that hour. Potter followed him in, and stopped just inside. He slipped his hand behind him, and extracted the key from the door.

"Buck up and pass the word, Potter!" said Coker. "I'll make a few notes for my address. I'm going to put it very plain."

"I should," agreed Potter.

He quitted the Form-room, closing the door behind him. Coker, with a pencil and an exercise-book, proceeded to make some notes for his speech. Potter slipped the key in outside the door, and turned it.

Then he joined Greene, and they went back to their study.

Without the genial company of Horace



Coker they proceeded to have tea, leaving Horace to wait for the meeting to arrive in the Form-room. It was the simplest way of disposing of Coker, Potter and Greene thought. Besides, there was a food shortage in the study, and the rations went further with two than with three.

Horace Coker was busy with his pencil for about ten minutes. By that time he had his notes complete, and he was beginning to wonder why the meeting did not arrive. Somewhat surprised, he went to the door. But the door did not open. Then he noticed that the key was missing.

Horace Coker drew a deep, deep breath. His feelings were really too deep for words at that moment. He was locked in the Form-room, and it dawned upon him that Potter and Greene were at tea in the study, and that there was not going to be a meeting of the Fifth. With feelings that were really inexpressible in any language but German, Coker began to hammer on the door of the Form-room.

#### THE-FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Bobs for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter blinked in at the door of Study No. 1, where the Famous Five of the Remove were at tea. There was a grin on Bunter's fat face.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in astonishment. "How did Bunter know we had a pineapple?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I didn't know you had a pineapple!" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "Still, I'll have some. I say, you fellows, Coker— He, he, he!"

"What about Coker?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing. "Has he appointed himself captain of Greyfriars?"

"He, he, he! He's locked up in the Fifth Form-room!" chuckled Bunter. "He's thumping at the door like anything. Somebody's locked him in, and taken the key away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I believe Potter and Greene know something about it," said Bunter. "I heard 'em laughing no end in their study. Do you fellows want any of this pineapple?"

"Oh, no!" said Nugent sarcastically. "Don't worry about us!"

"Right-ho! I won't!" said Bunter cheerfully. "I say, it's rather good! I'll finish it, as you're so pressing."

And he did, while the chums of the Remove gazed at him open-mouthed. It did not take him long.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry rose to his feet, and made a stride towards the corner where a cricket-stump was standing. Bunter blinked at him.

"I say, you fellows, I'll be getting along," he said, backing towards the door.

"Wait a minute!" exclaimed Bob, as he grasped the stump.

But Billy Bunter did not wait a minute. He did not even wait a second. He was gone long before the stump could reach him. The Owl of the Remove was disappearing down the staircase when Bob glared out of the study doorway.

Downstairs he found Cecil Reginald Temple and a group of Fourth-Formers chortling. The news had spread that Coker was locked in the Form-room; but no one seemed inclined to help him out.

"He's kickin' up the dickens of a row," said Temple. "He'll have some of the masters along soon if he doesn't chuck it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 551.

"I called to him through the door," said Temple. "He promised me a thick ear if I didn't get the key and let him out. Coker's so tactful!"

The Fourth-Formers chortled.

"I say, you fellows, do you know where the key is?" inquired Bunter.

"Better ask Potter. I believe he's got it," said Temple. "I fancy Coker's booked for a long stay, unless he climbs out of a window or up the chimney."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled away in the direction of the Form-rooms. His eyes were glistening behind his spectacles. Coker undoubtedly was kicking up a shindy in the Fifth Form-room. The noise could be heard at a considerable distance.

Thump, thump! Bang!

Billy Bunter stopped at the door, and tapped. The thumping within ceased.

"Is that you, Potter?" came in sulphurous tones through the keyhole.

"I say, Coker—it's me."

"Bunter! Open the door, Bunter!"

"He, he, he!"

"Will you let me out, Bunter? If you don't get this door open for me I'll give you the licking of your life!" roared Coker.

Coker had his own way of asking favours.

"I say, Coker, would you like me to get the key?" purred Bunter.

"I'll smash you if you don't!"

"Ahem! I say, Coker—"

"Go and get the key, you fat idiot!"

"I say, Coker, the postman's been," said Bunter.

"Eh? What does that matter, fat-head?"

"I've been disappointed about a postal-order."

"What?"

"I was expecting a postal-order, Coker," said Bunter calmly. "There's been some delay in the post, and it hasn't come."

"You fat dummy, get the door open!"

"I suppose you couldn't lend me five bob, Coker—"

"I'll lend you a licking!" howled Coker.

"Till my postal-order comes? Of course, I'll hand it to you immediately it comes, Coker."

"I—I—I—"

"If you refuse to oblige me with a small loan, Coker, I'm afraid I can't get the key," said Bunter. "One good turn deserves another, you know. It's only till my postal-order comes."

"Get the key, and I'll give you a bob!" said Coker, breathing hard. "You'll find it in my study. Potter's got it."

"Did you say you'd lend me five bob?"

"I said I'd give you a bob, you sneaking little fat beast!"

"I hope you don't think I could accept a gift of money from you, Coker," said Bunter, with dignity. "I should certainly decline to do anything of the sort!"

"Wha-at?"

"Some fellows might; but I'm not that kind of chap. I was merely referring to a loan."

"I—I—I—I— Will you get that key from Potter?" gasped Coker. "I've been shut up nearly an hour! I'll smash 'em! I'll scalp 'em! I'll—"

"Well, good-bye, old scout!" said Bunter. "Sorry I can't do anything for you!"

"Stop!" roared Coker. "Let me out! Look here, I'll give you five bob if you'll let me out, Bunter! There!"

"Once and for all, Coker, I want you to understand that I couldn't accept gifts from you," said Bunter calmly.

"Oh, if there wasn't a door between us!" gasped Coker.

"You don't seem to understand a decent fellow's feelings, Coker. Your offer is simply an insult. A loan is a different matter. If you're prepared to lend me five shillings till my postal-order comes—"

"I—I—I—I— All right!" stammered Coker. "I'll lend it you, then!"

"On that understanding, I can accept it," said Bunter.

"Well, go and get the key!"

"Shove it under the door," said Bunter cautiously. "There's plenty of room. Then I'll go for the key at once."

There was a sound in the Form-room as of a lion growling in his wrath. But Coker was getting desperate. An hour in the Form-room was enough for him. Five shillings were slid under the door, one after another, and Billy Bunter's fingers gathered them up greedily.

"Thanks, old chap!" he said. "That's really decent of you. You can rely on that postal-order."

"Go and get the key!"

"Now I come to think of it, it's barely possible that my letter may not arrive in the morning, Coker. Would you mind waiting till the next day, in that case?"

Coker seemed to be choking.

"Will you go and get the key?"

"You haven't answered my question."

"No—yes—anything you like!" gasped Coker. "Go and get the key, hang you!"

"Right-ho! Now that's understood, I'll go and ask Potter for the key."

"No good asking him!" roared Coker. "Get it somehow! He won't give it to you, you fat idiot! Get it!"

"I'll do my best, old chap," said Bunter.

The "old-chap" made Coker of the Fifth long to be within hitting distance of Bunter. He heard the retreating footsteps of the Owl of the Remove, and waited furiously for him to return. Billy Bunter rolled away to Coker's study, and blinked in. Potter and Greene had finished tea, and were chatting away cheerily, apparently in great spirits. No doubt it was a relief to be deprived of Coker's company for a time.

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter.

"Scat!"

"Coker's sent me for the Form-room key—"

"I've got a boot you can have," replied Potter.

William George Bunter hastily retired. He did not want Potter's boot. As a matter of fact, he had not had the slightest expectation of being given the key, and he did not care a brass farthing whether it was given or not. His fat conscience was quite satisfied with what he had done for Coker.

Coker was raging in the Form-room, when there came a tap at the door again.

"I say, Coker—"

"Got the key?" shouted Coker.

"Nunno!"

"Why haven't you got it, fathead?"

"Potter declines to give it to me."

"You—you—you—" Coker spluttered. "Get it somehow! Of course he won't give it to you! You've got to get it! I'll smash you if you don't! I'll scalp you! Go and get it at once! Do you hear?"

There was no reply.

"Bunter! Do you hear?"

Still no reply.

Coker realised that Billy Bunter had gone. He had no further business there, and he had departed. While Horace Coker raged in the Form-room Billy Bunter was busy in the tuckshop expending Coker's five shillings on articles that were still unrationed. Billy Bunter was feeling quite satisfied with the transaction, though Coker was not. But it was impossible to satisfy everybody.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 551.



THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Family!

"COME ON!"

Vernon-Smith shouted along the Remove passage from the stairs.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's up?"

"Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's got out of the Form-room window!" chortled Vernon-Smith. "I've just spotted him. He came a cropper, and I think he hurt something. Anyhow, he yelled. Now he's gone to look for Potter and Greene. I think there's going to be trouble."

And the Bounder hurried downstairs again. Trouble in Coker's study was apparently regarded by Smithy in the light of an entertainment.

The Famous Five followed him fast, with a crowd more of the Remove.

They did not want to miss the entertainment.

Potter and Greene, in shutting Coker up in the Form-room, had doubtless felt that it was the only way. But, naturally, Coker could not be expected to see eye to eye with them on that point. Climbing out of the window was a dreadfully undignified proceeding for the great man of the Fifth, and coming a cropper had not improved his temper. Coker, as he made tracks for his study to interview his study-mates, was a good deal like a wild Hun on the war-path.

Harry Wharton & Co. heard sounds of strife as they arrived in the Fifth Form passage. Coker's door was closed; but they knew that Horace was there. Furniture seemed to be on the move, to judge by the crashing, and there was a roar of excited voices.

"Sounds like trouble," remarked Frank Nugent.

"Terrific!" grinned Hurree Singh.

"Bedad, are they breakin' up the happy home?" exclaimed Fitzgerald of the Fifth, coming out of his study.

"What's that thunderin' row about?" roared Hilton from his study. "How's a fellow to work—eh?"

"It's only Coker!" chortled Bob Cherry.

Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, came along with Bland. Blundell kicked open Coker's door.

A startling scene was revealed.

Coker was raging.

He had not stopped to talk to his study-mates. He had made a frontal attack immediately on arriving in the study. Potter and Greene, who were nearly as exasperated as Coker, had collared him, and Horace was struggling in the grasp of his dear pals.

The burly Horace was very nearly a match for the two of them, and he dragged them to and fro as he struggled. All three of them were showing signs of damage, and so was the study. The table had been bumped over, the chairs were scattered far and wide, books and papers and pens littered the floor.

"I'll smash you!" Coker was roaring. "Locking me up—me! I'll show you! Yah! Rotters! I'll wallop the pair of you!"

"Stop that row!" roared Blundell.

"Do you want the Head here?"

"Rats!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Wingate!" yelled Bob Cherry from the passage.

The crowd of juniors made way for the Greyfriars captain.

Wingate, with a stern brow, strode into the study.

"What's this awful row?" he shouted.

"Stop it at once!"

"How can we stop it when Coker won't?" gasped Greene. "Do you think we're doing this for fun? Yow-woop!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 551.

"Collar him, can't you?" howled Potter.

Crack!

Coker had got his grip at last, and he brought the heads of his study-mates together with a sounding crack.

Potter and Greene yelled with anguish.

Wingate strode at Coker and grasped him by the collar, and Blundell and Bland and Hilton grasped him at the same time.

The truculent Horace was dragged away from his unhappy victims.

"Bump him!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate did not heed this. That junior mode of punishment was not in accordance with Sixth Form ideas.

"Coker, you fool!" he rapped out.

"Leggo!" bellowed Coker.

"What's this row about?"

"Find out!"

"What?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Do you know you're talking to the captain of the school?" shouted Wingate, shaking the Fifth-Former.

"Yaroo! Leggo! You're not my captain! Haven't I told you so?" spluttered Coker. "Far as I'm concerned you're sacked! Yah!"

"Potty, bedad!" murmured Fitzgerald.

"Coker, darling, take it easy! Sure, if it runs in yere family ye can't help it. But take it easy!"

"Leggo! I'll—"

"Lend me a hand with him," said Wingate quietly. "We'll take him to the Head. Dr. Locke's the man to deal with the howling ass."

"Good egg!" said Hilton. "Yank him along!"

Coker ceased to struggle at that. He did not want to be marched in to the Head like an unruly fag.

"Hold on!" he gasped.

"Come along, you idiot!"

"Hold on, I tell you! I'm jolly well not going to the Head!" stuttered Coker.

"I don't suppose the Head would understand. There's no need for you to interfere here, Wingate. I was simply thrashing Potter and Greene."

"You can explain that to the Head," said Wingate coolly. "Are you going to walk, or are you going to be carried?"

"Carry him!" yelled Bob Cherry. "I'll help. Let me have hold of his ears!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Clear off, you fags!" snapped Wingate.

