

GRAND NEW DETECTIVE SERIAL STARTS THIS WEEK!

No. 893. Vol. XXVII.

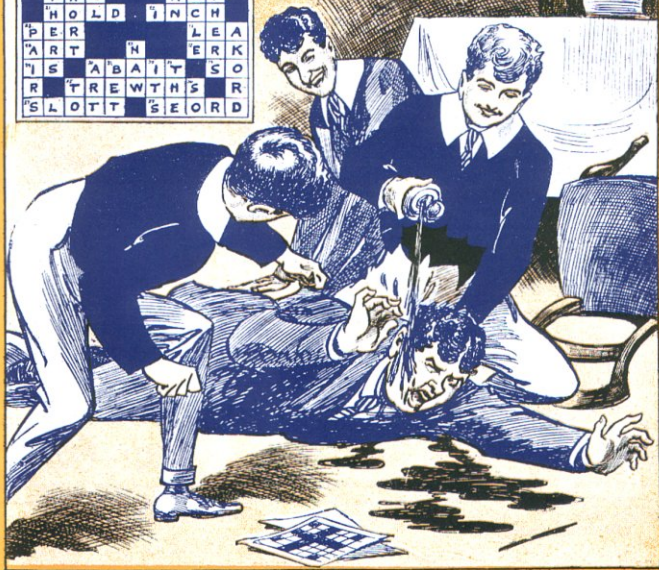
Week Ending March 21st, 1925.

The Magnet 2^d

EVERY MONDAY.

Library of Complete School Stories.

P	U	G	G		K	O	F	F	
R		O	A	T	I	O	N	O	
O	W		S	O	W	N	D	O	N
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HELPING COKER WITH HIS CROSS WORD PUZZLE!

(A humorous incident from the long, complete story of Harry Wharton, & Co. at Greyfriars contained in this issue!)





THIS is a competition in which every one of you can join. You are all familiar with the Cross Words that fly between schoolboys, and you are all familiar with the time-honoured Limerick.

For the benefit of those unacquainted with completing an unfinished Limerick I will give a few hints that may be found helpful. Now, suppose you were required to complete the following verse:

Said Brown to Bully Silvester
In tones that courted disaster:
"Yah, go and eat coke,
Hit some other bloke,"

You must make your last line scan with the first two. That's the most important thing to remember in completing a Limerick.

For instance, such a line as:

"Then Brown ran—but Silvester was the faster"

is obviously far too long. A more suitable last line would be:

"Now Brown's requiring some plaster."

I don't say that this is a clever line, but it fulfils the requirements of a Limerick and scans correctly with the first two lines.

Another point is, don't try to be too clever. A simple but forceful line is what is wanted—a line that rhymes and scans with the first two.

Now that you have got the hang of the thing study this week's Competition Limerick on the coupon below, and fill in your last line.

To the sender of the "last line," which in the Editor's opinion is the best, will be awarded the handsome money prize of FIVE POUNDS. To the 12 next best, Consolation Prizes of SPLENDID POCKET-KNIVES will be awarded.

DIRECTIONS.

When you have thought out a really good last line fill in the coupon below, IN INK, taking care to write your name and address clearly, and post it to:—

"Cross Words" Limerick Competition, No. 9,
c/o MAGNET, Gough House,
Gough Square, London, E.C. 4,

so as to reach that address not later than March 24th, 1925.

You may send in as many attempts as you like, but all efforts must be written on the proper Entrance Form.

It is a distinct condition of entry that the Editor's decision must be regarded as final. Employees of the proprietors of MAGNET may not compete.

NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"THE MYSTERY OF MOSSOO!"
By Frank Richards.

THAT'S the title of the next long complete story dealing with the world-famous schoolboys Harry Wharton & Co. As the title suggests, Monsieur Charpentier, the Greyfriars' French master, plays an important part. Mossoo is a good-natured, "harmless" type of master, much beloved by Harry Wharton & Co., and it comes as a shock to them to find him mixed up in an affair that is decidedly shady—shady on the face of things. But this mystery around Mossoo redounds to his credit when the Famous Five find the solution of it. What it is, however, I'm going to leave to Mr. Frank Richards to tell in his own inimitable fashion. Don't on any account miss this ripping story.

"THE GOLDEN PYRAMID!"

There will, of course, be another ripping long instalment of our grand new detective serial featuring Ferrus Locke and Jack Drake. There's a big surprise in it which furthers the interest the world-renowned sleuth has taken in the peculiar disappearance of Sir Merton Carr and his son. Look out for this instalment, my chums. You will enjoy it to the last word.

"SPRING-CLEANING!"

Harry Wharton & Co. of the "Herald," have chosen that subject as the centre-piece for their next Supplement. It really comes at the right time of the year. We get a glimpse of Greyfriars mixed up with spring-cleaning and all that it means, likewise that impressive school of Dicky Nugent's creation, St. Sam's. A topping Supplement this, boys, and one that must not be missed.

CROSS-WORD PUZZLE NO. 8.

There will be another just-for-amusement puzzle in next week's bumper issue of your favourite paper that will fill in an hour of your leisure time. Magnetites speak very highly of these Cross Word puzzles, and I want all those who have hitherto given them a "miss" to try their skill. It's surprising how fascinating this pastime is. You try with this week's puzzle!

COMPETITION RESULT NO. 4.

Next week's MAGNET will contain the result of Limerick Competition No. 4. Thirteen prizes are awarded, the first being the useful sum of Five Pounds. Perhaps your name will be amongst the fortunate ones, chum. Mind you get next week's MAGNET and make certain. In any case, the same number of prizes will be offered again in a new and novel competition which will start in our next issue, so there's a chance for everyone.

CARTOONS!

Several requests have reached me lately for a series of cartoons dealing with the principal characters at Greyfriars. I have passed on the idea to Mr. Chapman, the MAGNET's Tom Webster, and my chums will not have long to wait before our first cartoon makes its appearance.

A FAVOUR!

You will remember I made some mention in our New Year's issue of taking the MAGNET into every home of the British Isles. That, at the time, sounded a rash resolution. I am pleased beyond measure by the way my thousands of loyal chums have put their shoulders to the wheel. The old paper is going great guns; every week brings a fresh crowd of admirers to our banner. But there's still room for more improvement. I repeat what I said in an earlier issue: We intend to bring before the notice of EVERY boy and girl in this little island of ours the wonderful value, the clean, wholesome literature to be found in the MAGNET—the paper that has stood the test for seventeen years or more, and has never been found wanting. My chums are going to help me, of that I feel perfectly confident. To those who have already done so I offer my heartfelt thanks. It's a grand work this, and worthy of the name of Magnetites, whom I like to refer to as my chums. Keep at it, boys!

Your Editor.

"CROSS-WORDS" LIMERICK COMPETITION.

"I don't care two straws for the Head!"
Skinner cried (did he mean what he said?);
"He's too fat, and he's dozey,
And—here comes the old fogey—"

Last Line..... Closing date, March 24th.

I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final. **No. 9**

Name

Address

THE GREAT "I AM!" There are few things in this world that Horace Coker can't do—in his own estimation! Cross Word puzzles—Pooh! To the one and only Horace these puzzles are as easy as falling off a log. Keep your eyes on Horace and watch him at work!



Coker's Cross-Words!

A rollicking story describing the adventures of those popular characters Harry Wharton & Co of Greyfriars.

Told by

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Alarming!

"**C**AD!"
"Eh?"
"Pig!"
"What?"
"Hog!"

Potter and Greene, of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, stared at Horace Coker.

They were surprised and they were annoyed.

They had just walked into the study, quite friendly and cheerful, and this was how Coker of the Fifth had greeted them.

Coker of the Fifth never erred upon the side of an over-strained courtesy. He rather prided himself upon being a plain speaker, and letting a fellow know what he thought of him. And what Coker thought of a fellow was often unflattering.

Potter and Greene, indeed, never expected much from Coker of the Fifth in the way of manners.

But there was a limit.

Even Coker might be expected not to hurl epithets like those at his study-mates, as they walked cheerily into the study to tea.

Coker was sitting at the table with a pencil in his hand and scribbled sheets of paper around him. There was a wrinkle of deep concentration in his rugged brow, a far-away look in his eyes.

"Dog!"

Coker was going on. Staring straight at his surprised and annoyed study-mates across the table, he ejaculated these offensive epithets.

"Look here, Coker—" began Potter hotly.

Coker waved a large hand.

"Shut up!"

"Well, you shut up, if it comes to that!" exclaimed Greene. "Do you call that civil, Coker?"

"Pig!"

"Look here—"

"Cad!"

"Coker!"

"Mad!"

"What?"

"Rot!"
Potter and Greene began to fear for Coker's reason.

"Rat!" went on Coker.

"Coker, old man—"

"Cat!"

"What do you mean, cat?" shrieked Potter.

"Oh, bother it!" said Coker, passing his large hand across his wrinkled brow. "I think I'll give it up till after tea. It's not so jolly easy as it looks. I wonder if you fellows could help?"

"Help?" repeated Potter.

"Not likely, I suppose. It requires brains," said Coker thoughtfully. "Still, you could make suggestions. They wouldn't be likely to do much good, of course. Still, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings—"

"What are you burbling about?" yelled Greene.

"Don't yell at me, Greene. At least, you would be able to look out words in the dic. Your intelligence is equal to that." Coker rose from the table.

"After tea we'll pile in together."

"Pile in?" repeated Potter.

"Yes. You won't be of much use. But you may be a little, see? Like the lion and the mbuse over again."

"What the thump—"

Coker, as if struck by a sudden thought, sat down again, and grabbed up the pencil he had thrown on the table.

"Cur!" he ejaculated.

"Look here, Coker—"

"Cur! No, mug!" said Coker. "What about mug?"

"Are you calling me a mug?"

"Don't be an ass! Shut up a minute!"

The wrinkle returned to Coker's rugged brow, as he concentrated his powerful intellect once more. Potter and Greene stared at one another in alarm.

Of course, nobody ever expected Coker to have any sense. That would have been expecting too much of Coker of the Fifth—much too much. A fellow who played football, for instance, as Coker played it, could not be expected to have as much brains as a bunny rabbit. But even Coker ought to have

stopped short of babbling imbecility, and it really looked as if that was what he had come to now.

The incessant ejaculation of insulting epithets at his unoffending study-mates seemed to indicate that there was a screw loose somewhere.

Coker did not heed their surprise and dismay. He bent his brows as if over a difficult problem.

Suddenly he gave a shout

"Got it!"

"Oh, my hat! Got what?" gasped Greene.

"Pug!"

"P-p-p-pug?"

"Yes, pug!"

Coker fairly crowed with satisfaction. He beamed on his study-mates as if he had made a great discovery, a cause for immense elation.

"That's right," he said.

"Right, is it?" said Potter dazedly.

"Oh, yes! Pug! You see, it begins with a 'P'—"

"Eh?"

"And ends with a 'G'—"

"Oh!"

"With a 'U' in the middle!" said Coker triumphantly. "And there's three letters in it—"

"Three letters!" babbled Potter.

"So it fits in the vertical line, too."

"The—vertical line?"

"Yes, downward, you know."

"D-d-d-d-d-downward!"

"Makes 'huc'—see? Getting on, what?" asked Coker cheerily.

It did not seem to Potter and Greene that Coker was getting on. Rather it seemed to them that he was getting off—right off—fairly off his rocker; never, in their opinion, very secure.

Coker jumped up again, and Potter and Greene backed hastily towards the door.

"Where are you going?" demanded Coker. "Let's have tea now. I'll cut the bread for toast. Where's that bread-knife?"

"The—that—the—that—bread-knife?"

"Yes." Coker stared around.

"Where's that knife? Oh, here it is!" Coker caught up a large knife.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 893.

That was enough for Potter and Greene. Babbling imbecility might, or might not, be harmless. But Coker, in his present state, with a big knife in his hand, was no joke. Potter and Greene stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once, with a wild rush down the Fifth Form passage.

Coker stared blankly at the empty doorway.

"Potter!" he shouted. "Greene! What the thunder—?"
 In answer there came none. Potter and Greene were gone, and Coker of the Fifth was left standing alone, in a state of great astonishment, with the knife in his hand.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Only Cross Words!

"I SAY, you fellows—"
 "Don't!"
 "Eh? Don't what?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Say!" explained Bob Cherry. "Don't say anything! The less you say the more interesting you are, old fat man!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"
 "The speechfulness is silver, my esteemed Bunter," said Harroo Jamset Ram Singh solemnly, "but the golden silence is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were chatting by the window on the landing, when Billy Bunter, rolled up, with a very serious expression on his fat face. From one side of that landing the Remove staircase ascended to the Remove passage; on the other side the Fifth Form passage opened. The Famous Five were in a cheery humour, discussing a forthcoming fixture with St. Kit's, and they really did not want conversational contributions from William George Bunter. But the Owl of the Remove never knew when he was superfluous. Not that he would have minded had he known.

"You see, you fellows, it's a question of a stamp," he explained. "Have you got a stamp you don't want, Nugent?"

Frank Nugent shook his head.
 "Mean to say you haven't got a stamp?" exclaimed Bunter.

"Yes, I have one. But not one I don't want."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"
 "Roll away, old barrel!"

"Have you got a stamp, Bull?"

"Half a dozen," said Johnny Bull. "I'm keeping them, too! Good-bye!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"
 "About St. Kit's," said Harry Wharton. "They beat us last time. We've got to beat them next. Squiff in goal—"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I wish you wouldn't interrupt a chap, talking piffle, when a matter's serious! I must have a stamp!"

"Fished!"

"You see, I've got to post a letter," urged Bunter. "I wouldn't ask you, only I've been disappointed about a postal-order, you know—from one of my titled relations—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"It hasn't come!" said Bunter sorrowfully. "Still, it will be all right if you give me a stamp. I've done the puzzle."

"The what?"

"And I'll let you have the three-halfpence back out of the tenner."

"The tenner?" yelled Bob Cherry. "Are you expecting a postal-order for

ten pounds this time? Is it growing in the pot?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I'm expecting ten pounds for my Cross Word puzzle," explained Bunter. "It's practically a cert. It says plainly in the paper that the prize will be given to the chap sending in the best puzzle. So that settles it, doesn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "I don't think a moneylender would advance much on that security, Bunty!"

"That's only your ignorance, old chap!"

"What?"

"Ignorance. Fools never understand what a clever chap can do."

"Fools!" repeated Bob.

"That's it! You see, you're a thumping ass, if you don't mind my mentioning it," said Bunter cheerily. "That's why you can't understand that I've got more brains in my little finger than you've got in your silly head. Sheer ignorance, old fellow!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I've done the puzzle, but I want a stamp. I think very likely they wouldn't pay double on the letter if I posted it unstamp—"

"Very likely indeed, I think," grinned Johnny Bull.

"So you can give me a stamp, Bull—"

"Stamps cost money."

"That's why I want you to give me one, you ass, as I happen to be stony!" explained Bunter. "I say, Frank, give me a stamp—you're not such a mean beast as Bull."

"I am!" said Nugent, laughing.

"Worse!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Inky, old man, you're not so selfish as these rotters—"

"The selfishness of my esteemed self is even more terrific, my esteemed, fat-headed Bunter."

"I say, Bob, old chap—"

"You fat owl!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, old chap! You're not waxy, are you, just because I mentioned that you're a silly ass?" asked Bunter.

"Tain't my fault, is it? You can't help it—a chap can't help being born fat-headed. I'm not blaming you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared four members of the Co., while Robert Cherry glared at the Owl of the Remove as if he would eat him.

"Give me a stamp, Bob, old chap," urged Bunter. "I'll square out of the ten-pound prize—honest Injun!"

"You want me to give you a stamp?"

"Yes, old fellow."

"Here you are, then!"

"Thanks! I— Yarooooooop!" roared Bunter, suddenly dancing on one fat leg and clapping the other in both hands. "Oh! Ow! Yow! Yooop! You silly idiot! What are you stamping on my foot for? Yarooooooop!"

"You asked for a stamp—"

"Whoooooop!"

"Isn't that the stamp you wanted?" asked Bob.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Apparently it was not the stamp Bunter had wanted—though, really, it was the one he might have expected, considering the careful form of his request. He backed away from the Famous Five, and shook a fat fist at them.

"Beasts! Yow-ow-ow! I sha'n't stand you a feed out of the ten pounds now! Yah!"

And Bunter rolled away, doubtless to seek the required stamp elsewhere—not desiring any more stamps from Bob Cherry.

The football discussion was resumed; but it was destined to be interrupted again. There was a sudden pattering of running feet in the Fifth Form passage, and Potter and Greene came fairly flying on to the landing, crimson and breathless.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Look out!"

"Crash!"

"You silly owls!" roared Johnny Bull, as he went spinning under the impact of Potter of the Fifth.

"Oh, my hat!"

"What's the matter, you chumps?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as Greene brought up breathless against the banisters and Potter sat down with a bump.

"Oh dear!"

"Coker—" gasped Potter.

"He's mad!" panted Greene.

"Madder than usual!" asked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not a laughing matter! He's babbling in the study—fairly babbling—and he's got hold of a knife!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Potter picked himself up breathlessly, and cast an anxious glance along the Fifth Form passage. He was greatly relieved to see no sign of pursuit. Really, he would not have been surprised to see Horace Coker racing after him, brandishing the bread-knife.

"He—he hasn't followed us!" stammered Potter.

"Oh dear!" gasped Greene.

"Let's go and see him," suggested Bob Cherry.

"You jolly well take care!" exclaimed Greene. "I tell you he's jolly dangerous! If you'd seen him with that knife, and heard him babbling—calling us awful names—"

"Fearful!" said Potter. "Every name he could lay his tongue to. Us, you know—his friends! He—he called me a pug!"

"And pig, and hog, and dog!" said Greene.

"And cat, and rat—fancy!"

"My only hat!" said Harry Wharton.

"Coker must be fairly off it at last. Come on, you chaps!"

The Famous Five went along the Fifth Form passage; and Potter and Greene, rather ashamed to hold back behind fags of the Lower Fourth, followed them—ready to scud, however, at an instant's notice if Coker showed up with the bread-knife.

Harry Wharton looked in at the open door of Coker's study.

Coker undoubtedly had the bread-knife in his hand. But his occupation seemed quite harmless—he was slicing a loaf, apparently for toast. And he did not look insane. He looked an ass, perhaps—that was customary with Coker of the Fifth. But the Removites did not discern any signs of active insanity.

Coker stared at them.

"You fellows— Oh, it's you fags! What the thump are you cheeky fags butting in here for?"

"Then you're not mad?" asked Bob Cherry.

"What!" roared Coker.

"The insanity is not terrific, my esteemed Coker," inquired Harroo Jamset Ram Singh.

"You cheeky young swamps!"

"Is he—in he calm?" came Greene's nervous voice behind the Remove fellows.

"The calmfulness is great!"

"Look here, Coker, what have you been pretending to be potty for?" demanded Bob Cherry. "You've scared Potter and Greene out of their wits!"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" said Coker. "Have you seen Potter and Greene? They seem to be quite off their rockers!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"If they're not potty, I can't understand them. They bolted out of the study like lunatics," said Coker. "Beats me hollow. Just because I was telling them about my Cross Word puzzle—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Cross Word puzzle!" gasped Potter.

"Oh, there you are!" exclaimed Coker, as the two Fifth-Formers peered in. "What's the matter with you? Is it sudden insanity, or what?"

"You—you're not mad?" exclaimed Potter.

"What?"

