

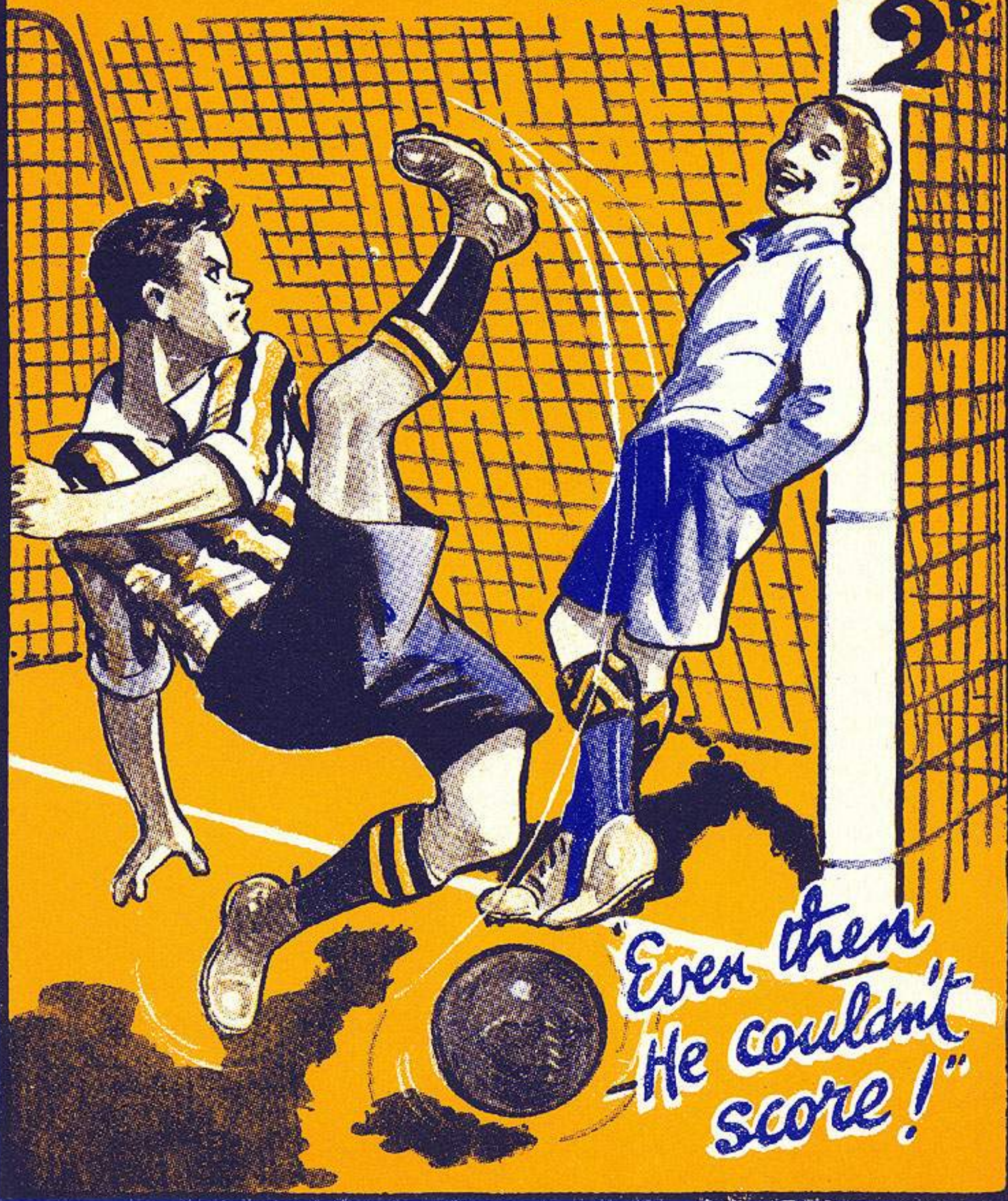
YOUR DAD USED TO READ IT—NOW YOU TRY IT!

No. 1,164. Vol. XXXVII. Week Ending March 29th, 1930.

The MAGNET

EVERY SATURDAY.

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*Even then
-He couldn't
score!"*

"THE FOOL OF THE FIFTH!"

Horace Coker's a born footballer—in his own estimation; but in the eyes of his schoolfellows he's a born idiot!
(Read the splendid story of *Greyfriars* inside and see what YOU think of this amazing schoolboy character.)



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

LET'S burst into song—or rather, let H. Oxenham, of 3, Colwith Road, W.8, burst into a limerick which well deserves the pocket wallet I have sent along to him. Here is his effort:

Billy Bunter, the "Barrel," is cursed
With an appetite, also a thirst.
I'm sure very soon
He'll get like a balloon,
Then one day we'll hear that he's
burst!

Now, following my usual habit, I'll dip into my diary, and see what interesting things have happened during this particular week on previous years. There is not much to record, although fourteen years ago this week, our country was beginning to feel the effects of the German submarine attack on our mercantile marine, and many ships went to the bottom during the week. I can tell you it was no safe job going to sea in those days and any of my chums who are thinking about embracing the sea as a profession nowadays ought to thank their lucky stars they weren't born fourteen years earlier, for in 1916 it was courting danger even to poke the nose of a ship outside harbour! And March is not a particularly pleasant month in which to be torpedoed!

It wasn't a pleasant month, either, for the veterans who engaged in

A FAMOUS WAR

—the Crimean War, which was declared on February 28th, 1854. Our soldiers had to put up with the most terrible hardships when they landed in the Crimea, but they proved victorious in the long run. Compared with the last war, of course, the Crimea was a picnic, for there were only about 100,000 men engaged in the Crimea, whereas, in the last war the British Empire forces lost no less than over a million men killed, and nearly two million and a half wounded.

WHAT IS A "CRIMP"?

J. D., of West Hartlepool, asks me. He has come across the word in an old-time sea-story, and doesn't understand it. Well, in the old days, when it was difficult to get men to go to sea, a man known as a "crimp" was used to entrap young men into the Mercantile Marine. And if he couldn't get them to go of their own free will, he had no compunction in doping them and shipping them aboard—a practice known as "shanghai-ing." Both "crimping" and "shanghai-ing" are forbidden under dire penalties nowadays, and all seamen have to be signed on at a Government shipping office.

Be careful not to confuse "crimp" with "crump." The latter was the name given to a particular high explosive shell used during the late war.

HOW MUCH IS A FARTHING WORTH?

—No, not an ordinary farthing, but a Queen Anne's Farthing. Norman Hunt, of Whitstable, wants to know. An ordinary Queen Anne farthing with a broad brim, in good preservation, is worth about a sovereign, as are also the patterns of 1713 and 1714. The two patterns which show Britannia under a canopy, and Peace on a car, marked R R R, are worth about a couple of guineas, and one pattern showing Peace in a car is worth about five pounds. I wish I had a few farthings of the latter type!

A RATHER CURIOUS QUERY

comes from two of my Darlington readers. They have been discussing the respective merits of Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry—especially with regard to wrestling, and they want to know if a wrestling match was arranged between the two, who would be the victor?

Now that's a question I can't answer, and for a very simple reason! If one knew exactly what the result of a wrestling or a boxing match was going to be, there would be no interest in the match at all! And it happens that Harry and Bob are just about equally matched. It would be quite possible for Harry to "floor" Bob—but then it would be equally possible for Bob to do the same thing to Harry!

It's a good thing that they are firm chums. Think what "dust-ups" there would be at Greyfriars, if otherwise.

A penknife goes this week to Douglas Nelson, of "Warnford," Old Road, East Cowes, Isle of Wight, for the following joke, which should make you smile.



Boy: "I want a box of those pills like I had yesterday, please."

Chemist: "Are they doing you good, then, sonny?"



Boy: "Yes, rather; they just fit my pop-gun!"

Now we come to general queries. I wonder how many of you know what a "potwalloper" is? J. F., of Maidstone, doesn't, and he has asked me to tell him. Before the passing of the Act which gave everyone a right to vote, people who had boiled a pot for six months claimed the right to vote for Members of Parliament,

and such people were termed "potwallopers," or "pot-boilers."

Here's

A STAMP QUERY.

One of my Middlesbrough readers has a stamp which bears the name "Magyar-orszag," and he wants to know to which country it belongs. It is a Hungarian stamp. He has another which bears the legend: "Kraljevstvo Srba," and this one is a stamp of Jugo-Slavia.

A Welsh reader asks me for the explanation of the trick of

THE MULTIPLYING PENNY!

This can be purchased at any magical stores, and consists of a penny hollowed out so that another coin can be concealed inside it. So that one penny can be made into two without the conjurer having to resort to "palming." With two of these trick pennies, four apparent pennies can be produced, and so on.

The same reader wants to know the secret of what he calls "The Electric Penny," by which, I take it, he means a penny which will pass through the neck of a bottle. This can also be purchased, too, and consists of a penny which can be folded. Immediately pressure is released it is brought back to its proper size by means of an indiarubber band. But, by that time, the penny is inside the bottle, and the audience can't get inside to examine it properly!

No more questions now, as I shall have no space to tell you what I have in store for you in

NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE.

First of all, there's Frank Richards' long complete yarn of the chums of Greyfriars, which is entitled:

"DUFFER AND HERO!"

When you've read it you'll agree with me that it is one of the best he has ever written. To tell you the truth, I find it hard to describe Frank Richards' yarns week by week, because he always seems to go "one better." Anyway, you'll find that he won't let you down in next week's story; you're in for a real tip-top yarn.

As for our serial, "For the Glory of France!" I must say that Geo. E. Rochester carries on the MAGNET tradition of making each yarn better than the last! Furthermore, the more one reads of his yarns the more one falls under their spell. Mr. Rochester can tell a rattling good story—and his present serial is the best he's ever done.

Then comes another yarn featuring Hal Smiles and his magic ring, entitled:

"CAYNINGHAM GOES WEST!"

by Bob Cherry, which you're sure to appreciate.

To complete this bumper programme there will be the usual "footer" feature and another clever poem by the Greyfriars rhymester.

My advice to all is—Order Your Copy Early!

YOUR EDITOR.

Send along your Joke or your Greyfriars Limerick—or both—and win our useful prizes of leather pocket wallets and Sheffield steel penknives. All efforts to be sent to: c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

A YARN THAT WILL MAKE YOU WISH IT WAS TWICE AS LONG!



THE FOOL OF THE FIFTH!

A Superb School Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Begging for It!

WINGATE looked worried. Harry Wharton & Co., as they came on the captain of Greyfriars in the quad that morning, noticed it, and sympathised. They sympathised silently, of course. The great man of the Sixth had no use for remarks on the subject from juniors of the Lower Fourth.

Probably he did not even observe the sympathetic five.

Between the captain of the school and Lower Fourth fags, there was a great gulf fixed, and no doubt the heroes of the Remove passed him by like the idle wind which he regarded not.

They knew, of course, what worried him.

Everybody at Greyfriars knew that the First Eleven was at sixes and sevens, and that old Wingate simply did not know what to do to get together a team for the match with Rookwood.

Harry Wharton, as captain of the Remove, had been there himself, so to speak, and was well aware that a football captain's job was not always like unto a bed of roses.

So he was specially sympathetic.

Wingate, walking about on the Sixth Form green, with his hands thrust deep into his trousers-pockets, and a wrinkle in his brow, did not take any heed of the juniors in the offing. Obviously, he was thinking out his problem, and not to his satisfaction.

The Famous Five would have passed

on their way; but just then Coker happened.

Coker of the Fifth came out of the House, looked round him, spotted Wingate on the Sixth Form green, and strode towards him.

The expression of determination on Coker's rugged face showed that Horace Coker had definitely made up his mind about something.

The chums of the Remove exchanged a grin.

They could guess what was in Coker's mind, and what he was going to say to the captain of the school. So, instead

Wingate, apparently, had not observed the juniors hanging about. But he had to observe Coker. It was impossible not to observe Coker, when that burly youth marched right up to him, and halted with his nose hardly a foot from Wingate's.

He observed him, but did not look pleased.

"Look here——" began Coker. The captain of Greyfriars interrupted him.

"Cut off!" he said briefly. Coker reddened. The Sixth Form man spoke to him just as if Coker had been a fag.

"What?" ejaculated Coker. "Cut off! You're not allowed here! Travel!"

Coker laughed. "Never mind that," he said. "But I do mind it!" snapped Wingate.

"Well, it comes to the same thing!" said Coker. "I've got something rather important to say, Wingate. And it won't keep."

Wingate looked at Coker of the Fifth.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at both of them—with increasing interest. They could read the Greyfriars captain's thoughts in his speaking countenance. Wingate was considering whether to take Coker by the scruff of the neck and hurl him headlong off the Sixth Form green, or whether to let him wag his chin.

Wingate was a peaceable fellow, and if he could not, as the old text enjoins, suffer fools gladly, at least he could suffer them patiently. So Horace

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COKER.

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Beef and Brawn | Terrific! |
| Pluck | Unlimited! |
| Brains | Nil. |

But you can't help liking

COKER.

of passing on their way, they lingered by the chains of the Sixth Form green, to look on. The interview, they thought, would be interesting, probably exciting, to judge by the expression on Horace Coker's face. With Coker of the Fifth in that resolute mood, and Wingate worried, it was quite probable that something might happen. And if it did, the Famous Five did not want to miss it.

Coker, loftily regardless of the fact that nobody under the Sixth—not even tremendous blocs of the Fifth—were allowed on that green, marched resolutely up to Wingate.

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Coker—without knowing it—had a narrow escape of hurtling over the chains of the Sixth Form green and landing in a heap.

"You're a cheeky ass, Coker," said Wingate quietly. "But what is it? Cut it short."

"About the football."

Wingate raised his eyebrows.

"The what?"

"Football!" repeated Coker.

Wingate smiled.

He was frightfully worried just then on that very question of football. With five or six of the best men at Greyfriars down with the flu, and one of the biggest features of the season just coming off, there was plenty for a football captain to worry about. Nevertheless, a smile dawned on his face as Coker referred to football. Smiles dawned on the faces of the five juniors loitering by the chains.

Why it was, Coker never knew, and was never likely to know, but it was a fact that the mere mention of football by Coker was enough to make a fellow smile. Perhaps it revived recollections of the way Coker played it.

"Football!" repeated Coker. "You're going over to play Rookwood. Now, there are some good men at Rookwood—"

"There are!" agreed Wingate.

"Greyfriars has to go all out to beat them!" argued Coker.

"Quite!"

"Half a dozen men are out of it now, and in sauny—"

"I'm aware of that."

"But there's good material still available," said Coker.

"That's what I'm thinking out," said Wingate, "and if you'll excuse me, Coker, I'm not looking round, at the present moment, for advice."

"Very likely not," said Coker. "But advice is what you want, all the same, and you're going to get it."

"Look here—"

"In the circumstances, it's up to you to draw on the best material available," explained Coker. "So far as I can make out, you're leaving out your very best man—"

"Can't be helped!"

"Why can't it be helped?" demanded Coker warmly.

"Gwynne's in sauny with flu."

"I'm not speaking about Gwynne."

"If you mean North, he's in sauny, too."

"I don't mean North."

"Well, Blundell of the Fifth is laid up as well—"

"I don't mean that ass Blundell!"

"Then who the thump do you mean?" exclaimed Wingate impatiently. "I don't mind hearing a suggestion, even from a duffer who can't play. Who is it?"

"What about me?"

"You?"

"Me!"

Wingate stared at Horace Coker. He seemed to doubt whether Coker was in earnest.

But there was really no doubt about it. Coker was in earnest. He was in deadly earnest.

"You?" repeated the Greyfriars captain. "But you can't play football, Coker! Don't be funny!"

"I didn't come here to listen to Sixth Form swank," said Coker, breathing hard. "I came here to talk sense!"

"You haven't started yet!"

Coker breathed harder.

"I'm not bragging about my footer or—" he began.

"I shouldn't," agreed Wingate dryly.

"It's not for me to point out that I'm

the best all-round footballer at Greyfriars, resumed Coker.

"Great pip!"

"But the facts speak for themselves," said Coker. "In some ways, Wingate, you're not a bad skipper. But in such matters as spotting a man's form, and picking out a good player, you're a dud—just a dud. Merely a dud."

"Thanks!"

"You've seen me play," said Coker, in growing alarm. "You've seen me, and you've never picked me out for a match. Mind, I don't say it's jealousy, Wingate, or envy or anything nasty like that. I believe you're straight. But if it isn't jealousy, what is it? Incapacity?"

"Oh, my hat!" said Wingate.

"You can't judge a fellow's form," said Coker. "Well, what I ask is this—take my word for it. I'm the man that's wanted to put backbone into the team for Rookwood. You can't see it?"

"I certainly can't."

"But there it is. Take my word for it. Take the word of the man who knows," urged Coker.

There was a pause before Wingate replied.

Coker waited; and Harry Wharton & Co., more interested than ever, waited.

Really, it was not easy to know what to say to a fellow like Coker. A fellow who played football like a wild elephant, or a mad mastodon, and fancied that he was entitled to a place in the First Eleven on his merits, was not easy to talk to.

Coker, when he played footer, would charge men on his own side with frightful energy, and spread terror and dismay through his own ranks. He had been known in a moment of wild excitement to send the ball into his own goal. Furthermore, he had been known to miss scoring a goal with the ball no more than a foot from the goal-line, with the goalkeeper leaning nonchalantly against the post.

Many of the rules of Soccer were unknown to Coker; but the rules he knew he broke as a matter of course. He had, according to Price of the Fifth, been born offside. And he had no respect for the judgment of a referee, because he knew better than any referee. More than once he had been barely restrained from making a terrible example of a referee.

Coker was an original fellow in many ways, but never more original than when he played footer. What his game was like it was hard to say. Fellows hardly knew to what to compare it. The antics of a wild elephant, the cavertings of an excited buck-jumper, the career of a runaway motor-bus, the paroxysms of an insane hippopotamus—all these similitudes had been used, but none of them did Coker's game justice.

What made Coker fancy that he could play football was a mystery that had never been solved at Greyfriars.

But he did fancy so. There was the trouble.

"My dear chap," said George Wingate, at last kindly, "I'm afraid there's nothing doing. Leave it at that."

Coker shook his head.

"I can't leave it at that," he answered. "I should be willing for my personal claims to be passed over. But there's the school to be considered. We want to win matches."

"You want to help us to win matches?"

"That's it."

"Well, you can do that."

"Good!"

"By keeping off the grass—"

"What?"

"When we want to lose matches,"

said Wingate gravely, "you can count on a place in the First Eleven. Until then—"

"Look here—" roared Coker.

"When we get fixtures for hopscotch, or marbles, or kiss-in-the-ring, I'll remember you," said Wingate. "But, so far as football goes, you don't come into the picture. Good-bye!"

"Do you think I'm standing that?" demanded Coker, trembling with just wrath.

"Well, yes, I think so. I don't see that you've got a lot of choice," remarked Wingate.

"I'm playing in the Rookwood match," said Coker deliberately. "I refuse—distinctly refuse—to let that match be thrown away by your fat-headed incapacity, George Wingate. I refuse to be kept in the background, while a lot of duds chuck matches away. I refuse—"

"Will you go and tell all this to somebody else?" asked Wingate patiently. "There may be fellows who would like to hear it. I'm not one of them, as it happens."

"You cheeky ass—"

"Now, that's enough, Coker—"

"You swanking dummy—"

"You're talking to the captain of the school, Coker," Wingate reminded him mildly.