"Hold on!" gasped Coker. "I—I'll let Potter and Greene off if you like. I've licked them enough, anyway. I don't want to go to the Head. Hilton, you cad, let go my neck! Fitz, you rotter—"

Wingate paused.

"I don't want to report you, Coker," he said. "You can't help being a born idiot. But there's got to be no more of this. I've told you before that I won't allow bullying!"

"Bullying!" stuttered Coker.

"Take him to the Head!" gasped Potter. "We're fed up with him!"

"Fed up to the chin!" hooted Greene.

"Well, that's a nice way to talk of a pal!" exclaimed Coker indignantly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coker was only being pally!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "My hat! I shouldn't care to be a pal of Coker's!"

Wingate released Horace Coker.

"No more of this, then!" he said.

"Mind, if there's any more rowing in this study you go to the Head at once! I'm fed up!"

And the captain of Greyfriars walked out.

Horace Coker gasped for breath. The Fifth-Formers followed Wingate, and Coker was left alone with his study-mates,

who eyed him morosely. Coker looked at them more in sorrow than in anger.

"You're a precious pair of rotters, ain't you?" he asked.

"Oh, shut up!" said Potter.

"Wha-at?"

"Shut up!"

Coker breathed hard.

"I don't want to begin on you again, George Potter—"

"I'll jolly well take a bat to you if you play any more tricks!" growled Potter. "Don't be such a silly fool!"

"Look at the study!" hooted Greene.

"Look at it!"

"You locked me up in the Form-room!" roared Coker.

"Well, you ought to be locked up in Bedlam!"

"I—I—I—"

"Dry up!" said Potter. "Any more of your rot and we'll call Wingate in. So mind your eye!"

"Do you think I care for Wingate? He's nobody—less than nobody! I look on him with scorn!" hooted Coker.

"Oh, don't be an ass! If you go before the Head you will very likely get a flogging, and serve you jolly well right!"

Coker contained his wrath with difficulty. Although he had "sacked" Wingate, it remained a fact that Wingate was head prefect and school captain, and had all the authority of that position. Wingate had the Head's support behind him, and that was rather a hard nut for Coker to crack. He transferred his attention to the juniors grinning in the doorway.

"Clear off, you cheeky fags!" he exclaimed.

"Is the circus over?" inquired the Bounder.

"Hand me that bat, Greene!"

"Oh, bosh!"

Coker ran for the bat, and the grinning juniors retired from the scene rather hastily. Coker looked on as if he might have done some damage with the bat. He slammed the door after them.

"Pretty state this study's in!" he remarked.

"All your fault, you ass!"

"Did you think I was going to let you lock me in?" roared Coker.

"You ought to be glad we didn't tie you to a desk to keep you quiet. We will next time!" snorted Potter.

Coker stared at his study-mates. This was quite a new line for Potter and Greene to take. Generally they were very patient and long-suffering with Coker. It was hard for Horace to realise that the worms had turned, so to speak—that even his faithful followers could possibly get fed up.

"So you're not backing me up?" he said, after a long, long pause.

"No, ass!"

"No, fathead!"

"Fed up!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Well, my hat!" said Coker, with a deep breath. "All right! I don't want you! I sha'n't speak to you after this, of course!"

"Thanks!"

"That's really kind, Coker!"

"And I expect you to clear out of this study!"

"You can expect!" jeered Potter.

"I can't share a study with fellows I'm not on speaking terms with!" said Coker decidedly. "That's impossible! You can clear!"

"Rats!"

"Do you want me to sling you out on your necks?"

"Go ahead!" said Potter, picking up a bat.

"Pile in!" said Greene, taking the poker out of the fender.



Coker seemed to breathe with difficulty. He had been accustomed to being monarch of all he surveyed in that study, and it looked as if his reign had come to a sudden termination. Once more the great Horace had bitten off too large a mouthful.

He did not turn Potter and Greene out of the study, but there was a grim and deadly silence as the three Fifth-Formers sat down to their prep. Coker was wrathful and indignant, and he ignored his study-mates. That was a suitable punishment for them, for they were to be under Coker's frown until they saw the error of their ways. Potter and Greene endured it with great fortitude. The loss of Coker's conversation was not really such a blow as Coker supposed.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### No Rally!

PONG!

Harry Wharton smiled as he came along to Hobson's study in the Shell and heard that sound from within. He knew the jingle of Hoskins' tuning-fork. Hoskins, the musical genius of the Shell, was evidently at it again. Wharton looked into the study with a smile.

Hobson was there, with an expression of patience on his rugged face that would have done credit to a member of the noble army of martyrs. Claude Hoskins was standing up, tuning-fork in hand, and he had just "ponged" it on the table. He was talking. When Claude Hoskins talked he talked of music; on other subjects his conversation generally consisted of "Oh!" "Ah!" "Yes!" "Eh?" and suchlike monosyllables. Hobson knew as much about music as he knew about botulism, but he let Hoskins run on. He had no choice about that, as a matter of fact.

"I had it that time!" said Hoskins, with a smile of satisfaction. "Did you recognise it, Hobby?"

"Eh—which?" yawned Hobby.

"A flat!" said Hoskins.

"Do you mean Wharton?" asked Hobson, catching sight of the captain of the Remove in the doorway. "Draw it mild, Hosky, old man! 'Tain't very polite to call a visitor a flat."

"I—I meant the note!" rapped Hoskins. "I mean, I've got the note!"

Hobson looked more interested as he nodded to Wharton to come in.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Even a ten-bobber would come in useful just now. Tip from your pater—what?"

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"You said you had the note," said Hobson. "Is it a currency-note or a banknote?"

"I say, Hobby, you are a chump, you know! I mean that note," said Hoskins, dabbing the tuning-fork on the table again. "That's A flat. Don't you know A flat when you hear it?"

"Oh, that kind of note!" said Hobson, his interest in the note evaporating suddenly. "I see! You call that A flat, do you?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Well, I don't mind. Squat down, Wharton, old man. I suppose you've come about the cricket?"

"That's it!" said Harry, taking a seat on the corner of the table.

"For goodness' sake," said Hoskins peevishly, "don't talk of cricket now! You heard that note, Hobby?"

"Eh? Oh yes!"

"Now, listen."

Hoskins opened his mouth, and ejaculated:

"A-a-a-ah!"

Hobson stared at him.

"Something wrong with your neck, old nut?" he asked anxiously.

"No!" roared Hoskins.

"What are you yelling for, then?"

"That was the note!" shouted Hoskins. "A flat!"

"Oh, was it? All right."

"Don't you see?" demanded Hoskins excitedly. "That's the note I got before I tapped the fork. I can produce A flat unaided. That's pitch! 'Tain't everybody who's got pitch."

"Blessed if I know what anybody would want pitch for, unless he's a road-mender or something!" said Hobson, puzzled. "What do you want with pitch?"

"I tell you I've got pitch!"

"In this study?" exclaimed Hobson.

"Yes, you fathead! This minute!"

"Well, don't get it smeared about," said Hobson. "I say, it's rather a mucky thing to bring into the study. Where have you put it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.

Harry Wharton knew a little more about music than James Hobson did.

"Oh, of all the asses," exclaimed Hoskins feebly, "you do take the cake, Hobby! I tell you I've got perfect pitch—"

"Blessed if I knew there were different qualities of pitch!" said Hobson in surprise. "Better let it alone. I don't see what you want it for. Besides, you can't touch pitch without being defiled, you know."

"Not that kind of pitch!" shrieked Hoskins. "Haven't you ever heard of the other kind of pitch?"

"I've heard of a cricket-pitch, if that's what you mean! I suppose you're not telling me that you've got a cricket-pitch in the study?"

"Pitch!" roared Hoskins. "The pitch of a note—pitch in music—"

"I didn't know pitch was used in music. What do they use it for?" exclaimed Hobson. "Jolly sticky, I should say!"

"Pitch!" gasped Hoskins. "You're an ass, Hobson! Now, listen to this—a-a-a-ah!" Hoskins ejected that long-drawn sound in A flat, but it might have been C sharp for all Hobson knew to the contrary. "See? That's A flat. Now I tap the tuning-fork." Pong! "That's A flat. I had the pitch exact!"

"I see!" said Hobson, thinking it was time he saw, whether he really did or not. He never did understand Hoskins' musical explanations, as a matter of fact.

"That squeak was A flat?"

"That note, you ass!"

"I mean that note. And the tuning-fork is A flat. I see! So you were making the same row as the tuning-fork makes. Is that it?" asked Hobson.

Hoskins shoved the tuning-fork into his pocket. Hoskins was very keen on getting perfect pitch, a valuable gift for anyone to possess. But he did not feel equal to making his study-mate understand. Hobby's tastes ran rather in the direction of cricket and football, and he was not musical.

"About the cricket—" said Hobson, addressing Wharton as Hoskins did not answer.

"Never mind cricket now!" said Hoskins. "Come along to the music-room! I'm going to play you my march in F sharp. Wharton can come, too."

Harry Wharton coughed.

"I've got to get back to the fellows," he remarked. "I just looked in to see Hobby about the match on Saturday."

"Stumps pitched at two, if that suits you," said Hobson.

"Right you are! Potter's going to umpire."

"I don't think you've heard my march

in F sharp, Wharton," remarked Hoskins.

"Is that the one you piped to Nugent?" asked Wharton. "The one that bristles with consecutive fifths?"

Hoskins snorted.

"I like consecutive fifths!" he answered.

"Matter of taste, I suppose," said Wharton blandly. "Hallo! Here's Coker!"

Coker of the Fifth came into the study. A general grin greeted him. Coker seemed destined to raise grins wherever he went. Even Hoskins forgot his march in F sharp for the moment.

"Hallo! Have they made you captain of Greyfriars yet, Cokey?" asked Hobson cheerily.

Coker frowned.

Hobson had been his pal when he was in the Shell; and he had passed up and left Hobby behind. Certainly, Coker was rather big for the Shell; and the juniors opined that he had got his remove on his size, not on his brains. Billy Bunter avowed that Coker's Aunt Judy had threatened the Head with her umbrella if he didn't give Coker his remove. Bunter declared that he had actually seen Aunt Judy flourishing the umbrella. Once in the Fifth, Horace Coker took the view that Hobby was only a fag, and was very lofty towards him; and since then there had sometimes been trouble.

"Don't be cheeky, Hobson!" said Coker. "I came here for a little friendly talk."

"You want some help with your Form work?" asked Hobson.

"No!" roared Coker.

"You want to hear Hoskins' march in K sharp—"

"F sharp!" yelled Hoskins.

"I mean F sharp. Trot along to the music-room with Hoskins, old scout, and he'll pour it out."

"I don't want to hear any of Hoskins' silly rot—"

"My what?" demanded Hoskins.

"Silly rot!" said Coker. "I heard you making a row in the music-room this morning, and I jolly near came along to stop you. It sounded to me like an air-raid. You oughtn't to do it. But never mind that. I want to speak to you chaps. You can cut off, Wharton!"

"Thanks!" said Harry, remaining at the table.

Coker stared at him.

"I told you you could cut off!" he said.

"And I said thanks!"

"Bless your cheek! Let Wharton alone!" exclaimed Hobson wrathfully.

"You can cut off yourself, Coker!"

"I don't want a cheeky fag here!" said Coker, frowning.

"Well, I don't want a Fifth Form dummy here, if you come to that. I'm talking business with Wharton! There's the door, Coker!"

"Like an air-raid was it?" murmured Hoskins, almost pale with fury. "My music was like an air-raid—my march in F sharp! You crass ass—"

Coker did not heed.

"Well, I'll go ahead," he said. "The fact is, Hobson, I'm sorry we haven't been so friendly since I left the Shell."

"Oh!" ejaculated Hobson, in surprise.

"It was really owing to your putting on airs of equality, though you're only a fag," explained Coker. "I had to put you in your place. Do shut up while I'm talking, Hoskins! But, as I say, Hobson, I'm sorry we haven't hit it off better. Why not bury the hatchet?"

"Only a fag!" breathed Hobson.

"Like an air-raid!" gasped Hoskins.

"Now, I'm taking up a new line," continued Coker, apparently unaware of the Hunnish fury he was arousing in Hobson's study. "I'm not standing Wingate





**GET ONE OF THESE CARDS TO-DAY FROM ANY POST-OFFICE.**

Each card is divided up into thirty-one spaces. Whenever you have 6d. to spare you just buy a coupon at the post-office and fix it on one of the spaces. As soon as all the spaces are filled up, you can take the card to a post-office and exchange it for a 15s. 6d. War Savings Certificate. In five years' time that certificate will be worth £1. This is the best way for a patriotic boy to put money by. Won't you try it?

any longer. I've told him so. I've told all the fellows so. I'm heading a new movement in the school. I'm going to down Wingate. You'd hardly believe it, but my own Form refuse to back me up—even my own study-mates. But a chap who's bent on reform must have some support. You see that?"

Coker did not wait for a reply. He did not want one. Coker's conversation was generally a one-sided affair.