"Well, if you're not mad, what were you burling about?" demanded Potter indignantly. "Calling fellows rats and pigs and hogs and pugs—"

"You silly owl!" roared Coker.

"They were my Cross Words!"

"Your what, you dummy?"

"Cross Words, you owl! I wanted a word of four letters."

"Four letters?"

"Yes, and it had to begin with 'P' and end with 'G,'" said Coker. "I suddenly thought of pug—"

"Pug," said Potter blankly.

"Yes, pug."

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

Potter and Greene, reassured now, came into the study. Coker, it appeared, was not insane—he had only caught the Cross Word fever. His opprobrious epithets had not been addressed to Potter and Greene. Coker had merely been reciting likely words as they occurred to his powerful brain.

"I—I see!" stuttered Potter. "I thought you were mad, of course!"

"You cheeky ass!"

"Any fellow would!" said Greene warmly. "A chap comes into the study, and you begin yelling out 'Cad!' and 'Pig!' and 'Hog!' and 'Pug!'"

"Oh, don't be a dummy, Greene! You clear off, you fags!" said Coker, with a lofty frown at the hilarious chums of the Remove. "Fags aren't wanted in this passage! Make the toast, Potter—I've sliced the loaf. I suppose you've got barely sense enough to make toast! You find the teapot, Greeney—I want to get tea over, and get on with my Cross Words. The tinner will come in very useful this week!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I've found the word I wanted, you see, and it's all plain sailing now," said Coker. "Pug's the word—four letters beginning with P and ending with G. Hog wouldn't do—it has four letters, just the same, but it begins with H."

Potter and Greene gazed at Coker, Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at him.

"How—how—how many letters in pug, did you say?" gasped Potter.

"Four, of course!"

"Oh dear!" moaned Bob Cherry. "Would you mind telling a mere fag, a Lower Fourth chap, how you spell pug, Coker?"

Coker glanced at him.

"I don't mind, though, really, Mr. Quelch ought to teach you spelling, Cherry. P-u-g-g-pug."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And—how do you spell hog?" muttered Bob.

"H-o double g."

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

Coker of the Fifth was famous for his orthography. It was popularly believed at Greyfriars that Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, often tore his hair over Coker's spelling. Coker was satisfied with it. He was satisfied with many



Potter and Greene backed away hastily as Coker plucked up the bread-knife. "Where are you going?" demanded Coker. "Let's have tea now." But Potter and Greene fled from the study. Babbling imbecility might or might not be harmless, but Coker with a bread-knife in his hand was no joke. "Potter! Greene!" shouted the great Horace. "What the thump—" (See Chapter 1.)

things that drove his Form master to the verge of a mental breakdown.

But, really, this seemed rather rich even for Coker of the Fifth. The Famous Five shrieked, and Potter and Greene—no longer alarmed—grinned.

Coker, apparently, was going in to win the ten-pound prize for a Cross Word puzzle, and he was filling up his squares with such words as Pugg and Hogg.

It seemed improbable that the tinner would ever arrive at Coker's address, on these lines.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Clear off, you cheeky fags!" roared Coker—and he caught up a fives bat and rushed towards the door.

The chums of the Remove retreated, still yelling. Horace Coker slammed the door after them, frowning.

"Cheek!" he said. "Their Form master doesn't smack those fags enough, you know. Nothing to cackle at, either—Why, you're cackling, too!" Coker stared angrily at Potter and Greene. "What are you cackling at, you silly pair of owls?"

"Oh dear!" gasped Potter. "I—I fancied that Pug was spelt with one 'G'!"

"You may have fancied it, Potter, but

it isn't so! You can't teach me anything about spelling!"

"Oh, my hat! I tell you there's only one 'G' in it, you ass!"

"Cheese it, Potter! Teach your grandmother how to suck eggs!" said Coker scornfully. "But don't try to teach me how to spell! I could spell your head off—Prout's, too, for that matter. Only to-day he groused because I put a 'K' in expect. The old ass actually wanted me to spell it with an 'X.' Ignorance, you know! Fancy that in a Form master!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Potter and Greene.

Coker glared.

"Are you going to shut up cackling, or do you want me to begin with this fives bat?" he bawled.

And Coker looked so dangerous that Potter and Greene decided to shut up cackling. But, really, it was hard. Coker at Cross Words seemed even more provocative of merriment than Coker at football or cricket—at which, hitherto, it had been supposed that Coker had reached the climax. But a fives bat was not to be argued with, and Coker's chums contrived somehow to moderate their transports, so to speak.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Mysterious Disappearance of Potter and Greene!

HARRY WHARTON smiled. It was the following day, and a half-holiday! And Coker of the Fifth Form had just come out of the House, and was looking round him with a searching eye. Wharton did not doubt that he was looking for Potter and Greene.

Having seen Coker's chums sneaking quietly away ten minutes ago, Wharton smiled, feeling rather entertained. Potter and Greene had stolen away almost on tiptoe, with the obvious intention of escaping the fascinating company of Horace Coker for that afternoon.

As a rule Potter and Greene stood Coker manfully. This very afternoon they were prepared to stand him—at tea-time; but up to tea-time they wanted a rest.

At tea-time, indeed, it would be essential to stand Coker—for Coker was standing the tea, as was frequently the case in Study No. 3 in the Fifth.

Obviously, if Coker was to stand tea, Potter and Greene would have to stand Coker, or go tea-less.

But it wanted some hours to tea-time, and Potter and Greene had gone for a walk, not particular at all as to whether they walked, so long as Horace Coker was left a good distance behind. That was the important point.

"It's jolly queer!" Coker muttered, standing on the steps of the House and looking this way and that, like Moses of old. He glanced at Wharton. "Have you seen two silly idiots come out, Wharton?"

"I've seen one," said Harry. "Oh! Which one?"

"Coker!"

"I wasn't asking for any cheek!" roared Coker. "Have you seen Potter and Greene? I want them."

"Did they know you wanted them?" grinned Wharton.

"Of course."

"Then that's probably why they've cleared."

"They couldn't have misunderstood," said Coker, in puzzled thought. "I told them plainly that I was putting in the whole afternoon at Cross Word puzzles, and that I wanted them. I told Potter I wanted him to keep at the dictionary to look out words for me, and Greene to sit with a pen to write down my flashes of inspiration as I got them—sort of amanuensis, you know. No brains required for jobs like that, so Potter and Greene could have done it all right—I explained that to them. Then they went out of the study to speak to Fitzgerald, and haven't come back. It's jolly queer."

Harry Wharton chuckled. It did not seem very queer to him that Potter and Greene did not want to pass a half-holiday in looking out words in a dictionary, and writing down Coker's flashes of alleged inspiration; it was quite likely that they could think of much more entertaining ways of passing a half-holiday.

But it seemed very queer to Coker. Having made his wishes quite plain to Potter and Greene, all that was left for those youths to do was to play up and carry out the wishes of their lord and chief.

Putting their own occupations before the wishes of Horace Coker was unheard-of cheek, if they had done it, Coker's wishes being the most important business in the whole wide universe.

But Coker could hardly believe that

Potter and Greene, knowing his wishes, had carried on regardless of them. Such conduct was really little short of Bolshevism.

So he continued to stare about, apparently in the expectation of seeing his comrades appear in the office. Wharton, who had seen them walk out of the gates in a hurried though somewhat surreptitious manner, smiled as he watched Coker.

"It's queer," repeated the great Horace. "They must have understood. I made it quite clear to the silly duffers. Yet they've gone. I've asked Fitz, and they haven't been to see him, and I can't find them in the House!"

Neither were they to be seen in the quad. Conviction forced itself into Coker's mind at last, and he frowned portentously.

"It's cheek!" he said.

"Awful!" said Wharton solemnly.

Coker glanced at him again.

"I want somebody to fag for me," he said.

"You're only a silly junior, Wharton."

"Thanks."

"But, after all, you've got sense enough to know how to look out words in a dictionary, haven't you?"

"Well, you never know," said the captain of the Remove thoughtfully. "I think if I made a tremendous exertion of my intellectual powers, Coker, I might possibly be able to do it after a fashion."

"Well, you can come and help me," said Coker.

"My hat!"

"Come on! I'll stand you a couple of jam-tarts—if you make yourself useful," said Coker kindly.

Wharton gazed at him. Such an offer might have been acceptable to a fag of the Second Form. To the captain of the Remove it was something in the nature of a deadly insult, only to be wiped out in blood. But the happy Coker, quite ignorant of this, proceeded cheerfully:

"I'm going in for this Cross Word bizney hot and strong. 'Tain't so jolly easy as some people fancy. It requires brains."

"Then what's the good of you going into it, Coker?" inquired Wharton, in surprise.

"Eb? That's why," said Coker, who was blind to sarcasm. "That's where I come in—see? Brains! I came across the paper yesterday, and glanced at it carelessly. I decided to take it up, having a unique chance of getting hold of the prize, owing to my being a brainy fellow, you know, and rather uncommonly good at spelling. A knowledge of spelling is essential, and that's where I come out strong."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I don't know whether you know anything about Cross Words, Wharton," said Coker, condescending to explain.

"It's in most of the papers now, these Cross Word competitions. You have to solve a puzzle, and make up a new one yourself; if your new one is the best they get, they give you a tenner for it—see?"

"I—I see."

"It's practically a cert for me, as they give the prize for the best puzzle they get sent in," explained Coker.

"Oh! A cert, is it?" stammered Wharton.

"Quite—I've no reason to doubt their bona fides. Well, enough time wasted! Come on, kid, and make yourself useful."

Coker started into the House, nothing doubting that the Remove fellow would follow him. Had not Coker told him that he wanted him? Was not that a

sufficient reason for any fellow to give up any other occupation he might have on hand? It was—from Coker's point of view.

Wharton's point of view, however, did not coincide with Coker's. He stood where he was, smiling after Coker.

The famous five were going out for a ramble that afternoon, as there was no match on, and Wharton was waiting for his chums to join him. Cheeky as it was, according to Coker, Wharton had no intention whatever of putting off that ramble, in order to make himself useful in Coker's study.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry came out with Hurroo Janset Ram Singh, and joined the captain of the Remove. Nugent and Johnny Bull, as it happened, had some lines to finish, and were not quite ready.

"We shall have to wait a few esteemed minutes," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The excellent and ludicrous Franky—"

"Wharton!" bawled Coker's voice.

"Hallo, old duffer!"

Coker looked out at the doorway.

"Don't answer me like that, Wharton! That isn't the way to speak to the Fifth! I told you to come."

"So you did!" assented Wharton.

"Well, come, you cheeky young ass! I'm going to stand you a couple of jam-tarts for making yourself useful!"

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

"I'm waiting!" snapped Coker.

"Wait away, old man," said the captain of the Remove. "You will have to wait a jolly long time before you can fag the Lower Fourth."

"About a century or two, Coker," grinned Bob.

"I don't want any rot!" said Coker, frowning. "I know it isn't the rule for the Fifth to fag the Lower School. But that is rot, in my opinion. Utter rot! I want a fag, Wharton, and you will do—see?"

"You cheeky ass!"

"Look here—"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, closing one eye, unseen by Coker, at the captain of the Remove. "What's this game? You want a fag in your study, Coker?"

"Yes," growled Coker.

"You ought to remember, Wharton, that Coker isn't a common-or-garden Fifth Former," said Bob Cherry chidingly. "Coker's a great man—really the most important fellow at Greyfriars, not excluding the Head! Fagging for Coker is really an honour."

Wharton laughed, and Hurroo Janset Ram Singh chuckled. As they had to wait for Nugent and Johnny Bull, they were prepared to fill in the time pulling Coker's leg.

"Right-ho!" said Harry. "Come on, you fellows, and help me fag for Coker!"

"I don't want a mob of fags in my study," said the Fifth Former.

"Oh, come!" exclaimed Bob. "Tain't fair to let Wharton have all the honour, and leave us out, Coker. Fair play all round."

"Well, if you put it like that!" said Coker, mollified. It could be said for Horace Coker, at least, that he was not a suspicious fellow.

"I do put it like that," said Bob solemnly.

Coker cast a last glance round the quad, as if expecting at the last moment to see something of Potter and Greene. But those two youths had completely disappeared.

"Come on, then," said Coker. And he walked back into the House.

This time Harry Wharton followed him, and Bob Cherry and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh followed their leader. Coker led the way to his study in the Fifth, and the three juniors dutifully followed him there. Coker's impression was that they were there for fagging. Harry Wharton's impression was that they were there for ragging. It remained to be seen which impression was the correct one.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Fagging for Coker!

COKER'S study was evidently prepared for the afternoon's business.

The table had been cleared, and on it were arranged inkstand and pens, a sheaf of foolscap, and a large sheet of cardboard marked off into squares. There was an enormous dictionary also; through which Coker's happy coadjutors were to ramble in search of words required by Coker—not really an easy task, as if he required such a word as "cat" he was quite likely to tell them to look among the K's.

Three smiling juniors followed Coker in. Pulling Coker's leg was a harmless and necessary amusement; and they felt, also, that it was their duty, as loyal members of the Greyfriars Remove, to demonstrate to Coker that the Fifth really could not fag that independent Form.

"You can sit down," said Coker.
"Thanks, my lord," said Bob Cherry meekly.

The three sat down. Coker sat down also. The Removites glanced at the square of cardboard, marked off into regular spaces, some of which were blacked out to show the beginnings and endings of words, in the regular way. Some of the spaces were filled in with words, among which they read such surprising words as "pugg" and "thort" and "sutch." But these were not surprising words to Coker—they seemed quite normal to him.

"Now, you're not to talk," said Coker.

"No."
"Or shuffle your feet, Cherry."
"Sorry!"
"Or grin, Hurree Singh."
"The grinfulness shall not be terrific, my esteemed Coker."
"Shut up!"
"The hearfulness is likewise the obeyfulness."

Coker gave his attention to his Cross Word puzzle, while the chums of the Remove sat and smiled.

Coker had, as he had said, fairly zone into the Cross Word business. His impression was that it was not so easy as it looked. Anybody could guess a Cross Word puzzle—any ass could work one out. But manufacturing a good one was quite a different matter. Any ass could have bagged the prize, had deciphering the puzzle been the one thing needful.

But the manufacture of a really good Cross Word puzzle required brains—and there were few fellows in the wide world so gifted as Coker in that respect—at least, that was how Coker looked at it. The whole thing was, perhaps, rather below the level of Coker's intellect, and perhaps rather below his dignity. Still, it was something to walk in easily and bag a prize for which a lot of people were competing—it was worth Coker's while. It would show all Greyfriars that Coker was a brainy fellow—and at present Coker could not help realising that there was wide-spread doubt on that point.

Moreover, though Coker had plenty of money, the ten-pound note would come in useful. Tenners were a kind of article that always came in useful, even when a fellow had plenty of pound notes, as Coker had. You couldn't have too much of a good thing. So Coker felt that it was worth his while to exert his powerful intellect to the extent of bagging this particular tenner.

He wrinkled his brow in deep thought over his squares; this being a sign that his intellect was in motion. Some of the squares were filled in, but many remained to fill, and all sorts and conditions of words were wanted.

"Cough!" exclaimed Coker suddenly. Bob Cherry coughed.
"Don't make a row, Cherry."
"Didn't you tell me to cough?"
"Don't be a silly ass! I need a word of four letters, beginning with K," said Coker. "Write that down, Cherry."
"Beginning with what?"
"K!" snapped Coker.
"But—but—didn't you say cough?"
"Yes. Don't they teach you anything at all in the Lower Fourth?" asked Coker sarcastically. "I suppose I'd better tell you how to spell the words, or we shall get into a tangle. K-O-F-F."
"Oh, my hat!"
"Write it down."

"Bob, Cherry dutifully wrote down "koff."
"Now, I want the synonymous words," said Coker thoughtfully. "The exact meaning of the word has to be put among the clues. See? Of course, anybody knows what a cough is. But it's best to give the exact dictionary meaning of the word. Look it out, Wharton."

"Bright!"
"Don't be a young ass. You've opened the die, at the C's," said Coker crossly. "Turn on to the K's."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Don't cackle in this study. You're not in the Remove passage now; behave yourselves, if you know how."
"Isn't he nice?" said Bob Cherry. "He makes it so pleasant for a fellow to help him, doesn't he? So polite and grateful."

"Don't talk, Cherry, especially if you can't talk sense."
"My esteemed Coker—"

"Shut up!"
Coker wrinkled his mighty brow again.

"Excellent!" he exclaimed, after another mental effort. "Word of eight letters beginning with 'E.' Write it down, Cherry."

"Eight!" murmured Bob.
"Yes—E-X-E-L-L-E-N-T."



"You want me to give you a stamp?" asked Bob Cherry. "Yes, old fellow," said Billy Bunter. "Here you are, then." "Thanks—Yarooop!" roared Bunter, suddenly dancing on one foot and clapping the other in both hands. "Yow! Yooop! You silly idiot, what are you stamping on my foot for?" "You asked for a stamp," explained Bob, cheerily. "Ha, ha, ha!"
(See Chapter 2.)

"Oh, my hat!"

"Hold your tongue, Cherry! For goodness' sake don't keep on chattering as you do in your fag studies. Look out!" roared Coker. "You're splashing the ink over my squares—you're splashing it over my notes—groooh—you're splashing it over me—groooh!"

Horatio Coker leaped to his feet. Whether by accident or not, Bob Cherry had made a terrific splash with the ink. Really, there seemed more on Coker and his squares than was left in the inkpot.

"You clumsy young ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did you do that on purpose?" raved Coker, dabbing ink from his face.

"Did I?" murmured Bob. "I wouldn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker came round the table with a rush. Three juniors leaped up to meet him, and a chair fell in Coker's way; and Coker fell over the chair. As he sprawled, and roared, three juniors jumped at him, and Coker found himself pinned to his own carpet.

He struggled and roared. A heavy knoc, planted in the small of his back, pinned him down. And two pairs of hands grasped him. "Leggo!" roared Coker.

"Dear man, you're safer when you're held," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Gerroff!"

"Did you really think you could fag the Remove?" chuckled Bob. "Did you really, old bean? Oughtn't we to un-deceive Coker on that point, you chaps?" "We ought!" grinned Wharton. "The oughtfulness is terrific!"

"Will you gerroff?" shrieked Coker, struggling wildly. "I'll thrash you all round! I'll kick you out, Cherry, and you, you confounded nigger, and I'll make Wharton fag all the afternoon, and lick him first as a warning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll smash you! I'll pulverise you! I—I—I'll—grooooooh!"

Coker broke off, spluttering, as the inkpot was only half-full. But there was enough in it to drench Coker's head. It ran down his neck, and over his extensive ears, and formed a pool on the carpet, in which his rugged face was rubbed. Wild yells and splutterings broke from Horatio Coker. Undoubtedly it looked as if there would be more ragging than fagging in Coker's study that afternoon.

"Now hand over his giddy cross words," said Bob.

"Groooh—ow—you young villains—oooooh!"

Crumpled cardboard was jammed down Coker's back. He made a terrific effort to rise, and the three juniors rocked and swayed. But they were too many for Coker, and down he went again, and his nose ground into the ink-pool on the carpet.

"M-am—" spluttered Coker. "Gug-gug-gug-gug! Ooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you sorry you tried to fag the Remove, Coker?"

"Goooh! ooooh! I'll smash you! Yoooooowoop!"

"Tap his nose on the floor!"

"Bang!"

"Yaroooooh!"

"Are you sorry, Coker?"

"Ow! Wow! Yow! Groooooh!"

"Do you apologise to the Remove?"

"Grooooooh!"

"Bang!"

"Ow! Wow! Yes!" howled Coker.