"I'm talking to a born idiot," said Coker. "I'm talking to a howling ass who doesn't know enough to go in when it rains. I'm—"

Wingate raised his hand.

"Shut up!" he said.

"I'm talking—"

"And get off the Sixth Form green—sharp!"

Coker laughed—a scoffing, sardonic laugh.

"You hear me?"

Wingate's long-tried patience appeared to be petering out.

"I'm not deaf."

"Well, go!"

"Shan't!"

That was Coker's last word.

From words the matter now proceeded to actions—prompt, drastic, and efficacious. Wingate of the Sixth collared Coker, whirled him round, and ran him to the chains. Coker, a burly and powerful fellow, struggled furiously, but, to his surprise, found that he was no match for the captain of Greyfriars.

Struggling, roaring, and wriggling, Coker was run to the chains of the Sixth Form green, and hurled across.

He landed in a heap, spluttering.

Wingate left him there, and strolled away across the green as if he had done with Coker.

Coker sat up.

He gasped for breath. Harry Wharton & Co. regarded him with keen interest. Coker was not the man to admit defeat. He never knew when he was beaten. Nature, who had been rather mean with Coker in the matter of brains, had endowed him with unlimited pluck and bulldog determination.

Now he was getting his second wind. When he had got it there were going—obviously—to be fireworks.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. Coker staggered to his feet. Obviously, he was going to charge Wingate like a bull on the Sixth Form green. The results of that exploit would certainly have been very serious for Coker—had it come off. For Coker's sake—to say nothing of a little entertainment for themselves—the Famous Five weighed in.

"Bag him!" said Harry Wharton.

"What-ho!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The bagfulness of the esteemed

Coker is the proper caper," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And like one man the Famous Five fell upon Horace Coker and bagged him. Five pairs of hands grasped Coker, and he went over like a sack of coke. Like a sack of coke he was lifted and carried away.

"Leggo!" roared Coker, struggling frantically. "You cheeky fags! You impudent little beasts! I'll smash you! I'll pulverise you! I'll spificate you! Oh, my hat! Oh! Ow!"

Struggling and yelling, with arms and legs waving wildly, Coker was borne away.

"I'll smash you!" roared Coker. "Leggo! My hat!"

"Go it!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"I'll pulverise you—"

"Quick—march!" chortled Nugent.

"I'll spificate you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker's struggles did not avail him.

Coker was prepared, at any moment, to thrash any number of fags. Had he been asked, he would have replied without hesitation that he could have handled the whole Remove with one hand tied behind him.

But that was only one of Coker's many little errors. He couldn't. Five Remove men were too much for him—much too much. Yelling and roaring and wriggling, Coker travelled helplessly in the grasp of the Famous Five, amid cheers from crowds of Greyfriars fellows who gathered to look on at the procession.

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly, as they came up to the House. "Here's Prout!"

"Oh, my hat! Chuck it!"

The chums of the Remove "chucked" it—and chucked Coker—at the same moment. They melted away into space, leaving Coker struggling, and roaring, and spluttering, almost at the feet of his Form master.

Mr. Prout glared at him.

"Coker!"

"Groooogh!" gasped Coker. "I'll—ooooh—I'll—ooooop—"

"Coker! How dare you."

"Groogh! I—I—"

"Are you not ashamed, Coker?" boomed Prout. "You, a Fifth Form boy, indulging in senseless horse-play in the quadrangle with junior boys! Have you no sense of propriety? Have you no self respect? Upon my word."

"I—I—I—" gasped Coker.

"This is not the first time," boomed Prout. "It is not the second time. I am ashamed of you, Coker! Go into the House."

"I—I—I—"

"Go into the House, and remain there!" thundered Prout. "Begone!"

And the hapless Coker, still gasping, went. He went, with feelings that could have been expressed in no known language; and Prout, with a snort, resumed his walk.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Horrid for Hobson!

"PULL up your socks, you men!" said Hobson, of the Shell.

James Hobson had a thoughtful look.

Hobby and his men were on the junior football ground the following afternoon. There was a Form match that afternoon, between the Shell and the Remove. It was close on time for kick-off, and Mr. Lascelles, who was to

were an older Form, of course, than the Remove, and their opinion was that, in football matters, the Remove were not in the same street with them. Still, they had to admit that the Remove won as many matches as they lost—owing to various accidents and mischances. On the present occasion, the Shell were going to wipe the Remove off the face of the earth: they were there specially to do it. Yet Hobson seemed a little anxious.

"What's up, Hobby?" asked Carr of the Shell. "What are you worrying about, old bean? You don't think the fags can beat us?"

"Oh, no! But—it's rather special to-day," said Hobson. "You know the pickle Wingate is in over the First



As the Shell goalkeeper stepped out to the ball and grabbed it to clear, Harry Wharton shot at him like an arrow and bumped him back into goal, ball and all!

referee the match, could be seen in the distance, approaching.

"Pull up your socks!" repeated Hobson.

He glanced towards Mr. Lascelles, still distant. Wingate of the Sixth was walking down to the ground with the young master.

"We shall beat those kids!" said Hoskins of the Shell, rather disdainfully.

"Kids or not, they can play footer," said Hobson, with a glance towards Harry Wharton & Co. "They beat the Fourth hollow."

"The Fourth are hardly in our class, at Soccer!" remarked Stewart of the Shell.

"I know! But those fags play a good game," said Hobson, "and in fact, the better game they play to-day, the more I shall like it. It will give us a chance to show what we can do."

Hobby's friends looked at him inquiringly, rather curiously. The Shell

Eleven. He simply can't make up a team for Rookwood."

"What about it?"

"This!" said Hobson, impressively. "A Shell man never gets a chance in the First Eleven. Not in ordinary circumstances. But with Wingate at his wits end for a team, I believe there's a chance for us."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I heard, at least, that Wingate was coming down to watch the game to-day," said Hobson. "And it's true—for you can see him coming. Well, my impression is, that he's going to keep an eye open, and see whether any junior shows form enough to be put into the First Eleven."

"Phew!"

The Shell fellows were keenly interested now. The chance of one of their number being selected to fill a vacancy in the mighty First Eleven, was dazzling.

"Of course, there may be nothing in

it," said the captain of the Shell. "But my belief is, that that's what Wingate is coming down to the field for, and there's a chance. So all you men have got to play the game of your lives. We've not only got to beat the Remove—we've got to walk all over them, and leave 'em gasping. We've got to show Wingate that if he's hard up for a man, he needn't sort out some dud from the Sixth or Fifth, but can find what he wants in the Shell. Catch on?"

"Yes, rather!" said Stewart, with a deep breath.

"What-ho!" said the Shell, with one voice.

"Play up like billy-o!" said Hobson. "Every man's got to go all out, and make skittles of the Remove."

To a man, the Shell fellows were keen—keen as razors. Playing under the eye of the captain of the school, with a chance of such dazzling glory falling to a fellow who distinguished himself, it was certain that the Shell would play as they had never played before.

Mr. Lascelles arrived on the ground, with a smile and a nod to the junior footballers.

Wingate took up his stand at a little distance, with his hands in the pocket of his overcoat. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him, rather flattered by the great man coming down to watch the game. A good many of the Remove and the Shell had gathered round the field, and the captain of Greyfriars towered over them. No other senior was honouring the match with his presence.

"Pull up your socks, you men," said Harry Wharton, unconsciously using the same words as Hobson of the Shell. "There's Wingate—and we want him to see that the Remove can play footer."

"What-ho!" said Bob Cherry.

"The playfulness will be terrific," declared Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh. "It is an esteemed and ridiculous honour for the absurd captain of the school to spectate."

And the Remove—like the Shell—went into the field determined to do or to die.

Kick-off fell to the Shell, and the kick-off was followed up hard and fast by Hobson and his men. With Wingate's eye on them, Hobby & Co. felt as if they could have put "paid" to Aston Villa, Sheffield United, or the Spurs.

Probably they couldn't have! But that was how they felt, and they gave the Removites the benefit of it.

They were older and heavier than the Remove, and they prided themselves on their knowledge of the game. But in point of fact, they had to deal with a team that knew how to play Soccer. In the first five minutes, they drove their way to goal, and attacked that citadel valorously. But Squiff, between the posts, was equal to the test, and Johnny Bull succeeded in clearing the ball away to midfield.

And then the tussle went into the Shell half, and bore down on the Shell goal.

This was not what Hobson intended at all. His intention was to give the Remove goalie a lot of work, while his own custodian had quite an easy time. There was no easy time for the Shell goalkeeper, however. The Remove came on in fine style, passing the ball like clockwork, and a shot from Harry Wharton very nearly materialised: unfortunately hitting the bar and rebounding. James Hobson had quite trembled for a moment, now he breathed again.

Another moment, however, and his breath almost stopped, for as the goalkeeper stepped out to the ball and grabbed it to clear, the captain of the Remove shot at him like an arrow, and bumped him back into the goal, ball and all.

"Goal!"

It was first blood to the Remove.

"Good man!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

Hobson's face, for a few moments, was worth a guinea a box. This was not in the least what he had intended to happen, under the watching eyes of the captain of Greyfriars.

"Goal! Bravo!"

Wingate's voice could be heard, among those shouting round the field. The captain of Greyfriars was evidently interested in the game.

"Pull up your socks, you fellows!" muttered Hobson, as they walked back to the centre of the field. "We don't want to turn this into a circus for the Remove."

"One swallow doesn't make a summer!" said Stewart.

"Don't let them bag any more, anyhow."

"We won't!"

And for the remainder of the first half they didn't.

The game went on, hot and strong; swaying to and fro, with narrow escapes on both sides. But when the whistle went for half-time the score was still unchanged.

"One up for the Remove!" said Bob Cherry, as he sucked a lemon. "Keep that up, you men! Wingate's still there—and he's got to see us win!"

"One up for the Remove!" said Hobson to his followers. "It was a fluke, more or less; but there it is—one up for the Remove! That means that we've got to bag two at least in the second half. For goodness' sake, you men, pull up your socks!"

In the second half fortune smiled upon the ambition of James Hobson. It was Stewart of the Shell who succeeded in beating Squiff between the Remove posts; and, as all the Remove remarked, it was because Squiff's foot slipped at a critical moment that it came off. Still, there it was—a goal for the Shell, and the score was level.

Half an hour remained to play; ample time for the Shell to pile up a score that would make Wingate open his eyes wide.

That was, of course, if the Remove let them.

But the Remove didn't!

To Hobby's surprise, and still more to his annoyance, the game was almost confined now to the Shell half; and when the Shell got away, the ball came back to their territory at once. The man between the sticks had the busiest time of his life. Once the Shell broke away and rushed the ball almost to the Remove goal; but Johnny Bull cleared with a kick that landed it far past the half-way line. And after that the Shell never got into the Remove territory at all.

Much against the grain, they had to devote their energies to defence. And the defence had plenty to do.

Wingate of the Sixth was still watching. Evidently he was bent on seeing the game through from start to finish. But that glorious exhibition the Shell had intended for his eyes was not coming off. It was frightfully exasperating to Hobson. He really began to wish that Wingate was not there. He had no desire to let Wingate behold the Shell penned up in their half, and unable to hold their own against the



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"Jevver get left?" That was what Fisher T. Fish started asking 'em when he first arrived at Greyfriars, for Fishy "figured" that once a cute, sly business man from New York got to work, the rest of the school were going to get left—some! Strange to say, however, things didn't work out quite like that. Instead, Fishy's wonderful money-making schemes generally landed their originator well and truly in the soup. But has that finished him? No fear! Once again Fisher T. Fish is up and doing (or being done!), as you'll find when you read this side-splitting story of the Chums of Greyfriars. Make sure of it!

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Remove. But that, and no other sight, was what Wingate beheld.

And almost on the stroke of time even the defence petered out, under the attack of the Remove; and the Bounder drove the ball in. Out it came, fisted by the Shell goalie, only to meet Harry Whar-ton's foot and pop in again like a pip from an orange, missing the goalie's desperate grasp by inches.

"Goal!"

It was a roar round the field.

"Goal! Hurrah!"

"Bravo!" roared Wingate. "Bravo! Well kicked, kid!"

Hobson could have groaned. He was a good sportsman, and knew how to lose; but this was cruel.

The whistle rang.

"I rather fancied we should pull it off," remarked Vernon Smith, as the juniors went off the field. "But the Shell played up pretty well. We licked 'em though, and that's everything!"

"The lickfulness was terrific!"

Wingate of the Sixth was strolling back to the House. James Hobson cast a mournful glance after him. With whatever object the captain of Greyfriars had watched that game through, certainly the outcome could not have encouraged him in the idea of picking out a Shell man for a vacancy in the Greyfriars First. Really, it was horrid for Hobson.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Coker Means Business!

"ROTTER!" said Coker of the Fifth.

"Um!" said Potter, of that Form.

"H'm!" said Greene.

"Disgraceful!" went on Coker.

"Um!"

"H'm!"

"Scandalous!" said Coker.

Potter and Greene were silent. "Um!" and "H'm!" were all they could think of by way of rejoinder; but they could not keep on saying "Um!" and "H'm!" for ever. So they said nothing.

Coker was pacing his study in the Fifth Form passage. His manly brow was darkly clouded.

Wrath sat on the lofty brow of Coker. Indignation burned in his breast.

Potter and Greene were in the study for prep. Prep was not in the thoughts of Horace Coker. He would have laughed sardonically at the mention of prep.

Such matters as prep, class work, and the like were small beer—ininitely small beer to Coker just now. It was true that Prout had to be faced in the morning; and this was rather an important consideration to Potter and Greene. It was nothing to Coker! Coker was not the man to fiddle while Rome was burning.

"Unspeakable!" added Coker.

He glared at Potter and Greene, as if daring them to deny that it was rotten, disgraceful, scandalous, and unspeakable.

But Potter and Greene did not deny it. They knew better than to argue with Coker. If a fellow did not argue with him, Coker might shut up at long last and let a fellow get his work done. But if a fellow argued with him he was likely to understudy the little brook in the poem and go on for ever.

"It isn't," said Coker, still glaring, "as if there's a lot of matches ahead. If we were at the beginning of the season, instead of near the end, I

might pass this over. Wingate, of course, will get licked at Rookwood—that's a foregone conclusion. Then he might have sense enough to play me. But the Rookwood match is the last big fixture of the season. That puts the lid on."

Coker paced the study again.

"Look what a team he's got together!" he said. "Why, you two fellows are in it! I need say no more than that!"

"You're frightfully complimentary!" said Potter, slightly sarcastic.

"You're my friends," said Coker. "But friendship isn't football. I speak as I find. Do you fellows play football like I do? I ask you!"

"No!" said Potter fervently.

"Never!" said Greene.

"Look at the rest," said Coker, who was fortunately impervious to sarcasm. "Wingate's stuck up the list on the board—and a precious list it is! You two fellows—Ha, ha! Wingate himself, of course! And I'll say this for Wingate, he's a fool, but he can play footer!"

A PRESTON Reader wins one of this week's HANDSOME LEATHER POCKET WALLETS.

Said Coker, with lofty disdain:
"These Form masters give me a pain.
Why, Prout told me to-day,
In his ignorant way,
There's no 'k' in 'cat.' What a brain!"

Sent in by P. Black, 1, Gillow Fold, Skew Bridge, Penwortham, near Preston.

Write a Greyfriars limerick to-day, chums, and send it along to me!

"Well, that's something," remarked Potter. "There are some fools who can't play football."

"There are!" agreed Greene.

Still blind and deaf to sarcasm, Coker nodded and went on:

"He's got Loder down—and Loder's a better hand at smoking cigarettes and backing horses than at Soccer! He's got Walker—very poor stuff! Lawrence—he's not bad, though not my style. Bancroft—all you can say of him is that he's in the Sixth; and that's not saying much for any man. Sykes—not bad, but, as I said before, not my style. Lucas—a Sixth Form man, merely that and nothing more. Tomlinson and Bland of the Fifth—good men in their way, but to compare them with me is simply asinine!"

"Um!"

"H'm!"

Potter and Greene were driven back to those non-committal monosyllables.

"And I'm left out!" added Coker unnecessarily.

He paced again.

"What do you think?" he demanded, turning on his chums suddenly.

"I think we'd better get on with prep!" suggested Greene.

"Don't be a silly ass, Greene!"

"Well, Prout, you know—" urged Potter.

"Don't be a silly chump, Potter!"

Potter and Greene sighed. They sympathised with Coker. A fellow who couldn't play footer for toffee, and fancied that he could play a great

game, was a deserving object of sympathy. But they wished Coker would shut up. From the bottom of their hearts they wished that.

Coker showed no signs whatever of shutting up.

"If it wasn't near the end of the season," he said, "a fellow might stand it. But this is practically the last chance. Can a fellow, with a proper sense of his duty to the school, and a proper sense of his own rights and claims, stand aside, and allow the last few matches of the season to be chucked away by an incompetent fathead?"

"The fellows think Wingate's a pretty good skipper, you know," murmured Potter.

"That only proves what I've often said, Potter—that most of the fellows are fools."

"Oh!" said Potter.

"He can play," said Coker. "I've said he can play. But as a skipper he's a wash-out. He doesn't know a good man when he sees one. I had a talk with him the other day, and tried to make things clear to him. Did it have any effect? No. What do you think he did? Pitched me neck and crop off the Sixth Form green!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Potter and Greene chuckled involuntarily. Coker glared at them as if he would bite.

"Is that a laughing matter?" he roared.

"Oh! Nunno! Of—of course not," stammered Potter. "N-n-not at all."

Coker paced.

Potter and Greene exchanged a dolorous glance. If Coker was going to roam about the study like a tiger in a cage, and keep his jaw incessantly on the go, how was a fellow to get his prep done? It was really getting too thick. There were certain advantages in being Coker's study-mates; the hampers that came from Coker's Aunt Judy, for instance. But there were disadvantages, too; and at the present moment Potter and Greene were chiefly conscious of the disadvantages.

Would Coker never shut up?

Apparently he wouldn't!

"There's one thing," said Coker, coming to a halt again and facing his study-mates.

"What's that?" asked Potter wearily.

"One of you fellows can stand out of the team."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"That will give Wingate a last chance of doing the right thing and picking a good man," explained Coker. "When he finds himself a man short at the last minute he may see sense—what?"

Potter and Greene gazed at Coker. They had fancied that they knew, by experience, every sort of an idiot Coker was. But Horace always had something new to surprise his friends.

"Stand out!" said Potter. "My hat!"

"Let Wingate down!" said Greene. "My word!"

"It's not letting anybody down, fat-head!" said Coker irritably. "It's making room for a better man. Can't you see that?"

"Not quite!" said Greene.

"Which of you is going to stand out?" asked Coker, who had apparently settled the matter in his own mind. "Don't both speak at once."

Potter and Greene did not both speak at once. They did not speak at all. They only gazed at Coker.

"Well?" rapped Coker.

"For goodness' sake don't be such an ass, Coker!" said Potter, goaded.

"We're not standing out. Wingate's picked us to play, and we're playing."

"Yes, rather!" said William Greene, with emphasis.

"And you're my friends!" said Coker, in the tone Julius Cæsar might have used when he made his celebrated final remark, "Thou, too, Brutus!"

"Friendship isn't football, as you said yourself," observed Potter.

"It's the same thing in this case—and you may be saving the match for Greyfriars by standing out and making room for a better man."

"Oh dear!"

Coker paced again. Potter grunted. "Look here, we've got to do our prep," he said. "You can have a row with Prout in the morning, if you like, Coker. We don't want to—see?"

"Blow Prout!"

"That's all very well," said Greene; "but—"

"Shut up, Greene!"