"I've thought it out," he continued, "and I'm going to rally the Lower School. Rather a good idea—what? I can't let matters go on as they are; and the seniors refuse to move. Well, I'm going to rally the juniors. Not Remove fags or small fry like that, of course." Coker bestowed a disdainful glance upon Wharton. "I'm thinking of the Shell, and perhaps the Fourth. With the Shell behind me, that will be something. Yes, I know what you're going to say, Hobson. A chap in my position loses caste by associating with Shell fellows. But I'm not exactly going to associate with you. I'm going to put myself at your head. That's quite a different matter."

Hobson seemed at a loss for words. But Coker wasn't. He ran on cheerily:

"Things move so jolly slow, you know, even when there's an energetic fellow like me bucking them up. Public opinion gets set in a groove. Well, I'm going to move it. I grant that it's a bit of a come-down for me to take the Lower School in hand and get mixed up with fags. But for the sake of Greyfriars I'm prepared to put my pride in my pocket."

"Oh!" gasped Hobson. "If I can bring about a new election for school captain, the votes of the Shell will count heavy," said Coker. "That's one of my aims. Meanwhile, you stand by me and I'll stand by you. Don't have any nonsense from Wingate! If he gives you lines, I'll instance, refuse to do 'em, and appeal to me for protection. I'll protect you. Rely on that. You kids in the Shell can look on me as your leader, and as your protector. There's only one

point I shall have to be particular about. I've got to consider my personal dignity, to some extent. Don't come up to me in the quad or the passages in a familiar way. I bar that. When you've got anything to say, come quietly to my study. See?"

Hobson's eyes were fixed upon Horace Coker as if that great man had mesmerised him.

He did not answer Coker. He looked at Wharton.

"As you're here, Wharton, you may as well lend a hand," he said.

"Certainly!" said Wharton.

"Buck up, Hosky!"

"Like an air-raid!" said Hoskins. "I'll give him air-raid!"

To Coker's surprise, the two Shell fellows advanced upon him in warlike array, and Wharton joined in cheerfully.

Coker backed away.

"What's the row?" he exclaimed. "I didn't come here for a scrap, Hobson—"

"You did!" answered Hobson. That was all he said. The scrap began then.

Since Horace Coker had taken up his new life he had come in for a good deal of scrapping, somehow. Now he had some more.

There was a terrific crash in the passage as Coker landed there.

He sat up, as much astonished as hurt. He could not see in the least why Hobson had cut up rusty.

"Why, you—you—I—I—" stammered Coker. "Wharver you at? You cheeky fag, I'll slaughter you!"

"Come on!" gasped Hobson. "I'll fag you!"

"I'll air-raid you!" roared Hoskins.

"Come on!" said Wharton, laughing.

Coker came on fast enough. There was a brief struggle in Hobson's study, and then Coker found himself carried along the passage by his arms and legs. At every other step some part of Coker smote the floor with a heavy smite. He was quite dizzy when he reached the stairs, and was rolled down them. He stopped at the next landing, feeling as if he had been in an earthquake.

"Hallo! What's the row?" exclaimed Stewart of the Shell, looking out of his study. "Is that Hoskins playing his march in F sharp?"

"Yaroooh!"

"Come back, Coker!" shouted Hobson and Hoskins and Wharton from the top of the stairs.

But Coker did not come back. His visit to Hobson's study had been a ghastly failure, for reasons quite unknown to him. Coker was a sticker; but he gave up the idea of rallying the Lower School. It was only too clear, even to Coker, that there was nothing doing.

**THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Bunter Seeks Protection!**

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Nothing doing!"

The Famous Five made that reply in unison.

Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles with deep indignation.

"If you think I want to borrow any money—" he began.

"Well, don't you?"

"No!" roared Bunter.

Bob Cherry leaned feebly against the wall of the Remove passage. He seemed overcome.

"Fan me, somebody!" he murmured.

"Say that again!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Once more, Bunter! You don't want to borrow any money?"

"No!" hooted Bunter.

"Are you ill?" asked Johnny Bull.

"The illfulness must be terrific!" said

Hurree Singh, in alarm. "Perhaps we had better patfully smite Bunter on his esteemed back."

"Don't play the goat, you ass!" growled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, it's about my lines!"

"What lines?" yawned Wharton.

"I suppose you know Wingate gave me a hundred lines yesterday. I asked you to do them for me then. You refused!" said Bunter, in an injured tone.

"Do you want me to refuse again?"

"I want to know what's going to be done. I've asked Toddy, and he was simply ill-bred," said Bunter. "I've asked Redwing, and he made a low reply; just what you might expect of a scholarship bounder. I asked Smithy, and he was rude, too. In fact, I've asked several fellows. The upshot is that the lines ain't done!"

"Why not go and do them?" suggested Nugent.

Bunter gave an impatient grunt. That simple expedient did not seem to find favour in his eyes.

"Of course, I can't do them!" he said. "I haven't the time. Wingate said they were to be taken in by six. There's no time to lose. My suggestion is for you fellows to whack them out. I'll do a dozen to give you a start!" added Bunter generously.

"Sure that wouldn't be too much exertion?" inquired Bob Cherry sarcastically.

"Well, I'll do it for you fellows!"

"Not a bad idea!" said Bob. "You do a dozen lines for a start—"

"That's it!"

"Then do the other eighty-eight—"

"What?"

"And take 'em along to Wingate," said Bob. "And take yourself along,

**CADET NOTES.**

Arrangements have now been made for the admittance of members of Cadet Units into the Royal Air Force for training as pilots and observers—a step which will prove the most popular means of recruiting the Cadet Movement that could have been taken. An Army Council instruction issued recently provides that members of Cadet Corps who are desirous of joining the R.A.F. (Pilots and Observers Section), may, on attaining the age of 17 years and 10 months, apply to the officer commanding their Cadet Unit, who, if he considers the candidate suitable, may send him to the nearest Reception Depot of the R.A.F., with a written recommendation, under this instruction. Bearing in mind the large number of lads who are anxious to get into the Air Force, this step of turning the Cadet Units into a channel for entry into the Royal Air Force ought to bring an enormous number of boy recruits into the Cadet Movement.

Of course, there are a number of other provisions in the order, and a number of details to be attended to; but copies of the order are sent to officers commanding all the Cadet Units so that they should be familiar with its terms and the steps they must take to assist their members to enter the R.A.F. when they reach the required age. During the past six months some hundreds of boys have applied to the Central Association Volunteer Regiments for information and advice about how to get into the Air Force. Here is a door open for them, and all they have to do is to join their nearest Cadet Corps, and wait until they reach the proper age for securing admission to the Air Force. As hitherto, full particulars, with address of local corps, etc., will be supplied to any recruits who will write to the Central Association Volunteer Regiments, Judges' Quadrangle, Royal Courts of Justice, W.C.2.



too. Your conversation isn't entertaining, Bunter."

"You mean to say that you're not going to do them?"

"Exactly!"

"Well, I've done all I can!" said Bunter, with an air of resignation. "I shall have to apply to Coker."

"Coker!" exclaimed Wharton. "If you ask a Fifth-Former to do lines for you you'll get a thick ear, fathead!"

"Coker advises juniors not to do lines for Wingate," explained Bunter. "He's offered to see any fellow through who backs up against Wingate. I'm sorry to be down on Wingate. But there you are! After all, he oughtn't to have given me lines. I wasn't really raiding his jam. I was simply tasting it to see what it was like. Perhaps I took a rather large taste. I'm going to back up Coker."

"You silly ass!" said Bob Cherry. "If you back up against Wingate you'll get slaughtered."

"Well, it's your fault," said Bunter. "You can't say I haven't offered to let you do the lines for me. Coker says he'll see any chap through who asks his protection. Can't make matters worse, anyway. I'm jolly well not going to do the lines. I've no time!"

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Are you going to do the lines?" demanded the Owl of the Remove.

"No, ass! But—"

"Enough said!" answered Bunter.

And he rolled away.

The Famous Five stared after him. They did not quite see what value Coker's protection would be to a junior who refused to obey the head prefect's orders. But Bunter evidently thought there was a chance, at least; and anything was better than work, from the Owl's point of view.

"That silly ass Coker ought to be stopped!" said Harry Wharton. "There'll be trouble if he begins setting silly fat-heads up against Wingate."

And the Co. agreed that Coker ought to be stopped. The great Horace was evidently hunting for more trouble. Trouble was likely to be the portion, also, of the fags who sought his protection against the powers that were.

Billy Bunter presented himself in Coker's study, and found silence reigning there. Potter and Greene were still in Horace's black books, and he declined to take any notice of their existence. For two whole days Coker hadn't spoken to either of his study-mates. It was a crushing punishment for disloyalty, in Coker's opinion. But Potter and Greene had confided to Fitzgerald that they found life in that study quite worth living now.

Coker was rather restive. He was much given to talking. He prided himself on being a fellow of the strong, silent kind; and, like most characters of that kind, he liked to hear the sound of his own voice. The punishment really fell more heavily upon Coker than upon his study-mates. Potter and Greene were certainly prepared to keep it up as long as he did.

It was really a relief to Coker when Bunter looked in. Bunter blinked at the Fifth-Former, and did not heed the pen which Potter pointed at the doorway.

"I say, Coker—"

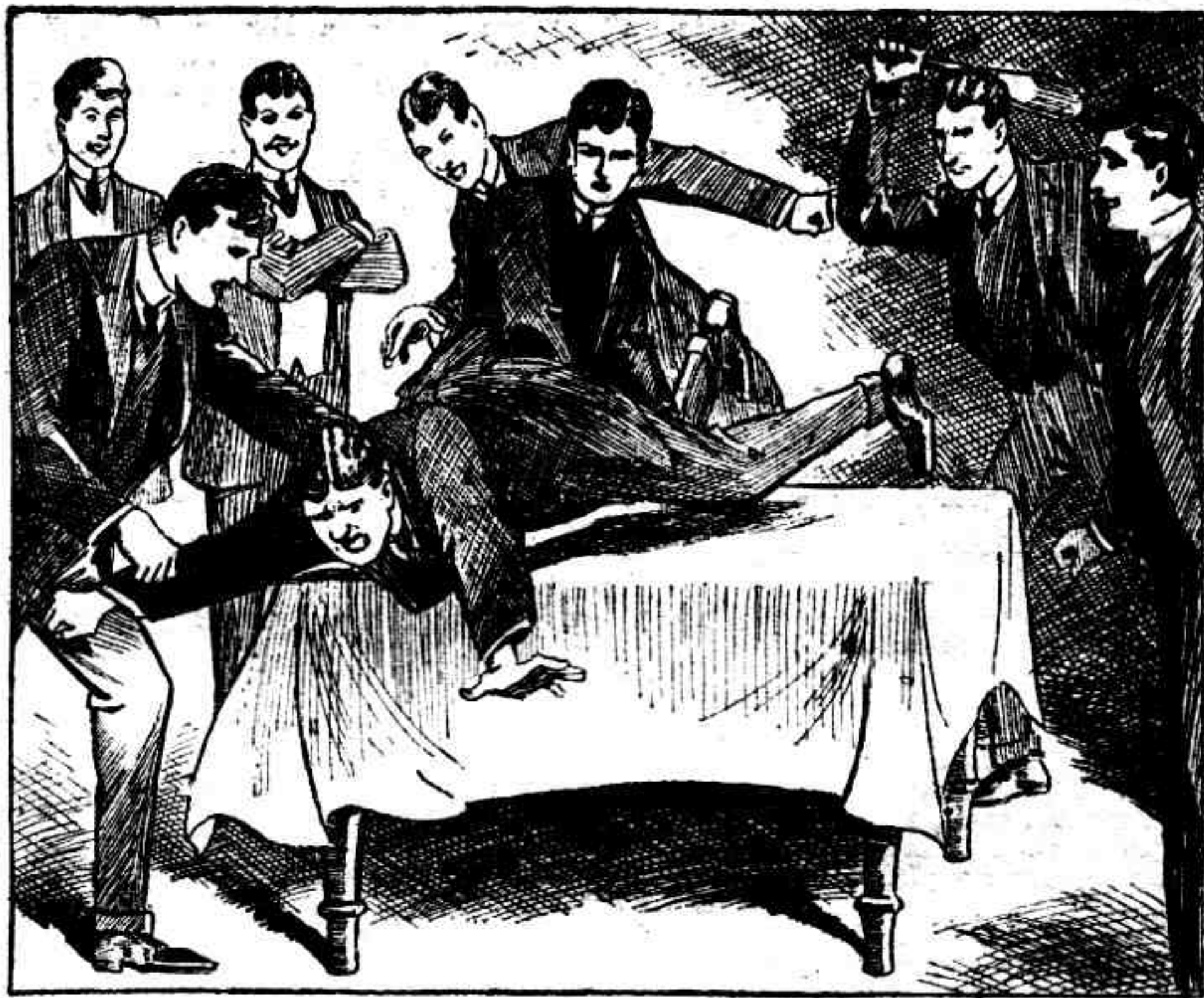
"Hallo?"