"Leave off! Leggo! Yaroooooh! Yes! Anything you like! Chuck it! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Your apology is accepted, old scout," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Come on, you fellows! Nugent and Johnny will be ready by this time. Good-bye, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three Removites jumped up and walked cheerily out of the study. Coker sat up on the carpet. His face was starting to look at, and he sat and gasped and gasped as if he never would leave off gasping. He had to get his second wind before he could start in pursuit of the merry Removites, and by that time Harry Wharton & Co. were outside the school gates and walking cheerily down the lane to Friaroad.

Coker gasped his way to a bath-room for some necessary repairs. For the time, Cross Word puzzles had to be abandoned; though while he cleaned off the ink and towelled his head, Coker used plenty of words, and they were all very cross—very cross indeed.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Not Bunter's Lucky Day!

"PETER!"

"No!"

"I want—"

"Rats!"

Billy Bunter blinked at his study-mate, Peter Todd, with a great deal of dignity. It was quite a lofty blink.

"I'm not asking you to lend me anything, Toddy."

"What?"

Peter Todd was naturally surprised. When William George Bunter spoke to a fellow it was quite natural for that fellow to assume that William George wanted to borrow something.

"Nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "I simply want a little of the ten pounds you owe me."

"Wha-a-?"

Peter undoubtedly was surprised now. He had come up to the study for a book to take out with him for a walk that half-holiday, and Bunter's conversation would not have held him long. But now he stopped and turned back and stared at the fat junior in the arm-chair.

"Ten pounds?" he repeated.

"Yes."

"That I owe you?" roared Toddy.

"Yes—practically."

"Oh," said Peter, "only practically!"

He stared at the Owl of the Remove. It was a surprise to learn that he owed Bunter ten pounds, even if it was only "practically."

"Yes," said Bunter. "Last night, Toddy, I asked you for a stamp to post my Cross Word solution."

"Well, ass?"

"You refused."

"I'll refuse again to-day, if you like," answered Peter. "I'm not a post-office runner for gratis, and for nothing." "Well, your beastly selfishness has done me out of ten pounds," said Bunter. "The prize was a cert. It was coming to me. On that point I hadn't the faintest doubt. Just to save three-halfpence you did me out of an absolutely certain ten-pound prize."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," grunted Bunter crossly. "I could have done with that ten pounds. Now it's too late. Of course, I can try again next week. But as the matter stands you've done me out of ten pounds—practically you owe me ten pounds. I'm not asking any favours of you now, Toddy. I know you're mean. All I want is something off that ten pounds."

And Bunter blinked severely at Toddy,

evidently having worked it out in his fat mind, to his own fat-satisfaction; that Toddy did owe him ten pounds; at least, practically.

Peter Todd regarded him thoughtfully. "How much do you want off it?" he asked.

"Five bob would do," said Bunter, brightening up. Really, he had not expected Peter to acknowledge his claim.

"That enough?" asked Peter.

"Well, of course, ten bob would be better," said Bunter still more brightly. "I say, Peter, you're quite decent, you know—'not anything like such a rotter as I've always thought you. Honest Injun."

"Thanks! But is ten bob enough?" asked Peter dubiously. "Wouldn't you rather make it a pound?"

Bunter sat up joyfully.

"Peter, old man, you're a real white man—you are, really. I say, I'll let you have a loan out of my Cross Word prize next week. That idiot, Coker of the Fifth, is going in for Cross Words. He, he, he! As if that ass could handle it! But in my case it's a cert. It's only a question of a penny to buy the paper and three-halfpence to post the paper. You stand me that trifling sum next week, Peter, and I'll lend you something out of the prize—something handsome. Where's that pound?"

"You really want a pound?" asked Peter.

"Certainly!"

"Here you are, then!"

Peter Todd picked up a cushion, rather to Bunter's surprise. He did not see what a cushion had to do with it.

But he very soon saw.

Peter whirled up the cushion and pounded the Owl of the Remove with it as if he were pounding mortar.

"Yarooooh!"

Billy Bunter roared, and rolled out of the armchair with a bump.

"Yow-ow-ow! Keep off, you beast!"

"Wharrer you up to?"

"Giving you a pound—with this cushion," explained Peter. "It's the only kind of pound I can hand out at present, but you can have as many as you like. Say when!"

Up went the cushion again.

"Yooop! Keep off!" shrieked Bunter. He rolled under the table to escape the swipe of the cushion. "Beast! Yab! I'll lick you! Gerraway!"

"Sure you don't want another pound?"

"Ow! No! Ow!"

"You can have the ten pounds all at once if you like."

"Beast! Ow! Gerraway!"

Peter Todd chuckled, tossed the cushion into the armchair, and walked out of Study No. 7. Not till he was gone did the Owl of the Remove crawl out from under the table, crimson and breathless and in great wrath.

"Oh, the awful rotter!" gasped Bunter. "Fancy pitching into a fellow because a fellow asked a fellow to settle up a just debt! Practically bilking! He's unscrupulous! I—I sha'n't ask him for the money again. Ow! I shall treat him with disdain. Wow! I wonder if that other beast, Cherry, would hand out something on account?"

Billy Bunter, having received a little from the "pounding" he had received, rolled out of Study No. 7 and rolled along to No. 13, the study that belonged to Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, Hurree Singh, and little Wun Lung. Three of the owners were out, but the little Chinese was curled up in a chair, blinking at the fire with his almond eyes. He blinked round at Bunter.

"Where's Cherry?" asked the Owl of the Remove.

"Gonce out."

"Blow him! I say, kid"—Bunter came into the study—"Cherry owes me ten pounds."

"Whattoo whoopee!"
"Don't you be cheeky, you little, skinny heathen!" said Bunter warningly. "Look here! Cherry owes me ten pounds, and I want something off it. What about lending me ten bob, and I'll tell Cherry to let you have it off what he owes me?"

Wun Lung grinned.
"No savvy!"
"Ten bob—ten shillings, you know," said Bunter.

"No savvy!"
"You see I'm rather pressed for cash," said Bunter. "That beast Toddy is tinging out of the study, and so is Dutton, and, you'd hardly believe it, but they don't care whether I get any tea or not. It's really too thick of Cherry to clear off for the afternoon, owing me money. Make it five bob, kid."

"No savvy."
"You savvy well enough when you like!" growled Bunter. "Look here, you beastly little heathen, you lend me half-a-crown."

"No savvy."
"I'll jolly well—"
Billy Bunter had been pounded by Peter Todd. He did not see any reason why he should not pass it on, to Wun Lung. It would be a solace, at all events, for his failure to collect the money due to him. So he advanced upon the little heathen with a watlike blink through his big spectacles.

Wun Lung grinned sleepily, and picked up the poker out of the fender. Bunter came to a sudden halt.

"Put that poker down!" he roared.
"No savvy."
"I'll jolly well— Yargoop!" Bunter spluttered, as the end of the poker lunged upon his well-filled waistcoat.
"Ow! You wretched heathen! Wow! I wouldn't soil my hands on you, you beastly Chinese savage! Ow!"

And William George Bunter rolled hurriedly out of the study, leaving Wun Lung chuckling.

Bunter grunted discontentedly as he rolled down the Remove passage. It was not nearly tea-time yet, but Bunter was ready for a tea or two to go on with. With fellows owing him money on all sides, it was rather annoying to have collected only a cushion and a poker. He caught sight of Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing going towards the stairs, and hurried after them.

"I say, Smythy—"
The Bounder looked round.
"Hold on a minute, Smythy! I say, you know you can depend on Wharton to settle up a debt, don't you?"

"Eh? Yes."
"Well, Wharton owes me ten pounds—"

"What?"
"Practically. Look here! Will you lend me ten bob, and I'll explain to Wharton, and he can settle up with you?"

"How on earth does Wharton owe you ten pounds?" asked Redwing, with a stare at the Owl of the Remove.

"He refused to lend me a stamp last night, to bag an absolutely certain tinner for a cross-word puzzle."

"You silly ass!"
"Oh, really, Redwing—"
"Well," said Smythy, "Wharton isn't exactly a pal of mine; but in the circumstances, Bunter, I don't mind giving you what he ought to give to you."

"Oh, good! Hand it out!" exclaimed Bunter eagerly.
"Certainly!"



"You really want a pound, Bunter?" asked Peter Todd. "Certainly," said the Owl. "Here you are, then!" Peter picked up the cushion and pounded the Owl of the Remove with it as if he were pounding mortar. "Yaroooooh!" Billy Bunter roared and rolled out of the armchair with a bump. (See Chapter 5.)

The Bounder caught Bunter by the collar.
Crack!

There was quite a loud report as Bunter's bullet head smote the wall of the Remove passage. The yell from Bunter was still louder.

"Whooooooop!"
"Have some more?" asked Smythy genially. "That's what Wharton ought to give you—"
"His, ha, ha!" roared Redwing.

"But as he isn't here, I'll pay up, Have some more!"
"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Leggo!" howled Bunter.

"Hand enough?"
"Wou-ow-ow! Yes! Ow!"
Vernon-Smith walked away, chuckling, with his clum. Billy Bunter rubbed his head and glared at the Bounder.

It did not seem to be his lucky afternoon. There were fellows who—practically—owed him ten pounds, and this was all he was able to collect on account! Bunter drifted dismally down the Remove staircase to the next landing, and paused at the Fifth Form passage. He remembered that Coker of the Fifth was among the innumerable Greyfriars fellows whom he had asked for a stamp the previous day. On his reasoning, therefore, Coker owed him ten pounds—Coker having refused the stamp, and even emphasised his refusal with a vigorous cuff.

And Bunter remembered that he had seen Coker doing some rather extensive shopping in the school shop early that afternoon. It was probable that Coker's

study would be well worth a visit from a fellow who had only eaten enough for four at dinner, and had had nothing since but a cake and a few tarts and a bag of nuts and some toffee. Bunter rolled along to Coker's study—in the hope that Coker was not there. He felt that, in the circumstances, he would be fully justified in raiding Horace Coker's tuck.

The study door was open, and the room was empty. Coker of the Fifth was still in the bathroom, cleaning ink from his hair and his ears and his neck. Bunter rolled into the study.

He glanced at the table, and grinned. Coker's Cross Words lay there, in full view. There was his cardboard marked in squares; there was his list of "clues." Bunter blinked at the papers curiously. Coker, being his rival for ten-pound prizes, Bunter was rather interested in his cross-word proceedings. The list of clues was unfinished, but so far as it went it was entertaining.

AKROSS.

1. A kind of dog.
4. A trubble in the chest.
7. A serial.
9. A mettle.
10. To be in detl.
12. A noyse.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bunter. "What an ass! He can't spell for toffee! Fancy spelling nose N-O-Y-S-E—when any fag could have told him that it's spelt N-O-I-Z-E. And metal, too. He

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doesn't know that metal is spelt M-E-T-T-A-L. He, he, he!"

The grinning Owl of the Remove looked over the squares. From the words written there, he learned that No. 1, a "kind of dogg," was a "Pugg." No. 3, a "trouble" in the chest, was a "koff." No. 7, a "serial," possibly meant cereal, being, "out." No. 9, a "mettle," was "ion."

"Fancy a Fifth Form chap not knowing that iron is spelt I-Y-O-N!" murmured Bunter.

No. 12, a "noyse," was "sownd." But with this Bunter was in agreement with Coker; he always spelt sound "sownd" himself.

There was a footstep in the doorway. Coker of the Fifth, having finished his long and laborious ablutions, had returned to his study newly swept and garnished, so to speak, to resume his Cross Word puzzle. And he started at the sight of Bunter of the Remove standing at his table, reading over what he had written.

With a jump, Coker came in. His powerful grasp closed on Billy Bunter's collar.

"Caught!" roared Coker.

Billy Bunter spun round in dismay.

"I—I say——" he stammered.

"Bagging my puzzle, by Jove!"

"I——"

Shako, shake, shake!

"Ow! Oh! Leggo! Wharrer you up to? Ow!"

"You young rascal!"

"Wow!"

"I'll jolly well give you six!" roared Coker, in indignant wrath. "Trying to bag a fellow's puzzle! Pah!"

Bunter jerked himself away, gasping. Coker stood between him and the door, glaring with wrath.

"This is the limit, even for a Remove fag!" exclaimed Coker. "Haven't you any sense of honour?"

"What?"

"Suppose you got the ten-pound prize by bagging my puzzle!" said Coker scornfully. "I should think even you would feel pretty mean."

Bunter blinked at him, slow to comprehend. He had come to Coker's study in search of a sock. To do him justice, he certainly had had no idea of profiting by Coker's intellectual labours in the cross-word line. It was quite a minute before Coker's meaning dawned on him.

"Why, you—you—you silly ass!" howled Bunter. "Do you think I was after your silly puzzle?"

"It's pretty clear, I think," said Coker contemptuously. "I know you are going in for Cross Words. You asked me yesterday for a stamp to send in your silly fag stuff. Now I find you mugging up my puzzle——"

"You silly clump!" hooted Bunter. "Your silly puzzle's no good! You haven't even spelt the words right!"

"Don't give me any cheek!" said Coker warningly. "If you didn't come here after my puzzle, what did you come for?"

Bunter paused.

It was quite useless to tell Coker that he felt justified in raiding his study cupboard. Coker would never have seen the justification.

"The—the fact is——" he stammered. "Oh, I know what the fact is," said Coker scornfully. "You want to butt in for the ten-pound prize, and you want to bag my puzzle so to do it with. I know! And I'm jolly well going to give you a lesson."

Coker stared round the study, and caught up a cricket stump.

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The Owl of the Remove made a wild rush for the door.

But Coker's grasp closed on him again.

"No, you don't!" said Horace Coker grimly. "You've got to have a lesson, Bunter. Not that I think you could finish the puzzle as I've begun it—you haven't the brains. It's no use to you till finished. But you jolly well meant to bag it, and you've got to learn to be honourable, see?"

"I—I never——"

"Bend over that chair!" said Coker magisterially.

Bunter glared at him in wrathful amazement.

"Do you think you're a prefect?" he bawled.

"I think I'm going to lick you," said Coker coolly. "My idea is that the Head ought to appoint prefects from the Fifth Form instead of the Sixth. Dr. Locke doesn't seem to see it—he's a bit of an old ass. But at present, Bunter, you can consider me a prefect, see? Bend over!"

"Sha'n't!" yelled Bunter. Even the worm will turn; and even Bunter would not "bend over" at the order of a Fifth Form fellow.

"You hear me, Bunter?"

"Yah!"

Coker grinned, and with an exertion of his powerful arm, bent Bunter over a chair.

Then the cricket stump rose and fell.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Whoop! Help! Fire! Murder!"

roared Bunter.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"There!" said Coker. "That's six!

Now you can go!"

"Ow! ow! ow!"

Bunter tottered to the door. The tuck in Coker's cupboard was not a practical proposition now, with Horace in the study. All he had bagged in Coker's study was "six" from a cricket stump, and the suspicion that he had come there with felonious intentions. Frequently there were painful episodes in Billy Bunter's career as a grub-hunter; but this afternoon the episodes seemed more frequent and painful than ever.

"Cut!" said Coker, pointing to the passage with the stump.

"Ow! You cheeky rotter——"

"Do you want another six?" roared Coker.

Bunter jumped out of the study. Coker, of the Fifth, slammed the door after him, and sat down to Cross Words. And the Owl of the Remove drifted dismally out into the quadrangle, and rolled away to Mrs. Mimble's little shop behind the elms—to tell that good dame once more the oft-told story of a postal-order that was expected, and which was certain to arrive by the next post—and to tell it in vain! Certainly, it was not Billy Bunter's lucky afternoon.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Soft Sawder!

POTTER and Greene came in at tea-time, and paused outside the door of Study No. 3 in the Fifth.

Inside the study they could hear Coker.

He was murmuring to himself, and they caught the murmured words: "Abate! that's all right! Let's see—A-B-A-I-T—abate! That fits in all right! And sword—sword will do for No. 38. And across—S-E-O-R-D—sword! Good!"

"Still at it!" murmured Potter.

"Still!" said Greene.

"It's rather wonderful, isn't it?" said Potter.

"How did they ever come to

shove Coker into the Fifth, when he spells like that?"

Greene shook his head. "Bless me!" he said. "I suppose they couldn't keep him in the Shell for ever! But how did he ever get even into the Shell?"

"I've heard that his Aunt Judith came to see the Head about it," remarked Potter. "Some of the fellows say that she threatened him with her umbrella, and made him give Horace a move up."

"Shouldn't wonder" assented Greene. "That would account for it! After all, if they'd waited till he learned something, they'd have had to leave him in the Third Form till he grew a beard."

Potter chuckled.

"I daresay he will be rather waxy at our dining-out," said Greene.

"Not much doubt about that."

"What about giving him a miss, and teasing in Hall?"

"Tea's nearly over—only wash left," said Potter, "and I believe Coker was laying in something special, too."

"Well, after all, he ought to stand tea, if we stand him. It's not so jolly easy to stand Coker in our study."

"Far from it!" agreed Potter. "Anyhow, let's soothe the poor old chap—let him talk Cross Words for a bit! After all, it's no worse than his talking football or cricket! He's always talking about something or other that he doesn't understand."

And the two Fifth-Formers entered the study.

As a matter of fact, they were feeling rather uneasy.

It was fairly certain that Coker of the Fifth would regard their departure that afternoon as a desertion.

It was true that they had felt that they couldn't—they simply couldn't—stand Coker and his Cross Words for a whole afternoon. But it was no use explaining that to Coker; it would not improve matters; rather, it was likely to make matters worse.

Coker in a good humour was a tolerable Coker. It was true that he talked a great deal, and always out of his hat. But the generous remittances he received from his fond Aunt Judith compensated for a great deal. Coker's study was like a land flowing with milk and honey—and Coker was a generous fellow, too—what he had he shared with his study-mates, without ever even thinking that they might as well "stand their whack" sometimes.

Such trifling considerations never entered Coker's mind at all, which was a great comfort to Potter and Greene. Undoubtedly, Coker had his value in many ways. So Potter and Greene, though often on the point of lynching him, felt that, taking one consideration with another, it was up to them to stand Coker.

The problem now was to get Coker into a good humour after their base desertion of the afternoon. That was necessary, even at the cost of sitting down after tea to Cross Words with him.

So Potter and Greene smiled affably at Coker as they came in, prepared to turn on their very pleasantest manners.

Coker looked up from Cross Words.

He did not speak.

He eyed Potter and Greene, down and up, then up and down, with a cold, grim expression. Then he dropped his eyes to his work again.

The two Fifth-Formers exchanged uncomfortable glances.

Horace Coker was "raty"—there was no mistake about that. He was not infrequently raty, but generally he was rather loud and emphatic about it. When it took this form, it was more serious.

"Hallo, Coker, old man," said Potter, with artificial geniality. "Getting on all right with the Cross Words, what?"

"Going strong?" asked Greene.

Coker looked up again.

"Would you mind not interrupting me?" he asked, with grim politeness. "I happen to be rather busy."

"Isn't it about tea-time, old chap?"

"I've had my tea."

"Oh!"

Coker resumed Cross Words. Potter strolled carelessly across to the study cupboard, and glanced in. There was quite a store of excellent things, which Coker evidently had laid in for a tea of unusual festivity. Potter was hungry; several hours in the open air had given a keen edge to his appetite. To leave those excellent things in the study cupboard, and go down to Hall to share in the fag-end of tea there, seemed impossible to George Potter. Cross Words were better than that.

Greene, following his glance, looked positively voracious. Greene was hungry, too, and the sight of the good things made his mouth water.