Horace Coker came to a halt again. He fixed his eyes on the two Fifth Form men, who were now showing unmistakable signs of irritation.

"I know what I'm going to do," he said. "There's a team consisting practically of duds posted on the board. Wingate's had the cheek to put it there. Well, Wingate isn't the little tin god he fancies he is. I'm not kow-towing to Wingate. My name ought to be in that list! You know that. Well, my name's going in."

Potter and Greene gasped.

"But—"

"My name's going in!" said Coker, with calmness. "I shall pick out the name of the biggest dud of the lot, cross it out, and write my name over it."

"But you can't!" protested Potter. "Old Wingate will—"

"Hang Wingate, and hang you, too! There's not a single man in that team who could hold a candle to me when it comes to footer."

"Great pip!"

"Coker! Coker, old man—"

"That will show all Greyfriars what I think! It will show Wingate! It may make him realise that he's gone too far: It may make him do the right thing. You never know! Anyhow, that's what I'm going to do."

"Coker! You—you can't!" said Potter, almost tearfully. "A man who meddles with a list posted up by the captain of the school—"

"I'm going to!"

"Don't, old man!" implored Greene. Coker's friends were really alarmed for him. "For goodness' sake, old chap—"

"I'm going to!"

"For goodness' sake—"

Slam!

Coker was gone.

Potter and Greene gazed at one another. Coker was gone—evidently to carry out his fell intention! It was unbelievable—unimaginable—except that anything could be believed and imagined of Horace Coker.

"Oh crumbs!" said Greene faintly. "Wingate will chew him up like a hungry bloodhound."

"What will be left of Coker," said Potter, "will want a lot of sorting out."

"The howling ass—"

"The burbling chump—"

"Anyhow, he's gone!" said Potter.

"Let's get on with prep."

"Let's!" agreed Greene.

And they got on with it. It was probable that awful things would happen to Coker. But, at least, he was gone, and his friends could get their work done, and that was a comfort.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Coker is Satisfied!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter almost shrieked. He came up the Remove staircase in hot haste, gasping for breath as he came.

Seldom did Bunter ascend a staircase in a hurry; even in descending one his movements were generally tortoise-like. Now he was fairly bolting up, as if the well-known law of gravitation no longer had any effect on his unusual avoirdupois.

He burst into Study No. 1, crimson with excitement—breathless, spluttering, bursting with news.

"I—I—I say, you fellows—"

His little round eyes were almost bulging through his big, round spectacles.

"I—I—I say, Coker!" he stuttered.

"Coker?" repeated Harry Wharton. "What about Coker?"

He smiled, and Frank Nugent smiled. No fellow with a sense of humour could hear Coker mentioned without a smile.

"Coker!" gasped Bunter. "He—he—he's—"

"What's the latest?" asked Frank Nugent.

"He—he—he's—" Bunter gurgled for breath. "I say, you fellows, Wingate will slaughter him! He's put his name in the football list for the Rookwood match."

"What?"

"Honest Injun!" gasped Bunter. "He's crossed out Greene's name and written in his own! I—I saw him!"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent gazed at Bunter, dumbfounded.

They were prepared to hear that Coker of the Fifth had done almost anything. But they were not prepared for this. Coker had surprised Greyfriars a lot of times; but he still had one surprise left.

"Impossible!" ejaculated the captain of the Remove at last. "Even Coker wouldn't—"

"He has! I saw him! Lots of fellows saw him! There's a crowd down there now—honest Injun!"

"Coker's altered Wingate's list—written his name over the name of a First Eleven man?" said Nugent incredulously.

"Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"Great Christopher Columbus!"

Bunter rolled out of Study No. 1 to spread his news further. His fat squeak was heard along the Remove passage.

Wharton and Nugent gazed at one another.

"It can't be possible!" said Harry. "Even Coker—"

"It can't!" said Nugent. "Even Coker—"

"Wingate will slay him—"

"Let's go and see, anyhow."

"Yes, rather."

"Gammon!" the Bounder's voice was saying, as they went out into the Remove passage. "Even Coker—"

"Rot!" said Peter Todd. "Even Coker—"

"Rubbish!" said Squiff. "Even Coker—"

There were excited comments up and down the Remove passage. "Even Coker" seemed the burden of the song. Apparently the fellows had an idea that even Coker had his limit when it came to sheer idiocy.

"Impossible!" said Bob Cherry. "Even Coker—"

"Even the esteemed Coker could not be such a preposterous and terrific

chump!" declared Hurreo Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Let's go and see!" chuckled Hazel-dene.

"What-ho!"

The fellows simply couldn't believe it! They could not believe it even of Coker. But they all wanted to see! There was a rush down the Remove staircase.

If Coker really had done this—

It was impossible! A football list, duly drawn up by the captain of the school, in his own hand, posted on the board as official—stuck there by Wingate himself! To meddle with such a document was unheard-of—unimaginable! Even Coker—

What would happen to Coker if he had done it was an interesting and thrilling question. Such a thing had never happened before, and if it had happened now no imaginable punishment seemed adequate. Strewing Coker in little pieces all over Greyfriars would hardly have met the case.

There was already a crowd round the board when the swarm of Remove men arrived on the scene. The news evidently had spread. In fact, many eyes had been on Horace Coker when he was handling his pencil. Fifth Form men, Shell fellows, Fourth-Formers, were gathered there in great numbers. Some of the Sixth were there, staring. Harry Wharton & Co. had some difficulty in shoving through to get a sight of the paper.

And even when they saw it they almost doubted their eyesight.

It was true!

The name of "W. Greene" had been crossed out with a heavy stroke. Under it was written "H. J. Coker."

Had any fellow fancied that Wingate, in a moment of temporary aberration, had decided to play Coker, there was proof otherwise, for the name was written in Coker's own well-known fist. Coker's handwriting was unmistakable—at least, it could never have been mistaken for anything but the trail of a spider that had fallen into an ink-well and crawled out. Coker had done this!

There was a buzz of excited comment round the board. Loder of the Sixth stared at the outrage, and walked away—probably to tell Wingate. The captain of Greyfriars was not yet on the scene.

What would he say when he came? What would he do? Even fellows who did not like Coker felt sorry for him then.

"The potty chump!" said Vernon-Smith. "This is the giddy limit—even for Coker!"

"It is the terrific and preposterous limit!"

"Must be off his jolly old rocker, you know," said Temple of the Fourth. "Coker wants takin' care of."

"Wingate will take care of him!" chuckled Hobson of the Shell.

"Poor old Coker!"

"He can't think that Wingate will leave his name there!" remarked Fry of the Fourth. "It's just cheek!"

"Sheer neck!" said Stewart of the Shell.

"And it's Greene's name he's marked out," chuckled Price of the Fifth. "How do you like it, Greeney?"

Greene made a hopeless gesture. Potter and Greene had been drawn to the spot by the general excitement. They were gazing at the handiwork of their chum with worried eyes.

Greene was rather annoyed, as a matter of fact. Coker's action, of course, was sheer imbecility; but Greene did not like his name being picked out for erasure, even by a born



"Which of you men is going to stand out in this match against Rookwood and make room for a better man?" said Coker irritably. "Don't both speak at once!"

idiot. Coker evidently regarded him as the least valuable member of the eleven. Of course, Coker's opinion on football matters was worth nothing—less than that, if possible. Still, it wasn't pleasant.

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Billy Bunter, "here comes Wingate!"

There was a hush.

George Wingate came striding up, and the fellows respectfully made way for him. There was breathless silence as Wingate arrived at the board and looked at the fell work of Horace James Coker.

The fellows hardly know what to expect. They waited breathlessly. Wingate rather disappointed them. His face hardly moved a muscle, as he looked at this unparalleled outrage. He was quite calm.

For a few moments a pin might have been heard to fall. Then George Wingate spoke.

"Where's Coker?"

"In the games study!" said Tomlinson of the Fifth.

"Thanks."

Wingate walked away.

The games study, at the end of the Fifth Form passage, was on the next floor. Wingate went to the staircase. Like an army, half Greyfriars marched after him.

Apparently unconscious—at least, heedless, of his numerous following, Wingate went up to the Fifth Form passage.

Quietly and sedately, just as if nothing out of the common was happen-

ing, he arrived at the door of the games study.

He looked in.

Coker of the Fifth was there.

Their glances met.

The swarm behind Wingate looked at Coker. They expected to see him crumple up under the steady gaze of the captain of the school.

But he did not crumple up.

He returned Wingate's steady stare with a breezy cheeriness and confidence. Coker was not alarmed. He was not dismayed. What he had done, he had done, and Coker was satisfied.

"Coker!" said Wingate.

"Hallo!" said Coker.

"You seem to have meddled with a paper on the board—a paper put up by me."

"I shouldn't call it meddled," remarked Coker. "I've made a correction."

"You've made an alteration in the football list."

"Exactly."

"I shall have to write that paper over again," said Wingate.

"I shouldn't," said Coker. "That will give me the trouble of altering it again. Why give a fellow trouble for nothing?"

There was a gasp from the crowd behind Wingate. Coker probably was the only fellow at Greyfriars who would ever have dreamed of talking to the captain of the school in this style. Coker sometimes said that he was no respecter of persons. Evidently he wasn't!

"You will step down to the prefects' room, Coker," said Wingate. "I shall expect you there in five minutes."

"If you want to talk to me we'll talk here," said Coker. "I don't care for the prefects' room. Too many of the Sixth about. I've told you before that I don't think much of the Sixth."

"It matters very little to me what your opinion of the Sixth is. I shall expect you in the prefects' room five minutes from now!"

Horace Coker thrust his hands deep into his pockets.

"The Sixth are a lot of—"

"Five minutes," said Wingate. "It's a prefects' beating! Don't be late!"

Wingate turned and walked away without waiting for an answer. Coker stared after him and burst into a laugh.

"Prefects' beating!" he said. "I like that! Ha ha, ha!"

Wingate disappeared. Outside the games study the crowd waited for Coker. They were ready to escort him in state to the prefects' room, to take his beating. But Coker did not stir. Five minutes elapsed, and Coker was still lounging carelessly in the games study.

"He's not going," said Frank Nugent, looking at his watch. "Time's up—and he's not going."

"The next move is up to Wingate!" remarked the Bounder.

The crowd waited. The next move was not long in coming.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Prefects' Beating!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here come the jolly old prefects!" "Now for the giddy circus!"

The excitement was intense. In stately array four Sixth Form prefects came up to the games study—Loder, Carne, Walker, and Sykes. They looked a little self-conscious with so many eyes on them, though they affected to be disregarding of the eager crowd swarming round the door of the games study.

Coker had refused to go, as he was bidden. It was carrying defiance of constituted authority to an unheard-of pitch.

Really a fellow couldn't defy the orders of the captain of the school who was also head prefect!

Coker, unhappily, seemed unaware that he couldn't.

As he refused to walk down to the prefects' room, where the official beating was scheduled to take place, of course he had to be fetched. Four hefty prefects had come to fetch him. This really was rather a compliment to Coker; in the case of no other fellow, probably, would such a force have been deemed necessary.

Loder of the Sixth led the way into the games study; the other three followed him in.

Behind them the doorway was crammed.

"Now look out for the fireworks!" murmured Bob Cherry.

It was fairly certain that there would be fireworks. Coker, having carried defiance of constituted authority so far, was not likely to submit tamely. What he thought would be the outcome of this wild rebellion it was impossible to say. Probably he did not think at all. Thinking was not much in Coker's line.

"We've come for you, Coker," said Gerald Loder.

Coker glanced at him.

"You needn't have troubled," he answered.

"You're wanted in the prefects' room."

"I'm staying here, thanks!"

"Will you walk down quietly?"

"No."

"Very well; we'll take you."

Coker squared his shoulders, pushed back his cuffs, and confronted the enemy with bulldog determination.

"Any man that lays a finger on me will get hurt!" he said. "I'm warning you!"

"Collar him!" said Loder.

The four Sixth-Formers proceeded to collar Coker. Undaunted, Coker faced the enemy and resisted. Coker was powerful and hefty, and his courage was unbounded; and it was just as well that four fellows had come for him. As it was, the odds were much too heavy even for the hefty and courageous Coker. Coker never counted odds; but odds had their effect just the same, counted or uncounted.

To his surprise, and still more to his anger, Coker was rushed over and pinioned, almost in the twinkling of an eye.

He got in one drive, which landed on Loder's chest and made him gasp. Then he was up-ended and reduced to a struggling heap.

For about a minute there was a wild struggle in the games study. Then Coker came out, carried. Loder and Carne had an arm each; Sykes and Walker had a leg each. They bore Coker out of the games study, wriggling and spluttering.

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"Will you walk now?" asked Carne politely.

"No!" roared Coker.

"Bring him along!" said Loder.

Horace Coker was brought along. After the prefects and their prisoner marched an innumerable crowd. Coker was still trying to resist; perhaps that was why his head was banged on the banisters several times, each bang eliciting a wild howl from Coker.

"Follow your leader!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

A breathlessly excited crowd followed on to the prefects' room. Under a sea of eyes, Coker was carried into that august apartment. Then, to the deep disappointment of the spectators, the door was shut.

"Rotten!" growled Johnny Bull.

The sacred mysteries of the prefects' room were not for common eyes. But if the interested juniors could not look, they could listen. They swarmed round the door, to listen for the sounds of whacking and the sounds of woe.

In the prefects' room Coker was set

THIS WEEK'S WINNING RIBTICKLER!



SOFTENING THE BLOW!

Ma: "Dear, dear! What is the matter with baby?"

Pa: "Oh, he bumped his head against one of the piano pedals."

Ma: "Poor little thing! Did he hurt himself?"

Pa: "Oh, no! It was the soft pedal he hit!"

C. Goble, of 40, Sugden Road, Worthing Sussex, who submitted the above winning joke, now possesses one of our useful pocket knives.

It's up to all of you to win these useful prizes!

on his feet. Walker and Loder held his arms in an iron grip.

All the prefects, excepting those who were in sunny with influenza, were present. Coker stared round at the august assembly with reckless defiance and boiling wrath.

Wingate eyed him calmly.

"You know what you've done, Coker," he said. "You're here for a prefects' beating. Better take it quietly."

"Rats to you!" retorted Coker.

"Bend over that chair!" said Wingate, taking up a cane and pointing.

"Shun't!"

"Bend him over!"

"You cheeky rotters!" roared Coker, struggling, as he was whirled towards the chair. "You cheeky blighters! You fancy you're going to cane a Fifth Form man! My hat, I'll spifficate the lot of you!"

"Bend him over!"

Coker resisted desperately.

Four prefects were required to bend him over the chair and hold him there in an attitude suitable for punishment. But they did it! Coker, still struggling and wriggling, was pinned down. A hand on the back of his neck drove his features into the seat of the chair, and Coker gurgled.

Wingate swished the cane.

Properly speaking, a prefects' beating should have been administered by all the prefects wielding the cane in turn. That was the rule. But in Coker's case, the rule had to be departed from. That was due to Coker's originality. No fellow had ever been known before to resist a prefects' beating. Coker was making history. As four prefects were required to hold him down, they couldn't take their turns with the cane. Wingate administered the beating; and as his arm was the heaviest in the Sixth the departure from the regular rule did not benefit Coker.

Whack!

"Yoooooop!" roared Coker.

Whack!

"Ow!"

Whack!

"Leggo!"

Whack!

Coker made a desperate effort and almost broke loose. Bancroft came to the help of his holders and lent an additional hand. Under the vigorous grasp of five sturdy Sixth-Formers Coker simply collapsed. He sprawled over the chair, gasping, and the cane came down again with a terrific swipe.

Whack!

"Yoooooooooop!"

WHACK!

"Ow! Oh crikey! Leggo! Leave off! Yuuuurrrrgh!" spluttered Coker.

Coker was tough; but this was terrible. Wingate was putting his beef into it—and he had heaps of beef! The cracks of the cane rang like pistol-shots, far beyond the confines of the prefects' room.

"My hat! Coker's getting it!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Yaroooooop!" came from the other side of the closed door.

"Oh, listen to the band!" chanted Skinner.

Whack!

"That's seven!" said Bob.

Whack!

"Wingate's going it!" breathed Bob.

"He will tire his arm at this rate. I fancy he's tired Coker already!"

Whack!

"Great pip! That's nine! Poor old Coker!"

"I think that will do." They could hear Wingate's quiet voice from the prefects' room. "Coker—"

"Ow! You rotter! Ow!"

"You will apologise for meddling with the football list—"

"Catch me!"

Whack!

"Whooooooooop!"

"We can't let it go at this," said the captain of Greyfriars calmly. "You've got to learn to behave, Coker. I'm afraid that I shall have to keep on with this cane till you're sorry for what you've done."

"Yah! I'll smash you—"

Whack!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-woooooop!"

"Come, don't be an ass, Coker! What's the good of asking for more?"

"Yah! Oh! You rotter— I'll— I'll—"

There was a sound of struggling, quickly quelled.

Whack!

"Ow! Leave off!" shrieked Coker.

"Oh, my hat! I'll smash the lot of you—I'll spifficate the lot of you—"

(Continued on page 12.)

INSIDE INFORMATION!



By
The "OLD
REF."

"Our Wise Man of the Whistle" says that to become a successful referee something much more than a knowledge of the rules is required. All intending referees should, therefore, take heed of these useful notes.

THE good folk who are not so young as they used to be are always telling us about the things which are wrong with the rising generation. This rising generation, according to the old folks, are lacking in all sorts of things—courage among them. Let me confess right here that I have said the same sort of thing myself: I have declared that the lads of to-day are nothing like the lads of my time.

But I take it all back: swallow my words—because of a couple of letters I have received this week from boy readers of the MAGNET. One of them says that the other day he was asked to referee a match and adds that he thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and therefore wants to know more about refereeing.

The other boy says that, owing to a physical disability he is prevented from playing football, but he

is very keen on the game, and has an idea that he would like to be a referee of first-class games when he grows up.

So you see that these two readers are both, in reality, asking the same question. They want to know what they must do in order to become referees. Of course, I could be very humorous concerning these requests. I could repeat the advice given, many years ago, by "Punch" to readers about to marry. That advice was contained in one word: "Don't."

But after all, somebody has got to referee football matches, and I can assure you that there are people who really enjoy themselves when they are on the job. One of the best referees we have had in recent times was Mr. Jack Howeroft, who "took" the Cup Final of 1920. When the Football Association decided that he was too old to continue refereeing it was about the saddest day in Mr. Howeroft's life.

NOW to be very serious on this question of how to become a referee. I would say in the first place to every youngster who has ideas in that direction, to get as much practice as he possibly can. Thus he will get the habit of making good and prompt decisions.

It follows, obviously that

nobody should undertake to referee a football match unless he is conversant with the rules of the game.

The straightforward rules can be learnt from any book which contains them, and the little snags are soon learnt by actual experience of refereeing.

I am convinced in my own mind, however, that to be a successful referee something much more than mere knowledge of the rules is required. You want what can best be described as personality, and you want also the knack of impressing that personality on the players who come under your charge. The best referees in the world make mistakes in the control of matches, give wrong decisions. But some referees give wrong decisions with such an air of authority that players and spectators alike wonder whether they, and not the referee, are wrong.

I once asked a referee who had had a lot of experience whom he tried to please—the players or the spectators by his refereeing. His reply was to my way of thinking most apt.

"When I go out with the whistle I never bother about pleasing anybody but myself, and I am quite happy if I succeed in doing that."

Be yourself and please yourself is a very good motto for referees.