"Wingate's given me lines," said Bunter pathetically. "I think I ought to complain to you, Coker."

Potter and Greene stared, stopping their work in their surprise. Coker as a receiver of complaints against the head prefect was something new.

But Coker smiled genially.

This was the first public recognition of his great importance as leader of the new movement in the school, which was



One of Coker's twenty! (See Chapter 9.)

to put down the mighty from their seats—perhaps.

"Quite so!" he said. "Exactly! Come on, Bunter! You've come to the right shop. Now, what's the matter?—Wingate's given you lines?"

"Yes—a hundred."

"What for?"

"He thought I was after his jam, Coker," said Bunter sorrowfully. "As if I'd scoff a man's jam—in war-time, too! I—I was just tidying up his cupboard; I only wanted to be obliging. He—he jumped to a silly conclusion. Just like Wingate, you know. He's silly! And he gave me lines. I thought I ought to tell you about it, Coker."

"Quite right! Don't do them!" said Coker.

"But—but suppose Wingate asks for them?"

"Tell him to go and eat coke!"

"Ahem!"

Bunter was not likely to tell the head of the Sixth to go and eat coke. Not very likely!

"If he makes a fuss, refer him to me," said Coker loftily. "I'll answer for it. Refer him to me. In fact, you can leave the matter in my hands. Tell Wingate I've ordered you not to do the lines."

"Good!" said Bunter. "Thanks, Coker! You're a jolly good sort! I wish you were captain of Greyfriars. You ought to be!"

"I shall be, if the fellows ever come to their senses!" said Coker. "Don't you be afraid, Bunter! Rely on me!"

"I will!" said Bunter.

And he rolled away, feeling satisfied. Certainly, Coker had no right to order him not to do his lines; but Bunter felt that that answer would do for Wingate. A fag in the Remove couldn't be expected to stand up against a Fifth-Former; and Wingate could settle the matter with Coker.

Potter and Greene looked very curiously at Coker. Horace gave them a lofty stare, and they shrugged their shoulders and went on with their work. Coker worked at his prep in silence, rather under difficulties. He was accustomed to getting help from Potter in his work—in a lofty way—without acknowledging the obligation, of course. But

that source of assistance was cut off now, so long as he was sending Potter to Coventry.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Coker Minor Does His Best!

"HALLO, Reggie! Trot in, kid!" Coker minor of the Sixth Form came into the study. Potter and Greene had finished their prep, and they left the study, leaving Horace and his brother to themselves.

Coker's young brother had a doubtful and hesitating look. Horace did not observe it, however. He was not very observant.

"Squat down, kid!" he said. "How are you getting on? Anybody in the Sixth bothering you? If so, give me his name, and I'll call on him."

Coker minor shook his head.

Reggie Coker was much younger than Horace, though he was in the Form above him. As Horace had sometimes remarked, he had the muscle and Reggie had the brains; that is to say, the kind of brains required for scholastic attainments, which Coker did not hold in very high estimation. Coker's brains were of a superior kind, and certainly did not help him much in his Form.

Horace Coker's muscle, however, had been quite as useful to Reggie as his own brains, for he was young and small to be in the Sixth; and fags like Bolsover major of the Remove or Hobson of the Shell could have licked him with one hand. But juniors who did not treat Coker minor with the respect due to a Sixth-Former had to reckon with Coker major; and Coker major was always ready to fight his brother's battles. Coker had his good points, and affection for his clever younger brother was one of them.

"I—I've just looked in to—to speak to you, Horace," said Reggie, in rather a faltering voice.

"Go ahead, old son!"

"About—about Wingate."

"Wingate been down on you?" asked Coker, frowning. "By Jove, I'll go to his study and fairly—"

"No, no!" interrupted Coker minor hastily. "Nothing of the sort! About



your setting up against Wingate, I mean."

"Right-ho, kid!" said Horace heartily. "I'm glad you approve of it. I mean to bring him down off his perch, I can tell you!"

"I—I don't mean that. I say, Horace, it means a lot of trouble for you," said the little Sixth-Former hesitatingly.

"I know it! I'm prepared for that. You see, somebody must take the matter in hand. I'm the man to do it."

"But—but Wingate isn't a bad sort, Horace."

"Not at all," agreed Coker. "A good sort, in his way. But rather an ass, Reggie. He doesn't play a bad game of cricket. But he's got simply no judgment in picking out a man for the First Eleven—none at all."

"Hasn't he?"

"No. He passes me over!"

"Ahem!"

"He doesn't know how to treat fags, either. Now, I've got a short way with fags," said Horace Coker. "It's my system. I find it answers."

Horace, old chap, I wish you wouldn't set up against Wingate," said Coker minor, coming out plainly at last.

"Eh?"

"He's a good sort. You know, cads like Loder and Carne wanted to make things very difficult for me in the Sixth, as I'm so young to be a senior. Wingate never lets them impose on me."

"I'd jolly well lick him if he did!"

"Ahem!"

"You see, I'm not really down on Wingate personally," explained Coker. "It's as captain of the school that I object to him. That's what I'm out to alter."

Reggie Coker sighed. Arguing with Horace was always a very difficult task, if not impossible.

"I—I hear that you've been telling the fags not to obey Wingate's orders, Horace," murmured Reggie.

"That's so."

"But—but you mustn't, you know."

Coker laughed.

"That's a beginning," he said. "I'm backing up everybody who backs up against Wingate. Mustn't isn't a word in my dictionary. I set myself a job, Reggie, and go straight ahead with it, regardless. That's efficiency. I pride myself on being efficient. If I were captain of Greyfriars you'd hardly know the school. I'd keep the fellows up to the mark, I promise you. Discipline! That's the word."

"But if you were captain, Horace, you wouldn't have a Fifth-Former setting the fags against you, would you?"

"No jolly fear!" said Horace emphatically.

"Well, then, as Wingate's captain now—"

"That's different."

"How is it different, Horace?" asked Reggie mildly.

"Well, you take my word for it. The fact is, Reggie, you're a bit dense, with all your brains. You can chew Greek and stuff, but in practical matters you're a bit dense."

"Ahem!"

"You leave it to me," said Coker cheerfully. "Don't you worry! You can depend on it I'm not making a mistake. I've got sense, you know—horse-sense. You can walk all over me in Greek and Latin, but what a fellow wants is gumption. Now, you haven't got much gumption."

There was a heavy step in the passage, and Wingate of the Sixth loomed up in the doorway. Reggie Coker glanced at him nervously, reading trouble in the prefect's knitted brows. But Horace Coker eyed him with perfect calmness. Wingate strode into the study.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 551.

"I've just seen Bunter, Coker!" he rapped out. "He hadn't done the lines I gave him, and he tells me that you ordered him not to."

"Quite so," said Coker calmly.

"You admit it?"

"Certainly."

Wingate breathed hard.

"I want to know how the matter stands," he said. "If you've been bullying Bunter into this, Coker, I shall not punish him."

"You won't punish him anyway," answered Coker.

"What?"

"I sha'n't allow it!"

"You won't allow it?" shouted Wingate.

"No. Bunter's placed himself under my protection, and I decline to allow him to be bullied."

"Bullied?" stuttered Wingate.

"That's the word," said Coker cheerfully. "However, if you had a good reason for giving Bunter lines, I'm willing to hear it. You can place your version of the facts before me."

"P-p-place my version of the facts before you?" articulated Wingate, who seemed to be speaking with difficulty.

"Precisely."

Reggie Coker looked quite scared. The idea of the captain of the school and a fag of the Lower Fourth entering into a dispute, and placing the facts before Coker of the Fifth for judgment was really unnerving. Coker did not seem to see anything extraordinary in the suggestion. He seemed surprised, in fact, at Wingate's excitement.

"Are you mad, Coker?" asked the Greyfriars captain at last.

"I don't want any cheek, Wingate."

"Ch-e-e-ek?"

"Yes. You'd better clear off, I think. But bear in mind that Bunter's not to be interfered with."

"N-n-not to be interfered with?" murmured Wingate dazedly.

"That's it! By my orders!" added Coker.

"Your orders?"

"I hope I'm speaking plainly, Wingate."

"Horace!" murmured Reggie.

"I think this is about the limit!" said Wingate, breathing hard. "You can't help being a fool, Coker; but if you are setting the fags to disobey orders you will have to be dealt with. I have no resource but to report this to the Head or else band you out a prefects' licking."

"Report and be blowed!" said Coker.

"I should expect a funk to sneak behind the Head!"

"A—a—a what?"

"Funk!" said Coker.

Wingate looked at him speechlessly.

"I've told you before," went on Coker, "that I'm prepared to give you a licking, which is what you deserve, in my opinion. A fellow who doesn't toe the line when he's invited to a scrap is a funk. A funk isn't good enough for captain of the school. You ought to resign, Wingate. If you get out, there's better fellows ready to take on the job—no need to look further than this study for one, in fact. As for Bunter, you're to let him alone. Interfere with him, and I shall drop on you heavy!"

Wingate looked at him. Horace Coker was very near at that moment to being used as a duster for the dusting of his own study carpet. But the prefect restrained himself. A fight with a Fifth-Former was too undignified a proceeding for the head of the Sixth. A fellow in that position was supposed to have done with scrapping.

"Go to the Head!" said Coker independently. "I'll go, too! I'll ask him, plain, whether he thinks a funk ought to be captain of the school."

Wingate drew a deep breath.

"You will be dealt with, Coker," he said briefly, and he left the study.

Horace Coker smiled.

"That's the way to tell him off, kid," he said to the terrified Reggie. "I'm going to make him toe the line. You rely on me."

"I—I say, Horace, there'll be awful trouble," said Reggie falteringly. "I think Wingate will call a meeting of prefects."

"Let him!"

"But they'll take you and lick you with a bat," said Reggie. "That's what the prefects do when a senior plays the goat. I—I mean—"

"I'd like to see 'em lick me with a bat!" said Coker, with a warlike look.

"I'm ready for 'em!"

Reggie Coker gave it up. He was concerned for his big brother, but there was evidently nothing to be done. He looked worried when he quitted the study, but Horace Coker did not look worried. Everything was going swimmingly, from Horace's point of view.

He turned to his work when Reggie was gone. But his work was interrupted a quarter of an hour later.

There was a tramp of feet outside, and four Sixth-Formers marched in. They were Gwynne, North, Loder, and Walker. Coker jumped up.

"Hallo! What's wanted?" he exclaimed.

"You are, my pippin," said Walker.

"You're to come before the prefects."

"I decline to recognise the authority of any prefects."

"No harm in that. You're coming, all the same."

And Horace Coker did come. He put up his hands, but the four big seniors collared him at once, and Coker of the Fifth was marched away to the prefects' room, loudly expostulating.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Prefects' Licking!

"I SAY, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter, in the Remove passage.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Come on!" yelled Bunter, in great excitement. "Coker's got it at last. They've taken him to the prefects' room!"

There was a buzz of laughter at once, and a rush downstairs. The heavy hand of authority had fallen upon the rebel of the Fifth at last. The fellows were really surprised that it had not fallen sooner. Everybody wanted to see the fun. It was fun from the junior point of view, though Horace Coker was not likely to find it funny. Harry Whar-ton & Co. and a crowd more of the Remove hurried away to the prefects' room. They found a crowd already outside.

"Coker's there!" chortled Temple of the Fourth. "They've got him. They fairly had to yank him in."

"He was puttin' up a fight!" chuckled Kenney.

"He punched Gwynne in the eye!" roared Hobson of the Shell. "Right in the eye! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, open the door!"

A junior, greatly daring, ventured to open the door of the apartment sacred to the Sixth-Formers. For a moment the crowd in the corridor had a glimpse of the interior.

Coker was standing there, ruffled and red, and all the prefects of Greyfriars were in the room. Loder had a fives-bat in his hand, evidently the instrument of punishment.

"Shut that door!" shouted Wingate angrily.

The door was hastily closed.



"Poor old Coker!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "He really might have expected this."

"I dare say it will do him good," remarked Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully. "He's been askin' for it, you know."

"I say, you fellows, what a silly ass, you know, telling chaps not to do their lines!" chuckled the ungrateful Owl of the Remove. "I say, Harry, old chap, I wish you'd do those lines for me. They'll have to be done."

"Rats!"

"Listen for the band!" said Vernon-Smith. "There will be musical honours when Coker gets the bat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door opened from inside, and Loder put an angry face out.

"Clear off, you fags!" he snapped.

The crowd cleared back to the end of the passage, but as soon as the door was closed they came on again. They were keenly interested in the proceedings of the Greyfriars prefects.

Within the prefects' room there was solemn debate. Coker was arraigned on the charge of defying just authority, and he did not plead guilty. On the contrary, he hurled defiance in the teeth of the whole august body.