"You—you've had your tea, old fellow?" asked Potter.

"Yes."

"You've tead' rather early: we'd have come in sooner if we'd known—"

"I tea'd in Hall," said Coker coldly.

"It saved time. I'd no time to waste, busy as I am."

Potter and Greene wondered whether Coker was quite sane—not for the first time. A fellow who had the fat of the land in his study, and yet bolted a hurried tea in the Hall to save time, was really a phenomenon. Potter and Greene could have understood it if he had been in a hurry to get off to a football match or anything like that. But to do Cross Words—

"Well, we'll have some tea, if you don't mind," said Potter.

"I don't mind at all. Shut the door after you!"

"Hem!"

"Will you be quite willing, I'm thinking?"

"Hem!"

Coker stared up.

"Have you got a cold, Potter?"

"N-n-no."

"Then what do you keep on barking for?"

"Hem!"

"There you go again! I can't work in this study if this is going on," said Coker. "You say you want tea? Well, go and get it, and leave a chap in peace."

"Look here! We're going to tea in the study," said Greene warmly.

Coker seemed to consider that. Coker was a high-handed fellow, but he had a sense of justice. He acknowledged that Potter and Greene had a right to "tea" in their own study. So, after taking a minute or so to consider the matter, he nodded.

"Very well! Tea here, if you like! If you talk too much, I shall buzz the milkpot at you, that's all! Leave me half the table!"

This was quite fair and reasonable—remarkably reasonable for Horaco Coker of the Fifth.

But it was not of much use to Potter and Greene.

Teaing in the study was a right; but it was not a possibility, unless Coker stood the tea. Potter and Greene had found other roads for their cash, which, in any case, was not ample.

And the study cupboard was almost crammed. Obviously, it had been Coker's intention to stand one of his royal spreads. Now he had forgotten that intention—incensed by the desertion

of his study-mates. Probably Coker, who never was mean in thought or deed, would not have noticed it if his study-mates had helped themselves to his supplies, without the formality of an invitation. But there was a limit.

Potter and Greene had sometimes wondered whether ill-natured, carping fellows would consider that they rather sponged on Coker. So long as Coker was friendly and free-handed, their opinion was that it was all right. But with Coker in a morose and unfriendly mood, they really could not help themselves unasked to his good things. It was too thick. Potter and Greene were not specially sensitive on such points, but they felt it really would be too thick.

Coker had to be brought round. But he was in a bitter offended mood, and the task was difficult. But his study-mates did not despair. Often and often they had pulled Coker's leg. And it was in their favour that Coker really was a fellow born to have his leg pulled.

Coker, grimly unheeding, worked away at his Cross Words. He was finding the task rather more difficult than he had anticipated. Even with the ordinary rules of orthography relaxed in his favour, it was not easy, he found, to fit in the words. He was rather perplexed now to find a word of three letters ending in "W," a vertical word which was to fit into the middle of the horizontal word "truths"—the "W" in the vertical word coinciding with the "W" in "trewths," which was Coker's way of spelling truths.

"Gnaw!" exclaimed Coker suddenly.

"Eh?"

"Gnaw!"

"Just what I want to do!" murmured Potter, with feeling.

"Word of three letters, ending with 'W,'" said Coker brightly. "Just what I want!"

And he filled in three of his vertical squares with the remarkable word "naw."

At any other time Potter and Greene would have chortled. But they were very, very careful now to avoid chortling. Besides, they were too hungry to see the humorous side of even Cross Words by Coker. They felt that admiration was their cue.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Potter.

"Marvellous!" ejaculated Greene.

Had Coker been a Sherlock Holmes and Potter and Greene a couple of Dr. Watsons, they could not have played their parts better.

Coker relaxed considerably.

"Well, it's not exactly wonderful," he said. "I think of these things! Cross Words are harder than a fellow might suppose. Of course, it's only a question of intellect and a good knowledge of spelling. That's where I come in."

"Oh, my hat! I mean—quite!" gasped Potter.

"Exactly," said Greene.

"Don't interrupt me again!" said Coker, bending over his work. He was now in need of a word ending with "K" to fit in with the "K" in accord, which, according to Coker, was, spelt "akord." "Ink" did not fit in with another word, "others," in a vertical line. To fit in with "others," the word had to have "R" for a middle letter.

"Something RK," said Coker thoughtfully. "And it ought to begin with



"Put that poker down!" roared Bunter. "No savvy," grinned Wun Lung. "I'll jolly well—yaroooop!" Bunter spluttered as the end of the poker lunged upon his well filled waistcoat. "Ow, you wretched heathen! Ow! I wouldn't soil my hands on you, you beastly Chinese savage." (See Chapter 5.)

'E.' It's a bit irksome—my hat! There it is! 'Irk!' And Coker gleefully wrote down "erk."

"I suppose a fellow couldn't help you with that, Coker?" said Greene despairingly.

Coker looked up. "Chuck it!" he said. "I'd fixed it for you chaps to help me this afternoon. You gave me the go-by. I'm fed-up with you!"

"Well, you see—" said Greene feebly.

"I see," assented Coker. "You don't like brain-work—naturally enough when you've precious little brains! You don't like playing second fiddle to a fellow with an intellect. I dislike fellows who feel a paltry jealousy of their intellectual superiors!"

"But—" Coker waved a large hand.

"That's enough! You fellows deserted me, and I fagged a Remove kid to look out words in the dic, and a gang of them had the cheek to rag me—in my own study, too! And while I was cleaning off the ink—"

"Ink! My hat!" Potter nearly chortled this time, but, fortunately, he restrained himself.

"Yes, while I was cleaning off the ink, that fat villain Bunter came in here to pinch my puzzle. I jolly well lammed him; but he might have bagged my puzzle, and consequently the prize, too. All the fault of you chaps if it had happened. I intended to thrash you

"Eh?"

"Knock your heads together, at least," said Coker. "But I've decided to chuck you instead. I'm done with you. Now shut up!"

Potter and Greene gazed at him. Evidently, Coker supposed that it rested only with him to decide whether he knocked together the heads of Potter and Greene or not. It seemed to Potter and Greene that they would have had something to say about it.

"Now a word of three letters, ending with RE," murmured Coker. "Air, of course—that's simple!" And he wrote down "are."

"Coker, old man," said Potter, after a private wink to Greene, "give a chap a chance. We were wrong."

"We were," said Greene.

"We were thoughtless," said Potter.

"Very thoughtless!" echoed Greene.

"Now I come to think of it, I don't really know how we could have been so thoughtless."

"We can only say we're sorry!" went on Potter, in a very frank way. "You are not the fellow to keep up grudge, Coker! Now, old man, let us help you with those Cross Words."

"When a fellow says he's sorry for having acted rather thoughtlessly, Coker—" murmured Greene.

Coker grew genial.

He was a placable fellow, and it was easy to pull his leg. If Potter and Greene were sorry, and owned up in this frank and handsome way, Coker was prepared to be propitiated.

"Well, if you put it like that—" he said.

"We do, old chap," said Potter, with one eye on the study cupboard. "Let's forget all about it, and let us help you—in our humble way—with those dashed—I mean, with those Cross Words."

"In our humble way, of course," echoed the faithful Greene. "No good us trying to play up to your level, Coker, is it?"

"Not much!" smiled Coker tolerantly. "Eh! Exactly. One can look out words in a dic," suggested Potter.

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"And one of us can write down your—your flashes of inspiration," said Greene. "We simply want to help."

"In our humble way," emphasised Potter. From of old he knew that it could not be laid on too thick for Horace Coker.

"Well, it's a go," said Coker cordially. "You acted badly, but being a pair of silly asses, I acknowledge that very likely you knew no better. I've always made it a point to be patient with you chaps. I think a clever chap should, you know. We're told to suffer fools gladly."

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

"You can help, if you like," said Coker. "I want to get the thing finished this evening, and catch the post with it. In your humble way, you can be of some use; not in the thinking line, of course, or as far as the spelling goes—you fellows can't spell for toffee. But you can save me some of the drudgery of the job, and that's about your main, intellectually. Sit down at the table."

"By the way," said Potter, as if struck by a sudden, bright idea, "what about having tea first?"

"I've had tea."

"Yes, but it would buck you up, I think, to have a really decent spread, and after that you'd work like a giant refreshed with wine, you know."

Coker shook his head.

"Nothing of the kind. I've had a snack in Hall, and that will last me till I'm finished. We'll have supper when it's done."

"Well, you see—"

"Look here, do you want to help, or not?" asked Coker testily. "If so, sit down and pile in; if not, shut up! Shut up in either case!"

Potter and Greene exchanged eloquent glances. They were hungry, and tea in Hall was over now. But there was a gorgeous supper in prospect, and that was something, if only Coker could somehow be shoved on through his Cross Word puzzle at considerable speed. They suppressed their feelings and sat down to help the great man.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Going Through It!

HORACE COKER, deep in intellectual effort, did not observe the expressions on the faces of his assistants. He had forgiven them, and that in itself should have been enough to make them happy and contented. If they weren't happy and contented, Coker had no time or inclination to notice such a trifling circumstance.

Potter and Greene had the idea of hurrying through that Cross Word puzzle. Coker's ideas were very different. In his opinion, if a thing was worth doing, it was worth doing well. He was going to do it well, if it kept him till bed-time. It was the last day for posting, but so long as he finished in time to cut across to the school letter-box before dawn, Coker would be satisfied. Supper was a very minor consideration. Coker would have missed half a dozen suppers rather than have missed the post with his masterpiece. Potter and Greene would willingly have seen all Cross Word puzzles at the bottom of the deep sea rather than have missed one supper. They tried to press on these

intellectual labours—to speed up Coker's mighty brain. But Coker was not to be speeded up.

"Now, for No. 23 across, I want a word of three letters," he said, thoughtfully. "It must end with 'R' to fit into the word 'short.' It must have 'E' in the middle, to fit into 'wethers.'"

"What about 'her'?" asked Greene.

"Then I shall want a downward word of five letters, beginning with an 'H,'" said Coker, snaking his head. "'H' is better, and that gives us 'purr.'" Write that down, Greeney—"purr"—and put in the clues, 'Sound made by a cat.'"

"Right-ho!" sighed Greene.

"For goodness' sake, Greene, have a little sense. You've spelt it P-U-R-R," exclaimed Coker crossly.

"How the thump did you want me to spell it?"

"P-E-R, of course!"

"But that isn't 'purr.'"

"Don't argue with me about spelling, Greene; you only show your ignorance of the subject. Spell the words as I tell you," said Coker. "Mind, I'm not blaming you for being ignorant of even simple words—some fellows can spell, and some can't. You're one of those that can't, and you cannot help it, of course. But I must have my words spelt right, or the whole thing will be thrown into confusion—see?"

"I—I—I see!" gasped Greene.

And he obediently wrote down "Per; a sound made by a cat."

"Now, 26 across is 'art,'"

said Coker thoughtfully. "That gives me 'P' for the beginning of 23 down. If it ends with 'S,' I can make 'slot' on the bottom line. Write down 'Pears, a fruit.'"

"But 'Pears, a fruit,' don't begin with 'PA,'" said the hapless Greene.

"I've told you not to argue. Write down P-A-I-R-S!"

"Oh dear!"

"And don't grunt."

"Look here, Coker—"

"Shut up!"

"Of all the—"

"I can't think while you're burbling, Greeney. Blessed if I ever saw such a fellow for wagging his chin. Can't you shut up?"

Greene shut up.

The hour of preparation grew near. But prep in Coker's study was disregarded that evening. Potter made a feeble allusion to it, and received a deadly and indignant glare from Coker.

"Prep! Did you say prep, Potter?"

"Yes!"

"Are you suggesting prep as a word for my puzzle?" asked Coker. "If so, it's no good, and I don't want useless suggestions from you, Potter. They simply worry me."

"I mean, we've got to do our preparation, haven't we?" demanded Potter.

"I don't want a row with Prouty in the morning."

"I'm afraid I can't consider Mr. Prout, when I'm really busy like this. Never mind prep. We've chanced it before, and we can chance it again. Dry up!"

"Look here, Coker—"

"Shut up!"

Cross Words were the order of the day. Prep was dropped from consideration. Indeed, the thoughts of Potter and Greene ran rather on supper than on prep. They were almost ferociously hungry by this time, and Coker's Cross Words seemed as far almost as ever from an end. Really, it looked as if bed-time might come round before he was finished, and, in that case, there would be no supper—after no tea! Potter and Greene were beginning to feel like Huns.

"Now for 24 across!" murmured Coker.

ANSWERS
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Potter gave a groan.
"What are you making that row for, Potter?"

"Oh, nothing!"
"Dry up, for goodness' sake. Now, for 24 across, I want a word of three letters, ending with 'A.'"

"Tea!" mumbled Greene.
"Tea won't do, as it's got to begin with 'L.' Lemme see, it's got to have 'E' in the middle, too. L-E-A. Yes, that's the word."

"Lea," said Greene. "Yes, that's all right. The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea, you know."

"Not that kind of lea," said Coker, frowning. "Lea, a nautical term, meaning opposite to windward."

"But that's L-E-E!"
"It isn't," said Coker calmly. "It's L-E-A. The kind of lea you were speaking of, meaning a field, is spelt L-E-I-G-H. I don't mind telling you this, Greeney, but really, it's rather hard lines that I should have to teach you easy words of one syllable, that you ought to have learned in the Second Form."

"Oh dear!"
"Write it down L-E-A—a nautical term. For goodness' sake, spell nautical so that I shall know what you mean. N-O-R-T-I-C-A-L!"

"Great pip!"
"I suppose you've never spelt nautical like that?" said Coker sarcastically.

"Never!" gasped Greene.
"Well, you live and learn. These Cross Words are supposed to buck ignorant people up in their spelling, and it may be a lot of use to you fellows, working with me like this."

Words failed Greene—even Cross Words. He wrote down "nortical" in expressive silence.

Potter and Greene worked now with one eye on the study clock. It was growing perilously near bedtime. Supper seemed as far off as ever. Coker, conscious that post-time was getting near, was growing a little cross and hurried, and rather snappish. Obviously, a suggestion of stopping for supper would have drawn forth the vials of Coker's wrath. But his hapless coadjutors really felt that they could not stand it much longer. They were yearning to take Coker by the collar, to jam his head into the coal-locker, and to stuff his Cross Words down his back.

In happy ignorance of their yearnings, Coker pursued the elusive words he required to complete his puzzle.

"Only one more word!" he exclaimed at last. "Beginning with 'S' and ending with 'OTT' to fit in. Now, if you fellows had any ideas in your heads at all—"

"Scott!" suggested Greene wearily.
"That ends with one T, Greene."
"I mean Scott the poet."

"So do I."
"Oh!"
"Shott!" said Potter recklessly. He did not see why "shot" should not be spelt with a double 'T' if it would bring supper any nearer.

"No. I happen to know that shot is spelt S-H-O-T," said Coker. "It doesn't end with a double letter, like such words as pug and pig and hog."

"Oh, my hat!"
"You never thought of 'slot,' of course," said Coker sarcastically.

"What's the good of 'slot' when you want a double 'T'?"

"Only that slot happens to end with a double 'T,'" Potter, said Coker gently. "Write it down, Greeney—S-L-O-T-T."

Greene was past argument now. He would have written it down with a triple 'T' or a quadruple 'T' for that



"Bend over that chair," said Coker magisterially. Bunter glared at the Fifth Former in wrathful amazement. "Do you think you're a prefect?" he bawled. "I think I'm going to lick you," said Coker coolly. "Bend over!" "Sha'n't!" roared Bunter. "Yah!" Coker grinned and, with a jerk of his powerful arm, bent Bunter over a chair. Then the cricket stump rose and fell. (See Chapter 5.)

master, if it would have brought supper within the range of practical politics.

"Now, that's the lot," said Coker, with satisfaction.

"Thank goodness!" breathed Potter.

"Now for supper!" murmured Greene. "There's no time for gazing now, Greene. We've got to write the whole thing out from beginning to end."

"Eh?"

"Numbering all the clue-words—"

Groan!

"And putting in the answers. Of course, the answers have to be supplied."

Groan!

"If you fellows want to help—help!" snapped Coker. "But if you don't, for goodness' sake get out of the study and leave me to work!"

"Look here, Coker," exclaimed Greene desperately. "I'm hungry—"

"Nonsense!"

"Famished!" gasped Potter.

"Bosh!"

"You've lost the post, anyhow!" groaned Potter. "Last collection's at nine, and it's nearly half-past now."

Coker looked at the clock.

"All the fault of you fellows. I should have been finished in time if I hadn't had to keep on explaining to you how to spell the simplest words. Now I shall

have to hold my puzzle over till next week."

"Good! Finish it to-morrow," said Potter hopefully.

Coker snorted.

"Don't be an ass, Potter. I'm not likely to leave a job half done. Read out the clues, Greene, and I'll write them down. I'd better handle the pen, to make sure that the spelling is all right. You know what you are!"

Greene, in a despirited voice, read out the clues. Coker wrote them down, with a due and careful regard to the orthography. Potter, being disengaged for the moment, thought of strolling over to the study cupboard. But as soon as he moved Coker's eagle eye was upon him.

"Can't you sit still?"

"I—I—" stammered Potter.

"Keep the dic handy. I may want you to look out a word."

Potter's hand closed almost convulsively on the dictionary. Coker never knew how narrow an escape he had of being holla'd to the floor of his own study with that lofty volume.

With sedulous care—regardless of time

(Continued on page 16.)

THE GREYFARIARS HERALD

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ARMED with a notebook and pencil, I have been trotting round Greyfriars, interviewing all sorts of people on the subject of dreams. I'm no dreamer of dreams myself. I sleep the sound, healthy sleep of the fellow who is thoroughly fit, mentally and physically. But I was jolly interested to hear of the dreams of others.

GOSLING, the porter, had a curious dream to relate. "For three nights runnin', Master Cherry," he said, "I've dreamt that I was the King of England, a-sittin' on the throne, with a crown perched on me 'ead, an' a spectre in me 'and."
"A spectre, Gossy?" I exclaimed, in astonishment.
"Surely you mean a 'spectre'?"

"That's it!" said Gosling. "I dreamt as 'ow I was coronated at Westminster Abbey, an' then drove through the streets in State to Buckingham Palace. Do you think my dream will ever come true, Master Cherry?"

"There's no knowing, Gossy," I answered. "In years to come, the King may be chosen from the people, and you might be the lucky one. But at present you'll have to be content with being King of the Woodshed, enthroned on a packing-case, with a battered hat for your crown, and a broomstick for your sceptre. And your subjects will be the rats and mice with which the woodshed abounds."

This picture didn't seem to please Gosling a bit, for he gruffly bade me "Be off!"

RETURNING from the porter's lodge, I bumped into Alonzo Todd. (He is still suffering from concussion!) Alonzo told me of a vivid dream he had, in which he sailed to the Golly-Wolly Islands as a missionary, and was roasted alive by cannibals. Alonzo was, rather anxious lest his dream might come true; but I assured him that there was no possibility of that. "Cannibals eat creatures of flesh and blood—not skeletons!" I said. "You'll have to fatten up like a Christmas turkey before you can hope to adorn a cannibal chief's banquet-table!" Alonzo has decided that it will be more discreet to remain slim and scraggy!

SKINNER of the Remove dreamed that he was in the act of taking a hot bath. Rather an ominous dream, this, for it means that Skinner will shortly find himself getting "into hot water!"