Then the personality of the referee is important because the way in which the players regard the referee determines to a very large extent the way in which they play. Let us imagine that a big Cup-tie is being played. The players in that Cup-tie look for the name of the referee who has been chosen. If they know, from past experience, that this referee is not the sort of person who will stand any nonsense at all, then it follows that when the game starts they don't try any nonsense, and the task of the referee is made ever so much easier.

NOW let us progress a bit with the way to become a referee. I have said learn the rules, and also I have said get as much practice in little games as possible. Before a referee can get on any League list he has to undergo certain examinations—a written one and an oral one.

The written examination is intended to prove whether or not the would-be referee knows the rules of the game: offside, and all the other little and big things by which football is governed. The oral examination has for its object the trying of the would-be referee so far as subtle points are concerned. A catch question is put here and there, and the manner in which the budding referee answers decides the examiners whether he is likely to be the sort who can make up his mind quickly in an emergency, or when an unexpected end out-of-the-way thing happens.

I should also add—though, of course, this is merely a minor point—that

one of the tests for referees concerns his capacity for distinguishing colours. Obviously colour-blind referees are of no use at all.

When the referee has duly passed his examination he applies to the local Football Association—each county has at least one, and some counties have more than one—to be put on their list. Once on that list he is given matches to control. That is the real start, and the rest depends very largely on the referee himself. If he referees the little matches well, then the news of his success as a referee is sure to spread, and in due course he will be recommended to the higher authorities and thus get bigger games to control.

As a final word to my would-be referee readers, I should mention the remuneration.

For first-class matches—First and Second Division games and for big Cup-ties the referees get three guineas plus third-class travelling expenses.

Some people don't think the fee is high enough, and argue that better referees and better refereeing would be obtained if the officials were paid bigger fees.

Well this may be true, but I doubt it. The only referees who make good at the job are those who love refereeing. And, as I said before, there are people who love the job.

THE FOOL OF THE FIFTH!

(Continued from page 10.)

Whack!

"Ow! Ow! Wow! Whooooooh! I—I—I'll apologise, if you like, you blighter! Ow! Anything you like! Wow! Wow! Ow!"

"That's good enough!" said the captain of Greyfriars quietly. "Let him go, you men! And try to have a little more sense in future, Coker!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!"

The door of the prefects' room opened. A swarming crowd craned their necks to look in. Coker, ruffled, dishevelled, crimson, breathless, wriggling, came out—in a heap! Four or five pairs of hands slung him forth, and he tottered headlong into the waiting crowd.

Potter and Greene picked him up. They walked him away—in silent sympathy. Coker went! Some of the fellows had rather expected him to charge back into the prefects' room like a wild bull. But that terrific licking had had its effect, even on Coker. For the present, at least, Horace Coker had had enough. He went.

The crowd dispersed, excitedly discussing the thrilling affair. A little later, a new paper appeared on the board, in Wingate's hand. Fellows wondered whether Coker would venture to "correct" it again. But the paper remained unaltered. Evidently, Coker had had enough!

But if any fellow had fancied, from that, that Coker was done with, that fellow would have made a mistake. Horace Coker rather resembled the man in the story, who was dead, but would not lie down. Horace Coker was far from done with, as the subsequent remarkable happenings were to show.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Not Bunter!

"PUTRID luck!" grunted the Bounder.

Tom Redwing looked up.

Smithy had been reading a letter, and now he tossed it on the study table, with a grunt.

"What's the trouble, Smithy?" asked Redwing, with a rather dubious look at his study-mate.

The Bounder, as he caught that expression on Redwing's face, grinned.

"Fathead! That isn't a letter from a hookie, tellin' me my horse has come in eleventh!" he said.

"Oh, good!" said Tom; and he laughed.

"It's from my father."

"No bad news, I hope?"

"That depends on how you look at it. The pater was coming down to see me to-morrow, and I was going out in the car with him for a joy-ride. Now he can't come—blinkin' business turned up."

"Sorry?" said Tom.

"He's sending the car, to take me for a joy-ride, as a sort of consolation prize," added the Bounder. "That's all right, of course. But I haven't seen the pater since last hols."

He grunted again. Few fellows would have suspected the Bounder of soft and affectionate feelings; yet there was no doubt that he was deeply attached to the fat and florid Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith.

He was always glad when that plump and portly gentleman came down to the school; and fellows who observed it were rather surprised.

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Many Greyfriars fellows were rather particular about parents; it was against a fellow if his people did not make a good show. Wilkinson of the Fourth had writhed for nearly a term because his pater was so ill-advised as to visit Greyfriars in elastic-sided boots. Temple of the Fourth owed much of his prestige to the fact that his father was Sir Reginald, and looked it. Mr. Vernon-Smith was not the pater whom a fastidious fellow would have been glad to walk round the quad. But the Bounder cared nothing for such things. Once he had had a terrific combat with Bolsover major for criticising Mr. Vernon-Smith's waistcoat, which certainly leaped to the eye.

"Sorry!" repeated Tom.

One of the things he liked best about the Bounder was that Smithy could see no fault in his father.

"Well, it can't be helped!" said Vernon-Smith. "No good grousing. We get the joy-ride, anyhow. Where shall we go?"

"That's up to you, Smithy," said Tom, with a smile.

"We'll make it a long trip, and get leave from Quelchy to stay out a bit late," said Smithy. "May as well ask some fellows—it's a big car, and will take a party. What about askin' Wharton? If he comes, Quelchy will know we're not kickin' over the traces, and goin' to the jolly old races."

Redwing laughed.

"Good wheeze!" he said.

"I suppose Wharton wouldn't come without the whole family?" said the Bounder. "But we could pack them in. Shall I ask him?"

"Yes, rather; it would be jolly."

"Right-ho!"

The Bounder left Study No. 4, and walked along the Remove passage to No. 1. In that study he found the Famous Five, gathered for a chat after prep.

"Trot in, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton, as the Bounder looked in at the door. Vernon-Smith trotted in.

"We were talking footer!" said Bob Cherry.

"I could have guessed that one," said Smithy.

Bob chuckled.

"Well, what about fixing up a game for to-morrow afternoon?" he asked. "There's no match on. But it's a half-holiday, and so—"

"What about a joy-ride?" said the Bounder.

"Ripping—if somebody will lend us a car!" said Bob, laughing. "Nobody in the Remove except Mauly can afford joy-rides."

"Well, somebody's lendin' me a car."

"Oh, good!"

"My pater was comin' down in the car to take me out—he can't come, so he's sending the chauffeur with the car instead," explained Smithy. "I came to ask you fellows if you'd care to come? Reddy's coming—but there's room for a bunch."

"It is a preposterous good idea!" remarked Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Wharton can ask Quelchy for leave to spin it out a little," added the Bounder. "Being a shinin' character and a model to the Form, an' all that, he can be trusted anywhere."

"Oh, don't be an ass Smithy!" said Harry.

"My dear man, I'm statin' the facts. Quelchy might suspect me of goin' to the races. I have heard," added the Bounder, with great gravity, "that there are Greyfriars men who have done such things."

"You're not thinking—" began Nugent doubtfully.

"Not in the least. In your company, dear man, I shouldn't dream of such things. In fact, I should make it a point to forget, for the afternoon, that such wicked things as bookies and races exist at all. I shall leave my cigarettes at home, and take a few tracts."

"Fathead!" said Bob.

"We'll make a jolly long run of it—across two or three counties, if you like, said Smithy. "The car will do seventy easily—"

The Famous Five exchanged glances. The suggestion rather appealed to them. And an idea had already come into Harry Wharton's mind.

"Have you fixed up where you're going?" he asked.

"Not at all! Anywhere you like, so long as we cover the ground," answered the Bounder.

"What about Rookwood?"

"Rookwood?" repeated the Bounder.

"The First Eleven are playing at Rookwood to-morrow. I'd like to see the match. But Rookwood is jolly nearly a hundred miles away."

"That's nothing!"

"My hat! What a wheeze!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, his eyes sparkling. "I'd have gone over with the team if the railway company gave tickets away. But they don't."

"By Jove!" said the Bounder. "That's a ripping idea! I hadn't thought of it! What a surprise for old Wingate to get a cheer from Remove men when he's kicking goals at Rookwood!"

"What-ho!" said Johnny Bull.

"Shall we make it Rookwood, then?" asked Vernon-Smith. "Suits me if it suits you fellows."

"Suits us down to the ground," said Wharton. "But it's your car, Smithy, and it's for you to say."

"Then I say, Rookwood," said the Bounder, "it's settled, then?"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Roll away, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Hook it, fatty!"

"Shan't! I came here to speak to my pal Smithy," said Billy Bunter. "I say, Smithy, old fellow!"

"Scat!" said Smithy.

"I've got a rather better idea," said Bunter, blinking at the Bounder through his big spectacles. "There's not much catch in standing about with cold feet watching a football match. That's rot, really."

"Go hon!" remarked Bob.

"Let's run down to a seaside place, and get a jolly good feed at a big hotel," suggested Bunter. "That rather beats your idea, doesn't it, Wharton?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter pcevishly.

"What do you say, Smithy?"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, old chap! Look here, if you're going to Rookwood to hang about watching a lot of muddy asses slinging a muddy ball about, I'm not coming!" said Bunter warmly.

"Right! You're not!" agreed the Bounder.

"I—I mean, I'll come with pleasure, old chap, if you're keen on going over to Rookwood," amended Bunter. "The fact is, I'd like to see my old friends there again Jimmy Silver, and Lovell, and the rest. They're always urging me to come over and see them again. I've got a letter from Jimmy Silver in my pocket now rather reproaching me for neglecting him so long."

"Let's see it," grinned Johnny Bull.

Bunter ran his fat hands through his pockets.

"Here it is. No, that's a letter from D'Arcy at St. Jim's. This is it. No, this is from the Caterpillar at Highcliffe. Well, I must have left Jimmy Silver's letter in my study. A fellow with so many friends gets such a lot of letters, you know. Anyhow, it's all right; I'll come to Rookwood. Silver's a decent chap, and he will stand a fellow some tea in his study."

"You fat ass!" said the Bounder.

"What time do we start, Smithy?"

"You can't start at all."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Scat!"

"If you mean that you don't want me, Smithy—" said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"I mean exactly that."

"As a matter of fact, I'm afraid I shouldn't be able to come," said Bunter thoughtfully. "If we were going anywhere else, Smithy, it would be all right. But I could hardly show up at Rookwood and introduce you as my friend. A fellow has to draw the line somewhere."

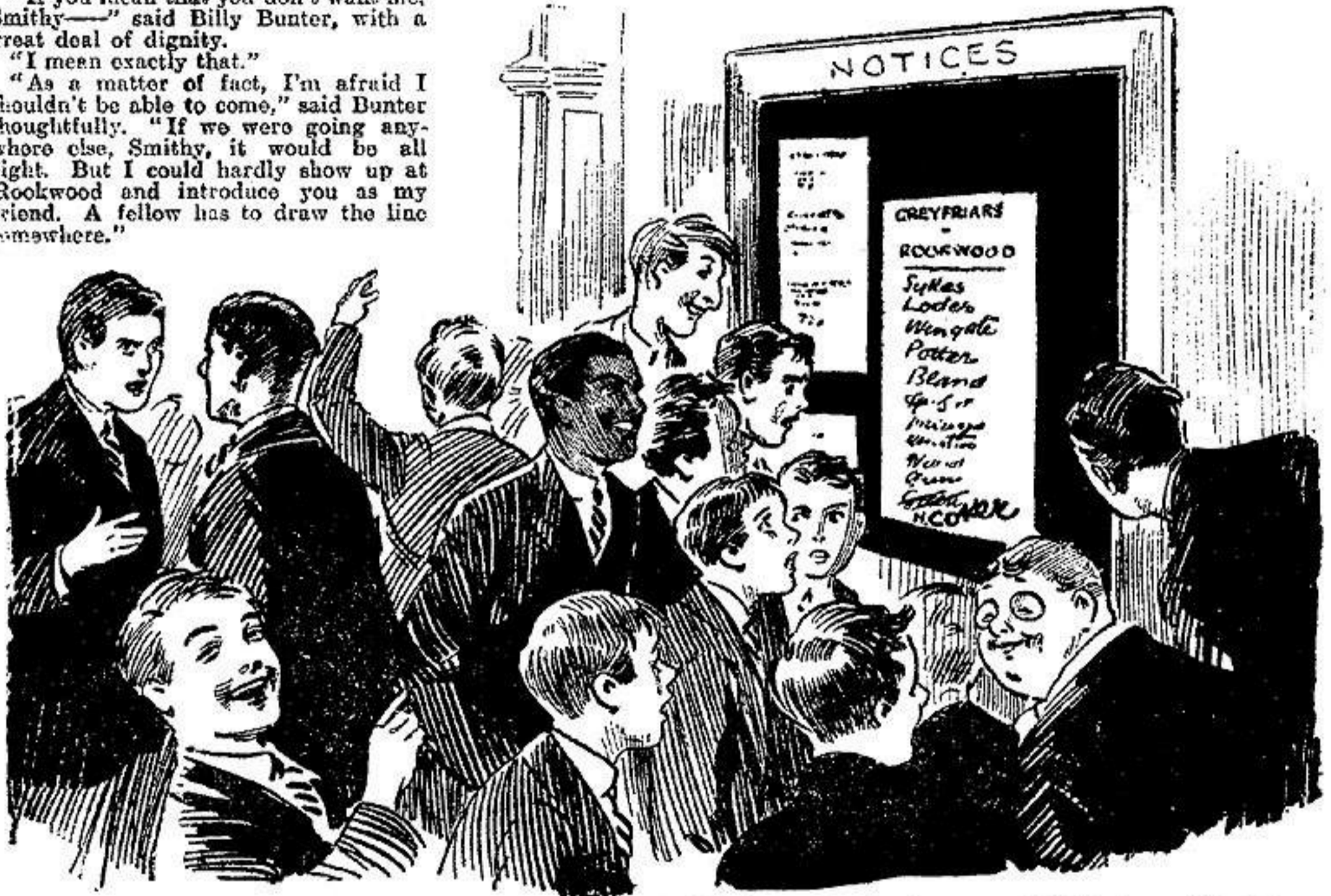
out here, you rotter, and I'll mop up the passage with you! Wow!"

The door opened.

Bunter jumped up. But on second thoughts—proverbially the best—he did not mop up the passage with the Bounder. He departed up the passage at a speed which looked as if Bunter, like Mr. Vernon-Smith's car, could do seventy. After which the chums of the Remove discussed the trip to Rookwood, with great satisfaction to themselves, and without the assistance of William George Bunter.

Coker's chums, of course, sympathised with him. But they could not help feeling that a prefects' beating had done him good. Coker often stated that he did not think much of Sixth Form prefects. But his friends considered that, in these circumstances, there was a lot to be said for them.

Coker had done no prep. That made his silence all the more remarkable. Even during prep Coker could not help talking. Now he was unoccupied, and still he was not talking. It was so remarkable as to be a little unnerving.



As Harry Wharton & Co. glanced at the list they almost doubted their eyesight, for the name of "W. Greene" had been crossed out and "H. Coker" substituted.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Anywhere else," said Bunter firmly, "but not Rookwood. I simply couldn't show up at Rookwood with you, Smithy. It's not only you personally, but your pater, you know—there's the rub. I couldn't let my friends at Rookwood fancy me on friendly terms with the son of a bucketshop financier—a shady company-promoter, you know. A fellow has to draw a line somewhere. So all I've got to say, in the circumstances, is— Yooooooop!"

Billy Bunter ended his remarks in that unexpected manner as the Bounder suddenly collared him, and jammed his bullet head against the study door.

Bang!

"Yoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Beast! Ow-wow-ow!"

Bump!

Bunter departed into the Remove passage. He smote the floor with a concussion that fairly shook it.

"Ow-wow! Yow! Beast!" roared Bunter, as the Bounder slammed the door on him. "Ow-wow! You come

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Up to Something!

POTTER and Greene of the Fifth could hardly believe their ears.

There was silence in the study.

That was the remarkable thing.

For Coker was in the study, as well as silence. Those two things, Coker and silence, had never been found in such a position before.

It was nice, of course, but it was surprising. Potter and Greene could hardly believe their ears, because their ears were blessed by that sweet, peaceful, unaccustomed silence while Coker was present.

Coker was, or believed he was, one of those strong, silent, masterful characters. It is well known that such characters cannot be prevented from annexing more than their fair share of the chin-wag. As a rule, Coker had much more than his fair share. Now he was silent. Thrice-blessed silence reigned in the study.

No doubt it was due to the licking Coker had had in the prefects' room. That was an unusual occurrence, and it had produced a still more unusual effect.

Perhaps Coker was thinking. There was a deep corrugation in his rugged brow, which might have indicated thought. But if this was the outward and visible sign of the inward invisible grace, it was more surprising still. For thinking was not at all in Coker's line. His friends seriously doubted whether he possessed the necessary apparatus.

Anyhow, he was silent, and that, at least, was something to be thankful for. Potter and Greene finished their work uninterrupted. Then they rose from the table, hoping to get away from the study before Coker spoke. If they escaped Coker's conversation for a whole evening, that day would be a day worthy to be marked with a white stone.

But it was not to be. Both Potter and Greene felt that it was too good to be true. And it was.

"That ass, Wingate—" said Coker suddenly, breaking the long and beating silence.

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance. It was coming. Coker's wrongs, his views on football, his views

(Continued on page 16.)

A HANGING-MATTER!

By Dicky Nugent.



Dicky Nugent, of the Second Form at Greyfriars, is frightfully indignant. He states, with some vehemence, that he's been left out in the cold long enough. So he insisted that I should include in this issue another St. Sam's "shocker." I think you'll agree it was too good to leave out, anyway—ED.

I.

"**G**OT a box of paints to lend a bloke, anyone?"
Dr. Birchmull, the venerable headmaster of St. Sam's, sang out that question through the doorway of the Common-room.

The juniors looked round in surprise.
"A box of paints, did you say, sir?" asked Jack Jolly, almost incredibly.

The Head nodded.
"Paints—p-a-y-n-t-s!" he said, displaying his usual deep nollidge of the rules of spelling. "I need some paints, so that I can do some painting."

"Going to paint that nose of yours a delicate shade of pink, sir?" asked Jack Jolly. "If so, I must say the improvement is long overdue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The juniors roared, though they still hadn't quite got over the shock of the Head's quest on. It really took a lot of getting over. Of course, it wasn't unusual for the Head to trot along to the Common-room on a borrowing eggspedition. That frekwently happened. He was always raising loans of half-crowns and shillings, to be repaid in the distant and uncertain future. But he had never before rekwested the loan of a box of paints. The juniors could only conclude that he had developed a sudden passion for art.

That, as it happened, was eggactly what had happened. Before the roar of larfter had died away into silence, the Head was eggspaining matters.

"It's liko this here," he said. "I've been thinking things over lately, and I've come to the conclusion that it's high time the nation was presented with a painting of its most distingwished skoller and citizen—Alfred Birchmull."

"Grate pip!"
"The puzzle is to find an artist good enuff for such a grate task. I have
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thought of William Lavery and John Orpon, our two most famus artists, but decided that they were not quite fit for such a responsibility."

"M-m-my hat!"
"That being so, there is, of course, only one jentleman left who can be trusted to make a real suxcess of the job—myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Look here——" began the Head warnly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"How dare you larf at your artistic headmaster. you disrespectful young cubs! Silence, immejately, and lend me a box of paints before I give you all a box on the ears!"