"Who are you?" Coker demanded.

"The Sixth? Blow the Sixth! What do I care for the Sixth? Set of noodles, if you ask me!"

"Perhaps you'll care soon!" remarked Loder.

"Rot!"

"I leave it to the prefects," said Wingate quietly. "You know how the matter stands. Personally, I don't mind Coker's silly rot. I've gone easy with him because I know he's a born idiot. But he has taken to setting the fags against the prefects. That's got to be stopped."

"I should jolly well say so!" exclaimed Walker.

"I've offered to hear your version of the affair, and decide between you and Bunter, Wingate!" snorted Coker. "A chap can't say fairer than that."

"So you're setting up as a court of appeal for prefects of the Sixth to come to—what?" exclaimed North.

"Exactly."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Nuff said," remarked Gwynne.

"Coker's got to have his lesson. I suggest twenty."

"Twenty!" agreed the prefects.

Wingate nodded.

"Lay 'em on!" he said.

"Hands off!" roared Coker. "Mind, I'll hit out! I'll jolly well— Yaroooh! Leggo my neck! Yooop! I'll smash you— Gerrrrrh!"

Coker, in the grasp of the Sixth-Formers, was swung across the table and laid face downwards.

Then Gerald Loder got to work with the fives-bat.

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"Yaroooh! Oh! Yah, yah! Oh!" roared Coker.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There goes the band!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

There was a chortle in the passage. The "band" certainly could be heard without difficulty.

So could the swipes of the fives-bat. Loder was laying on the strokes with hearty vigour.

Coker struggled and roared, but he received the lashes to the very last of the twenty, well laid on.

By that time even the great fighting-man of the Fifth was feeling a little subdued.

"That will do," said Wingate. "Let him go."

Coker rolled off the table, panting.

"Now, let there be no more rot," said

Wingate. "I don't want the matter to come before the Head, Coker. If there's any more of your nonsense it must. Think it over, and don't play the goat!"

Coker spluttered.

"Get out!" said North.

Instead of getting out, Coker made a rush for Wingate. Immediately half a dozen pairs of hands seized him, the door was opened, and he was pitched into the passage. There was a howl from the juniors he came in sudden contact with. Five or six of them rolled over with Coker.

"Yaroooh!"

"Yow-ow! Mind my glasses— Oh! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors cleared off, and Coker scrambled to his feet. He shook his fist at the grinning prefects in the doorway, and limped away to his study; and for some time afterwards sounds were heard from that study of mingled fury and anguish.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Horace Has His Way!

"WHAT'S up?"

Harry Wharton paused as he came in with his bat under his arm the next day after lessons.

There was a crowd before the notice-board, greatly interested in a paper newly pinned up there.

"This way!" called out Bob Cherry.

"Come and squint at it. It's a corker!"

"The corkerfulness is terrific!" chortled Hurree Singh. "The esteemed Coker is going it Cokerfully!"

Harry Wharton joined the crowd before the board. Fellows of nearly every Form were there, chuckling with glee.

It was a notice in the well-known sprawling hand of Horace Coker, in Coker's celebrated orthography, that was attracting attention. It ran:

"NOTISS TO ALL GREYFRIARS!

"Wingate is a phunk!

"I hearby denownce Wingate of the Vith Form as a rottenn phunk."

"Signed, HORACE COKER."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

"What's a— Oh, a funk! I see."

"That's the way they spell in the Fifth!" roared Johnny Bull.

"You young ass!" exclaimed Hilton of the Fifth. "That's only Coker."

Coker would spell like that if he were Head of Greyfriars. He can't help it."

"The spellfulness is terrific!"

"Somebody ought to take that paper down," said Wharton uneasily. "Coker must be potty to stiek it up there."

"Well, he is potty!" remarked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, Wingate will be wild if he sees it!" grinned Billy Bunter. "I think I'd better fetch Wingate."

"Shut up!" growled Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy, Wingate ought to see it—"

"Hallo! What's that Wingate ought to see?" broke in the voice of the captain of Greyfriars.

"Ahem!"

The chuckling died away as George Wingate came up. The juniors realised that the matter was taking a serious turn.

Wingate pushed his way through the crowd, and looked at the notice. For a moment he was puzzled, and then he frowned.

The original spelling made the paper

look funny enough, but it did not detract from its colossal nerve and impudence.

"Oh, bedad!" murmured Gwynne, who was with the Greyfriars captain.

"That's about the limit intirely!"

Wingate looked grim.

He jerked the notice from the board, and strode away to Coker's study with it crumpled in his hand.

"Now look out for squalls!" murmured Vernon-Smith.

"Another prefects' lickin' for poor old Coker!" remarked Temple.

"Why doesn't Wingate fight him?" sneered Angel of the Fourth. "Perhaps Coker's right, and he is a funk."

"The captain of the school doesn't scrap," said Harry Wharton, with an angry glance at Angel.

The Fourth-Former shrugged his shoulders.

"Any excuse is better than none— what?" he sneered.

"And a Fourth Form cad isn't allowed to slang Wingate," added Wharton.

"Give him a bump, you chaps!"

"Hear, hear!"

Aubrey Angel was collared and bumped on the spot. Coker's campaign against Wingate was all very well; but the cad of the Fourth was not allowed to slang the popular captain of the school. By the time the juniors had finished with him Angel was sorry he had spoken.

Meanwhile, Wingate strode into Coker's study with the paper in his hand.

He found Coker there, at tea with Potter and Greene, in stony silence. Potter and Greene were still in disgrace with their great leader.

Wingate held up the paper.

"Did you put this on the board, Coker?"

"Oh, yes!" answered Coker carelessly.

"Isn't one prefects' licking enough for you?" demanded Wingate.

Coker snorted.

"I say what I mean!" he exclaimed.

"I've asked you to meet me in the gym, or anywhere you like. You've refused. You shelter yourself behind your precious dignity as captain of Greyfriars. I call that funk. I always say, what I mean. It's my system!"

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance, but they did not speak.

Coker sliced the war-bread with cheerful coolness. He wanted to make it clear that he did not care for Wingate, or a whole battalion of Wingates.

The captain of Greyfriars stood looking at him.

He seemed undecided.

"Be a man!" said Coker encouragingly.

"What?"

"Take your licking! It may do you good!" said Coker jocularly. "Don't sneak behind a gang of prefects! Take it like a man!"

"For goodness' sake, shut up, Coker!" breathed Potter.

"Don't talk to me, George Potter! I've done with you!"

"Oh, you ass—"

"Shut up!" commanded Coker.

Potter shut up, breathing hard.

Wingate was still silent, as if in deep reflection. He spoke at last.

"I don't quite know how to deal with you, Coker. I don't want to take you before the Head, and get you into serious trouble. I thought a prefects' licking might help to bring you to your senses. I suppose you know the captain of the school can't scrap with every hot-headed idiot in the place."

"Rot!"

"But," continued Wingate quietly.

"I'm going to make an exception in your favour. I think that perhaps your

favour. I think that perhaps your

favour. I think that perhaps your

favour. I think that perhaps your

favour. I think that perhaps your



peculiar form of imbecility may be cured by a jolly good hiding. I will try that before I bring the Head down on you."

"Good!" said Coker. "I'll let the fellows see me knock the stuffing out of you, Wingate. It may have a good effect on the school."

"Very well," said Wingate. "We'll have it out with the gloves on, Coker. I'll set aside being captain of the school for once. I'll expect you in the gym after tea."

"Good man!" said Coker heartily. Wingate tore the notice into four pieces, tossed them into the grate, and quitted the study with a very thoughtful expression on his face. He hardly noticed five or six excited juniors in the passage. Those juniors soon spread the news far and wide that the captain of Greyfriars was going to have the gloves on with Coker of the Fifth after tea.

The sensation excited by that news was tremendous.

Immediately there was a procession to the gym. Fellows wanted to be in time to get good places.

Nearly every fellow at Greyfriars was keen on seeing George Wingate mop up the floor with Coker of the Fifth. This was a way of dealing with the rebel that quite accorded with junior ideas at least.

Coker would probably have been surprised if he had known that the record crowd was gathering to see him mopped up. His mopping-up seemed to be taken as a foregone conclusion. Coker was a great fighting-man, and he feared no foe.

His strength was tremendous, and he had heaps of bulldog pluck. But nobody excepting Coker thought for a moment that he could lick Wingate of the Sixth.

Coker thought so; in fact, he took it for granted. But possibly he was going to be undeceived on that point.

Coker smiled genially as he finished his tea.

Potter and Greene looked grave. "This is just what I wanted," said Coker. "Dash it all, you can speak, you fellows! I overlook your rotten tricks! Once I've licked Wingate, I fancy it won't be so hard to rally Greyfriars! Nothing like licking a chap to show what small beer he really is. You can be my second, Potter."

"You're not really going to fight Wingate?" exclaimed Potter.

Coker stared at him. "Eh? Didn't you hear me arrange it, Potter?"

"But you can't be such a howling ass!" shouted Potter. "You'll get smashed up!"

"Oh, don't be funny!" "Do you think you can stand up against Wingate for two rounds, you funny chump?" hooted Greene.

"I doubt whether Wingate can stand up against me for more than two rounds," answered Coker calmly.

"Oh, crumbs!" "I'm going to give him the licking of his life," said Coker, with great satisfaction. "I fancy that will help on the campaign no end. You fellows can see me do it."

"We'll carry you home after Wingate's done with you," said Potter.

"Oh, talk sense!" Coker rose from the table. He was eager to begin.

"Come on!" he said. "Let's get to the gym! I'm rather sorry for Wingate, in a way—sorry he's going to be badly hurt. But—"

"Better keep your sorrow for yourself!" suggested Potter.

"Rot! Come on!"

And Coker strode out of the study, followed by his reconciled study-mates, who were quite anxious for him.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 551.

Potter and Greene felt that they could forgive Coker for everything, in consideration of the terrific thrashing he had asked for, and was now about to receive.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Just Like Coker!

"HERE he comes!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah!" "Good old Coker!"

There was a cheer as Horace Coker strode into the gym with his chums. Coker acknowledged it with a smile and a lofty nod. He did not know that the juniors were cheering him for the entertainment he was about to afford them.

"Like a merry lamb to the slaughter," grinned Vernon-Smith. "Well, he's got pluck. I shouldn't like to be in Coker's shoes."

"The pluckfulness is as great as the fatfulness of Coker's esteemed head," agreed Hurree Singh. "The lickfulness will be—"

"Terrific!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

The crowd thronged round Coker at once. As his adversary had not yet arrived, Coker put on the gloves for a spar with Fitzgerald. He considered that he was in great form. There was a fresh roar as Wingate of the Sixth came in with Gwynne and several other Sixth-Formers.

For the captain of Greyfriars to be engaged in a fight was so unheard-of that it almost constituted a record. Nobody intended to miss the fight if he could help it. The ring that was formed was six or seven deep.

Wingate was looking serious.

After due reflection, he had decided that this was an effective way of dealing with the obstreperous Fifth-Former; but he was very much exasperated. To be dragged into a scrap was humiliating, and it was certain that the Head would not like it if he heard of it. Coker had to pay for the annoyance he was causing, and Wingate had grimly resolved that he should pay dear.

Wingate threw off his jacket, and took the gloves from Gwynne. Coker gave him a cool nod.

"I'm ready!" he called.

"I won't keep you waiting," said Wingate quietly.

"Made your will, Coker?" called out Bob Cherry. And there was a roar of laughter.

Coker did not reply to that query.

Smith major of the Fifth was appointed to keep time. There was a buzz of suppressed excitement as the two adversaries faced one another.

Coker looked full of confidence—perhaps a little too full of confidence. He was so big and burly that he was not a bad match even for Wingate. There were other fellows in the Sixth whom Coker could have licked easily enough.

But strength and pluck were not everything; and Coker's boxing was not too clever, while Wingate was one of the finest boxers at Greyfriars. Nobody but Coker was in any doubt as to the result of the combat, but certainly there was likely to be a struggle.

"Time!" said Smith major,

And they began.

Coker started the attack with a fine rush. He was going to knock Wingate fairly flying, as a sample of what was to come. He anticipated the thunderous cheers as Wingate went over—

But Wingate did not go over!

Somehow, Coker's fierce drive was turned aside, and Coker rushed on to a fist that met him on the jaw with a jar like a battering-ram.

Coker sat down.

He was quite dazed. But for the

boxing-glove, Coker would have been very badly hurt. As it was, he felt as if his jaw had been driven into the back of his head.

"Ow!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Coker!"

"Do that again, Coker!"

Smith major was counting. Coker hardly realised it till he heard Smith major at 'eight'; then he jumped up.

He came on again wrathfully.

With keen and intent gaze the swarm of Greyfriars fellows watched the fight that followed.

Coker was probably as strong as Wingate, but in science he was nowhere near him. He got a few blows home, and they were hard ones; but the captain of Greyfriars seemed hardly to notice them. He was punishing Coker all the time.