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COKER of the Fifth dreamed that he was foundering in a muddy duck-pond. This is a dream of the prophetic sort, which is bound to come true; for Coker is a mad motor-cyclist!

THE DREAMER!

By LORD MAULEVERER.

IN study warm, or in the dorm,
I love to lie a-snoozin';
I cannot bear to rush an' tear—
A gentler life I'm choosin'.
With pillows piled beneath my head,
An' candles gaily gleamin',
I love to pass my time in bed
In dreamin', dreamin', dreamin'!

I always shirk my daily work,
For work is far too tirin';
When footer's played, I promptly fade—
I simply hate perspirin'!
And when my brain should be at work,
Devisin', plannin', schemin',
Upon my study couch I lurk
A-dreamin', dreamin', dreamin'!

When in the gym, I have no vim
For punchin' people's noses;
And on the mat, stretched out quite flat,
My weary frame reposes.
A thousand fancies through my brain
Are surgin', rushin', teemin';
Because, begad, I can't refrain
From dreamin', dreamin', dreamin'!

In morning school my mind is full
Of such delightful fancies,
That I ignore old Quechly's roar,
And most severe his glance is!
He strides towards me, pointer raised,
His gimlet eyes are gleamin';
Then I awake—though still half-dazed
With dreamin', dreamin', dreamin'!

Now let me rest; I've done my best
For this week's Special Number;
And now I fain would rest my brain
In sweet an' soothin' slumber.
I'm feelin' happy as can be,
My bonnie face is beamin';
No boisterous youth shall hinder me
From dreamin', dreamin', dreamin'!

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

A FEW nights ago I had a most weird dream. It was a pleasant dream, too, though for the life of me I can't remember what it was all about. I can think myself jolly lucky that it wasn't a nightmare, for I had supper overnight with Lord Mauleverer, and partaken liberally of lobster salad. There were other members of that supper-party who did not get off so lightly. They were troubled by horrible dreams, and, in some cases, nightmares.

Although I cannot recall the exact nature of my dream, it has served a useful purpose. It gave me the inspiration for a Special Dream Number of THE GREYFARIARS HERALD:

I don't pretend to understand much about dreams. Exactly what they are, and why they come, I know not. And I'm not ashamed of my ignorance, because people far wiser than I have been baffled by this same subject. I have a sort of notion that there are two distinct kinds of dreams. There is the wild, meaningless dream which is simply the result of a heavy supper or a disordered digestion. Then there is the more serious, prophetic sort of dream, which sometimes comes true and sometimes doesn't; and which some people laugh at, but others take seriously.

Whether this class of dream has any real meaning and purpose it is hard to say. But I certainly should not say that all dreams were utterly nonsensical, and without point or purpose. After all, "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

I remember dreaming once of a terrible shipwreck off the coast near Greyfriars; and I awoke to find that the dream was a fact. The minute-gun was booming, and the Greyfriars fellows hastily arose and hurried down to the shore. A vessel had come to grief on the rocks, and the lifeboat arrived on the scene too late to be of much assistance. It was terrible to have to stand helplessly on the shore.

I am afraid I have drifted on to a rather gloomy topic. Shipwrecks and other dire calamities should have no place in our bright and breezy school-boy journal. But if I have made any of my readers feel depressed, then my depression will promptly vanish when they turn to the Extracts from Professor Tom Brown's Dream-book. Tom Brown claims to be an authority on dreams, and what he has to say on the subject will be read with much merit.

[Supplement i.]

**BILLY BUNTER:**

I had a most blissful dream the other night—a dream which makes my mouth water whenever I think about it. I dreamt that I was locked in the tuckshop. It was getting dusk, and Dame Mumble hadn't noticed me sitting in the corner, dozing. So she shut up the shop and put up the shutters, and went away, leaving me a prisoner in that paradise of plenty, the tuckshop, surrounded by shelves of glorious grub! When I awoke—in my dream, I mean—I felt a bit scared, at first; but on striking a match and peering around, I realised where I was, and what had happened; and I fairly danced with glee. "Oh, what a wonderful eggspereience, to be locked in a tuckshop!" I eggclaimed. And then I started to pile into all the good things around me. Oh, it was grand! It was, in fact, a perfect dream! I was reaching down a tin of mixed biskits from the top shelf when it some-

how slipped from my grasp, and came down with a crash on my cranium. Then I awoke! It wasn't a biskit-tin which had landed with a sickening thud on my napper. It was a football-boot, thrown by that best Bob Cherry. With a yell of anguish and dismay, I realised that I wasn't in the tuckshop, but in the Remove Dorm. Rising-bell had gone, and that was Bob Cherry's gentle way of waking me! I'm not going to dream any more; if I can help it. Dreams are snares and delosions!

HURREE SINGH:

I often dreamfully dream, while I sleepfully slumber, that I am back in my native Bhanipur, with my trusty servants waiting on me handfully and footfully. But the clangfulness of the unsteamed rising-bell soon scatterfully dispels the blissful dreamfulness; and I sigh to think that there are thousands of miles between me and my native homefulness.



Extracts from my Dream-Book!

By Professor Tom Brown.

BY kind permission of our noble and illustrious Editor, I am quoting a few extracts from a Dream Book which I have recently compiled.

It is a well-known saying that "dreams go by contraries," and I bore this in mind when writing my book. The things that you dream about rarely come to pass; quite the reverse happens, as a rule.

Fellows are often asking me to explain their dreams to them, and I feel sure the following interpretations of dreams will be found interesting and instructive. Bow-wow!

WEALTH.—To dream of vast riches, bags of bullion, buried treasure, or wads of banknotes, is a sure indication that you will awake to find yourself "stony."

POVERTY.—To dream that you haven't a penny to bless yourself with, *Supplement ii.*

that you are clad in rags, and that you are trudging "over the hill to the poorhouse," as the poet puts it, implies that you will receive a "fiver" by the morning post from your pet aunt or your favourite uncle.

FOOTBALL.—If you dream that you have been selected to play at centre-forward for your Form Eleven, it means that a big disappointment is in store for you. You won't be selected to play at all! If, on the other hand, you dream that your skipper has dropped you from the Eleven, it means that you will play in the next match and cover yourself with glory by scoring the winning goal!

POSTAGE-STAMPS.—A dream in which postage-stamps appear is a very ominous one. It suggests that you are in for "a good licking."

TUCK.—To dream of unlimited tuck, or of tuckshops, or dining-halls, or mid-

DICKY NUGENT:

"I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls, with vassals and serfs at my side." but I've no use for that sort of thing. I don't want to dwell in marble halls. I'm quite happy at Greyfriars, thanks! so to-morrow night I mean to dream of "marble hauls." Being a grate marble player, this is much more in my line!

BOLSOVER MAJOR:

A few nights ago I dreamed that I knocked out a hulking negro prizefighter in ten seconds, and became the champion prizefighter of the world. The newspapers were flooded with my photographs; I reaped no end of honour and glory; and I received a "purse" of a million dollars. I awoke to find it was only a dream; but I do not despair. It's a dream that will come true, one of these days!

MR. QUELCH:

I have no thrilling dreams to describe. I go to bed to sleep—not to indulge in rapid and silly dreams! In my opinion, dreams are the result of heavy suppers. I, therefore, avoid the stodgy and indigestible compounds which my pupils appear to revel in, and partake of very light refreshment—a biscuit and a glass of milk—before retiring. Bunter, and others, would be well advised to do likewise!

DICK PENFOLD:

"I ain't a-goin' to dream no mo', no mo'."
"I ain't a-goin' to dream no mo'."
I'm frightened at what the dream-books say.
So I ain't a-goin' to dream no mo'."

night feasts, means that you will be disappointed about a tuck hamper, and that there will be a famine in the land—or, rather, in your study—for a whole week.

ACCIDENTS.—To dream that you tumble downstairs and break your neck, or that you come a cropper when cycling, or that you blow yourself to smithereens whilst carrying out chemical experiments, implies that you will remain sound in wind and limb for some time to come.

FATALITIES.—To dream that you are cut off from this world, in the springtime of your giddy youth, so to speak, is a sure indication that you will live to be as old as Gosling the porter, to say nothing of Methusalem!

REMITTANCES.—If you dream that a miserly uncle, in a sudden burst of generosity, sends you a "fiver"—well, it's time you woke up!

DREAMS.—If you dream that you are dreaming it means that you are not dreaming; and if you dream that you are not dreaming it means that you are dreaming; and if you dream that school life is a dream, you'll never dream of dreaming such a dream again!

INVITATIONS.—If you dream that you have been asked to tea by your Form master and that you are thoroughly enjoying yourself, it means that you will be "called over the carpet" at an early date.



(Continued from page 13.)

now that the post was irrecoverably lost, utterly regardless of such petty considerations as supper—Horace Coker wrote out his numbered clues. His list was really worth reading had his hapless assistants been in a mood for comic relief.

AKROSS.

1. A kind of dog.
4. A trouble in the chest.
7. A serial.
9. A nettle.
10. To be in debt.
12. A noise.
14. A preposition.
15. Masticate.
17. The atmosphere.
18. Definite article.
20. A parent's sister.
21. Part of a shipp.
22. A lineal measure.
23. Sownd made by a cat.
24. A nortical term.
26. Payuting or skulpteur.
28. To kause inconvience.
29. A verb.
30. To lesson.
34. Thus.
35. Opposit to lyes.
37. A konkave spaco.
38. A weapon.

Potter and Greene looked at that list of clues, and looked at Coker of the Fifth.

Coker was being very careful.

Without care, indeed; he could not have produced words spelled in that remarkable way. Doubtless it was a gift; but care was needed, too.

"That's the lot across," said Coker.

"That's done."

"And now—" began Potter.

"And now—" said Greene simultaneously.

"Now we've got to get the downward clues," said Coker.

"Oh!"

And Horace Coker proceeded with his second list of clues to the words that were to be read downwards in his amazing puzzle, which certainly was more puzzling in some ways than most puzzles.

DOUNE.

1. Erunt part of a shipp.
2. Intransitive verb.
3. A vaper.
4. A kind of fish.
5. A preposition.
6. Shawt for telefono.
8. Another preposition.
9. Saine as insyde.
11. Temperatewers.
13. Ploraal prounoun.
14. Peeple who rite books.
16. A montal prowcess.
17. Part of the leg.
18. A mezure.
20. Indeffynit artikle.
23. Froot.
25. Agrement.
27. To tare with the tooth.
30. Saine as 26 akross.
31. A wajor.
32. Possessive prounoun.
33. Artikle.
35. Preposition.
36. Thus.

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"Is that really all?" asked Potter in a gasping voice, when Coker had completed this striking list and laid down his pen.

"That's the lot," said Coker cheerily. "Now we'll read the whole thing right over from beginning to end to make sure—"

The study door opened, and Fitzgerald of the Fifth looked in.

"You fellows know you're late for dorm?" he asked. "Mr. Prout is looking for you. He's waiting."

"Bother Prout!" said Coker crossly. "I've got to get this finished—"

"He's coming!" grinned Fitzgerald.

The Fifth-Former vanished, and Mr. Prout appeared in the doorway. Potter and Greene rose wearily to their feet.

The prospect of supper now was gone from their gaze like a beautiful dream.

No prep, no supper, and an evening at Cross Words with Coker. But for their Form master's appearance, it is probable that Potter and Greene would have turned on Coker at that moment and smitten him hip and thigh.

"What does this mean—what, what?" exclaimed Mr. Prout angrily. "Why are you not in your dormitory? Do you think I have time to waste looking for boys who do not remember bedtime? What, what?"

"The fact is, sir—" began Coker, while Potter and Greene sneaked dispiritedly from the study under the angry eye of Mr. Prout.

"Silence, Coker! Go to your dormitory at once!"

"I want to get this finished, sir," said Coker. "I've been working at it all the afternoon and evening, sir."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Prout, in surprise. "If you are really beginning to pay some attention to your studies, Coker, I would be very far from discouraging you. What is it—Livy?"

"Livy!" Coker almost snorted. He was not likely to give a half-holiday and an evening to Titus Livius, if he could help it. "Oh, no, sir!"

"Mathematics?" asked Mr. Prout kindly.

"Oh, my hat! No."

"Then what is it, Coker?"

"Cross Words, sir."

"Eh?"

"Cross Words."

"What do you mean, Coker? What are Cross Words?" snapped Mr. Prout.

"It's a puzzle—"

"A—a—a puzzle?"

"Yes, sir. You see—"

"Is it possible, Coker, that you have kept me waiting to put out the light in the Fifth Form dormitory while you have been playing with puzzles?" thundered Mr. Prout. "Take two hundred lines!"

"Oh! You see, sir—"

"Take three hundred lines, and go to your dormitory at once!" thundered the Fifth Form master.

"Really, sir—"

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

Horace Coker, with a suppressed snort of indignation, marched out of the study, leaving his Cross Words where they were. With a frowning brow Mr. Prout followed on his heels to the Fifth Form dormitory —

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Missing Masterpiece!

"HELP!"

"Hullo, hallo, hallo!"

"Whoop! Help! Fire!"

Rescue!"

It was a wild roar from William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove.

On the occasions when William George Bunter sustained damage, the noise he made was quite out of proportion to the damage sustained. So Harry Wharton & Co., who were strolling in the quad in morning break, looked round in quite a leisurely manner to see what was happening.

Such a terrific roar from any other fellow might have meant that murder was being done, or, at least, robbery with violence. In Bunter's case, however, it might only mean that he had received a well-deserved kick.

But on this special occasion the damage Bunter was sustaining almost justified the uproar he made.

Coker of the Fifth, with fury in his face, had swooped down on the Owl of the Remove near the Cloisters.

Coker's grasp was on Bunter, and Coker was banging Bunter's head on the trunk of an elm.

Bunter's head was hard, but the elm was harder. The concussion did not seem to affect the elm at all. But it was producing a terrific effect upon Bunter.

"Help! Yooop! Whoop! Rescue! Fire!" roared Bunter. "Help! Leggo! Wharrer you at! Help! Yagoooooh!"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Rescue, you chaps!"

"Stop him!" exclaimed Nugent.

The Famous Five rushed on the scene. They did not stop to ask questions. They collared Coker of the Fifth right and left, and brought him to earth with a crash.

There was a roar from Coker, which almost equalled the stentorian efforts of Bunter himself.

Billy Bunter staggered against the tree, rubbing his head. He was still whooping frantically.

"Lemme getrup, you young villains!" howled Coker. "Clear off! I'm going to have it back if I have to burst him!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry fixed a secure grip on Coker's ears to restrain him. There was plenty of room for a good hold. "Has Bunter been pinching your tuck?"

"My Cross Word—"

"What!"

"He's burgled my study!" roared Coker. "Bagged my Cross Word! He was after it yesterday, and I stopped him. Now he's bagged it. It's worth ten pounds, too! Leggo!"

The Famous Five allowed Coker of the Fifth to rise, but they kept between him and Bunter. Even had Bunter

pinched Coker's Cross Word they did not want to see the fat jocular strown in fragments about the quad, and, really, Coker looked quite homicidal.

But for once the chums of the Remove were disposed to believe Bunter guiltless.

Had Horace Coker missed a cake or a box of chocolates from his study they would have been prepared to believe Bunter guilty on the spot. Evidence, really, would not have been needed.

But that even Bunter would raid a Cross Word puzzle was improbable, especially a Cross Word puzzle by Coker of the Fifth. Bunter was not bright. But he was bright enough to know that Coker's Cross Words had no chance whatever of bagging a prize, though they might add considerably to the gaiety in the editorial office.

Harry Wharton & Co. stood in a firm phalanx between Bunter and the infuriated Coker.

Thrico Coker tried to charge through them, and was hurled back. Then he tried to dodge round them and was headed off.

The desire to get at Bunter possessed Coker like a sort of obsession or fixed

idea. He wanted to slaughter the Owl of the Remove almost more than he wanted to recover his missing masterpiece.

But there was nothing doing. Hefty as Coker was, he could not handle the five sturdy juniors with success. And Bunter gasped and spluttered and howled in safety behind the protecting quintette.

"Will you lemme gerrat him?" gasped Coker at last. "I'm going to smash him! I'm going to spifflicate him! I'm going to burst him! I—"

"Not all at once, old bean," said Bob soothingly. "Now, let's know how it stands. If Bunter has pinched anything from your study we'll make him hand it back fast enough. Wharton's captain of the Remove, and it's up to him."

"That's so," assented Harry. "I tell you he's raided my Cross Word puzzle!" roared Coker. "I finished it last night too late for the post. Potter and Greene worked at it with me till bedtime, and then that old ass Frost came in and interrupted me before I could read it over and put it away. It was left on the table. Now Bunter's taken it—"

"I haven't!" yelled Bunter. "You have!" roared Coker. "Yah! I wouldn't be found dead near your silly Cross Word puzzle!" hooted Bunter. "Why, you can't even spell! I noticed you had 'sword' spelt without an 'a.' Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Spell!" gasped Coker. "I'll give you spell! Lemmo get at him!" The taunt touched Coker on a tender point, for he prided himself on his spelling, and with cause, so far as originality went. "Hold on!" said Harry Wharton cheerily. "Easy does it. If Bunter's

got it he shall hand it back. But he says he hasn't."

"He has!" howled Coker. "I looked into my study this morning and it was there. I shoved a book over it so that it shouldn't blow away, or the maid sweep it off. Well, I went there as soon as I was out of the Form-room in break to read it over and make the final copy, and it was gone."

"But how do you know Bunter—" began Johnny Bull. "The knowfulness cannot be great, my esteemed Coker," said Hurree Singh, shaking his dusky head.

"I tell you he was after it yesterday; I caught him at it in my study, and I thumped him!" howled Coker. "I wasn't after it!" yelled Bunter. "I was after—ahem—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Tuck!" exclaimed Nugent. "Well, that beast Coker had refused to lend me a stamp, and practically owed me ten pounds, so I thought I should be justified in taking a snack in his study," said Bunter. "I just looked at the silly Cross Word, because it was on the table, and the spelling was so funny."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I wouldn't have touched it with a barge-pole," said Bunter. "What's the good of it? You can't eat Cross Word puzzles."

"You bagged it to win the prize with!" roared Coker. "But that puzzle wouldn't win any prize!" sneered Bunter. "Might give the editor a fit. That's about all." "I—I—I— Will you cheeky fags let me get at that fat villain!" "I say, you fellows, keep him off!" Harry Wharton shook his head, laughing.

"No fear! Bunter hasn't got it, Coker! Why should even Bunter bag an article of no value?"

"It's worth ten pounds—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have you any reason to believe that the editor of the 'Evening Despatch' is blind, deaf, and silly?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Eh? No! Why?"

"If he isn't, he wouldn't dream of handing you the prize for your piffle, old man. So you're off-side!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That was too much for Coker. He did not entertain the slightest doubt that his masterpiece, now it was finished, was absolutely certain to bag the prize for the best Cross Word puzzle. That, indeed, went without saying! The thing was, therefore, worth ten pounds of anybody's money, minus the trifling expense of posting it to the office of the "Evening Despatch." Practically—for Coker could take practical views as well as Bunter—practically, he had been robbed of ten pounds, and he was convinced that Bunter had the loot about him at that very moment.

He rushed furiously at the protecting phalanx of the Famous Five, to hack his way through, in the manner of a warlike Hun. But, as with the Huns in war-time, hacking a way through did not turn out an easy task. Coker's great offensive petered out, with Coker on his back, and five juniors sprawling over him.

Billy Bunter sagely departed while they were sprawling on Coker. If Coker got through, it was a serious matter for Bunter. So the Owl of the Remove stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once.