Jack Jolly crossed over to a cubbard containing drafts and chess sets, et settera, and producing a shilling box of paints which some budding young artist had left there, handed them to the Head.

"Here you are, sir!" he said. "Mind you, I won't guarantee that you'll find a culler deep enuff to match your nose."

"You needn't bother your head about my nose, Jolly," broke in the Head, with a frown. "I think I shall mannidge to reproduce its bewtiful art shade with life-like fidolity. Thanks for these paints!"

"Don't mensh! By the way, sir, what are you going to do with the picture when it is finished?" asked the kaptin of the Fourth curiously.

Dr. Birchmull set his mortar-board at a jaunty angle on his head.

"I shall first submit the masterpiece to the Royal Academy," he answered loftily. "Doubtless it will be awarded a special prize for being the best picture of the year."

"Oh crikey!"
"After that, I shall present it to the Nation, and it will take an honnered place among the art trezzures of England in the National Gallery. Cheerioski!"

And the Head, with the box of paints clutched triumphantly in his hand, nodded to the crowd and marched out of the Common-room. He was followed by a yell of larfter from the juniors.

Natcherally, it didn't take long for the news of the Head's new departure to spread. In a short time the boys of St. Sam's, from the hawty seniors of the Sixth down to the inky fags of the Second, were all larfing fit to bust.

The tidings spread like wildfire among the masters, too. Mr. Lickham herd it first from Frank Fearless of the Fourth, and rushed to confide it to Mr. Swishingham, who rapidly passed it on.

The St. Sam's masters were mostly possessed of a keen sense of hewmer, and they made up their minds not to let this opportunity of a jape pass by, neglected. They decided on a really bright wheeze, to drop into the Head's study one at a time and pull his venerable leg on the subject of his artistico masterpiece.

Mr. Lickham went in first and pretended to recoil with amazement at the sight of the Head, who was by this time bizzy at the easle.

"Grate pip, sir! Are you training to be a painter and decorator?" he eggelaimed.

The Head frowned.
"No, Lickham, I am not. As a matter of fact, I am at present devoting my supream jenius to painting a portrait of myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Lickham, and he departed hastily, leaving the Head staring after him rather blankly.

A moment later, Mr. Justiss, of the Fifth tramped pondercusly in.

"Good-evening, sir— Oh, my giddy aunt! What's that?" he ojaculated.

"This, my dear Justiss, is a bewtiful portrait of myself——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Mr. Justiss and he also withdrew, leaving the Head cullering furiously.

Mr. Chas. Tyzer of the Third, was the next to enter.

"Off your rocker, sir?" he inkwired simperthetically.

The Head snorted.

"How dare you suggest such a thing, Tyzer! This is a picture of myself, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I thought it was meant to be an advertisement for Brock's Fireworks!" roared Mr. Chas. Tyzer, and he fled, apparently duddled up with mirth.

After Mr. Noyce, the music-instructor, and Herr Guggenheimer, the German master, had been in and passed similar remarks, Dr. Birchermall began to feel seriously annoyed.

More footsteps became audible down the passidge, and the Head decided to put a stop to this persecution. Grabbing a heavy lexicon, he poised it in mid-air, ready to aim as soon as the newcomer entered.

There was a tap on the door, which then opened. At the same moment the lexicon whizzed through the air to collide violently with the newcomer's fizz.

Crash!

"Yaroooo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Head. "That'll learn you to jape your esteemed headmaster, you potty— Oh, grate pip!"

The Head's song of triumph ended up in a hollow groan as he reckornised the victim of the assault. It was not one of the masters, after all. By a stroke of bad luck, it turned out to be none other than Sir Frederick Funguss, the majestick chairman of the Board of Guvveners!

"You—you!" spluttered Sir Frederick furiously. "What the thump do you mean by flinging a book at my majestick napper, hay?"

"It's like this here, Sir Frederick—"

"Pah, you're off your nutt!" declared the baronet savvidgely. "But off your nutt or not, you're not jolly well going to chuck books at me! Take that—and that—and this, too, while you're about it!"

And Sir Frederick waded in and did grate execution, biffing the Head right and left until that unforchunit gentleman hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels.

After that little eggsperience, Dr. Birchermall decided that he had enuff of art for one day, and work on his masterpiece was postponed until later in the week.

II.

ABOUT a week later the bell was told for a General Assembly in the grate hall of St. Sam's.

When the Skool had assembled, Dr. Birchermall cantered on to the scen, and, taking his stand in the centre of the platform, addressed the gathering as follows:

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows.—I have summoned you here this morning because I have a very special announcement to make to you."

"Free feed coming, boys," mermered Tubby Barrell optimistically.

"My hat!"

There was a movement of interest in the serried ranks of the assembled skool. The fellows strained their ears to catch the Head's next words.

"As most of you are aware," went on Dr. Birchermall, "I have recently been devoting my spare time to painting a portrait of myself. I have now completed that portrait, and sent it to the Royal Academy to be eggshibited."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared the Head, rather astenished at that uneggspected burst

of larfter. "To proseed: Now that I have finished the picture, I can give you my word as an art critic that it is the most brilliant work of jeenius ever set down on canvass. Consekwently, I want you all to see it as it hangs in its honnered place in the Royal Academy."

"Has it been axcepted yet, sir?" venchered Mr. Justiss.

Dr. Birchermall gave the master of the Fifth a withering look.

"Don't ask silly questions, Justiss! Of course, it has been axcepted! I haven't heard from them yet, but I take it for granted."

"H'm!" coffered Mr. Justiss, rather dewbiously.

"To resume: I have decided to give the entire skool an opportunity to see this marvellous work of art, and I have, therefore, engaged a fleet of sharrybangs to convey us all to the Royal Academy to-morrow."

"My hat! That's Jennerous of you, sir!" eggscclaimed Burleigh of the Sixth.

"Of course, it is Jennerous of me, Burleigh—Jennerosity being one of my strongest points. By the way, I forgot to mention that the cost of the sharrys will be met by a subscription of five shillings each. They are charging me four-and-six a head, and the balance I shall keep for my trubble."

"Oh crikey!"

The following morning the sharrys rattled and clattered smoothly along the country roads to London, making scarcely a sound as they roared and banged along.

The Royal Academy was soon reached, and there was a grate rush of St. Sam's fellows anxious to have a decko at the Head's picture.

They glarnsed round the famus eggshibition in all directions, but nothing like a painting of the Head's noble fizzog could be seen.

All at once there was a yell from the Head.

"M-m-my hat!"

"Anything wrong, sir?" inkwired Mr. Lickham.

"Wrong? I should jolly well think there is something wrong! The silly fatheads have gone and hung my grate masterpiece upside down!"

And Dr. Birchermall pointed a trembling forefinger in the direction of an

almost unreckernisable dawb hanging in a prominent position on the wall. The crowd looked, and several of the fellows stood on their heads to see the thing at its true angle. Sure enuff they found that by looking at the picture upside down it became a passable likeness of Dr. Birchermall himself.

A gentleman in a silk hat happened to pass just then. The Head grabbed him feverishly.

"Are you one of the booses of this show?" he asked.

The gentleman nodded.

"I am a member of the committee. Can I do anything for you?"

"Yes, yqu can!" grunted the Head. "You can eggsplain to me what's the big idea of hanging my grate portrait upside down?"

The gentleman started.

"My hat! Is that upside down?"

"Of course it is! It is a picture of my own fizz."

"Well, well! Strangely enuff, somebody suggested that it mite be a portrait when turned upside down," grinned the gentleman. "But most of us felt that no human face could be so ugly as your picture, so we came to the conclusion that it must be a picture of a parsnip."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"So that's the eggsplanation, is it?" gurgled Mr. Lickham. "They hung it upside down, and thought his board was a parsnip! Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For several minnits the Head was too parrilised to act. Then, with a cry of rago he sprang forward, and snatched his grate masterpiece from the wall.

"Blow you! Bother you! Bust you!" he shouted. "Rather than see this wonderful work of jeenius hanging upside down, I'll take it away with me! Yah!"

And that was Dr. Birchermall's final word on the subject. After that, nothing more concerning art was heard from the old buffer for a long, long time.

THE END.

(Next week's centre pages will contain another of Bob Cherry's masterpieces, featuring Hal Smiles and his magic ring. Watch out for: "Cayningham Goes West!" It's a treat you'll enjoy!)



"The silly fatheads have gone and hung my grate masterpiece upside down!" yelled Dr. Birchermall, while one of the juniors stood on his head to see the dawb at its true angle.



THE FOOL OF THE FIFTH!

(Continued from page 13.)

on Wingate—the whole thing was coming. Another minute and they would have been safe. And now—

"That ass, Wingate," said Coker, "thinks that he's put the lid on me. He hasn't."

"Um!" said Potter.

"I've had a prefects' beating," said Coker.

"Hard cheese, old man!" said Greene. "Simply for standing up for my rights," said Coker, "and trying to make a silly fool see sense."

"Oh!"

"I've thought," said Coker, "of taking the prefects, one at a time, or two at a time for that matter, and thrashing the whole lot."

Potter and Greene gazed at him. Evidently, Coker had been thinking—unlikely as it seemed. And this was what he had been thinking.

Really it was to be expected. If Coker's brain worked at all, it was bound to work somewhat on these lines.

"I—I shouldn't," murmured Potter. "You—you see, the Head would sack a man who walloped a prefect."

"The Head would hardly sack me."

"Oh!"

"Schoolmasters haven't much sense," said Coker. "But we're bound to suppose that Dr. Locke has too much sense to do a thing like that. There are some fellows who can't be spared from a school, without lowering its tone, and letting the whole show down generally. The Head knows that."

"Oh!"

"Still, I'm not going to thrash the prefects," added Coker.

Potter and Greene were glad to hear that, at all events. Coker, probably, was the only fellow at Greyfriars who would ever have thought of thrashing the prefects. It was upon such lines that his bright and original intellect worked. But even Coker seemed to have realised that these thrashings, though deserved, had better not be administered.

"I can afford to treat them with contempt!" said Coker.

"I—I should!" murmured Greene.

"They are really beneath my notice, if you come to that!" said Coker thoughtfully.

"They are!" agreed Potter. "Leave them there, old chap."

Coker waved his hand, as if dismissing such unimportant microbes as Sixth Form prefects from the discussion.

"That's not the question," he said. "The question is the Rookwood match."

"Oh dear!" groaned Potter.

"What? What did you say?"

"Nothing, old chap! Go on."

"It's the last big fixture of the season. All through the season I've been passed over. You fellows are

aware that I've been kept in the back-ground all the time. I've offered my services—Wingate can't deny that. I've never left him in any doubt that I was willing to help the school win matches. But he has steadily and consistently refused to play me—and insisted upon playing any old dud instead. You fellows, for instance."

"Um!"

"H'm!"

"I'm not blaming you," said Coker kindly. "You funk a row with the captain of the school. That's it! You haven't my pluck. You haven't my determination. I don't expect it of you. So I don't blame you."

"Thanks!" said Potter, with deep sarcasm.

"But the question arises," said Coker, "what am I going to do?"

Potter and Greene made no reply to that. They could not see that Coker was going to do anything—indeed, that there was anything for him to do. Something, however, was evidently working in Horace Coker's powerful intellect; and they wondered—rather uneasily—what it was.

"After being passed over for a whole season, I refuse—absolutely—to be left out of the last big fixture!" said Coker.

"That can be taken as settled. Fixed and immutable—like the laws of the Swedes and the—the Norwegians!" said Coker, perhaps meaning the laws of the Medes and the Persians.

"Oh!" said Potter and Greene.

"Not that I'm thinking mainly of myself," added Coker. "A fellow who knows that he plays a brilliant game naturally wants a show. But it's not really that. The First Eleven has gone to pot—Wingate's filling up the places with any dud that comes along. I've even heard that he looked over the Shell, thinking of picking out a junior. That's about the limit. He hasn't done it; but he's capable of it. The question is, am I going to stand aside and see that match thrown away by crass fat-headedness? The answer is—I'm not!"

"Oh!" murmured Potter hopelessly.

"But—but you can't make Wingate play you, old bean," murmured Greene.

Coker smiled.

"Can't I?" he said.

"Well, I don't see how—"

"There are lots of things you don't see, Greeney. Perhaps you'll see something that will surprise you at Rookwood to-morrow. I understand that only Fitzgerald is going over with the team."

"That's so. Twelve's the lot."

"Well, there will be thirteen," said Coker. "I'm going!"

"Oh, we—we'll be glad of your company, old fellow," said Potter, rather hypocritically. He had been looking forward to not seeing Coker for a whole afternoon.

"Fine!" said Greene dismally.

"You want to see the match?" asked Potter.

Coker smiled again—a rather strange smile—what would be called an inscrutable smile in a detective novel.

"Exactly! I want to see the match," he answered. "I suppose even Wingate won't object to a footballer travelling with the team, though there aren't any actually in the team."

This was sarcasm; Coker could be sarcastic.

"Any fellow can come, if he likes to pay his fare," said Greene. "It's rather steep—from here to Hampshire."

"Well, I'm going! We'll have a carriage to ourselves, and keep away from that crowd," said Coker.

"Oh dear! I—I mean, ripping!"

"That's settled, then," said Coker. "Leave it at that. And—though it doesn't look like it at present—I can tell you that Greyfriars may beat Rookwood to-morrow, after all."

"But—" said Potter, eyeing Horace Coker very curiously. "I say, what have you got in your noddle now, old chap?"

Potter was uneasy.

Again Coker smiled that inscrutable smile.

"Wingate may decide to play me at the last minute," he said.

"It—it's really not likely, old fellow."

"That's all you know," said Coker. "He may have no choice in the matter."

"But how—"

"Never mind that!" said Coker. "I dare say you'll see to-morrow. I dare say you'll see when we get as far as Canterbury."

"We change trains at Canterbury," said Potter blankly. "But I don't see what that's got to do with it."

"You wouldn't!" said Coker.

With that cryptic remark, Horace Coker relapsed into silence; and Potter and Greene, glad of the respite, quitted the study.

In the passage they looked at one another.

"What has that howling ass got into his silly head now, Greeney?" asked Potter, in a low voice.

"Goodness knows!"

"He's thinking of something fat-headed—"

"Does he ever think of anything else?"

"Well, no. But he can't be thinking of kicking up a row at Rookwood!" muttered Potter. "Even Coker—"

"Blest if I know!"

"I—I hope he'll lose the train."

"I hope so."

"If he doesn't, we might land him at Canterbury, in changing trains—there's only a three-minute stop, and no other train for an hour and a half."

"Good! We'll try it on, anyhow."

"Coker will turn my hair grey in the long run," said Potter, shaking his head. "He's up to something, goodness knows what. You never can tell what a fellow like Coker will do—except that whatever it is it will be something idiotic. Still, if we strand him at Canterbury to-morrow it will be all right."

And Potter and Greene, giving Coker up, strolled away to the games study, little dreaming of the amazing thoughts that were working in Coker's brain; far, very far from guessing who was to be stranded at Canterbury on the way to Rookwood.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Run to Rookwood!

MR QUELCH smiled genially. "Certainly!" he said. "I see no harm in this excursion, Wharton."

"Thank you, sir."

And Harry Wharton left the Remove master's study in a cheery and satisfied mood.

"All serene," he said, when he rejoined his friends in the Rag. "We've got leave."

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry.

"The goodness of the esteemed egg is terrific!"

"Sharp after dinner to-morrow, then," said the Bounder. "It's a long step to

Rookwood, and we don't want to be late for the kick-off."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

Whereat Billy Bunter snorted.

Bunter did not see how the party for Rookwood could possibly be complete without him. Neither did he see how the excursion could be a success, deprived of his fascinating self. Somehow, the other fellows seemed to think that that was just what was going to make it a success.

The next morning the Famous Five were the objects of envy in the Remove. Plenty of fellows would have been glad to run across to Rookwood to see the First Eleven play the last big fixture of the football season.

Had there been room in Mr. Vernon-Smith's car, the Bounder might have taken half the Remove with him.

That Wednesday dawned bright and clear; and when the Remove came out after third school, it was still fine, with no sign of rain. It was going to be a ripping day for a motor run, and a ripping day for football; and the chums of the Remove were going to enjoy every minute of it.

At dinner that day Billy Bunter eyed the Famous Five morosely through his big spectacles.

After dinner he haunted their footsteps like a fat ghost.

After his interview with the Bounder on the subject, certainly any fellow but Bunter would have given up the idea of joining in that joy-ride. But the Owl of the Remove was not the fellow to take no for an answer—even when the negative was emphasised by banging his head on a study door.

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter joined the Famous Five on their way to the gates.

"Coming to see us off, old fat bean?" grinned Bob Cherry. "That's really kind of you, Bunt!"

"The fact is, I've decided to come."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look here, you fat idiot—" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"You howling ass!" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

The juniors went out to the car. They found Redwing there, but the Bounder had not yet come out. It was a handsome car, and an efficient-looking chauffeur; and Billy Bunter remarked that it wasn't a bad turn-out, though not quite up to his father's Rolls.

"May as well pack in," remarked Bunter. "What?"

"Do!" said Bob. "I fancy Smithy will pack you out again, fatty."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Where's Smithy, Redwing?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Coming along in a minute," said Redwing. "He's stopped to get some tuck to bring along."

"Thoughtful chap!"

"The thoughtfulness is terrific."

"I say, you fellows, let's pack in," said Bunter rather anxiously. "I'm relying on you to stand by a pal if Smithy does anything ill-bred. Tell him you won't go without your old chum."

"Oh crumbs!"

"That will make it all right," said Bunter. "Dash it all, if I can stand Smithy, that ought to settle it. Don't you fellows think so?"

"Better ask Smithy!" chuckled Nugent.

"Well, put it to him," urged Bunter. "The fact is, I'd like to come Jimmy Silver's anxious to see me again."

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, you fellows! Look here, I'm relying on you to fix it up," said Bunter. "I think you might play up, after all I've done for you."

Harry Wharton glanced at his comrades.

"It's Smithy's car," he said. "What about putting it to him? I dare say that fat oyster could stow in somehow."

"I shall want room, of course," said Bunter. "One of you—in fact, two of you—could go outside with the chauffeur—"

"Dear old Bunter!" grinned Bob.

"I hope you fellows are not going to be selfish," said Bunter. "I may as well say plainly that if I come I shall expect to be made comfortable."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Put it to that cad Smithy when he comes," said Bunter. "I can't say I shall be proud to turn up at Rookwood with a rank outsider like Smithy; but as it's his car, I shall have to stand that."

"Shut up, you ass!" said Bob Cherry, as he sighted the Bounder coming up.

"Shan't!" Bunter had his back to the Bounder and—not having any eyes in the back of his head—did not see any reason why he should shut up. "A rank rotter like Smithy—a flashy, no-class fellow of that sort—ought to be glad of my company; it will give him a leg-up. They're a precious low lot, you know; like father like son! He, he, he! Oh! Ow! Whooooooop!"

The Bounder had arrived.

William George Bunter found himself suddenly up-ended in the road. He sprawled and roared.

"Ready, you men?" said the Bounder cheerfully, without a second glance at Bunter.

"Quite!" said Wharton, laughing.

"The readiness is terrific."

"Pile in, then!" said Smithy.

The chums of the Remove piled into

the car. Vernon-Smith gave directions to the chauffeur, and followed them in. The big car started.

Bunter still sprawled.

As the car whizzed away the Owl of the Remove sat up, spluttering.

"Ow! Oh crikey! Beasts!" gasped Bunter. "Ow, wow! Oh, my hat! Groogh!"