Two rounds were fought out, and the general expectation was that Horace Coker would have had enough. But he came up quite cheerfully for the third. In that round he was badly punished, and he hardly touched Wingate at all. Potter made a knee for him when Smith major called time.

"Better chuck it, old chap!" whispered Potter, as he sponged Horace Coker's heated face.

Coker blinked at him. His eyes were extremely blinky.

"Chuck it?" he repeated. "Chuck it—when I'm licking him! Are you potty?"

"Oh, my hat!" said Potter; and he gave it up.

Coker was evidently for a fight to a finish. The finish was likely to be a painful one for Coker.

"Time!"

"By Jove, he's sticking it!" said Harry Wharton, as Coker came up to time. "He can take his medicine. If he had as much brains as pluck—"

"My hat! There he goes!"

Coker was on the floor again.

But he jumped up, panting, and rushed at Wingate. So furious was his attack that the Greyfriars captain had to give ground, and Coker got in a drive or two that made him gasp.

"Time!"

Coker retired to Potter's knee with a breathless but gleeful look. He had had the best of that round, at any rate.

"Looks like business—what?" he said to Potter.

"Call it off now," advised Potter.

"Fathead!"

"Time!"

"Fifth round!" said Vernon-Smith. "Good old Coker! Who'd have thought it? I fancy this is the last, though."

But the Bounder was not quite right. It would have been the last round for anybody but Coker, for he was knocked right and left, and finished gasping on the floor. But when Smith major called time again, Horace Coker staggered in for the sixth round.

Coker was looking badly punished by this time in spite of the gloves. His nose streamed red, and his eyes were nearly closed. Some doubt of final victory was in his mind at last; but he was game to the end. He had confided to Potter that he was fighting for the knock-out blow. He was going to get it instead of giving it; that was all the difference.

He was down twice in the sixth round, and only just managed to avoid being counted out. When the round finished, he sank on Potter's knee with a gasp like very old bellows.

Potter did not venture to give him any advice. When Smith major called time, Coker staggered into the ring.

"You can't go on, Coker!" rapped out Wingate impatiently.



Horace Coker winked at him painfully.

"Do you give up the fight?" he asked.

"Eh? Of course not!"

"Then I'm going on!"

"Bravo, Coker!" yelled out Bolsover major. "We'll carry you home afterwards."

"Time!"

Coker stood up to it gallantly in the seventh round. Even fellows who did not like Coker had to admit that he was showing tremendous pluck. His punishment was severe, but he fought on gamely, though even he no longer had any hope of victory. There was a crash as he went down under a heavy right-hand drive.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven—"

"Go it, Coker!"

Coker made a manful effort to rise. But he rolled back again helplessly. He was utterly spent—licked to the wide!

"Eight, nine—OUT!"

Smith major put his watch back into his pocket.

Wingate quietly peeled off the gloves, and Gwynne helped him on with his jacket. The captain of Greyfriars had had some hard knocks, but he was not looking much the worse for them. But the unfortunate Coker had had a licking such as had never fallen within his experience before—a licking which Hurree Jamset Ram Singh justly described as terrific.

He sat up feebly.

One of his eyes was quite closed. He blinked round dizzily with the other. Potter took one arm to help him up.

Harry Wharton seized the other, and he was set upon his feet.

"Ow!" gasped Coker.

"Hold on, old chap!" said Potter, quite affectionately. "You put up a terrific fight. Lean on me."

"Ow! I—I feel rather bad!" gasped Coker. "I—I say, I'm—I'm licked! I've been licked, Potter. Would you believe it?"

"Ahem!"

Wingate was turning away when Coker called to him.

"Wingate! I say!"

The Greyfriars captain turned back.

"Well?" he said grimly.

"You've had the best of it," said Coker manfully. "You're a better man than I thought you, George Wingate! I take back what I said about you're being a funk!"

"You needn't bother," said Wingate coolly.

"I speak as I find—that's my system!" said Coker firmly. "You're a better man than I thought, and I own up! A chap who can stand up to me for seven rounds, and lick me at the finish, is a chap I can respect. I'm not going to interfere with your being captain of Greyfriars! Mind—not because I've got the worst of this, but because you were able to do it. You ain't such a noodle as I thought—"

"What?"

"There's something in you," said Coker. "I own up! Chap who can lick me is quite fit to be captain of Greyfriars! Stick to it! I'll back you up! I can't say fairer than that."

Wingate stared at him for a moment, and then burst into a laugh.

"You're not a bad sort, Coker, if you weren't a born idiot!" he said. "I'm glad, anyway, that you're giving up playing the goat. All serene!"

Horace Coker limped out of the gym, supported by Potter and Greene. He was not seen again that evening. He had to recuperate, and when he was on view the next morning the signs of his combat were thick upon him.

He was rather a subdued Coker. George Wingate had evidently impressed upon his mind the fact that he was quite a suitable fellow to be captain of Greyfriars. He had convinced Coker of that in the only way Coker could be convinced. And Coker, being convinced, admitted it.

Harry Wharton and Co. grinned when they saw Coker's face that morning. It was rather a picture.

"Are you still sacking Wingate, Coker?" inquired Bob Cherry.

Horace Coker frowned.

"None of your cheek, Cherry! Don't speak of your captain in that flippant way!"

"What?"

"I'm backing up Wingate! Any disrespect to the captain of the school, my boy, and I'll drop on you—heavy!"

"Well, my hat!" said Bob.

The Famous Five chuckled as Coker stalked away. Evidently there was an end to Coker's Campaign!

(Don't miss "DICK RUSSELL'S CHUM!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

## The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"DICK RUSSELL'S CHUM!"

By Frank Richards.

Dick Russell's chum is, of course, Robert Donald Ogilvy. We do not often find Ogilvy playing a very prominent part in the stories; but I know that he is a favourite with many readers, and especially, as is only natural, with Scottish ones. He shows up well in next week's yarn. Russell hardly figures to so much advantage; but then Russell, though he is a good fellow, and knows how to be loyal in another's trouble, is rather over-sensitive, and inclined to be nery in trouble of his own. How he got himself into what looked like proving a nasty mess, though there was no real guilt in what he did, and how Ogilvy bucked up to get him out of it, the story now announced will tell.

### AN OLD-TIME CHAT.

Owing to the publication of the list of Greyfriars stories in this column, I have not had, for a long time, a chat of the old sort with my readers. But I have the chance now, and am going to take it.

The letters which have reached me lately show that the stories are just as popular as ever, which is always a cheering thing to know. Now, I want to ask you to do what I have often asked you before, and never without result. Days are drawing in, and the time will soon be here when evenings are short, and people who read at all begin to do more reading than during the height of summer. Will you—all of you—do me the favour of introducing the MAGNET to any of your chums who do not already know it? There must still be many such, and I want to enlist them as readers. The paper difficulty is still with us; but copies can be supplied all right if they are ordered in advance, so that we are prepared to cope with a considerable increase of circulation at any time, owing to our having made arrangements to avoid any sort of waste. Will you see that we get the increase I ask for? You can,

you know. Lots of you have helped me in this way before. In a week or two I am starting another series of Tom Redwing stories, in which Vernon-Smith figures prominently; and these are just the sort of thing to bring in new readers with. Tell a chum something of what has gone before, and give him the first story of the coming series to read, and I am certain he will want to read those which follow.

I am sorry that circumstances have compelled me lately to refuse most notices. Too many come along—far more than we can possibly print unless the flow is checked now and then. I have only checked it to give us a chance of working off those which we have already in hand—some of them months old. In a few weeks I hope to be able to tell you that you may send along again. But when you do, please give numbers instead of titles in the case of back number notices. It will save a lot of space; and you ought to be able to do it now, for I have given you the list of titles for which so many asked; and I don't think it is too much to expect that, if you want back numbers, you should have taken care of that list.

### FOOTBALL NOTICES.

ST. MARY'S ATHLETIC—16—want matches at home and away.—T. Hares, 4, Caroline Terrace, Brook Green, W. 6.

FOREST ALBION want matches.—Hon. Sec., 104, Goldsmith Avenue, Manor Park, E.

PARK VILLA C.C.—Players wanted, goalkeeper especially.—G. Cox, 12, Woolton Road, Wavertree, Lancs.

D. Cardno, 11, St. John's Road, Penge, S.E. 20, wants to join football club in S.E. district, age 17. Inside-right or right-half.

CRAYFORD A.C.—15½—5 miles radius—wants matches.—E. Thomas, 9, Harvest Road, London, N. 7.

BROOKHOUSE 2nd XI.—13—5 miles—wants home and away matches.—T. Fenton, 5, Wood Street, Chapel Lane, Wigan.

UNITED ATHLETIC F.C.—15—5 miles—wants home and away matches.—W. Lomas, 78, Norris Road, Hillsbro', Sheffield.

BULWELL RANGERS F.C.—17—7 miles radius—wants home and away matches.—G. Robinson, 5, Brady Yard, Main Street, Bulwell.

NORWOOD ATHLETIC F.C.—16—5 miles—wants home and away matches.—H. Hawkins, 6, Woodland Road, Upper Norwood, S.E. 19.

HUNTINGDON F.C.—17—10 miles radius.—W. Dove, 65, Huntingdon Street, Barnsbury, N.

NEWLANDS F.C.—16-17—Peckham Rye district.—L. Dennis, 53, Surrey Road, Newlands, S.E. 15.

### Clubs, etc.

A. E. Catchpole, 398, Queen's Park Road, Brighton, wants members for club organised for boys interested in detective work. 2d. for particulars.

Wallace, Bowker, 2, Bickerstaff Street, Dale Street, Blackpool, wants members for board of directors for publishing a new magazine. Stamped and addressed envelope for reply.

A. Reader, 12, Eldon Street, Sheffield, wants 20-25 boys for allotment club. Must be steady, industrious boys—14-16.

R. J. Mills, 25A, New Cross Road, S.E. 14, wants readers and contributors for the "Midget."

Ernest Wisker, 15, Tranmere Road, Earlsfield, S.W. 18, wishes to join club running magazine in England.

Conductor, 514, Vernon Road, Old Basford, Notts, wants players for orchestra—violins, viola, cello, bass, etc.—aged 15-16; near Notts; small subscription.

J. Barnes, 115, Bullington Road, Oxford, wants members for a correspondence club.

A. A. E. Akehurst, 60, Daneville Road, Camberwell Green, S.E., wants model printing press, with type, for amateur magazine.

F. A. Sandon, 66, Lancaster Road, Notting Hill, W. 11, wants members for "Rising Sun" Exchange and Correspondence Club.

P. J. Clerice, 93, Gold Street, Johannesburg, South Africa, wants more members for the South African Club and "Springbok Magazine." Send two 1d. stamps.

D. Alsopp, 16, Linwood Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, wants readers of pass-round magazine, well-printed—stories, etc., and competition. Price 4d.

A. Webber, 47, Corelli Street, Newport, Mon, wants members for Alberta Club.

T. Waters, 19, Sheepcote Lane, S.W. 11, wants members and agents for club.

Your Editor



Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

THE ERRING HERRINGS!

By H. MANNERS (Being the Narrative of Manners Minor).

I.

THE Third Form-room presented quite a homely and domestic appearance. Desks and forms were piled up at the back of the room; a table, laden with several more or less complete cups and saucers, and plates containing bread-and-scraps of thicknesses ranging from an inch to one and a half graced the centre of the room; and, seated round a huge fire, noisy, inky fags were engaged in preparing their tea, which consisted mainly of tea, toast, bread-and-butter, and some half-dozen or so belated specimens of the piscine race which Curly Gibson proclaimed to be "fresh herrings." The smell which came from them suggested otherwise; and Hobbs and Joe Frayne, who were cooking them by holding them in front of the fire on the end of penholders, got the full benefit of the smell.

Wally D'Arcy, the leader of the fag tribe, looked up from his plate of toast.

Sniff, sniff!  
Curly Gibson glared at Wally truculently. "What're you sniffing at, young D'Arcy?" he demanded.

Wally dived into the pockets of his nether garments, and produced a sorry-looking rag which he applied to his nose.

"My word!" he gasped. "Don't they niff?"  
"You ass!" roared Gibson. "Don't what niff?"

Wally gave the herrings a disparaging look, and shook his head.

"Those—er—what do you call 'em?"  
"They're herrings!" said Curly Gibson, glowering upon his humorous leader.

"Are they, though?" inquired Wally.  
"Thanks for telling me!"  
"You—you—"

Wally, with an exasperating sigh, made a grab at an exercise-book, and waved it before him as though it were a fan.

"Gee-whiz!" he murmured. "They do hum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Hobbs turned a red and perspiring face from the fire, and glared at Wally.

"Look here, young D'Arcy!" he roared. "Don't you sneer at my herrings! I gave two for three-ha'pence for them, down at Rylcombe!"