He vanished in the distance, while the



CROSS WORD PUZZLE No. 7.

CLUES ACROSS.

Give me a word that ends in "S"
And yet begins with "C."
A five-letter-word that means athwart,
Also adverbially.
The name of a puzzle, too, I'm told
(At least so said my boss),
A common word that's often heard.
Bless me, of course it's "cross"!

- Skinner's favourite occupation on a half-holiday.
- Bunter's way of spelling "earn."
- Disliked by Bunter.
- Delightful to Bunter.
- The pleasantest part of a lesson.
- Not off.
- Part of the verb "to be," present tense.
- A very prominent member of the Greyfriars Remove.
- What Fisher T. Fish considers he is.
- Half size.
- Nice with tea in the study.
- Anciently divided into three parts.
- The Head's unpleasant duty.
- Kind of stables Bunter likes.
- Two of them at Greyfriars.

All you will need is a pencil, rubber, and a little patience.

I want it to be clearly understood that these puzzles are published merely for your AMUSEMENT. There is no competition attached to the scheme. Readers are, therefore, requested not to send in their solutions.

Next week's MAGNET will contain the solution of this week's Cross Word puzzle, together with a new puzzle. Now for a few tips on solving Cross Word puzzles.

In the diagram alongside you will see a number of white and black squares, in some of which appear numbers. Each number in the puzzle indicates the position of the first letter of the word whose definition you will find in the clue column alongside the same number in the square. From this clue you are to decide what the word is, and to place each of its letters in one square until the number of white squares allotted to this word has been filled.

Each word reads from left to right (across) or top to bottom (down), according to the positions indicated in the clue column.

Remember that each black square separates one word from another.

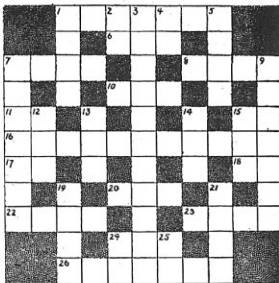
When you have completed the puzzle you will find that all the words that cross interlock.

It is advisable to pencil the letters in lightly at first, so that should they be wrong you will be able to erase them with a rubber, without mutilating the diagram. Now get busy, chums!

CLUES DOWN.

- Very frequently required by Billy Bunter.
- Beginning the Aeneid.
- A member of the Famous Five.
- Not out.
- Looked after by Gosling.
- Necessary in the serum.
- What Billy Bunter does not like in the morning.
- What a footballer hopes to find in a match.
- Much used in the Form-rooms.
- A well-known bird in Squiff's native land.
- Half itself.
- A prominent member of the Third Form at Greyfriars.
- They grow in the quadrangle.
- Just one.
- Personal pronoun, plural number, common gender, vocative case.

CROSS WORD PUZZLE No. 7.



chums of the Remove were still sprawling and struggling with the hefty Horace.

Vernon-Smith and Squiff and Penfold and several other Removites came scudding up; and if Coker had little chance before, he had none at all now. He was lifted up by the grinning juniors, and carried away into the Cloisters, struggling and spluttering, and they dumped him down in a remote corner and left him there.

When Horace Coker was sufficiently recovered to crawl away, he was not thinking of Cross Words or vengeance—he was too far gone for either to interest him. "Break" was order by that time, and Coker limped away breathless and tired, and was five minutes late in the Fifth Form-room.

Potter and Greene eyed him rather curiously as he came in. Mr. Prout eyed him with grim sternness.

"You are late, Coker!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Coker.

"Take——" began Mr. Prout.

"I've been robbed!"

"What?"

"Robbed!" gasped Coker.

"Bless my soul! Do you mean to say that a theft has been committed?" exclaimed the master of the Fifth, staring at Coker.

"Yes, sir! That's why I'm late!" gasped Coker. "It's been taken from my study; it's worth ten pounds——"

"Bless my soul! This is a serious matter. It is incredible that an article of value can have been stolen in the school—incredible! There must be some mistake—some dreadful mistake!" Mr. Prout had a look of absolute consternation. "Are you certain, Coker, that this article is missing?"

"Yes, sir. Quite."

Coker was glad to see his Form master taking the matter with becoming seriousness.

"And it's value is ten pounds?"

"Yes, sir."

"Give me the particulars at once, and I will speak to the Head! What is the article—a watch?"

"Oh, no, sir, my Cross Word puzzle." "YOUR CROSS WORD PUZZLE!" Mr. Prout articulated those words as if each letter were a bullet. "YOUR CROSS WORD PUZZLE!"

"That's it, sir," said Coker.

There was a silence in the Fifth Form-room. The Fifth did not dare to laugh, the expression on Mr. Prout's face was too terrific for that. They sat and waited for the earthquake.

It was not long in coming.

"Coker! You incredibly stupid boy!" roared Mr. Prout.

"Sir!"

"This—this—this rubbish—this foolery—this—this childish absurdity! You speak of this as an article, value ten pounds! I fear that you are not in your right senses, Coker!"

"Mr. Prout!"

"Unaccustomed as I am, Coker, to inflicting punishment in this Form-room, I feel that nothing but a caning will meet this case." Mr. Prout grabbed up a pointer. "Bend over that form!"

Coker gasped.

"I—I—I——"

"Will you obey me, or shall I take you to the Head for a flogging?" roared the master of the Fifth.

"Oh, my hat!"

Coker, in quite a dazed state, bent over the form.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Now go to your place, Coker! Not another word! Silence, sir! Another word, and I shall cane you again!"

Coker limped to his place.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The History of the Mystery!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. kindly walked with Bunter, when the Remove came out after third lesson. On the unique occasion when William George Bunter was actually guiltless of an accusation brought against him, the heroes of the Remove felt that it was up to them to stand by him.

Billy Bunter was glad of their company. He walked in fear and trembling, on account of Coker of the Fifth. "I say, you fellows, here he is!" exclaimed Bunter, in alarm, as Horace Coker came out of the schoolhouse with Potter and Greene.

"Line up!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

But Coker did not attack. He glanced morosely at the group of Removites, and walked on. Then suddenly he turned. "It's all right," he said. "I don't think it was Bunter after all. I fancy I can put my finger on the thief."

Then he walked on with Potter and Greene.

"For this relief, much thanks!" grinned Bob Cherry. "We can go and punt a ball about, as Coker doesn't want to punt Bunter about."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Potter and Greene were looking very curiously at Coker, as they walked in the quad with him. They were quite interested in the statement he had made.

"You haven't found your Cross Word yet?" asked Potter, with a surreptitious wink at Greene.

Greene suppressed a chuckle.

Coker shook his head.

"No. But I know who had it."

"Who's that, then?" asked Potter casually.

"Prout!"

Potter and Greene jumped.

"Prout?" ejaculated Potter.

"Prout?" said Greene faintly.

"Prout!" said Coker grimly. "I was fairly flabbergasted, at first, by the way he carried on in the Form-room. Then it flashed into my mind."

"Oh crumbs!"

"His making out, you know, that my Cross Word was rubbish—pretending to think that it was of no value," said Coker. "Why should he pretend, unless he had something to hide?"

Potter and Greene did not answer that question.

They couldn't! They gazed at Coker with their mouths open, like fishes newly landed, so great was their astonishment.

"Licking me, too!" went on Coker, working out his theory in a masterly manner, really worthy of Sherlock Holmes, if not Ferrers Locke. "The Fifth are never licked! That was to make me drop it—give up the idea of trying to get my Cross Word back, you know!—Bullying me into putting up with the loss—while he bags ten pounds with my Cross Word."

"Oh!"

"Oh dear!"

"I'm sorry to think such a thing of a Form master," said Coker. "But look at it! Facts are facts!"

"Facts!" murmured Potter. "Oh, my hat! Facts!"

"Prout's whole conduct is that of a guilty man. He saw the Cross Word in my study, last night—and saw at a glance what a corker it was! It's a certain ten pounds—and Prout may be hard up for all we know! He yielded to a sudden temptation—like the beastly thieves you read about in the newspapers, you know."

"Like—like— Oh dear!" gasped Greene.

"Shocking, isn't it?" said Coker. "Awful, in fact—in a Greyfriars Form-master. But it's the only explanation of his conduct in the Form-room—no other theory will fit the facts. Prout's got it."

"Prout's got it!" repeated Potter dazedly. "Got your Cross Word puzzle—the way it's spelt! Oh!"

"Had it in his pocket all the time while he was licking me!" said Coker. "The question arises, what's a fellow to do?"

"Oh! Does it?" stammered Potter.

"I'm not letting him keep it, of course! That's not to be thought of for a moment. Of course I could make another copy—or you fellows could make another copy under my directions. No need for me to waste my time on mere drudgery. But naturally a fellow doesn't remember it all—a lot of it would have to be worked out again. And he may be going to send off that Cross Word this very afternoon, to some paper—all the papers are going in for this wheeze now. If so, I might be late with a new copy of it. Of course I could make up another. But I'm not producing masterpieces like this for the benefit of a sneaking thief. I'm going to have my Cross Word back from Prout—that's settled."

"Back from Prout! Oh, my hat!"

"You fellows agree with me that he's got it, the way I've worked it out?" asked Coker.

"Nunno! No, quite!" gasped Greene.

"You always were an ass, Greene?"

"You agree with me, Potter?"

"N-n-no! You see——"

"You always were a fool, Potter. But there's no time to discuss the matter. I've thought it out, and that settles it. Will you fellows come with me to see Prout?"

"What are you going to see Prout for?" asked Potter faintly.

"To demand it back. I shall offer to say nothing, if he hands it back at once. I don't want to disgrace a Greyfriars master. If he refuses, I'm bound to go to the Head."

Potter almost fell down.

"You—you—you're going to Prout to ask him—to demand—you idiot—to—accuse him——" Potter fairly bubbled.

"I'm bound to have it out with him at once," explained Coker. "There's no time to lose—he may be putting it into the post next collection. The whole thing gone, you know—after that happy evening we spent together getting it done!"

"That—that happy evening? Oh, quite!"

"If you fellows funk it, never mind—I can go it alone. I'm not afraid to beard the giddy lion in his den," said Coker. "I shall offer to let him off if he shells out my property at once. That's the best I can offer him. I'll catch him now, before dinner. You fellows wait for me, if you won't come along."

And Coker of the Fifth started towards the House with his long strides, leaving Potter and Greene in a dazed state, rooted to the ground.

They gazed after Horace Coker.

Coker, it was true, was Coker; it was useless to expect from Coker the intellectual powers of a bunny rabbit. But this really seemed too incredible, even for Coker. Slowly it dawned upon the minds of Potter and Greene that Coker was in deadly earnest—that he

actually was going to put his egregious hoof in it in a way that even Coker had never done before.

"Ho—ho—ho—" Potter babbled.

"Ho—ho's going to Prout—"

"To demand—" babbled Greene.

"His Cross Word—oh, my hat!—puzzle. To accuse Prouty—"

"Prouty! Oh dear!"

"He will be flogged—sacked—if Prouty doesn't kill him on the spot! Ho—ho—ho's got to be stopped!"

"Coker!" shrieked Greene.

Coker was a good distance away by that time; if he heard, he did not heed. With rapid strides of his long legs he went on to the House.

"After him!" exclaimed Potter desperately. "He's got to be stopped! Why, he might be shoved into a lunatic asylum for this. For goodness' sake let's stop him before he sees Prout!"

"Come on!"

Potter and Greene ran after Coker. Now that they realised the full and awful seriousness of the matter they lost no time.

They ran hard.

But Horace Coker was already at the steps of the House where Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove were coming out, Bob Cherry with an old footer under his arm. Potter yelled desperately.

"Stop him!"

The juniors looked round.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?"

"Stop him—stop Coker!" shrieked Greene. "For mercy's sake stop him! Stop him—stop him!"

"Hold him!" raved Potter.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at the Fifth-Formers, as they came racing on to the House. The desperate anxiety in the faces of Potter and Greene showed that the matter was serious—whatever it was. And the Famous Five accordingly stopped Coker—by the simple process of surrounding him and collar-ing him on all sides.

Coker was backed up against the stone balustrade, surprised and angry.

"You cheeky fags—" he bellowed.

"Hold on!" said Harry. "Something's up—"

"Let go!" roared Coker, in angry indignation. And he struggled furiously, and went down the steps with the juniors clinging to him.

Potter came up, panting.

"Hold him! Good! For goodness' sake don't let him go! It's the sack for him if he sees Prout."

"Leggo!" roared Coker. "Potter, you ass—Greene, you dummy—drag these cheeky fags off! I—I—I!"

"Hold him!"

George Potter bent over Coker, as he wriggled on the stone steps, in the grasp of the Famous Five.

"You born idiot—" he began.

"You're going to see Prouty, to accuse him of pinching your silly Cross Word—"

"What?" yelled Wharton.

"Oh, my hat!"

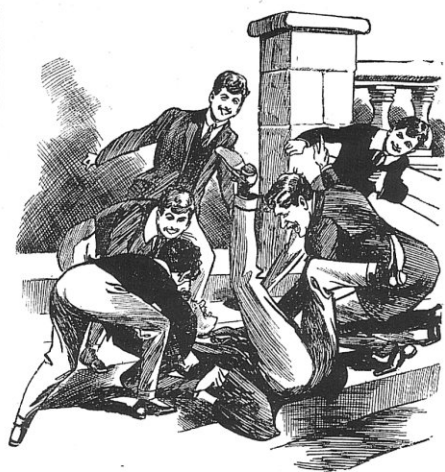
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He thinks Prouty has got it!" raved Greene. "He—he thinks the pot was worth pinching, and that Prouty has pinched it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removees fairly shrieked. They were laughing almost too much to hold Coker; but they managed to keep him safe. Evidently it was not a time to sit on Horace James Coker loose.

"You dummies!" howled Coker. "I don't think he's got it—I know he's



"I'll jolly well tell you where your silly cross word puzzle is," shrieked Potter at his prostrate, studymate. "It's in the study chimney!" "Eh?" said Coker faintly. "My c-cross word is in the study chimney?" "Yes—I put it there!" roared Potter defiantly. Coker was too amazed to struggle to his feet, and Harry Wharton & Co., rocking with laughter, had no need to hold him down. (See Chapter 9.)

got it, and I'm going to have it back—see?"

"He hasn't got it!" shrieked Potter.

"Look here. Will you promise not to speak to Prouty—"

"Certainly not. Drag these cheeky fags off a fellow—"

"Then I'll jolly well tell you where it is!" roared Potter, losing all patience at last. "It's in the study chimney."

"Eh?"

"Study chimney."

"My Cross Word is in the study chimney!" said Coker blankly. "How did it get there, then?"

"I put it there!"

"You?"

"Yes, little me!" snorted Potter.

"Greene helped me."

Coker sat up.

"You—you fellows confess that you robbed me of my Cross Word—you, my own friends, robbed me of ten pounds!" Coker gasped out the words, more in sorrow than in anger.

"Robbed! Ten pounds! Fathead! As!" Potter, having decided to speak out, spoke with unusual frankness.

"Idiot! Dummy! Your Cross Word is all silly rubbish!"

"Rotten tosh!" said Greene, following Potter's example of frankness.

"Bibbling piffle!" said Potter.

"Howling tripe!" said Greene.

"We shoved the binking rubbish in the chimney to get it out of sight, because we were fed-up with your Cross Words!"

"Fed-up to the chin!"

"And fed-up with you, too, Coker!"

"Fed right up with you!"

"Keeping fellows without their tea—"

"And without their supper!"

"Scribbling misspelt words!"

"Spelling a fag would be ashamed of!"

"You born idiot!"

"You blithering cuckoo!"

It was a regular chorus, strophe and antistrophe. Coker sat with a dazed look and listened to it. Harry Wharton & Co. rocked with merriment, too far gone to hold Coker now. They laughed till they wept, and wiped their eyes and laughed again. The mystery of the missing masterpiece was elucidated now—and it did not need any astute theory on the lines of Sherlock Holmes. Potter and Greene had shoved the exasperating Cross Word up the study chimney, because they were fed-up with it. It was quite a simple explanation—too simple to have occurred to Coker's mighty brain.

"Now do you understand?" hissed Potter. "Go and rake the chimney and you'll get your silly rubbish!"

"Your boshy tripe!" said Greene.

"But don't ask us to waste any more time on it."

"No, don't—or we'll jam it down your neck next time!"

"And jolly well bump you into the bargain!"

"Hard!"

Coker struggled to his feet. There was wrath in his face—wrath compared with which the celebrated wrath of Achilles, to Greece the direful spring of woes unnumbered, was a mere passing

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breeze. He was no longer thinking of calling on Mr. Prout. Even Coker realised that his mastery theory on the subject of the missing masterpiece was out of gear. What he was thinking of was soon clear. He rushed at Potter and Greene, and the Fifth-Formers closed in deadly strife.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "Oh dear! Coker will be the death of me yet!"

"Go it, Coker!"

"Go it, Potter!"

"Go it, Greene!"

Harry Wharton & Co., in front seats, as it were, on the House steps, watched the combat with cheery interest, and cheered on both sides with happy impartiality.

Coker's intention was to mop up the quad with Potter and Greene. With one of them in either hand, he was going to mop the quad till they shrieked for mercy. That was what Coker was going to do. What he actually did was a little different. There were two or three puddles near the steps, and these puddles were mopped up—but it was Coker's bulky form that did the mopping, in the grasp of Potter and Greene. Coker never counted odds; nevertheless, the odds, counted or uncounted, were there!

Potter and Greene finished by jamming Coker's features into a puddle and ramming them well down. Then they walked away, tired, breathless, but feeling better.

As for Coker, who was in quite a dazed state, he would hardly have been able to crawl away for a much-needed wash had not Harry Wharton & Co. kindly helped him to a bath-room. But they did—and carried their kindness so far as to up-end him bodily into the bath. Then they retired, followed by observations from Coker which sounded like the blackest ingratitude for their kindness.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Crass!

COKER'S Cross Word puzzle was a standing joke at Greyfriars for some days afterwards.

The masterpiece had been rescued from the study chimney, a little sooty, but otherwise none the worse for wear. Coker, with sedulous care, made a fresh copy of it—unaided. He was not on friendly terms with Potter and Greene these days.

The new copy was sealed up in an envelope, addressed to the "Evening Despatch," with "Cross Words" duly marked in the top left-hand corner of the envelope, was posted by Coker in the school letter-box.

Not the slightest doubt occurred to him about the £10 prize. It was plainly stated in the paper that the prize would go to the best Cross Word puzzle. Coker's was the best. That settled it. To doubt that the prize was coming to him would have been to doubt the bonafides of the competition.

In Coker's study there was an icy atmosphere these days. He did not deign to notice the existence of Potter and Greene.

They felt it, Coker's fascinating society, his unlimited conversation, they could have dispensed with. But at tea-time they often felt that they missed Coker's friendship.

But there was a limit. Even for the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, they realised that they could not stand Coker and Cross Words all at once. Coker by himself, or Cross Words on their own, but not the two together. So long as Coker was at Cross Words, Potter and Greene were prepared to let his friendship slide—and Aunt Judith's hampers along with it.

They did not talk to Coker now; but they talked about him. They told the Fifth Form fellows about the Cross Words and the striking orthography therein—they told everyone who would listen, keeping the House in a roar. It was a standing joke—and the cream of the joke, as Bob Cherry remarked, was Coker's amazing expectation of landing the prize.

What the adjudicator would think when he saw Coker's masterpiece was an interesting question. Smyth expressed a hope that First Aid would be at hand; it was possible that the adjudicator might need it.

Coker of the Fifth was unmercifully chipped on the subject, in the Fifth and out of the Fifth.