The fat junior picked himself up and set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose and blinked after the car. It vanished in a cloud of dust on the Courtheld road.

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter.

And he rolled back to the gates.

"Hallo. Didn't you go with the jolly old party?" grinned Skinner, as he met him in the gateway.

Bunter shook his head.

"No. On second thoughts, I couldn't do it," he answered. "Bit too much like a Bank Holiday beano for me."

"Liar!" said Skinner cheerfully.

"Beast!"

And Bunter snorted and rolled in.

The fellows in the car enjoyed the rapid run, in spite of the loss of Bunter's company—or perhaps because of it. Smithy had said that the car would do seventy; but, whatever it did, it certainly seemed to eat up the miles.

On long country roads it fairly whizzed and the juniors enjoyed the rush. The Kentish countryside flashed by; the Surrey hills faded away behind, and they were in Hampshire.

"Letcham!" said Bob Cherry, catching a glimpse of a signpost as they flew. "Why, it's only a few more miles to Rookwood!"

"Coombe!" said Nugent, a little later.

"Now for Rookwood!"

And the grey old buildings of Rookwood School rose over the trees, and the Greyfriars party arrived with a rush and a roar, to be greeted, with surprise but evident pleasure, by their old friends, Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Master-Stroke!

"COKER!" said Wingate, in surprise.

He noticed Coker on the platform at Courtheld.

Probably he had not given Horace Coker a thought since the beating in the prefects' room; now the existence of the great Coker was recalled to his mind.

"He wanted to come," said Potter apologetically. "Seemed to want to see the match, Wingate."

Wingate nodded and smiled.

"Let him, by all means; it may do him good to watch the game! Not that

(Continued on next page.)

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he will pick up anything from it. I'm afraid Coker's hopeless."

"Well, he won't do any harm," remarked Greene.

"Not at all!" answered Wingate good-humouredly.

And he dismissed Coker of the Fifth from his mind once more.

There were only twelve in the party; Coker made thirteen—said to be an unlucky number. It was destined to be unlucky for certain members of the Greyfriars party, had they but known! When William Greene remarked that Coker wouldn't do any harm he was far from guessing the true reason for Coker's presence. Great thoughts—wonderful thoughts—were stirring in Coker's remarkable brain.

To the footballers he was nobody and nothing. They did not heed his existence. Potter and Greene, being members of the eleven, naturally wanted to act as such, and but for the fact that they were Coker's cumps, they would naturally have passed him unheeded, like the rest. But they had to be careful with Coker. "Swank" from his friends was a thing that Horace never could have forgiven.

Any fellow but Coker would have felt honoured by the position of friend to members of the eleven. Not so Coker! Members of the eleven were honoured by being his friends. That was how Coker looked at it.

Coker had reserved a carriage—money being of no consideration to Coker. He and his friends were going to travel apart from the rest—an arrangement that made Potter and Greene restive, but to which they submitted with as good a grace as they could. They had all sorts of reasons for not wanting trouble with Coker, and if they opposed his lofty will and pleasure, trouble was sure to accrue.

So when the party entered the express for Canterbury, Potter and Greene were with Coker, away from the other fellows.

It was not a long run to Canterbury, and Coker was silent during that short run. Two or three times his companions saw him smile and wondered what there was to smile at. But Coker did not explain.

Potter and Greene might have wondered a good deal more than they did, Coker's manner was so unusual; but their thoughts were chiefly on the coming game at Rookwood and on their annoyance at being separated from the rest of the eleven. They were glad, at all events, that Coker wasn't talking. That was a relief, at least. It was a new departure for Coker, and they hoped he would keep it up.

At Canterbury, the party turned out of the train, to take the express for the west. Wingate and his men made a cheery group and Potter and Greene, glancing towards them felt more annoyed with Coker than ever.

But they had to stick to Coker. "Come on!" said Coker briskly. "I think I told you fellows I'd reserved a carriage in the express. We shall have it to ourselves."

"Oh!" said Potter, not particularly overjoyed.

"H'm!" said Greene. They walked to the other platform, still at a distance from Wingate & Co. Coker, as he had told his friends, was giving that crowd the go-by. That was all very well for the lordly Coker; but Potter and Greene did not want to give their fellow footballers the go-by. But there was no gainsaying Coker and they submitted wearily to their fate.

The train was in the station. Coker

led the way to his reserved carriage. Wingate & Co. piled into the train at a little distance from the three Fifth-Formers. A porter opened the carriage door for Coker very politely—Coker had a tipping look. Coker, in fact, exuded half-crowns when he was on his travels.

Coker slipped one of his innumerable half-crowns into the porter's hand.

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance.

They had nourished a hope—a faint hope, but a hope—of leaving Coker behind at Canterbury. Without Coker, the run to Rookwood would, of course, be ever so much more enjoyable. It would, in fact, mean a heavy weight off the minds of Coker's friends.

Coker looked at his watch.

"Three minutes here," he said. "Two more minutes, you men—what about stepping into the buffet?"

Another quick glance was exchanged between Potter and Greene.

Was this their chance? Was the ineffable Coker playing into their hands?

Certainly there was no time for a visit to the buffet, as the train was starting in under two minutes. But if Coker fancied there was, it was only wise to encourage him.

"Good egg!" said Potter heartily.

"Come on!" said Greene.

Coker nodded, and, slipping his arms quite affectionately through the arms of his friends, walked them away.

Behind the back of Coker's neck, Potter and Greene exchanged one more glance.

Words were not needed. They understood one another. Having got Coker to a safe distance, they were going to detach themselves from him and bolt back to the train at the last moment. Ten to one Coker wouldn't catch them up in time. If he did, it was bad luck—but probably he wouldn't. He was playing into the hands of his friends—fairly asking for it.

Coker had no suspicion.

His mind was too full of what he intended to do to have any room for considerations concerning the intentions of Potter and Greene.

He walked them off cheerily.

A shrill whistle rang out behind them.

Potter and Greene, as they heard it, realised that there was no more time to lose, and they made a simultaneous jerk to free their arms from Coker's.

To their surprise and annoyance, Coker's hold on their arms tightened instead of loosening. He had them fast.

Coker smiled at them.

"What's the hurry?" he asked genially.

"I say, the train's just going!" exclaimed Potter, in alarm. "We've got to get back to it!"

"Oh, we've got time!" said Coker.

"For goodness' sake, come on!" exclaimed Greene. "There's no other train that will land us at Rookwood for an hour and a half—that means missing the match, if we miss this!"

"Really?" said Coker.

Potter and Greene dragged at their arms. They dragged in vain. They gave up all idea of stranding Coker at Canterbury. They were filled with a horrid alarm lest they should be stranded themselves.

"Look here——" gasped Potter.

"Let go, Coker!" panted Greene.

"What are you up to?"

They wrenched at their arms. Coker still held on to them, with a grasp of iron.

It really seemed to Potter and Greene that Coker must be going off his chump. Otherwise, there was no accounting for this extraordinary conduct on his part.

"Let go!" shrieked Potter, struggling. "We shall miss the train! You silly owl, let go!"

"You potty fathead, let go!" raved Greene. "By gad, I'll punch your head if you don't let go!"

Keeping in with Coker, placating the lofty Horace, could not be considered now. Potter and Greene would not have missed the Rookwood match for all Aunt Judy's hampers for a whole term. Coker could go and eat coke, but they had to get to Rookwood.

"Let go!" roared Potter.

Coker suddenly let go. He released the arms of his excited, alarmed, and exasperated comrades, and at the same moment gave Potter a shove that sent him sprawling headlong. Greene was turning back towards the train, and Coker, the next moment, had a grasp on Greene's collar, and sent him sprawling across Potter. Potter was half up, when Greene landed on him, and he sprawled again, gasping. The two Fifth-Formers were mixed in a spluttering heap what time Horace Coker, unheeding them further, raced back to the train.

Doors had slammed! all along the train.

"Too late—stand back!" came a yell.

Coker did not heed.

The porter who was the happy possessor of Coker's half-crown, opened the door of the reserved carriage just in time. Coker flew in headlong. The door slammed after him as the train started to run.

Coker sprawled in the carriage breathlessly. He gained his feet, and jumped to the window.

Two breathless figures were on the platform that was rapidly gliding back from view—Potter and Greene, staring blankly, wildly, furiously after the train they had missed.

Coker leaned from the window and waved a hand to them.

"Good-bye!" he roared. "Come on by the next. You'll be in time for the finish!"

Two frantic fists were shaken at Coker. He laughed, and Potter and Greene, still shaking frantic fists, disappeared from view behind.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Glorious Prospect!

"LATCHAM!" Coker smiled as he heard the porter's voice, and rose from his seat. At Latcham, the Greyfriars party had to change for the local train to Coombe, which was the station for Rookwood.

Coker smiled. Considering what he had done, it really was not a time for Coker to smile. But he smiled. So far, Coker was fully satisfied with the way things had worked out.

Coker was the fellow for strategy. He prided himself on it. And nobody could have denied that his strategy, in this instance, had been eminently successful, whatever the ultimate outcome might be.

He had laid his plans with deep forethought, and carried them out without a hitch. Potter and Greene, indeed, had fairly played into his hands at Canterbury. He had had less trouble than he had ventured to hope, in stranding them there. It had not dawned on

Coker's powerful brain that Potter and Greene had hoped to strand him there. But he knew that they had fairly walked into his trap.

They were left hopelessly behind. There was no train that would bring them on to Rookwood in time for the match. That was utterly out of the question.

It followed, therefore, that there would arrive at Rookwood only ten Greyfriars footballers—and Coker!

The result was a certainty—to Coker! Finding himself faced with the prospect of playing a man short, Wingate would have no choice but to play Coker.

He would be unwilling; he would grumble and grouse; he would probably call Coker names! Well, let him! Whatever he said and whatever he did he could not get out of playing Coker now!

The result would justify Coker in the measures he had taken—measures that

prefer to play a man short rather than play Coker, never even occurred to the great Horace. Any fellow at Greyfriars could have given him the tip if it had come to that. But Coker's brain was not of the kind to which such a mis-giving was likely to occur.

Wingate had, in fact, more than one alternative. He could play a man short, or he could borrow a Rookwood man. Either alternative was certain to appeal to him more than the idea of playing Coker. Certainly he would never have played Coker had he lost ten men en route instead of two. But that sad truth found no lodgement in Coker's brain. He had forced Wingate's hand—the Greyfriars captain had to give him his chance—and he was going to pile up such a score that after the match Wingate would thank him almost with tears in his eyes for having forced his hand. That was how Coker worked it out.

going to be bothered or incommoded by other fellows trying to get the ball; he was not going to listen to any rot from Wingate, captain or no captain. If any other Greyfriars man got in his way, so much the worse for that Greyfriars man. One really brilliant player, in a crowd of duds would have all his work cut out—and Coker was going to take possession of the ball, and take possession of the game—the end would justify him. Goals were wanted—and Coker was going to get the goals.

He could imagine Bulkeley saying to Wingate, after a crushing defeat:

"Dash it all, I didn't know you were going to spring an International on us!"

No wonder Coker smiled.

In his mind's eye he saw himself the centre of a cheering crowd. In his mind's eye he saw the triumphant return to Greyfriars, with the whole school roaring: "Coker! Coker! Good



Coker leaned from the window as the train moved off, and waved a hand to Potter and Greene. "Good-bye!" he roared. "Catch the next train and you'll be in time for the finish of the match!"

even Coker admitted to be a little irregular.

Coker's wonderful football would pull the game out of the fire. Fitzgerald was with the team, and would take the place of one of the absentees. Coker would take the place of the other. Fitz was as good as Greene, and Coker was better than Potter—immensely better—so much better that comparison was absurd. Wingate either could not or would not see it, but he would have to admit it when he saw Coker kicking goals for Greyfriars.

The proof of the pudding was in the eating. What counted in Soccer was goals. And Coker had no doubt about his goals.

The Rookwood men were good—he knew that. Bulkeley, the Rookwood captain, was a first-class footballer, and he had a strong following. Coker would have to go all out! Well, he was ready to go all out—and he flattered himself that he would make Rookwood open their eyes. He flattered himself that he would show them some Soccer such as they had never seen at Rookwood before.

It was probable that he would—if he played! The idea that Wingate might

So he smiled as he stepped from the train at Latcham. He had, he felt, reason to smile.

All was serene so far as Coker could see. Even Potter and Greene, when they heard how Coker had mopped up the Rookwood ground with the hapless Rookwooders, would realise that he had acted for the best.

By methods a little irregular Coker was going to bring about a great result—the end justified the means. So why should he not smile?

There was plenty of time for changing trains at Latcham—the local was waiting on the other line. Coker did not approach the local; he walked out of the station and took a taxi for Rookwood. He wanted to avoid the footballers till the last moment. The later Wingate made his discovery that two men were missing from the team, the better. There was nothing he could do to fill the gaps. Still, it was as well to make assurance doubly sure.

Coker smiled cheerily in the taxi as he buzzed away to Rookwood. He was feeling elated.

Goals danced before his eyes. Two or three in each half, he hoped—for Coker was going all out. He was not

man, Coker!" In his mind's eye he saw himself carried shoulder-high across the old quad.

All these glorious things Coker saw with his mind's eye. With the eye of the flesh he was never likely to see them.

Wingate & Co. packed into the local train for Coombe, blissfully ignorant of Coker's master-stroke, and the glorious day-dreams of Coker.

They had seen nothing of Potter, Greene and Coker during the long journey as far as Latcham, so they were not surprised at seeing nothing of them on the run to Coombe. They supposed—without giving the matter a thought, however—that the trio were along somewhere.

When they turned out at Coombe, however, Wingate noticed that the three Fifth-Formers did not turn up to enter the brake that was waiting to take the party to Rookwood.

He did not think of Coker—having again forgotten the existence of that important youth—yet he thought of Potter and Greene. But he looked round for them in vain.

"Where are those two Fifth Form men?" he asked.

"Haven't seen them," answered Loder.

"Well, they've got to come in the brake."

"They couldn't have missed the local at Latcham?" said Walker.

Wingate grunted.

"Fatheads if they did—there was lots of time! Still, they could come on in a taxi from Latcham. Anyhow, they're not here—let's get on."

The brake carried the Greyfriars footballers to Rookwood.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

At Rookwood!

"HALLO! Hallo! Hallo!" Bob Cherry was surprised. Jimmy Silver, of the Rookwood Fourth, glanced in the direction of Bob's surprised stare.

"Who?" he asked.

"Coker!" said Bob.

"Coker!" repeated the rest of the Co.

Harry Wharton & Co. had been a little while at Rookwood. They had started early from Greyfriars, and the run had been rapid. So there they were, first to arrive from Greyfriars, and they were strolling round Big Side at Rookwood with their friends of the Rookwood Fourth—Jimmy Silver, and Lovell, and Raby, and Newcome, and one or two other fellows. Jimmy Silver & Co. were going to see the big match that afternoon and cheer the victory of Bulkeley and his merry men; while Harry Wharton & Co. were there to cheer the victory of Wingate and his team. The chums of the Remove had not expected to see any more "followers" from Greyfriars, at such a distance, least of all Coker of the Fifth. But it was Coker of the Fifth that happened.

"Coker?" said Jimmy Silver, looking at the burly form and rugged face of the newcomer. "I think I've seen the chap at Greyfriars when we've been over there for footer. Not one of your First Eleven, is he?"

"Not quite!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The not-quiteliness is terrific," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Your men are not here yet," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "This chap seems to have dropped in on his own."

"Blessed if I know why he's here," said Harry Wharton, puzzled. "I shouldn't have expected Coker to come over and see the game."

"He's spotted us!" remarked Nugent.

Coker, walking to the football ground, was smiling cheerily to himself, and seemed to be in a satisfied frame of mind. But as he caught sight of the Greyfriars juniors he started. If they were surprised to see Coker at Rookwood, he was equally surprised to see them there.

He came striding over to the group.

"What are you kids doing over here?" he asked.

"Seeing the match," answered Harry.

"How the thump did you get here? You weren't on the train," said Coker.

"My dear man," said Bob, "we don't travel by such common things as trains. When we want to see a football match at a distance a millionaire lends us a car, and we do the thing in style."

The juniors chuckled at Coker's perplexed expression.

"Don't be a young ass, Cherry," said Coker.

"Right," assented Bob. "No good asking you not to be an old ass—you can't help it, can you, Coker?"

"You motored here?" asked Coker.

"What a brain!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "He's guessed that, you fellows, because I mentioned that we came in a car! What an intellect!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker frowned.

"I don't want any cheek!" he snapped. "I should be sorry to thrash you fags here, at Rookwood—"

"You would!" agreed Bob. "Frightfully sorry if you started. You'd have a lot of reason to be sorry!"

"The sorrowfulness would be preposterous!"

"Can it, Coker!" suggested the Bounder. "You're not in the games study at Greyfriars now, you know."

Behave yourself before the Rookwood fellows."

Coker very nearly exploded. But he restrained his just wrath. It would have been frightfully undignified to enter into a scrap with a mob of fags, under the eyes of a Rookwood crowd.

Besides, Coker was not there to scrap with fags. He was there to play football; and, on the whole, he was not sorry to see some Greyfriars men on the spot. Cheeky young scoundrels as they were, they would witness Coker's goal-getting, and would be able to tell all Greyfriars about it when they got back.

"But what are you doing, Coker?" asked Harry Wharton. "You've travelled all this way to watch the game?"

Coker sniffed.

"I shouldn't be likely to travel ninety miles, or ninety yards, to watch a lot of dudes fumbling with a ball!" he answered contemptuously.

"Then, what—?" said Harry, puzzled.

"You'll see! You kid, Silver."

Coker turned to the captain of the Rookwood Fourth. "I think I've seen you before—you're young Silver."

"That very identical person!" assented Jimmy politely.

"Take me to the Greyfriars men's dressing-room, will you?"

Jimmy eyed him in surprise.

"Certainly, if you like," he answered.

"But—"

"Get a move on, then!" interrupted Coker.

"Oh, all right! This way. Back in a minute, you men."

Jimmy Silver led Coker away. Harry Wharton & Co. gazed after Horace Coker. His presence at Rookwood surprised them; and something in his expression surprised them, too; and his proceedings seemed a little surprising. They felt that there was something on—something rather unusual—though they could not guess what it was.

"Coker's up to something!" said the Bounder.

"But what can he be up to?" asked Tom Redwing. "Even Coker can't have come over here for another row with Wingate."

"You never know!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Coker's capable of that, or anything else. You never can tell with Coker."

"I don't see what he wants in the dressing-room. And what's he got in that bag?" said Johnny Bull. "Wingate can't have gone potty and told him he can play, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha! Not likely."

"The pottiffulness would be terrifically preposterous!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"But the esteemed Coker is up to something."

The juniors strolled on round the ground. The Greyfriars team had not yet arrived; but some of the Rookwood Eleven could be seen on the ground, in coats and mufflers. Fellows of all Forms were gathering now to be ready to watch the kick-off.