Wally gazed at the herrings critically.  
"Well, you are a mug, young Hobbs!" he said. "I wouldn't have given three for two-ha'pence for 'em!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Joe Frayne moved uncomfortably away from the fire. He was glad to get to windward of the "fresh" fish.

"You don't mean to say you're going to eat those things, do you?" asked Wally.

"Eat 'em!" echoed Hobbs. "Of course we're going to eat 'em!"

"Well, it serves you right!" said Wally.  
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the fags, most of whom had moved away from the spot where the offending herrings were reposing in their piece of newspaper.

"I—I—I—" spluttered Hobbs.

"Oh, come off it, Hobby!" said Wally seriously enough. "You really can't eat those herrings, you know!"

"Well, they do niff a little bit," admitted Curly Gibson grudgingly.

"I should jolly well say they do!" gasped Wally, industriously waving his exercise-book.

"Well," said Hobbs, "I gave fourpence-ha'penny for 'em."

"More fool you!" said Wally.  
"You shut your jaw, young D'Arcy!" growled Hobbs. "The man seemed all right—"

"Yes, he saw you coming, Hobby, old top!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, be quiet, do!" said Wally. "You've

been had over that deal, Hobbs; and the question now is, what's to be done with 'em?"

"Make Hobby eat 'em raw," suggested Curly Gibson, who, not having paid for the herrings, now sided with the majority.

"Will you?" demanded Hobbs, backing hastily away. "I'll jolly well see you don't!"

"I know!" said Wally, struck by a bright idea. "We'll let Selby have 'em!"

"Ass!" said Hobbs. "How can you? He'll spot 'em in no time, and we'll all get it in the neck!"

"Oh, no, we sha'n't!" said Wally loftily. "My idea is to nail 'em underneath his chair—"

"Eh?"  
"Getting deaf, Gibson?" demanded Wally. "I said nail 'em underneath Selby's chair. He'll never spot them there if he hunts from now till Doomsday. They're pretty ripe now, but in a week or two's—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"My word! They will be juicy, and no mistake!"

And the fags, greatly pleased at this bright idea of getting rid of the highly-smelling herrings, proceeded to find nails and a hammer with which to carry it out. Four tacks and sundry small nails were got, and Wally and Joe Frayne set to work to fix two of the herrings underneath their respected Form-master's chair. A hammer was not to be found, so they made the poker do.

Bang, bang, bang! went the poker, and in a few minutes the herrings were securely fixed upon the under side of the seat of Mr. Selby's chair.

Then, in great good humour, the fags proceeded with their tea, minus the herrings. Half an hour later everything was cleared away, and the Form settled down to the evening preparation with Mr. Selby.

II.

MR. SELBY rustled into the Third Form-room, and fixed a choleric glare upon his long-suffering Form. He sat down in his chair, and blew his nose testily. The Third Form remained as still as mice, with faces like cherubs. Mr. Selby was in an irascible mood this evening, as usual.

"Dear me!"—sniff, sniff!—said Mr. Selby, once more applying his handkerchief to his rather red nasal organ. "Dear me! What an unpleasant odour there is in this room, to be sure!"

The Third gave no visible signs of understanding.

"Sniff, sniff! Oh, dear! W-what a smell!"  
Mr. Selby glared suspiciously round upon his innocent gang of cherubims, and again wiped his nose.

"Keep your face straight!" whispered Wally, in an undertone to Joe Frayne.

"D'Arcy!"  
Wally stood up meekly in his seat.

"Yes, sir?"  
"Groogh!" gasped Mr. Selby. "Have you been cooking—ah—er—fish here this—er—evening, D'Arcy?"

"No, sir. I've been cooking no fish here, sir," answered Wally truthfully. Joe Frayne and Hobbs had been doing the cooking.

"Well—dear me!—there is an awful odour in this room! Groogh!"

"Yes, there is rather a funny niff, sir!" agreed Wally innocently. And he lugged out his inky rag and rubbed his nose industriously.

Curly Gibson nearly exploded, and was suddenly affected with a violent fit of coughing.

Mr. Selby glared at him over the top of his glasses.

"Gibson—sniff, sniff!—Gibson, what is the matter with you, boy?"  
"Ow! Groogh! Oh, dear, sir—that awful smell, sir!" spluttered Curly Gibson, burying his face in his handkerchief. "It—it—it's awful! Gug-gug-gug!"

Sniff, sniff! came from all over the Form-room.  
"Groo-hoo!" gasped Mr. Selby. "It smells suspiciously like bad fish! Sniff! However, I will speak to the Housemaster about it, and possibly he will have the drains seen to. Groogh! Sniff, sniff!"

There certainly was an extremely unpleasant odour round about Mr. Selby's chair. The herrings were more juicy than Wally & Co. had bargained for, and their smell was simply terrific. Mr. Selby felt extremely uncomfortable, and his handkerchief was in frequent use. However, the lesson started. The subject was Latin, and Wally & Co. were soon struggling with "Cæsar," to the accompaniment of frequent sniffs from Mr. Selby.

Half an hour went by, and Mr. Selby had not improved the rather decided scarlet of his nose by frequent and savage rubbing of that organ with his handkerchief.

He kept shifting his chair about from place to place; but, like Mary and her little lamb, wherever Mr. Selby went the smell was sure to go.

At last a crisis was reached. The smell became too much, and Mr. Selby, with a hurried dismissal of the Form, dashed out of the room, his handkerchief to his nose. He left the Third in an uproar.

"Wally, my son, you're worth your weight in bulleyes!" trilled Curly Gibson. And he clasped Wally round the neck, and together they executed a war-dance round the room.

There was great rejoicing in the ranks of the Third that evening. They had had a bit of their own back on Mr. Selby for past tyrannies, and got themselves off three-quarters of an hour's work into the bargain.

They did not stay in there, however—the smell was more than they could stand—so they marched triumphantly away, having secured the herrings under Mr. Selby's chair safely for the night.

III.

NEXT morning the Third assembled as usual for morning lessons.

During the night the smell had lessened somewhat, but nevertheless there was still that unmistakable odour which had permeated the Form-room the day before. Wally & Co. and the rest of the young rascals in the Third looked forward to another lively time; and they were not disappointed.

Mr. Selby sniffed and snorted. His temper was worse than ever that morning.

The lesson was geography, and Mr. Selby settled himself in front of the fire with the globe before him. It was cold, and a more than usually large fire was burning merrily away. Wally & Co. had attended to the chair that morning, and the herrings, now in a state of juicy decay, were safely fastened underneath the seat.

The lesson commenced, and soon Mr. Selby's temper began to rise—as did the smell. Mr. Selby's handkerchief came into active use once more.

"Oh, dear!" he gasped. "There is that horrible smell again! I am sure the drains must be out of order!" And he sniffed away lugubriously.

"D'Arcy, tell me the principal products of Newfoundland," he said testily.

"Fish, sir," answered Wally meekly.

Mr. Selby looked suspiciously at him, but



said nothing. One or two of the Third seemed to be afflicted with internal spasms.

The lesson went on, with much sniffing and many interruptions. The smell grew worse.

Mr. Selby wriggled about in his chair, and gave vent to many curious grunts and groans—to the extreme delight of the Third. At last he tackled Wally D'Arcy on the subject.

"What ever can it be—do you know, D'Arcy minor?" he asked. He was not without his suspicions of that cheerful youth.

"It's jolly Naby, sir," said Wally. And again the form wriggled in their seats for no apparent reason.

"It's positively unbearable!" howled Mr. Selby, whose nose was beginning to shine. "I am sure there must be some audacious joke on foot!"

"Oh, sir!" said Wally, in tones of shocked astonishment.

"D'Arcy minor, I believe you are responsible. I— Grooh-hoo!"

The smell became too thick, and Mr. Selby jumped up and banged his chair down on the floor in his fury. Then an unfortunate thing happened. The heat from the fire had affected the herrings, which had undergone some degree of cooking as a result. Naturally the fastening had become less stable, and, at the sudden jerk as the chair crashed, the herrings fell away from the tinacks, and

came to rest upon the floor. The Third gasped in dismay.

Mr. Selby glared down upon the herrings, and nearly burst a blood-vessel in his rage.

"Do my eyes deceive me," he howled, "or are they herrings?"

Wally groaned. The game was up!

"D'Arcy minor!" fumed the outraged master. "Come here at once, boy!"

Dismally, with many evil forebodings, Wally made his way to the front.

"Did you place these—er—fish beneath my chair?"

"I—I—I—"

"You dared to place bad fish under my chair, boy! I—I—"

Mr. Selby, dancing with rage, almost choked.

"This is an outrage! You young villain, I'll half kill you! I'll—"

Almost foaming at the mouth, Mr. Selby clutched at a cane, and made a dash at Wally. Mr. Selby did not look safe at that moment, and Wally promptly bolted, with the furious master in full chase.

Wally knew that if Mr. Selby caught him he would catch it hot. He also knew that he must be punished in any case, so he made a bee-line for the Head's study. Mr. Selby was unreasonable and unjust, and if Wally's punishment were left in his hands things

would go ill with Wally. The Head, on the other hand, was strict, but fair, and Wally chose to be punished by him.

He dashed up to the door of Dr. Holmes' study, and burst it open. Mr. Selby arrived hot on his heels, and together they precipitated themselves into the presence of the Head.

Then it all came out. Mr. Selby would have commenced assault and battery upon Wally there and then, but Dr. Holmes stopped him, and listened to Wally's confession of the whole affair. His brow was grim when Wally finished, and he chastised him thoroughly, but not unjustly. Wally received four cuts on each hand, with all the force of the Head's strong right arm. And there the Head declared the matter ended. Mr. Selby would fain have had Wally flogged, but the Head told him firmly that Wally had been punished, and nothing more need be said on the matter.

Wally was hailed as a martyr by his fellow-rascals in the Third, and, although his hands ached and smarted for quite a long time afterwards, he stontly declared he wasn't sorry he did it, and that he would do it again if Selby kept on with his tyranny.

And the herrings were quietly buried behind the school chapel that evening.

THE END.

## THE CASE OF THE MISSING WIFE!

An Adventure of Herlock Sholmes.

By PETER TODD.

**L**IFE is tame! observed Herlock Sholmes, grating his feet upon the mantelpiece in his private-room at Shaker Street. "Almost as tame as you are, my dear Jotson!"

"True!" I rejoined, marvelling at my friend's amazing philosophy.

"If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, then Mahomet must go to the mountain," continued Sholmes. "In other words, if clients will not come here to send me upon missions of peril, I must go forth and seek those missions of peril myself."

The light of battle was in my friend's eye as he drained the cocaine-cask at a gulp and strode to the door.

I was wondering whether to accompany him on his quest for adventure, or to go and tend those of my patients who were still living, when the sound of a loud concussion rent the air.

I rushed to the door, and found a portly gentleman of middle age in the act of descending the stairs head-foremost, having collided with the great detective at the top.

Having made the discovery that the bottom step was the lowest, our client—for such I presumed him to be—bounced up again with the velocity of an indiarubber ball. Sholmes took him by the nose in his playful way and whisked him into the room.

"Proceed," he said, "if you have the necessary breath. You may speak quite freely before my friend Dr. Jotson."

Our visitor adjusted the back of his neck to his satisfaction, and glanced wildly at the great detective.

"Mr. Sholmes," he said dramatically, "my wife is missing!"

Sholmes beamed.

"A thousand congratulations, my dear fellow!" he exclaimed. "That is indeed a stroke of good fortune for you!"

"On the contrary, Mr. Sholmes, it is a matter for considerable alarm. She has in her possession our Post Office Savings Bank book!"

"Ah!"

"My name is Hennessy-Pethwick—pronounced Henpeck—and my wife's disappearance dates from Saturday of last week. I have advertised in the columns of 'Punch' and 'The Fishing Gazette,' but without result. Upon you, Sholmes, I hurl myself in my extremity!"

And our amazing visitor leapt at Sholmes, clutching him frantically round the neck.

"Pray remember whom you have the honour of addressing!" said Sholmes, in the cold, forbidding tones he reserved for these occasions. "How can I proceed with the case if you throttle me beforehand?"

Mr. Hennessy-Pethwick disentangled himself at the expense of bursting my friend's shirt-front.

"You will find my wife?" he asked eagerly. Sholmes nodded.

"She will be on your doorstep at seven o'clock this evening," he said.

"But how—what—" gasped our client.

"I do not make my methods the subject of vulgar discussion. Leave it to me."

And Mr. Hennessy-Pethwick was ushered to the door. Judging by the detonation which smote our ears the next moment, he had again taken the line of least resistance with regard to the stairs.

Sholmes lit a Flor de Cabbagio with an abstracted air.

"This is quite in accord with a smiling world, Jotson. I foresee half the contents of that Post Office Savings Bank book transferred to my own pocket. I foresee a complete settlement of arrears with Mrs. Spudson. I foresee high revels this evening at the fried-fish shop!"