He did not mind.

Great men, he knew, are always disparaged by inferior minds; so there really was nothing surprising in it. A prophet is not honoured in his own country; and an intellectual genius was misunderstood in his own school. It was really a thing to be expected.

Besides, Coker had a crushing answer

for his critics: in the announcement that his Cross Word had won the prize—when that announcement came. According to Coker, it was only a question of a few days.

When it came, and his detractors were overwhelmed with confusion, Coker meant to forgive them—even Potter and Greene. From his lofty height of superiority he could afford to do so.

On the decisive day a fog was bribed to fetch in the "Evening Despatch" from Courtfield. Coker waited for him at the door; and a large number of fellows gathered there to wait also. They were interested in the climax; Coker's face, they considered, would be worth watching.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!" called out Bob Cherry, 'as Tubb of the Third was sighted, with a newspaper under his arm.

Tubb, grinning, handed the paper to Coker of the Fifth.

"Now for it!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"You'll stand a feed in the Rag out of the tinner, won't you, Coker?" inquired Temple of the Fourth.

"Let's see the giddy verdict," said the Bouncer. "Are you a winner or an also-ran, Cokey?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker opened the paper in a leisurely way. As a matter of fact, he was rather eager—not so much for the prize as for the announcement that he had won it; the announcement that was to overwhelm all these grinning fellows.

"That's the page!" said Potter.

"You needn't butt in, Potter."

Coker scanned the page devoted to Cross Words. He seemed puzzled.

"Some mistake here!" he said.

"How's that, umpire?"

"It's very odd," Coker was quite perplexed. "The name given here as the winner is H. S. Jones. My name isn't Jones!"

"Go on!"

"A silly mistake!" said Coker. "I should have thought they ran these newspapers better than that. Of course, it will be set right."

Coker's faith really was touching. Powerful as his intellect was, according to his own belief, there could be no doubt that it worked rather slowly.

But realisation came to him, helped,

(Continued on page 25.)

COKER'S CROSS WORD PUZZLE!



This is a reproduction of Horace Coker's wonderful puzzle. It certainly is wonderful! Note the original spelling:—"Pugg" a "kynd of dogg!" "Ion" a "mettle." For further laughs turn to page 16 and read his "kloos"—they're equally as weird and wonderful! Then turn to page 17 and see if you can solve a real puzzle!

IN THE BEGINNING! A terrific thunderstorm lashing the bleak moors of Devon, a wondrous flash of lightning that illumines the countryside for miles round, a young fellow with a camera determined to "snap" a storm picture, and two figures locked in a deadly embrace far below. Thus starts—

The GOLDEN PYRAMID!



Featuring **FERRERS LOCKE**,
the world-famous detective, and
JACK DRAKE, his clever boy
assistant.

What the Camera Saw!

"**G**OT it! Hurrah!"

Jack Drake almost shouted the words in his excitement, and his eyes danced with exultant satisfaction.

He was so delighted that he scarcely paid any heed at all to the wild storm which raged around him as he stood, on the summit of a tor on the bleak Devon moorland, gripping his camera and surveying the scene in all its awe-inspiring splendour.

Ferrers Locke's young assistant had come down to Devonshire to spend a week-end with a friend, and, being keen on amateur photography, he had brought his camera with him, little dreaming to what strange uses the instrument would be put.

When he had arrived at his chum's house, in the heart of the Devonshire moors, the sun had been shining brightly.

But within the ensuing twenty-four hours the clouds had banked up, the thunder had muttered and rolled, and almost before they had realised it, the storm had broken in all its fury.

That had occurred early on the Sunday—the day after Jack Drake's arrival. It was now Monday night, and Jack was due to return to London by the first fast train on the following morning. And, meantime, the storm was still raging, with only occasional breaks in its intensity.

But though this sudden change in the weather had spoilt his holiday in many respects, Jack was too resourceful to be discouraged.

He had for a long time past been anxious to get a really good snap or two of a good old British thunderstorm, especially when there was forked lightning about. Taking photographs of lightning effects is no easy job, but Jack Drake was in his element when he had to tackle something rather more difficult than usual.

So, after a couple of days spent unavoidably indoors, Jack had decided to try his luck, and had set out alone, wrapped up as well as possible in a rainproof coat, and carrying his camera—which was likewise protected against the storm—with a view to getting a few snaps.

He had trudged a couple of miles through the rain until at last he had struck a point from which he reckoned he would be able to secure the best effect. Then he had waited for a favourable opportunity, and seized it swiftly, with the most brilliant results.

"Gee! I'll bet Mr. Locke will be interested in this, when I've developed the film!" he muttered delightedly to himself. "It's a picture in a thousand, and—Hallo! There she goes again!"

A momentary lull had been followed by a renewed crash of thunder, which rolled its way across the leaden heavens in a deafening roar. And even as Jack



Drake spoke, the lightning began to play again, splitting the great skies in great, yellow gashes, which momentarily illuminated the moorlands almost as vividly as daylight.

Jack Drake paused in the act of making his way down the side of the tor, and swung round.

"Might as well get another," he muttered. "Nothing like duplicating a thing like this—it's a chance in a lifetime!"

He focused his camera again, dashing the rain from his face, and waited, his thumb on the shutter release.

A minute passed, and then the lightning began to play again on the instant Jack Drake jammed down his shutter release.

"Got it again!" he exclaimed. "And—why, what the dickens was that?"

His tone changed with dramatic suddenness to one of genuine amazement.

For even as he clicked the shutter, he could have sworn he had glimpsed something down on the moorland, not far from the base of the tor on which he was standing—something as startling as it was almost unbelievable.

He waited now, every sense alert, his eyes fixed on the spot to which they had first been attracted.

A moment, and the lightning played again, and then Jack Drake positively jumped in his excitement.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "There's two men down there—fighting like mad! And in this storm, too!"

The second flash of lightning had lighted up the scene only for a fleeting second. But Jack was certain of it now. In that moment he had caught a glimpse of two struggling, swaying figures locked in a deadly embrace.

They were some distance away, and seemed, from where Jack stood, like a couple of toy figures. But, nevertheless, he felt sure he had not made a mistake.

He folded his camera, and fastened it up in its waterproof cover. Then he started off as quickly as possible down the hill. But the darkness was intense, and the rain splashing into his face and eyes caused him to stumble badly, while the intermittent flashes of lightning were so dazzling that they momentarily blinded him, and his progress was thus seriously impeded.

It seemed an age ere he reached the foot of the hill and paused once more to take his bearings. Then, judging as nearly as possible the direction whence he had first glimpsed the figures of the two men, he started off again.

By a stroke of bad luck, the lightning had now ceased for a time, and the electric torch which he carried was little better than useless in the Stygian blackness with which he was surrounded.

He halted every now and again in the hope that perhaps some sound of the struggle might reach his ears. But the roar and rush of the rain and the almost incessant thunder ruled this right out of the question, and he was compelled to carry on.

But at length he came to a hopeless standstill.

"It's no use!" he muttered. "I might be going round in a circle for all the result I'm getting! And if I don't look out I shall lose my own bearings altogether, and be stranded on the moors for the rest of the night!"

Then it occurred to him that perhaps he had made a mistake—perhaps his eyes, dazzled with the incessant play of

the lightning and the misty veil of the rain, had played him a trick.

Maybe what he had seen and taken for a couple of struggling men was in reality only some trick of the night shadows.

"Just the same, I'd be ready to swear it in a court of law!" he muttered obstinately to himself. "And—yes, by Jove! If there were a couple of men down here, desperately fighting, it will be bound to come out on the picture I've taken, for I pressed the shutter release at the identical moment, and the camera was focused on the actual spot!"

Jack Drake disliked intensely having to give up, once he had set himself out on a task. But he had the good sense to realise now that it would be sheer folly to attempt to do anything in this baffling storm and darkness. And the fact that the photographs would afford final proof of the accuracy or otherwise of his visual impressions comforted him somewhat.

Without further ado, therefore, he retraced his steps, and, getting a new idea of his bearings, set out at a brisk pace towards the little farmhouse at which he was staying as the guest of his old school chum.

It was well past ten o'clock when he reached his destination, and both his chum, Harry Trent, and the boy's father had already begun to feel anxious about Jack's safety.

But in a few words Jack explained the circumstances, and when he added a graphic description of the amazing scene on the moors, which he still felt positive was no figment of the imagination, both Mr. Trent and his son were intensely interested.

"I can't think what on earth it could be," Jack said Mr. Trent gravely. "Besides, if your description of the spot is accurate, that part of the moor is one of the most desolate—"

"Maybe it was an escaped convict, pater," put in Harry suddenly. "He might have been overtaken by a warder from Stonemoor Prison, which is not very far from here—"

But Mr. Trent shook his head. "I hardly think so, my boy," he replied. "The prison, as you say, is barely a couple of miles off, and even in this storm we should have heard the booming of the guns, which are always fired when a convict escapes."

"Well, I suggest that we develop the negatives right away," cut in Jack Drake. "Then we can see for ourselves whether the light really happened or whether my eyes have been playing me tricks!"

"Good egg!" agreed Harry enthusiastically. "I've got a dark-room here and you've brought all your developing tackle! Let's get on with the job right away!"

Mr. Trent glanced suggestively at the clock, but decided that he would not interfere. Besides, he himself was keenly interested, and he knew that Jack Drake was not the sort of fellow to allow himself to be led away by pure imagination.

"Let me see the result when it's ready, Jack," he said, with a smile, and his grey eyes twinkled with excitement as he spoke.

Jack nodded and hurried away with his chum, and for the next hour or so they were busily engaged in developing and fixing the film.

At last he was able to hold up the film to the light and study it intently,

Harry Trent peering with almost equal excitement over his shoulder.

And as he did so Jack Drake gave a cry of triumph.

"There you are!" he almost shouted. "See it? There's two figures there—locked in each other's arms. See, one of them has one foot in the air, as if the other were steadily throwing him. Harry, it's as plain as the nose on your face!"

"You're right, Jack!" gasped Harry, with an almost equal show of excitement. "One of the men has his hand over the other's mouth, forcing him back! My hat, but it must have been a dickens of a struggle!"

There was no mistaking the evidence of the picture. The figures were plainly to be seen, against the outline of the bleak moors, temporarily illuminated by the flash of lightning, and there was no doubt that a desperate life-and-death struggle was taking place.

It was not possible, of course, to see any details about the two contestants, on account of the distance from which the photo was taken. But that they were both fairly big men, and that both were locked in a fierce embrace, there was not the slightest doubt whatever.

As quickly as possible Jack fixed the negatives, and then, without waiting to take any prints, they both hurried out of the dark-room and showed the result of their labours to Mr. Trent.

"It is certainly a most amazing business," admitted Harry's father, after he had studied the film intently for some moments, "and it is difficult to imagine what on earth 'two men were doing meeting each other out on that most desolate stretch of the moors on such a dreadful night as this, to say nothing of engaging in a desperate struggle!"

"I vote we wait till the morning," said Harry, "and then, if the storm has cleared, Jack and I could do a scout round and see if there's anything to be found."

But Jack Drake shook his head. "I'm sorry, old man," he said; "but I really must catch that early train back to town, much as I'd like to stay on a bit longer. The gov'nor wrote me on Saturday, saying he had been called away on some urgent business for the week-end and might not be able to get back to town till about the middle of the week; so, you see, I shall be wanted at Baker Street in case of anything turning up during his absence."

"Rotten luck!" growled Harry. "But, just the same, I think I'll have a prow round on my own account, and if I should find out anything I'll drop you a line."

"That's the wheeze," rejoined Jack promptly. "I should be no end interested to get to the bottom of the mystery—that is, if there is any mystery about it at all. And now I vote we turn in, if you don't mind. I'm feeling pretty fagged!"

Ferrers Locke's Queer Adventure!

AS luck would have it, the storm had cleared away by the morning, and for a moment Jack Drake was half inclined to accede to his chum's suggestion of the previous night and accompany him on a tour of investigation over the moors.

But a moment's reflection warned him that it would not be playing the game with Ferrers Locke, who, called away unexpectedly, was relying on him to get back to Baker Street to deal with any other business which might eventuate during the detective's absence.

So, bidding an revoir to his chum and Mr. Trent, Jack boarded the train for London, and was soon passing swiftly through the gorgeous hills and dales of Devon into Somerset, on across the fringe of Salisbury Plain and over the Marlborough Downs, till at last the train clattered over the myriad points into Paddington.

It did not take Jack long to get from here to Baker Street, but when he entered Locke's consulting-room he gave a gasp of mingled surprise and dismay, for the world-famous detective was standing before the fireplace in the act of pulling off his gloves.

"Hallo, my lad!" he exclaimed.

"Didn't expect to see me, did you?"

"I did not!" growled Jack Drake disgustedly.

Hang it all, he reflected, Locke might have sent him a wire or something, so that he could have remained on at Harry Trent's farm, if only for as long as would enable him to follow up the mystery of that astounding photograph.

"Thanks for the hearty greeting, my lad," returned the detective, with a quizzical smile. "You do seem pleased to see me again!"

Jack Drake's face cleared. Then he broke into a merry laugh.

"Well, as a matter of fact, guv'nor," he explained, "I was feeling a bit fed-up, as I thought I was doing the right thing in rushing back as quickly as I could in view of your letter."

"So you were, my boy," said Locke good-naturedly. "And I must apologise for apparently misleading you, and, if my surmise is correct, doing you out of an extended holiday. But, as a matter of fact, I really did not expect to get back so soon. I was called away by an urgently worded telegram from Dr. Lampton, the headmaster of Stormpoint College, near Winchester. But when I got there I found there was really nothing to compel me to remain. One of the schoolboys, a youngster named Gordon Carr—has mysteriously disappeared, and— But that can wait.

I can see there's something on your mind, Jack, so let's hear about it."

"Maybe what I'm worried about will turn out to be no more important than your own case, guv'nor," said Jack, with a smile. "But I must confess it has kept me guessing all the way up from Devonshire."

And, removing his coat and hat, he flung himself into a chair and briefly outlined the story of his unusual adventure of the night before.

Ferrers Locke listened interestedly and without interruption, and when at length Jack unfastened his bag and produced the still damp negatives, the detective studied them with the closest attention.

"It is certainly an extraordinary business altogether," admitted Locke at last, "and I wish I'd known about it, so that I could have sent you a wire this morning before I left Stormpoint. Of course, there may be nothing much in it, but, on the other hand—well, we don't hear of two men fighting for their lives in the midst of the desolate Devonshire moors and in a wild storm every day of the week, do we?"

"That's exactly what I thought, sir," rejoined Jack Drake eagerly. "And, of course, if I'd known that you were returning so soon I'd have risked it and stayed on. But no doubt if Harry discovers anything he will let us know about it."

Their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of tea, brought in by the silent-footed Ling Ling, Locke's Chinese servant. The famous sleuth and his assistant settled down to the meal in comparative silence.

"Well, Jack," said Locke, after they had finished, "as I did not expect to be returning to town so soon I'm at a bit of a loose end for this evening. I don't know what you are going to do, but I think I'll seize the opportunity and pop round to the Hotel Meridian, in Piccadilly, to look up my old friend Westford, the explorer. I saw a paragraph in the paper this morning to the

effect that he has just returned to London after a long tour of the Orient, and is staying for a couple of days only at the Meridian. He's leaving again on Wednesday for Egypt, and as I've not seen him for an age, I'd like to seize the chance while it's available."

Jack Drake nodded.

"Right-ho, sir!" he said cheerily. "I'll stroll round to the Coliseum for an hour or two. Might as well wind up the holiday in style while I'm about it. I expect we shall have our hands full from to-morrow onwards, as per usual."

An hour or so later, Jack Drake, having taken himself off theatre-wards, Ferrers Locke set out for Piccadilly. He felt in a walking mood, and decided to do the journey on foot, especially as the night was fine, though somewhat cold.

Reaching the Hotel Meridian, he inquired about his friend, and was informed that Sir Roger Westford was in.

"Shall we send up your name, sir?" asked the clerk politely, for he had recognised the eminent detective at once.

But Locke shook his head.

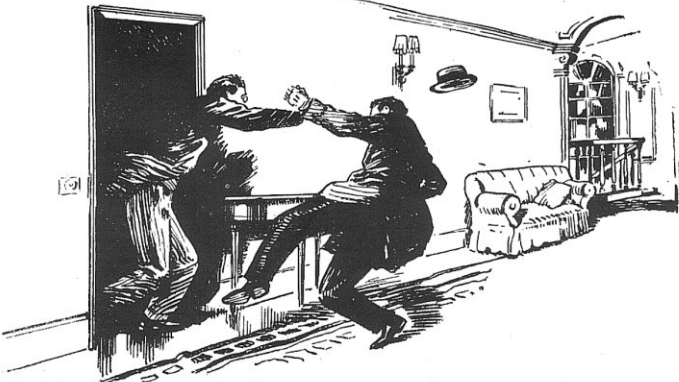
"No, thanks," he said, with a smile. "I'll run up myself and give him a little surprise. What is the floor and the number of the room, please?"

The clerk giving him the necessary information, Locke stepped into the lift and was swiftly taken upwards, alighting on the fourth floor. After a moment's hesitation he hastened along one of the many corridors.

"Room No. 544," he murmured to himself, scanning the numbers on the doors as he went along. "Let's see—that'll be this way. Ah, here it is!"

He stopped outside a closed door, and after a moment's hesitation knocked sharply upon the panel. Then, as there was no response, he knocked again.

But still the silence continued. "Funny!" murmured the detective. "The clerk said he was in!"



Thud! Ferrers Locke caught the flash of a suddenly outflung arm, felt the crash of a man's fist against the side of his jaw, and dropped headlong to the floor, his brain spinning round like a top. (See page 24.)

He glanced instinctively upwards to where, just over the door, was a half-open fanlight.

"Why, the room's in darkness!" he murmured in surprise. "That blessed clerk must have made a mistake. Still, I'll try the door-handle, and— What the thunder—"

He broke off with a sudden exclamation of amazement, for just as he had reached out to seize the door-knob the door was unceremoniously flung open, causing the detective to stumble forward and all but lose his balance.

He righted himself by an effort, and glanced quickly upwards.

Standing in the doorway was a tall, somewhat imposing figure. The surrounding shadows made it difficult to make out the features, but Locke caught the glint of an eyeglass, and then—

Thud! He caught the flash of a suddenly outflung arm, felt the crash of a man's fist against the side of his jaw, and dropped headlong to the floor, his brain spinning round like a top.

And even as he fell he seemed to hear, as if from an immeasurable distance, the sound of a light, mocking laugh, followed by the quick, soft patter of running feet, dying farther and farther away.

For an instant Ferrers Locke lay on the floor, too dazed to move.

Then, with a determined effort, he dragged himself to his feet and stared in amazement around him.

The corridor was entirely deserted. His unknown assailant had completely disappeared!

Locke stood there for a moment, lost in bewilderment. Then he turned instinctively towards the room, and as he did so his eye fell upon the number painted in white lettering on the door.

"No. 54B," he muttered; and then gave a short laugh. "I must have come to the wrong room, or that clerk gave me the wrong number! But just the same, that's no justification for that fellow's outrageous attack upon me! I— Hallo, what's this?"

His eyes, roving round the entrance to the room, the door of which now stood open, had caught sight of something. The room was in darkness, of course, but the blinds were not drawn, and through the windows a faint stream of moonlight cast a feeble radiance over the scene.

"There's something wrong here," murmured Locke, frowning, and without compunction he felt along the wall till his fingers came into contact with the electric-light switch. He pressed it, and the room was flooded with light.