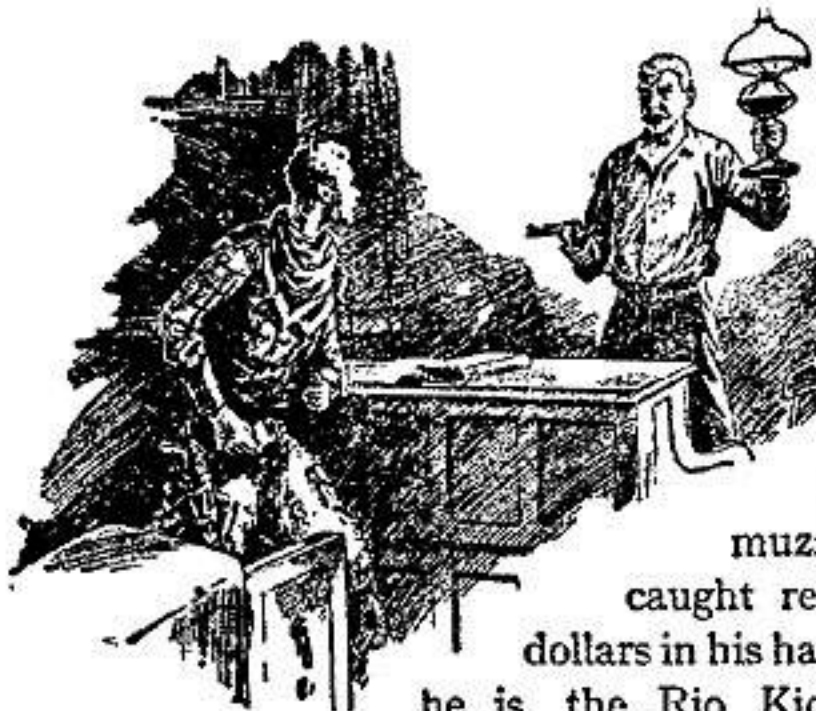
Bulkeley of the Sixth was not to be seen. Lovell told the Greyfriars juniors that he had gone to the station to meet the visitors with a brake. But other men of the eleven were on view—Knowles and Neville, Lonsdale and Carthew, and others, whom the Rookwooders pointed out.

Jimmy Silver came back at last and rejoined his friends, with a puzzled expression on his face.

"That man Coker isn't playing for your lot, is he?" he asked.

"No fear."

"Well, he's changing," said Jimmy.



"Hands up, you outlaw!"

A sudden gleam of light, and the Rio Kid swung round to find himself looking into the muzzle of a revolver . . .

caught red-handed with his boss' dollars in his hand. But, outlaw though

he is, the Rio Kid's not guilty! Many

stirring and dramatic adventures has he experienced, but none of them comes up to those that are described in the long complete

Western Yarn that appears in this week's issue of

THE POPULAR

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"Changing?" repeated the Greyfriars juniors, with one voice.

"Yes; changing for footer."

"Great pip!"

"Sure he isn't playing?" asked Jimmy.

"Well, he can't be, unless our skipper has suddenly gone off his dot," said Harry Wharton. "Coker can't play footer, you know—he can't do anything, and footer least of all. Wingate wouldn't play him if he had a match on with the Second Form here!"

"Then what's he changing for?"

"Goodness knows."

"May be wandering in his mind," suggested Johnny Bull.

"Yes, he may be off his rocker," remarked Bob Cherry. "He's never really on it, you know. If you saw Coker playing footer, you'd never be surprised at anything he did."

The juniors were more and more surprised. They were quite interested in Coker now.

Why Horace Coker was changing for footer was a deep mystery; unless, indeed, he was "off his rocker." He could scarcely have any hope of being included in the Greyfriars team at the last moment, so far as the juniors could see. Hope springs eternal in the human breast; but on what grounds could the irrefrable Horace base such a hope? The chums of the Remove little suspected that it was not merely a hope, but a certainty, that Coker was counting on.

They looked at Coker with keen interest when he came into view again. Obviously, he had changed; his hefty legs, in footer shorts, were visible under his coat. There was a cheery, confident, self-satisfied expression on his rugged face. That was not an unusual expression on Coker's face; but it was more pronounced than usual.

Coker looked as if he fancied that things were going well for him; and it was very mysterious.

But the arrival of the brake from Coombe took attention off Coker.

Wingate and his men had arrived.

Harry Wharton & Co., among the Rookwood crowd, watched them, and wondered where two members of the eleven were. Potter and Greene were not visible.

"Is that the lot?" asked Jimmy Silver. "I've counted ten men. They haven't come a man short, have they?"

"Only nine of the team there," said Harry. "Fitzgerald—that man with the red hair—is a reserve. There's two fellows missing. I suppose they're coming along."

"Wingate can't have lost them coming!" remarked Vernon-Smith.

"Hardly."

"There's not a lot of time for them to turn up," said Bob Cherry, looking at his watch. "I wonder—"

All the Greyfriars juniors wondered. And Wingate, by that time, was not only wondering, but worried.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Alas for Coker!

GEORGE WINGATE was worried and perplexed.

Nine men had changed for the game, and they were ready. Bulkeley and the Rookwood men were ready. It was close on the time fixed for the kick off. But two members of the Greyfriars team were unaccountably absent. The absence of one member would not have mattered a lot; Fitzgerald was there, and he was in much the same class as Greene as a footballer. Had only William Greene unaccountably failed to appear, Wingate would not have minded very much.

But Fitzgerald, though keen and willing to play, could not take the places of two men. Where on earth were Potter and Greene?

GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES.

Having dealt with some of the leading lights at Greyfriars, our clever rhymester chooses Alonzo Todd, of the Remove, as his subject this week.



ALL hail, the lean and skinny freak,
Young Peter Todd's 'twin' cousin;

In words distinguished hear him speak,
With syllables—a dozen!
He suffers from a dread disease—
Prolonged, acute verbosity!
And once he starts, he'll never cease
His verbal high velocity.

His Uncle Benjamin's wise saws
Are quoted, well and truly:
"My Uncle Benjamin," he roars,
"Has told me 'tis unruly
To argue, quarrel, contradict,
And I approve his teaching!"
Alonzo's more than once been "licked"
For boring chaps by preaching.

This simple chap, as japers saw,
Was simply born for fooling.
His nether limbs were fashioned for
The ripping sport of pulling.
With clothes in bundle 'neath his arm,
Not packed, like other mortals,
He came, without the least alarm,
At first, to Greyfriars portals.

Of course, it was an ill-bred hoax
Devised by Stott and Skinner;
Who planned—the ripest of their
jokes!—

Todd shared the Head's own dinner!
And every sort of trick they've played
That japer's brain could fashion;
Alonzo never gets dismayed,
Or flies into a passion.

At footer and at cricket—well,
Both brain and brawn are lacking;
His head is empty as a bell,
He's limp as sawdust packing!
He muddles up the simplest terms;
The "fowls" he's seen were basted.
The only "ducks" he knows eat worms:
In sporting life he's wasted.

But yet you'll find Alonzo can
Be sometimes really plucky;
He'll up and prove himself a man,
And lads come off unlucky.
We'll raise our glasses, brimming o'er,
And toast this simple muffer.
Our voices now like lions roar—
"Hip, hip—the Greyfriars Duffer!"

If they did not turn up—
It was inconceivable that they should not turn up. It was unimaginable that Greyfriars footballers should lose themselves on their way to a match—especially the last big fixture of the season. Yet why weren't they there? And where on earth were they?

"Anything wrong?" asked Bulkeley, who could see that something obviously was wrong. "Some of your men not here?"

"I can't understand it," said Wingate. "Two men haven't turned up—they got into the train at Courtfield all right. I can't make it out. If they lost the local at Latcham they'd have come on in a taxi, and got here before us. I can't guess what's become of them. It's awkward."

"Did they miss the connection at Canterbury?" asked Loder.

Wingate started.
"My hat! They couldn't be such asses! If they have, they can't get here for the match at all."

"They were travelling with Coker, I remember," remarked Tomlinson. "Coker misses everything, from trains to goals. But—"

"Why, here's Coker!" exclaimed Sykes.

Wingate brightened up, as Horace Coker bore down on him. The sight of Horace Coker, in itself, was not delightful; but if Coker had arrived, it seemed that his travelling-companions must have arrived. So the worried Greyfriars captain was glad to see Coker. "Here, Coker!" he called out.

Coker came up.
The Greyfriars men, observing that he was in footer rig, stared at him. Why Coker was in footer rig was a puzzle.

That, however, did not matter. Nothing connected with Coker mattered—excepting Potter and Greene.

Coker nodded cheerfully to the footballers. It was observed that Coker had a very pleased look.

"Where are Potter and Greene, Coker?" asked Wingate.

Coker shook his head.
"Couldn't say exactly," he answered.

"But they were travelling with you," said Wingate, staring. "They got into the train at Courtfield with you. You haven't got here without them, I suppose?"

"I just have!" answered Coker.

"When did you see them last, then?"

"At Canterbury."

"Canterbury!" roared Wingate. "Seventy or eighty miles back."

"Yes."

"Mean to say they missed the connection?"

"Just that!"

"Oh, holy smoke!" said Bland of the Fifth.

"They—they missed the connection at Canterbury!" repeated Wingate blankly.

Coker nodded cheerfully.

"I don't know where they are now, or what they're doing," he remarked. "May be coming on here to see the finish, or may have gone back to the school, or may be doing the cathedral—I believe there's a cathedral at Canterbury, I've heard so, I think. Anyhow, they won't be here for the game, Wingate."

Wingate compressed his lips.

"I don't understand this," he said. "Potter and Greene are not the men to miss a train—especially when an ass like you catches it. I don't understand—"

"Well, it doesn't matter does it?" said Coker.

"What?"
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"Here's Fitz—as good a man as Greene, any day," said Coker. "And here's me—a better man than Potter."

"Don't be an ass!" said Wingate impatiently.

He turned to Fitzgerald of the Fifth. "Get into your things, Fitz—we shall wan' you. Goodness knows what we shall do for another man."

"Right-ho, won't be a tick," said Fitzgerald.

"Well, this is a go!" said Loder. "Bit fatheaded to trust Fifth Form men, Carne of the Sixth would have been glad to play—"

"Oh, cheese it," said Coker. "I could pick a dozen better men than Carne, out of the Fifth, with my eyes shut. Better men than you, Loder, if you come to that."

"Oh, you shut up!" said Loder.

"What the thump are we going to do?" said Wingate. "Here we are with ten men—"

"Eleven!" said Coker.

"Don't bother—"

"Eh?"

"Don't bother!" said Wingate impatiently.

"I'm offering my services!" said Coker, with quiet dignity.

Some of the Greyfriars footballers grinned. But Wingate did not grin. He was too worried to grin.

"Thanks—not accepted!" he said curtly. "Now dry up there's a good fellow. I've got to think this out."

Coker stared at him. He breathed hard and deep.

For the first time, it dawned upon him that this obstinate ass, this incapable fathead, might refuse his services, even when there was nobody else to fill the vacant place!

It was an awful thought.

Coker's eyes sparkled.

"Look here, Wingate—"

"Do dry up!" said Wingate crossly.

"Can't you see I'm worried?"

"I'm here to play for Greyfriars!" hooted Coker. "What do you think I've changed for? Mean to say that you're going to keep up this jealous, envious, rotten attitude, now that the whole thing depends on me? Why you—you—fathead—"

"Shut up, Coker," said Tomlinson.

"Don't interrupt me! Why," pursued Coker excitedly, "some fellows, after the way I've been treated, would refuse to play—would leave you in the lurch, leave you to be licked and laugh at you. I'm not that sort. I'm thinking of the school. We've got to win this match. You've got to play me, Wingate! Do you hear?"

"Don't be a fool!"

"A-a-a what?"

"Fool!"

Wingate was too worried and anxious to measure his words now. He had enough trouble on his hands, without being bothered by the claims of the egregious Coker.

Coker crimsoned with wrath.

"Fool yourself!" he roared. "Fool-fathead - ass - chump - idiot - burbling footling fathead! Are you playing me or not?"

"Not!" hooted Wingate. "Now shut up."

"You want to keep me out of the game, though you're a man short?" gasped Coker.

"Better a man short, than playing a footling ass," snapped Wingate. "You can't play footer, you dummy! Marbles is your game! Now shut up!"

Coker spluttered.

"Then I appeal to the team!" he

gasped. "You men, you hear that? You hear that fool telling me I'm not to play! I'm here to play—came specially to play—I'm ready to get goals for Greyfriars—and that idiot tells me I'm not to play! I appeal to you men."

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Shut up!"

"Ring off!"

"Don't worry!"

"Run away and play hopscotch!"

These answers, and others like them, came back to Coker from the team to which he appealed. He listened dazedly.

Apparently it was not only Wingate who was an obstinate ass. The whole team was composed of similar obstinate asses.

"Well, you—you—you rotters!" gasped Coker. "Mean to say you agree with that dummy in leaving me out?"

"Yes; shut up!"

"Get out!"

"Don't worry."

"Then you can jolly well bag a licking, and be blowed to you!" roared Coker indignantly. "You set of dummies—you—you crass asses! I might as well have let those other duds get there—"

Wingate turned to Coker again, with a deadly gleam in his eyes. He was beginning to see light.

"Hold on a minute," he said. "I can't understand Potter and Greene missing the trait at Canterbury. Have you been playing tricks, Coker?"

Coker laughed scotfully.

"I stranded those two duds at Canterbury, to give you a chance of playing a good man!" he answered. "I thought even you would see sense, when there was nothing else to be done. I see now that I over-rated your intelligence. You, a football captain! I wouldn't give you the job of skippering a team of white rabbits."

Wingate's eyes fairly blazed.

"You stranded them at Canterbury? On purpose?"

"Certainly. It was up to me—a fellow has to have a sense of duty. It was my duty to help Greyfriars win this match. I couldn't foresee, of course, that you would be such a fool—"

"That was why you travelled with the team?"

"Guessed that?" sneered Coker. "You're getting quite bright, Wingate. But of all the benighted fools—Whooooo!"

Coker was suddenly interrupted. To Coker's surprise—for he did not seem to be expecting anything of the sort, though really, in the circumstances he might have—George Wingate hit out.

Coker spun

There was a crash as Coker landed, in a horizontal position, two or three yards away!

"Oooooop!" gasped Coker.

The Rookwood men stared. They stared still more, when the Greyfriars footballers, following Coker up, proceeded to kick him away from the spot. Coker was in a mood to give further trouble—much more trouble but the application of many football boots was too much for Coker. Coker was in a mood for argument—but there was no arguing with football boots at close quarters. Coker, roaring, vanished into space.

Wingate dismissed Coker from his mind. Coker did not matter. But what was a hapless football captain going to do?

As if in answer to that question, Wingate's worried eyes fell on a group of juniors at a little distance.

He started

He had not been aware, till that moment, that there was any followers of the team at Rookwood.

"Why—my hat!" ejaculated Wingate. He waved his hand and shouted.

"Wharton!"

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton Is Wanted!

HARRY WHARTON, who was talking to Jimmy Silver, looked round as his name was called.

"Who—" he began.

"It's Wingate!" said Bob, in surprise. "He's calling you, old bean."

"Wharton!" came Wingate's shout.

"What on earth can he want?" ejaculated Harry. But he left his friends, and cut across at once, to see what the Greyfriars captain wanted. He little guessed what it was.

"Buck up!" called Wingate.

Wharton bucked up, and arrived a little breathless. The other footballers, having finished with Coker, looked at Wharton and looked at Wingate, and wondered what was on. Two or three of them guessed—and one or two nodded, one or two shrugged their shoulders.

"Here I am, Wingate," said Harry.

"What—"

"Thank goodness you're here! I had no idea there were any Greyfriars juniors over here to-day—"

"Smithy's pater sent his car, to give us a joy-ride—" Wharton was beginning to explain. But Wingate cut him short.

"All right—never mind! Thank goodness you're here. Only juniors in your party, of course—no seniors—"

"No!" said Harry.

"Can't be helped! After all, you're the best of the bunch in the Lower School—I was watching your game with the Shell the other day, and it crossed my mind then that you'd come in, as a last resource. Thank goodness you're here to help us out of this pickle."

"But what—" exclaimed Harry, bewildered.

"We're a man short! You'll play."

Wharton jumped.

"I!" he gasped.

"Yes, yes, you."

"I—I play with the First Eleven!" stammered Wharton. "Oh, my only hat! Oh crumbs!"

Wingate smiled.

"You'd like to?"

"Like to!" repeated Wharton, eloquently.

"Well, get ready; we're keeping Rookwood waiting now. You've got no football things with you—I suppose you—"

"No, but I can borrow some easily enough." Wharton's eyes were sparkling. "Jimmy Silver's about my size, and he will lend me the things like a shot. The colours can't be helped."

"That's all right. Don't lose time." Wharton rushed away.

Wingate walked over to Bulkeley, who was waiting with great politeness, and affecting not to be aware that trouble was stirring among the Greyfriars visitors.

"We're keeping you waiting," said Wingate. "But—"

"That's all right."

"Two of my men lost the connection at Canterbury, that's how it is. I've got a reserve with me, and I've just found another man here that I can play at a pinch. Won't be long now."

"Take your own time, old scout," answered the Rookwood captain. "Sorry for your ill-luck." His glance followed Wharton. "You're playing that junior?"



"Goal!" roared Bob Cherry, thumping Jimmy Silver on the back with terrific force. "Didn't I tell you to wait for Wharton? He gave Wingate that goal—made him a present of it. What?"

"Yes," said Wingate, rather awkwardly. "You see—"

"Looks a sturdy kid, anyhow," said Bulkeley. "I've seen him playing in junior matches here, and he's good stuff."

"Well, it's a case of any port in a storm," said Wingate, "and he's the best man in the Lower School at Greyfriars. Nothing like the form of your men, of course, but jolly good stuff in his own way. I'm jolly glad he was here."

Wingate returned to his own men. Some of them were discussing his decision—favourably or unfavourably. Loder of the Sixth had a sneer on his face, but two or three of the men looked approving. Anyhow, the matter was settled, and the team were waiting for Wharton.

He did not keep them waiting long. In a remarkably short space of time he joined the footballers, ready for the game, and wearing a white shirt.

He left his comrades staring, but jubilant. Bob Cherry slapped Hurree Singh on the back, with a slap that made him yelp.

"A Remove man playing for the First Eleven, Inky!" chirruped Bob. "What price that, old black bean, what?"

"Ow! The pricefulness is terrific," gasped Hurree Singh. "But do not dislocate my esteemed backbone."

"Blessed if I can make it out," said the Bounder. "Potter and Greene seem to have lost themselves. Wingate's put Fitz in the team, as well as Wharton. What were they ragging Coker for?"

"Goodness knows! I darsay he asked for it," said Bob cheerfully. "My hat! Won't the Remove sit up

and take notice when we get back, and tell them a Remove man played."

"What-ho!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"It's one up for the Remove," said Frank Nugent, his eyes dancing. "It's gorgeous! Ripping."

"The ripfulness is terrific!"

"I wonder if Coker thought they might play him!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Ha, ha! He might have!"

"Poor old Coker!"

"There they go!" shouted Bob.

"My hat! I hope Wharton will put up the game of his life!" said Redwing. "If he bags a goal—"

"I shouldn't wonder," said Bob. "The fact is, there's some more good men here, if Wingate only understood. Any good advising him to leave out a few of the Sixth and Fifth, and play us?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

All the juniors' eyes were on Wharton, as he walked out into the field with the Greyfriars men.

Sturdy as he was, for his age, he certainly looked rather diminutive in the ranks of the big seniors.

But his friends noted that there was no uneasiness, no stage-fright, about him. He was cool and collected. He was quite aware that he was in the team as a makeshift, because no other man was available; and glad as he was of the chance of figuring as a member of Greyfriars First, he was not likely to be conceited about it. He was there to do his best; to put all he knew of the game and all his beef into an effort to help the side.

Perhaps there was a hope in his breast that he might succeed in bagging

a goal for the school, which would be undying glory for the Remove. It was a pleasant thought, if nothing more.