"But how do you propose to run Mrs. Hennessy-Pethwick to earth?" I asked. "It is impossible!"

"Nothing is impossible—except to Scotland Yard. Our friend left his address, did he not?"

"Yes; here is his card. 27, Ragtime Alley."

"Very well, Jotson. If you will saunter round to No. 27 at the time I specified, you will see Mrs. Hennessy-Pethwick restored to the bosom of her family. Did you get me, Steve, as they say in Persia?"

So saying, my wonderful friend tilted up the empty cocaine-cask with a gesture of annoyance, and proceeded to leave the house, donning his carpet-slippers lest Mrs. Spudson should hear him.

### II.

**F**IRM as was my faith in Herlock Sholmes, I confess I could not quite see how, without a single clue to guide him, he was to be successful in bringing Mrs. Hennessy-Pethwick back to the fold. Besides, the good lady had been missing since the previous Saturday, and in the interval which followed her disappearance she might have placed a gulf of hundreds of miles between herself and civilisation.

Yet my friend had so many brilliant achievements to his credit that I was impelled by instinct and curiosity to visit No. 27, Ragtime Alley, that evening.

I arrived at five minutes to seven.

Seated on the front gate, kicking his legs with agitated violence against the poodle which hovered there, was the distracted husband.

"Ah, Dr. Jotson!" he exclaimed on my approach. "You have come to report that there is nothing doing with regard to my wife?"

"On the contrary," I observed. "I have every reason to believe that my friend Sholmes will add yet again to his list of triumphs. Listen!"

Above the roar of the traffic and the booming of the anti-aircraft guns—for a mild aerial bombardment was in progress—we distinctly heard the rustle of a skirt.

The next moment the missing wife was locked in the embrace of her husband, who feverishly seized the Savings Bank book from her bag.

I turned away to hide my emotion, when

Herlock Sholmes loomed up out of the shadows.

"A very happy climax, Jotson!" he said, rubbing his hands. "Mr. Hennessy-Pethwick once more breathes freely. His wife is restored to him complete, and—what is more important—his Post Office Savings Bank book. I think we have every reason to congratulate ourselves."

"Indeed we have, Sholmes!"

"Excuse me a moment, Jotson. I must secure my commission from the happy husband, or our dream of fried cod and chipped potatoes may not materialise."

My friend stepped into the house, whither the couple had retired; and when he returned a moment later I distinctly heard the rustle of a shilling postal-order.

"Lead on, Macduff!" said Sholmes, prodding me in the ribs in his affectionate manner. "In addition to our fish and chips, I fancy we shall be able to sport a bottle of strong ginger-beer."

We walked away, and I waited for my friend to give the usual explanation.

He remained silent, however, until after the first course. Then he turned to me with one of his rare guffaws.

"You are wondering how I found Mrs. Hennessy-Pethwick, Jotson?"

"My wonder increases each moment, Sholmes!"

"The thing," said my friend, mopping up his ginger-beer, with a smile, "was dead easy. The good woman was first absent on Saturday."

"True!"

"Why are women absent from their homes on Saturday, Jotson?"

"The lure of the cinema?" I suggested.

"Wrong, Jotson. From wide experience of this subject I have deduced that the majority of women are absent on Saturday in order to do their weekly shopping."

"Marvellous!" I exclaimed.

"Not at all. Granted, then, that Mrs. Hennessy-Pethwick had got to do her shopping, what commodity would she have gone chiefly to purchase?"

"I shook my head.

"Why, margarine, of course! Margarine is a national necessity. Very well. And where can margarine be purchased cheaper than anywhere else?"

Again I shook my head.

"In Wapping, Jotson. There are many things that are cheap at Wapping, and margarine is one of them. My course, then, was clear. I proceeded to Wapping, and found Mrs. Hennessy-Pethwick in the margarine queue. She had been waiting there since last Saturday!"

"Sholmes!" I exclaimed. "There are moments when my admiration for you knows no bounds! Only a master-mind such as yours could have deduced—"

"Enough!" said Sholmes, rising to his feet with a yawn. "This is neither the time nor place to indulge in heroics. Pay the bill, Jotson, and we will travel."

We travelled.

THE END.



# THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 87.—Mr. FERRERS LOCKE.

**F**ERRERS LOCKE does not belong to Greyfriars, of course; but his relationship to the Head gives him a connection with the school, and he has more than once been called in to solve mysteries there. He has little time for friendly visits, as such; a detective of his class is naturally a very busy man. But he is a particularly genial and likeable man; and on his official visits he has come to be well known and highly respected by the Famous Five and a good many other Greyfriars fellows.

He only comes into the life of the Kentish school now and then, and at longish intervals. Most of his work lies in far less pleasant surroundings. The boyish notion is apt to be that the life of a private detective, working on his own, without taking orders from anyone, is one full of romance. This is wrong, however. There is romance in it now and then, and there is adventure, and very often danger, as all readers of the Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee yarns, as well as of those which deal with Ferrers Locke, know; but much of it is necessarily sordid and unpleasant. It is by no means all beer and skittles; and it is not all triumphs. Now and then the criminal, not the detective, gets the best of the deal; and that means bitter chagrin and disappointment to the man who has worked hard to bring the criminal to book.

The Famous Five and William Wibley foiled Ferrers Locke once; and he took their interference in a spirit which revealed him as a broad-minded man, and a very good-hearted one also.

Many of you will remember the story—"On the Wrong Track," it was called—which appeared about a year ago. Skinner and Wibley had gone out in a boat together, had quarrelled, and had got upset. Wibley was in danger of drowning when an unknown man dived magnificently from the cliff and rescued him. This was done in the sight of the Famous Five, who, good swimmers as they all are, knew that that dive would have been utterly beyond the powers of the best of them, and who naturally admired Mr. Roland Smale on account of it.

They made friends with him, and he told them a story which was wholly fictitious. He was living alone at a bungalow by the shore, and he said that he was a detective taking a brief holiday. Harry Wharton and the rest saw a suspicious-looking character watching his quarters, and told him about it. The news elicited more lies. Mr. Smale was quite sure that the man was a mere tramp, with no interest in him. He laughed at Johnny Bull's theory that the seeming tramp was a dangerous criminal, known to have escaped from prison, and to have sworn revenge against the detective who had been the means of getting him sent there. He was not that detective, he said.

The stranger continued to keep Smale under observation, and the juniors saw him at it again. Then they took refuge from a thunderstorm in Mr. Smale's bungalow, and came upon him struggling with the seeming tramp. They helped their friend, and through their aid he escaped. Before that they had heard words which should have given them some notion of the true state of affairs; but the gallant dive to Wibley's rescue had cast a glamour about Roland Smale for them, and they found it hard to believe that he was anything but a white man.

It was impossible to doubt that he had lied to them, however, when the shifty-eyed tramp turned out to be Ferrers Locke; and Mr. Locke told them the story of Roland Smale, alias Douglas Marsh. Marsh was not a detective; he was a forger, and Mr. Locke was hot on his track. The interference of the juniors had thwarted him, and he was naturally put out.

They were sorry, and yet when Marsh called upon them for aid against the detective they gave him it. He convinced them that he had repented of his crime—his first, and, so he vowed, his last—and that he meant to make full restitution. They bid him at Greyfriars when Locke had almost got him cornered; they got him out, disguised in a master's gown; and then Wibley led the detective off on a false scent by disguising himself as Douglas Marsh, and cutting off on a bicycle. The five were allowed to go in the car in which Mr. Locke gave chase. They knew that

it was Wibley ahead, not the man whom the detective wanted, and they felt just a bit ashamed of themselves. But when Wibley was run down they confessed, and handed over to the detective the stolen money, which Marsh had left in their charge.

Without that evidence of the fellow's real repentance Ferrers Locke could hardly have overlooked the offence of which they had been guilty—an offence against the law of the land, remember, as well as against him. Even as it was, it must have been difficult for him to take coolly the deceit which had been practised to enable Marsh to get away. But he did take it coolly after his first outbreak of justifiable rage, and in the long run he was glad that Marsh had got away. For a little later, on a hurried visit to Greyfriars, he went over with the Remove team to a match at Redclyffe, and at the station they saw Douglas Marsh in khaki, plainly resolved to do his best to wipe out the past.

Fisher T. Fish was the means of bringing Ferrers Locke to the school once. Fishy had been severely caned by Mr. Quelch, and in revenge he started sending the Remove-master anonymous threatening letters. Inspector Grimes failed to trace the letter-writer; but it did not take the astute detective long to get on to him. He discovered that the letters had been typed on Mr. Quelch's own typewriter, which naturally narrowed the field of investigation. A tall story which Fish had told about a mysterious stranger with a knife drew attention to him, and he was soon bowled out.



It was Ferrers Locke who solved the mystery of little Sylvester's disappearance, and brought him back safe and sound to the school. Shortly after that the detective came on a visit to the Head, and tumbled into a job, so to speak. Skinner had not the same high opinion of Mr. Locke as most of the others had, and he tried to spoof him. He collared Bunter's watch—not a very valuable article, as we all know—one night, and Ferrers Locke was asked to discover the thief. He did so. He discovered the watch in his own hatbox, where Skinner had told the rest he had put it. He brought it out with him in his sleeve, and he used sleight-of-hand to get it into Skinner's pocket. That japing junior himself produced it, and was completely staggered. He confessed then, and Mr. Locke begged him off punishment.

Then Wibley tried another spoof on the detective. Wibley visited him as Colonel Cholmondeley, of the Dundum Fusiliers. He told a story of German spies in a bungalow, and Ferrers Locke agreed to take up the case. But, good as Wibley's disguise was, and well as he played his part, he was not clever enough to take in the detective; and the net result was that he found himself locked up, and was only released just in time not to be late at dinner.

After that Lord Manleyverer lost a whole wad of banknotes, and Skinner fell under suspicion. But the thief was not Skinner; he was Master Reginald Bertie Cecil Fitzroy Mumble, otherwise Nosy Mrs. Mumble's troublesome boy. And Mr. Locke soon dis-

covered that, causing Skinner to entertain a somewhat higher opinion of his capabilities.

It was Mr. Locke who bowled out Snaith, too. He had brought to the school a lad, one Paul Sydney, whom he had rescued from a life of crime in the slums of London. It was something of an experiment on the detective's part, and Sydney did not stay long. But that was not because he disgraced himself, though he stood in the shadow of disgrace till Mr. Locke came along and proved that it was Snaith, and not he, who had committed the thefts in the dormitory. Natural enough that almost everyone should believe Sydney guilty when he confessed that he had been a thief before he was adopted by Ferrers Locke. But all that was put behind him now—he was "Straight as a Die," to use the title of the story which related his brief stay at Greyfriars—and those who had been down upon him were sorry when the truth was made known.

We shall hear of Ferrers Locke again, no doubt. There have been many stories of him elsewhere than in these pages; but upon these there is no need to touch here, of course. It is likely that in the future there will be more stories in the MAGNET, and possibly in other papers. For he has always been a popular character, as he deserves to be.

## ST. JIM'S LIMERICKS.

By Monty Lowther.

The chief of the study is Blake,  
His chums he would never forsake.  
He's ripping at sport;  
But he ought to be taught  
At the name of Tom Merry to quake.

Next that undersized duffer called Digby,  
If he only grew taller he'd big be.  
He can think of a wheeze  
With the greatest of ease,  
And will, when grown up, a bigwig be.

There's another whose surname is Herries,  
His feet, when he walks, he near buries;  
They're awfully large,  
And resemble a barge  
But they can't kick as hard as Tom Merry's.

The fourth in that study is D'Arcy;  
His manner of dressing is classy.  
He wears topping hats,  
And the neatest of spats,  
But his manner of talk is jackassy.

## TEN LITTLE SCHOOLBOYS.

[These verses are entirely new and original, and nothing of the kind has ever been published before, with the possible exception, perhaps, of "Ten Little Nigger Boys" and a few others.—G. FIGGINS.]

[There certainly does seem to be some resemblance to "Ten Little Nigger Boys." But never mind! Figgy says it's original; and he knows best!—EDITOR.]

Ten little schoolboys hurrying to dine;  
One lost his meat-card, then there were nine.

Nine little schoolboys arrived at dinner late;  
The Form-master spotted one, then there were eight.

Eight little schoolboys, all in the eleven;  
One got out leg-before, then there were seven.

Seven little schoolboys, up to lots of tricks;  
One dropped his monocle, then there were six.

Six little schoolboys, one was Sidney Clive;  
He got a blistered heel, then there were five.

Five little schoolboys, tagging Berrymore,  
He turned the hose on them, then there were four.

Four little schoolboys ate a rationed tea;  
One partook of "substitutes," then there were three.

Three little schoolboys hadn't much to do;  
One took up photography, and then there were two.

Two little schoolboys, full of childish fun;  
One was too "Merry," and then there was one.

One little schoolboy made a rotten pun;  
Someone wiped the floor with him, and then there was none.