"Well, I'm hanged!" he gasped, falling back a step in his astonishment. "The room's been turned inside out!"

Queer Clues!

FOR a full minute Ferrers Locke stood on the threshold of the room, gazing in amazement upon the scene within.

It was an ordinary hotel room—one of a suite—and Locke saw that there was a door in the right-hand wall leading into a second apartment, evidently the bed-room.

But the place was now in a state of utter chaos. The furniture had been pulled out of its normal position, drawers and cupboards had been dragged open and their contents thrown in confusion all over the floor. Even the carpets on the floor had been turned up. It was as if someone had been conducting a mad, frantic search against time.

The detective forgot for the moment THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 893.

his intention of calling upon his friend the explorer, so astounded had he become over this altogether unexpected adventure.

Having taken a good view of the position, he hesitated no longer, and, entering the room, searched for and found an electric bell-push labelled "Service."

He pressed this and waited.

A few moments later a uniformed hotel attendant came along the corridor, and Locke turned quickly to him. "Ask the manager to be good enough to step this way," he said briskly. "There has been a burglary here. I will remain here until you have delivered your message in case anything else happens."

He handed the amazed attendant his card, and the man sped away, while Ferrers Locke took up a position outside the still-open door of the suite and waited.

In a very few moments the portly figure of Mr. Ridwell, the manager, came hastening along the corridor, his face expressive of the gravest alarm. He held Locke's card in his hand, and made straight for the detective.

"Good-evening, Mr. Locke," he said fustily. "This is, indeed, a surprise, and a most unpleasant one, if what you say is true. Burglary is a bad business in any hotel, and— Good heavens! How on earth does this room come to be in this state?"

He broke off as his eyes swept the overturned contents of the room, and his jaw gaped in blank amazement and dismay.

"I thought it best to send for you at once, Mr. Ridwell," said Locke quietly. "I called at this hotel barely five minutes ago to see my friend, Sir Roger Westford. Apparently, either I made a mistake in the room, or your clerk downstairs gave me the wrong number. Anyway, I knocked at the door of this room, and, receiving no answer, I was about to try the handle when the door was flung open and a tall man, wearing a monocle, rushed out and bowled me clean over before I had a chance to see what was happening! And by the time I had picked myself up, my unknown assailant had disappeared altogether! Meantime, thinking something must be wrong, I took the liberty of switching on the electric-light, and—well, you see what I found!"

"Extraordinary!" gasped the hotel

manager. "Most extraordinary! Of course, there's nobody else in the suite. We must find out at once the name of the occupant of these rooms."

And he turned and hastened a few steps down the corridor, finally pausing at a speaking-tube in the wall.

For a minute or so he conversed in quick tones, and then hastened back to where the detective was waiting.

"That's strange, Mr. Locke!" he said in a low voice. "This room happens to be occupied by a gentleman recently arrived here from South Africa. He booked the suite yesterday morning, went out almost at once after leaving most of his luggage in our care, and—he has not been seen since. As a matter of fact, we were beginning to feel a bit worried, and had intended, if he had not returned by to-morrow, to communicate with the police."

Locke raised his eyebrows. "And the name of the gentleman from South Africa?" he inquired interestedly.

"His name is Carr, Mr. Locke—Sir Merton Carr."

"The detective positively jumped.

"Not the big Johannesburg mining magnate?" he gasped.

Mr. Ridwell nodded, surveying the detective with renewed interest.

"The same," he replied. "He arrived by the last mail-boat from Cape Town, and said something about having business here in connection with his only son, who is, I believe, a scholar at a big college in Hampshire."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" exclaimed the detective in genuine amazement.

"You know the gentleman, perhaps, Mr. Locke?" ventured the hotel manager. "His name is Carr, and now you are amazed silence."

"No, I have not that pleasure," replied the detective at once, "but, as it happens, only last week-end I was wired for by the headmaster of Stormport College to investigate the mystery of the disappearance of a boy named Gordon Carr."

"Gordon Carr!" repeated the manager excitedly. "Why, surely—surely that is the name of Sir Merton's son?"

Ferrers Locke nodded slowly.

"It is, Mr. Ridwell," he said quietly, "and it seems to me that what I had at first assumed to be a very commonplace case of a boy playing truant from school, is, in reality, developing into a first-class mystery. First, the disappearance of the boy, and now the equally unaccountable vanishing of his father! I suppose Sir Merton left no message with you? I mean, he did not say that he expected to be long away, or give any indication of where he was going?"

But the manager shook his head.

"He left no message at all, Mr. Locke," he replied. "He arrived about eleven o'clock yesterday morning, straight from the boat-train at Waterloo, left his luggage, had a wash, and then walked out, just as any other guest in the hotel might, and does do. We expected him in the normal way to return, at least, by night; but since he walked out of the main entrance, nobody, apparently, has seen or heard anything further about him."

For a moment Locke stood lost in thought. Then he turned suddenly to the hotel manager.

"Do you mind if I make a brief inspection of this suite?" he asked. "I have been retained by Dr. Lampton, of Stormport College, to look into the mystery of young Gordon Carr's disappearance, and I am strongly of the belief that the two disappearances are not unconnected—"

"By all means, Mr. Locke," agreed

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"There's something wrong here," murmured Ferrers Locke. And, without compunction, he felt along the wall till his fingers encountered the electric light switch. The room was flooded with light. "Well I'm hanged!" gasped the sleuth, falling back a step in his astonishment. "The room's been turned inside out!" (See page 24.)

the manager readily, "and we shall be most happy to give you all the assistance in our power. Apart from our anxiety for the welfare of our guest, this sort of thing does not do the hotel any good at all, and the sooner it is cleared up the better we shall like it."

Ferrers Locke nodded, and at once entered the room and began his investigation, while the manager stood on the threshold watching him interestedly.

It was difficult now to know just where to begin. The detective paced across the room, through the door in the right-hand wall, and into the bedroom beyond.

Here, too, he found a similar state of chaos, though perhaps it was not quite so marked as in the first room.

But Locke noted with special interest that Sir Merton's luggage had all been ripped open and the contents of the trunks and portmanteau spread in riotous confusion over the floor.

Even the bed had been stripped of its linen and the mattress dragged off on to the floor, while a large chest of drawers had been tarped inside out.

Everything was in a state of the wildest confusion.

"I reckon we can take it for granted that the burglar was the man with the monocle," thought Locke, after a few moments' survey of the scene; "also that he was aware of the fact that Sir Merton was absent—he may indeed have been responsible for the magnate's disappearance. We may also accept it as fairly proved that the man with the monocle suspected Sir Merton of being in possession of something which he—the burglar—most desperately required to possess. What we want to know is—first, what was the object of the search;

and, secondly, how did the man get into the suite?"

The last mystery was a teaser, for Locke knew that the Meridian, like every other big London hotel, keeps a strict watch on its guests' rooms and property, and it would not be easy for anyone, not actually a guest to gain access to the rooms in the hotel.

Locke gave his first attention to studying the means whereby the mysterious monocled man gained entrance to the suite, and, after a few minutes he signalled to Mr. Ridwell, who came forward with fussy expectation.

He found Locke standing by the window of the bedroom. The detective had lifted the sash and was peering out. He drew back as the manager joined him.

"This is where our burglar got in," he said briefly. "If you examine the catch on the window, you will see that although, apparently, it is in order, there are a number of faint, but undeniable scratches around it. The burglar used a rather clever little instrument—not unlike a long, narrow blade, of exquisite thinness and flexibility—forced it between the sashes of the window, and gently levered the catch back."

"But—but there's a sheer drop of seventy-five feet to the ground outside that window!" gasped Mr. Ridwell.

"There is," agreed Locke, with a smile. "There is also a very solid-looking rainpipe a yard or so to the left of the window, running from the roof to the ground. The burglar shinned up this unobserved—for, as you know, this wall faces on to a yard at the back of the hotel, beyond which is a high wall—then he swung himself on to this narrow but quite safe ledge two feet beneath

the window, and—well, there you are! A simple enough job to an athletic sort of man."

The detective turned away from the window, leaving the manager staring in dismay after him.

Having solved that little problem, Locke instantly dismissed it from his mind and began to tackle the room itself.

One of the first things he did was to drop down on to one knee almost immediately beneath the window and begin to scrutinise the floor in silence for some moments. Then he pulled an empty envelope from his pocket and a small clasp-knife.

Opening the knife, he scraped the blade gingerly along the floor near the beading beneath the window and tipped something from it into the envelope.

"It's all right," he said, with a smile, as he caught the amazed expression on Mr. Ridwell's face. "Only some fragments of a clay-like soil, doubtless shed from the burglar's boots. I want to take it home with me and see if I can discover, by studying it more thoroughly, just where our mysterious friend has come from. From a cursory glance the soil seems of a reddish tint, and suggests the Cornish coast, or perhaps the Devon moors. However, we'll soon settle that under the microscope."

He thrust the envelope into his pocket and continued his inspection, turning his attention now to Sir Merton's luggage.

The detective ferreted about among this for some minutes, finally pausing as he picked up a copy of a South African newspaper.

He turned its pages slowly, till at length he gave a grunt of satisfaction. Then he held up one of the news sheets.

"See that?" he said quietly.
 "Looks as if something had been torn out," said the manager vaguely.
 "Just so," rejoined the detective.
 "And as it has been torn from the main news page, it may prove to be an important clue. The main news page in a South African newspaper, Mr. Ridwell, is mostly filled with cable news—news from this country. You follow my meaning?"

The manager nodded, but looked vague and undecided. Locke smiled slightly, but did not trouble to enlighten him further at this point, turning his attention once more to the luggage, and, after that, to the trunks themselves.

One trunk in particular seemed to interest him unusually, and he ran his sensitive fingers more than once round the cloth-lined interior, frowning slightly as he did so.

Then, apparently not quite satisfied with this method, he pulled out a magnifying-lens, and went over the surface of the cloth inch by inch with painstaking slowness. And at last he gave a grunt of satisfaction, and, thrusting the lens back into his pocket, withdrew his pocket-knife, opened it, and began to pluck at a thin line of what turned out to be ordinary thread.

Bit by bit he pulled this out, till at last he had covered an "L"-shaped patch and unfastened a cunningly concealed flap. The hotel manager drew near and watched the proceedings with the most intense interest.

"What have you found?" he asked breathlessly.

But Locke made no reply.

The last piece of thread pulled away, Locke gently lifted the flap, and as he did so a piece of paper tipped out and fluttered to the bottom of the trunk.

Locke picked it up at once and unfolded it. Then, frowning perplexedly, he moved nearer to the electric light and studied it in silence for at least a couple of minutes.

Finally, he handed it without comment to the hotel manager, who, on holding it up, saw something like this:



Mr. Ridwell stared at this queer sketch in silence for fully a minute. Then he turned towards the detective.

"What the dickens does it mean?" he asked blankly.
 Locke smiled.

"That's what I shall have to find out," he replied. "Obviously it is a plan of some sort—very crudely drawn, of course, but none the less plain. There are also some single letters inserted at various points. For instance, 'W,' and, further on, 'D,' with, below it, in brackets, 'Lkd.' Purely; for the sake of argument, we might assume that 'D' stands for 'door' and 'Lkd' might be an ordinary abbreviation for the word 'locked.'"

"And those weird-looking signs next to the capital letter 'W'?" asked the manager. "What on earth would they signify?"

"Those signs," returned Locke immediately, "are merely shorthand notes, but they are written in a system of shorthand not very well known in this country. I hope to be able to decipher them later on, and may find that they afford a very useful clue.

"Anyway, the fact that this plan was so cleverly stitched into the lining of that trunk suggests at least two important things—first; that the plan is valuable to its owner, and, secondly, that it is more than probable that it is the very plan which the mysterious man with the monocle was after when he broke into this suite and turned everything upside down!"

Inspector Pycroft Brings News!

FIFTEEN minutes later, Ferrers Locke took his departure from the Hotel Meridian, after promising the now thoroughly mystified manager to keep him informed should any news come to hand regarding the disappearance of his guest, Sir Merton Carr.

The detective hailed a taxi, and was quickly driven back to Baker Street, where he found that Jack Drake was still absent at the Coliseum, the hour as yet being comparatively early.

Locke at once settled down to the study of the queer plan he had found in Sir Merton's trunk, and at the end of about half an hour he had contrived to transcribe the shorthand note written thereon.

"Wall has secret entrance," it read, "but looks solid."

"Good!" muttered the criminologist thoughtfully. "Then that means that the letter 'W' on the plan must obviously stand for 'Wall.' But what wall? And what on earth do the letters 'S.C.' with an arrow, signify?"

He laid the plan aside after a further few moments of study resolving to attend to it again later on. Meantime, he turned his attention to the fragments of claylike soil which he had scraped up from off the floor near the window in the hotel bedroom.

These he studied with particular care, and finally submitted them to a geological analysis in his laboratory.

"A mineral soil," he murmured to himself at last, "composed largely of red clay, and with particles of sandstone. Not pure 'sand-soil,' because that would inevitably show a percentage of only five of clay, whereas the proportion of clay in this specimen is at least thirty per cent. There are also minute chips of rock or granite. Yes, I think we may assume that our friend, the gentleman with the eyeglass, was very recently prowling about not far from Dartmoor—"

He broke off as Jack Drake came in, and then briefly outlined to his young assistant the details of what had happened at the Hotel Meridian. After that, the hour being late, they retired to bed.

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Y	O	R	K	E	G	R	E	Y	
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M		C	I	D	E	R		B	
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Y	A	R	D	S	S	M	I	L	E

You will find another ripping puzzle on page 17 of this issue.

Next morning at breakfast Jack Drake found a letter awaiting him, and, after perusing it, he gave an excited exclamation.

"I say, guv'nor," he cried. "This is from my pal, Harry Trent, and he says that a few hours after I left him a farmer reported the discovery of the body of an elderly man on the moors in almost the exact spot where I saw that fight!"

"Is that so?" said Locke, exhibiting, however, only the mildest interest.

"It's jolly important, too!" rejoined Jack Drake warmly. "Coming right bang on top of that fight, I saw—"

"Probably only a striking coincidence," muttered Locke, who was immersed in his newspaper; "and, anyway, you may have made a mistake. In a storm like that, optical illusion is no uncommon occurrence!"

Jack Drake glared, but said nothing. He saw at a glance that Locke was evidently intent upon his newspaper, and he realised that to press the subject further at this stage would be about as useful as kicking at a stone wall. Locke could be exasperatingly deaf when he liked!

So, with a grunt of emphatic disapproval, Jack Drake settled down to read through his chum's letter once again.

But he had barely got half-way through it when, without any warning, there came the sound of heavy footsteps outside, followed immediately by the sudden flinging open of the door of the room. The burly figure of Inspector Pycroft, one of the leading lights of the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard, stood on the threshold, his face red and his breath coming and going in excited gasps.

"Morning, Mr. Locke!" he barked. "Morning, Drake!" "Seuse me buttin' in like this, but it's important—darned important!"

Ferrers Locke laid aside his newspaper with a gesture of weary resignation. "So in my newspaper and my breakfast!" he said pointedly. "Pon my soul, you're a most inopportune beggar.

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- REG BOYCE, 9, Canada Road, Cardiff.
- JAMES EDWARD EGAN, 182, Widnes Road, Widnes.
- LEONARD HOCKING, 23, Chapel Road, Hoyle, Cheshire.
- D. JONES, 70, Bulwer Street, Everton, Liverpool.
- WM. LUCY, 2, St. Albans Villas, Durants Hill, Ponders End, Middlesex.
- D. MUNDAY, Cormorants Cottage, Cormorants, Lame, Redhill.
- TOM SPENCER, 37, Cremorne St., Meadows, Nottingham.
- ARTHUR STEELE, 14, Penarth Road, Cardiff.
- J. R. WATKINS, 25, Doynton Street, Highgate, London, N. 19.

Pycroft! What's the trouble now? Has some Society lady lost her pet pony, or—

"Pet pony fiddlesticks!" snapped the C.I.D. man, glaring ferociously at the detective, and waving a buff-coloured paper in Locke's face. "Just read that!"

The famous private detective took the telegram and glanced at it casually. Then he jumped to his feet with a gasp of amazement.

"Look at that, Jack!" he exclaimed, handing it to his young assistant.

And then it was Drake's turn to gasp. For the telegram, which was addressed to Inspector Pycroft from the Superintendent of Police at Morvale, Devonshire, contained this startling message:

"Can you investigate mystery of dead man found on Dartmoor yesterday, believed to be body of Sir Merton Carr, South African mining magnate? Urgent."

"Get my attache-case!" said Locke, as he pushed the amazed and breathless Pycroft towards the door. "Look lively! We're on this little stunt from the word 'go!'"

(None of my chums must miss the continuation of this amazing new detective serial. I can promise you all enough thrills and mystery to last you a lifetime. A tip: Don't forget to order a copy of this paper when next you pass your newsagent's shop; it saves disappointment!)



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COKER'S CROSS WORDS!

(Continued from page 20.)

perhaps, by the irresistible chorles of the crowd of fellows round him.

"No, it's not a mistake," he said slowly.

"Not!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Really not?"

"No!—It's not a mistake—it's a swindle!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Coker held up the delinquent newspaper with sorrowful scorn.

"They've really given the prize to this man Jones. The thing's a swindle—squared in advance, of course!"

"How do you make that out, Coker?"

"Because the prize hasn't come to the!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker knitted his brows. He looked at the Cross Word page again, the centre of grinning glances.

"No!" he said. "No, I won't say that—I won't say it's a swindle! It's only fair to put the best possible construction on it: It's not a swindle, but a piece of class, stupid, spiteful, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's it," said Coker, with a nod.

"This dummy?"

"What dummy?"

"The editor of this paper—this dummy, this crass idiot, really thinks that this rot of this man Jones is a good thing, and is incapable of understanding that my Cross Word is the real goods. I'm not angry with him. A man can't help being a fool!"

"A Fifth-Former can't anyhow!" murmured the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's no good being down on a man because he's a fool," said Coker. "A man can't help it if he's born so, and that's how it is with this poor chap: Just sheer incapacity—just sheer inability to do his job! I shall not try again. I admit I never foresaw this—that I should be taking trouble for nothing, simply because I had to deal with a crass ass! Now I know, I shall, of course, give the whole thing the go-by."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker of the Fifth walked away, leaving the Greyfriars fellows yelling. They had wondered how Coker would take it. He had taken it Cokerishly, so to speak. His self-satisfaction was unimpaired. "The man was a fool, and that was the end! But though that view of the matter satisfied Coker, it was not shared by anyone else.

Fortunately for Coker, the opinions of other fellows passed him by like the idle wind, which he regarded not. So the inextinguishable laughter of the Greyfriars fellows did not disturb his lofty serenity in the very least.

That evening there was peace in Coker's study. Cross Words being a thing of the past—owing to the crass stupidity with which they were conducted—Potter and Greene made it up with Coker; they felt that they could stand Coker minus Cross Words. So, with a due allowance of "soft sauder," Coker was brought round, and all was calm and bright.

But for days and days afterward—cheeky fags would come up to Coker in the passages and the quad and ask him how many "K's" there were in "cat," and how many "F's" there were in "cough," and how many "A's" there were in "eight," and similar questions; and the brainy man of the Fifth was quite glad when at last the fellows forgot Coker's Cross Words.

THE END.

(Now look out for next week's ripping story of the Greyfriars chums—"The Mystery of Mosses"—and take the precaution of ordering your MAGNET early.)



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