Wharton generally played centre-forward in the Remove team, but he was a good forward in any position, and Wingate had put him on the right wing, in the place Potter should have filled. His face was a little flushed, and he drew a deep breath as he found himself standing in battle array with the great men of Greyfriars. But he was, as his friends noted with satisfaction, as cool as ice.

The whistle went. Rookwood kicked off, and some hundreds of eyes were on the game.

And the little Greyfriars group watched with keen interest and some anxiety. Bulkeley and his men looked in good form, but the Greyfriars eleven was not at the strength usual for such a match. Some of its best men had had to be left behind, being on the sick list, and even without Coker's intervention the team would not have been at full strength. The result of Coker's amazing scheme put the lid on. The most enthusiastic Greyfriars onlooker hardly expected Wingate & Co. to pull that match off.

Still, as Bob Cherry remarked, you never could tell, and anyhow, a Remove man was in the team, win or lose. That was something, anyhow.

In the first half, there was no doubt that Rookwood had the upper hand. Wingate's patchwork team did not seem to pull together in the usual Greyfriars style, and for a long time, the visitors were chiefly on the defensive.

Tom North, who should have been in goal, was in sunny at Greyfriars, and Sykes of the Sixth was in his place. But Sykes showed up uncommonly well, and again and again he saved in great style when the attack came through.

"Good old Yorkshire!" roared Bob Cherry, when Sykes, who came from that great county, sent out a tearing shot that came in from Bulkeley, and which had looked, for a second, like a certain goal.

"Play up, Greyfriars!"

Jimmy Silver grinned.

"I was just going to chirp Goal!" he remarked regretfully.

"Leave the chirping to me, old bean," said Bob. "Wait till Wharton gets going."

"We're waiting," chuckled Lovell.

But they had to wait. Wharton was playing a very good game, considering limitations of age and size; but he had not had a chance yet. And though the visitors were penned up most of the time in their own half, the defence was sound. Again and again Rookwood seemed like making hay of them, and still the score did not come. It was close on time when a strenuous attack broke up the strenuous defence, and a whizzing shot from Bulkeley beat Sykes in goal. Then there was a roar from Rookwood.

"Goal!"

Soon afterwards the whistle went. Rookwood one up at the interval. Which, as Bob remarked, was not, considering everything, bad.

"Not bad," said the Bounder, "but we want better."

"Wait till Wharton gets a chance," said Bob.

"We're still waiting," grinned Lovell.

The whistle went, and the second half got going. Meanwhile, a hapless youth, with a brow like thunder, was sitting in a railway train, on his way back to Greyfriars. Coker of the Fifth was gone, with feelings impossible to describe. Coker's amazing scheme had gone without a hitch—up to the last moment. At the last moment it had fallen down—as anybody could have told Coker would be the case, had Coker consulted—anybody. The much-injured Coker, with inexpressible feelings, saw a Remove kid played in the place he had marked out for himself, and when he saw that the cup of Coker's wrath and bitterness was full. Silently he departed. And even his departure was unheeded. Remote, unfriended, solitary, Coker took his homeward way, unregarded.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Winning Goal!

"ON the ball!"

"Play up, Greyfriars!"

"Good old Wingate!"

The Greyfriars group, in the crowd round the field, was small, but it made up for that by its vocal efforts. Bob Cherry's stentorian tones were heard far and wide, and his comrades backed him up with all the force of their lungs, which was considerable.

Greyfriars had got fairly going at last. For nearly half an hour there had been a ding-dong struggle, with the advantage on the home side, though Rookwood did not quite get through. Now, for the first time, there was a hard attack on the home goal, and the Greyfriars juniors bubbled with excitement.

A Rookwood back robbed Loder of the ball, and drove it out to the touch-line, but it was neatly trapped by an active foot on the Greyfriars right wing

just in time, and sent back to Wingate, at centre, with a lightning pass.

The next instant Wingate had scored.

"Goal!" gurgled Bob Cherry.

"Goal!" shrieked the Bounder.

"Goal! Goal! Goal!"

Six Greyfriars juniors made noise enough for sixty.

"Goal!" Bob Cherry thumped Jimmy Silver on the back with terrific force.

"Didn't I tell you to wait for Wharton? What? Jever see a better pass than that? What? I tell you, Wharton gave Wingate that goal—made him a present of it! What?"

Jimmy Silver hastily dodged another enthusiastic thump.

"Goal!" roared Bob. "Good old Wingate! Good old Wharton! Goal!"

"The goalfulness is terrific," chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

There were ten minutes to go when the teams lined up again. The score was equal now, one for one, and that goal had greatly encouraged and heartened the Greyfriars men. The game had been a gruelling one for them; but there was a new vigour and vim in their movements when the whistle went, and they got going again.

Attack was now the order of the day on the Greyfriars side, and it came hard and fast. Some of the fellows had bellows to mend, especially Loder, who, at inside-right, was almost tottering. But outside-right seemed as fresh as paint, as Bob Cherry gleefully remarked. Outside-right looked almost as fresh as when he started, his face as cool, his eyes as keen and clear. Wharton was at the top of his form, and as fit as a fiddle. And fitness counted for much in the last lap of a hard-fought game. And in speed at least, he was equal to any man on the field: neither was his judgment ever at fault.

"Go it, Greyfriars!" roared Bob Cherry, as the forwards came down the field with a rush on the Rookwood goal.

"Play up! Bravo!"

"Wingate—Wingate!"

The ball was at Wingate's feet when he was charged off it by a heavy Rookwood back; but he passed out to the right wing before he fell. Loder should have taken the pass, but Loder was nowhere. But outside-right ran in and sent the ball back to Wingate, who was on his feet in a twinkling, and Wingate drove it at goal. An active back leaped in and booted the leather clear. It dropped fairly at Wharton's feet.

Bob Cherry held his breath.

Two Rookwooders were hurling themselves at Wharton. He had a second; he made the most of it. Wingate was mixed up with a Rookwood half. Loder was tagging and gasping. There was no chance of a pass, and Wharton kicked for goal.

The next second he was rushed over. But all eyes were on the ball.

"It's hitting the post!" said Lovell.

But it wasn't. The Rookwood goalie made a spring at it, and missed it. It was in the net.

"Hold me, somebody!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I'm going to have a fit!"

"Goal!" shrieked Nugent.

"Goal! Goal! Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"Wharton! Wharton!"

"Goal!"

Wharton picked himself up. He gasped for breath, and stared. He had taken the chance, hardly daring to hope that it would come off. But it had come off.

"Goal! Goal!"

The Greyfriars group were raving. Bob Cherry hurled his cap into the

air, careless where it came down, or whether it ever came down at all. He roared and howled.

"Goal! Goal!"

"What did I tell you?" gasped Bob. "Didn't I tell you to wait for Wharton? What? Was that a goal, or wasn't it? What? Hurrah!"

"Some goal!" said Jimmy Silver. "Bravo! Well kicked!"

Wingate dropped his hand on Harry Wharton's shoulder as they walked back to the centre of the field. His face was glowing.

"Good man!" said the Greyfriars captain. "Good man! I'm almost glad that Coker played the fool as he did! Good kid!"

"Two to one, my infants!" said Bob Cherry. "And a few minutes left for Rookwood to play pretty! Whose game is this, my children?"

"Ours!" grinned the Bounder.

And it was! The last few minutes of play gave Rookwood nothing; and the great game ended two to one, the Greyfriars men undoubtedly rather surprised to find themselves winners.

Half a dozen Greyfriars juniors rushed on the field, as the players came off. They rushed at Harry Wharton.

"Shoulder-high!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Fathead!" said Wharton ungratefully. "Chuck it!"

But his enthusiastic friends did not chuck it. They collared him, and carried him off shoulder-high, with wild yells.

It was just then that two breathless fellows arrived on the scene.

"It's over," said Potter. "How's it gone?"

"How could it go?" said Greene.

"Licked, of course; but—"

"Oh, you're here!" said Wingate, glancing at the breathless pair.

"Better late than never. We've won!"

"Won!" gasped Potter.

"And Wharton kicked the winning goal!"

"Whar-Wharton!" stammered Greene.

"Yes, Wharton."

"Oh, my hat!" said Potter.

"Oh, crumbs!" said Greene.

"And—and where's Coker?" gasped Potter.

"I don't know! If you see him, tell him to get ready for his funeral," answered Wingate.

"We're going to get him ready for it when we find him!" said Potter.

"We jolly well are!" said Greene.

Perhaps it was just as well for Horace Coker that his friends did not find him at Rookwood.

"What a day!" said Bob Cherry, when the Remove men were in Mr. Vernon-Smith's car, and humming away along the roads for Greyfriars.

"O day worthy to be marked with a white stone!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Fancy the Remove winning a First Eleven match!" said Bob.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Hardly that!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Coker!" said Bob. "I wonder what will happen to him when Wingate gets home! I'd never have liked to be Coker—but I'd like it less to-day than ever."

It was rather an interesting question, what was going to happen to Horace Coker. The asinine absurdity of the great Horace had not, after all, done any harm; indeed, it was possible that it had, unexpectedly, and by a lucky

(Continued on page 28.)

FOR THE GLORY OF FRANCE!

By Geo. E. ROCHESTER.



With devilish ingenuity the sergeant-major had placed the condemned man's friends in the firing squad. . . .
"Fire!"

Bolke's eyes swept the tableau thus presented, and settled on the unoccupied beds of Stulz and Kalgar.

"This is the sty of the pigs!" he said triumphantly.

Striding forward into the room, he halted, glaring at Zimmermann.

"Have you been out of this room to-night?" he demanded menacingly.

Zimmermann nodded.

"Yes," he replied.

"And you went with Stulz and Kalgar, you dog!" snarled Bolke.

"I did not!" retorted Zimmermann.

Bolke's blazing eyes dwelt on him suspiciously for a moment, then switched to the nearest Italian.

"Did this man leave the room in the company of Stulz and Kalgar?" he barked.

The Italian hesitated. But conscious of that pricking bayonet in the hand of Lemarne, and knowing that should he fail to answer as previously instructed the steel would plunge with deadly thrust, he gulped and said:

"No, he was here when the disturbance awakened us."

"By thunder! If you're lying, you dog—" roared Bolke.

"I am not—I am not lying!" babbled the Italian, urged on by the pressing bayonet point.

"Lemarne!" rapped Bolke.

"Yes?"

"Have you been out of this room?"

"Yes," replied Lemarne coolly. "I have. I reached the corridor just in time to see you throttle Stulz. It was well done, mon sergent! Ah, the treacherous little rat! You served him well!"

"And I'll serve his companions better when I smell them out!" blazed Bolke.

"Hotzman!"

"Sergent?"

"Were you with Stulz and Kalgar?"

"I was not," answered Hotzman. "I swear it on my oath!"

Bolke was silent, standing with great head thrust forward, his little, venomous eyes fixed on the seated men, who returned his glare unabashed, and without the flicker of an eyelid.

"Mordieu!" he swore gratingly. "But if I find you have lied I shall have you flogged to the bone before you face the firing-party!"

Turning on his heel, he strode from the room, followed by the sergeant of

piteous, and who knows but what rank mutiny might have broken out in the fort of Sulta that night had someone been possessed of temerity enough to attempt his rescue.

For Bolke was hated as only men who have plumbed the very depths of humiliation and degradation can hate. The sympathy of the onlookers was entirely with their comrade, Kalgar, and had a voice been raised in protest, or, better still, had a shot been fired, it would undoubtedly have been the spark which would have caused to flare up long suppressed and simmering passions.

But the cold, grim personality of Bolke held them in check, and the moment passed without incident.

"Get to your quarters, you scelerats!" he ordered them harshly. "Sacre diable, but there will be a weeding out in the morning. I promise you!"

The men dispersed, and, accompanied by the sergeant of the guard, Bolke made a tour from room to room. He came at length to the room of the Five—now the Three, for Stulz was dead and Kalgar was under close arrest.

Throwing open the door, he stood glowering on the threshold. Zimmermann was sitting up in bed, his eyes staring, as though bewildered by the hubbub. Seated idly on the bed of one of the Italians was Lemarne, and seated on the bed of the other was Hotzman. They were talking excitedly of the events of the night, and anyone listening to them would have imagined that they had been roused only by the disturbance.

But one thing Lemarne and Hotzman had in common. Casual though their attitude was, a portion of blanket was covering the left hand of each. And hidden beneath the blanket, both Lemarne and Hotzman were gripping a bayonet, the points of which were pressing steadily against the Italians' flesh.

INTRODUCTION.

To save Guy Warren, his scapegrace cousin, from expulsion on a charge of theft, Paul Blake, Fifth-Former of Greystones, takes the blame on his own shoulders by running away from school. Fired by its promise of adventure, he joins the Foreign Legion and is sent to the desert fort of Sidi-bel-Abbes, where he forges friendships with Charles Desmond, once captain of Greystones, and Esterharn, a former officer in the French Army. Warren, meanwhile, has inherited the title and fortune of his father, and is touring Africa with his sister June. In Sidi he arranges with the villainous Sergeant-Major Bolke that Paul, the fellow who holds his guilty secret, shall be killed—somehow. A few days later a strong force of the Legion, including Paul, Desmond and Esterharn, is sent into the desert to quell an Arab rising, and Bolke avails his chance to carry out his part of the dastardly plot. After a desperate fight against hordes of fanatical tribesmen, the force reaches Sulta, where several of the men plot to kill the sergeant-major. The plot fails, however, and Bolke, in his maniacal fury, maims one of the men and throttles another. The rest escape, but orders are given to double the guard and shoot any man attempting to approach the outer wall of the fort.

(Now read on.)

Hoodwinking Bolke!

WHEELING, Sergeant-Major Bolke strode to the covering Kalgar.

"Well, you dog!" he said, and kicked him savagely in the ribs. "You'll pay dearly for this night's work. But I'll have the names of your companions, even if I have to tear your cursed tongue out by the roots!"

Turning to a sergeant of the guard, who was pushing his way through the press of excited men, with four soldiers at his heels, he rapped:

"To the guard-room with him!"

Kalgar was half led and half dragged away. His deathly white face was

the guard. He was convinced that there had been others with Kalgar and Stulz. And he would have their names somehow. Kalgar would talk—would be made to talk. If he refused, then Sergeant-Major Bolke knew a variety of ways in which to loosen a stubborn tongue. And they were ways which, every one, were singularly unpleasant.

The Sentence!

KALGAR did not talk! Let that be said to his eternal credit. The court-martial, which was held at 10 a.m. the following day, was, to the disgust of Bolke, presided over by Lieutenant Villiers.

The Lieutenant was a sick man—a dying man, some said who saw him—but when the attack had been reported to him he had determined to take the court-martial himself and see that justice was done to the prisoner. He knew his Bolke, and knew that if the sergeant-major took the court-martial justice would certainly not be tempered with mercy.

Stoutly Kalgar swore that he and Stulz had been alone. Swore it even when it was hinted to him by the president of the court that if he would speak, a punishment battalion, and not a firing-party might be his fate.

Before 11 a.m. sentence of death had been passed upon him, and he was taken to the cells with the knowledge that he was to be shot at dawn the next morning.

The Three could do nothing for their comrade. To rescue him was impossible; and even had it been possible Kalgar could not have travelled, maimed as he was by his injured knee.

Owing to the miscarriage of their plans they had been forced to abandon their attempt at desertion the previous night. In fact, they had been only too pleased to reach their room undiscovered by Bolke.

"We march for Zukra in the morning," commented Hotzman, as he, Zimmermann, and Lemarne sat that mid-day in the shade, with their backs against the wall. "Out in the desert, with sentries posted, there will be little

chance of our getting away. Moreover, Bolke is suspicious of us, and we will be well watched."

"Yet we cannot go to-night," said Zimmermann quietly. "We cannot go whilst Kalgar lives. It would look as though we were deserting him, and he has been loyal to us."

"Yes, loyal indeed!" muttered Lemarne. "Le bon Dieu rest his soul!"

Do you find it strange that this murderous trio should abandon all further attempt at desertion whilst their ill-fated comrade lived? They were hard men, who had lived hard, but ingrained in their very souls was a real understanding of that word which alone

makes life in the Legion possible—the word "comradeship."

And this it was which kept them on in that sun-baked fort at Sulta when they know full well that the alternative to desertion that night was a perilous march into the Arab-infested desert—a march from which, if Lemarne's grim prophecy was correct, not a man would emerge alive.

Dawn found the company drawn up on the small parade ground, to form three sides of a square. Silent and rigid they stood, waiting to see a comrade die.

And bitterly now had the Three reason to curse their having forgone all further attempt to desert. For Bolke, suspicious of them still, with devil's ingenuity, had placed them in the firing-party.

Under escort, painfully dragging his wounded leg, Kalgar appeared from the death cell. His epaulets and buttons were ripped off by the stern-featured

half turned, then slithered to the ground, to lie in a huddled, lifeless heap.

Zukra!

THE Three were alone in their room, standing by the small, barred window which overlooked the parade-ground on which Kalgar had died less than fifteen minutes ago.

Lemarne was strangely silent, his brooding eyes gazing down on the grey, bullet-spattered wall against which their comrade had stood. It was Zimmermann who spoke first, plucking at his trembling lips with shaking fingers.

"The fiend, to do that thing to us! He knows—he has guessed——"

Hotzman nodded. "Yes," he said quietly, "Bolke knows. To put us in the firing-party was his vengeance. Ah, a devil's jest indeed!"

Without warning the long barrels of muskets slid into view. Then came a ragged crash of firing as frenzied volleys were poured into the advancing legionnaires!



sergeant of the guard. Then, amidst a deathly hush, he was escorted to the wall, where he turned and faced the levelled rifles of the firing-squad.

The face of Lemarne was grey, and momentarily Hotzman swayed on his feet, like a drunken man.

"Prepare to fire!" Bolke's voice rang out harshly in the morning stillness.

Lemarne sighting along his rifle barrel, saw the livid lips of Kalgar twitch in a ghastly grin. Then came the harsh command:

"Fire!" A crash of musketry rang out. Kalgar clutched at the breast of his tunic,

"Yes," assented Lemarne grimly. "How Satan must laugh at the antics of his jackal!"

He lifted his gaze to his companions. "And what do we intend to do now?" he asked.

"What can we do?" asked Zimmermann sullenly. "Within the hour we march for Zukra!"

Hotzman answered snarlingly: "There is this that can be done. We can square with Bolke. We have failed once, but we will not fail a second time. Mordieu, but we have something to repay now!"

"And we will repay it at the first

opportunity," said Lemarne. "Listen, comrades! Whether you are with me or not, I swear on my most sacred oath that I will not leave the company till Bolke is dead. A chance to desert may come sooner than we think. But I shall not go, leaving Bolke alive!"

"Nor I!" agreed Hotzman venomously.

Zimmermann nodded.

"I am with you," he said.

And there, by that barrack-room window, the three swore a solemn oath

with Paul, Desmond, and Esterharn, was in the leading four. "I marvel that we have been permitted to reach it without serious attack!"

"Well, let's be jolly thankful we've won through," responded Paul cheerily.

"Thankful?" Lemarne laughed bitterly. "You do not yet know what a cursed blistering oven the place is! Ma foi, I had seven months here on garrison duty. It seemed like seven years to me!"

But the sight of their goal acted like

that cub had not yet arisen. But opportunity would come in the village. On that Bolke was determined. He would see to it that, somehow or other, Blake was put away before many days had passed.

It was with these thoughts in his mind that he barked:

"En avant—marche!"

In obedience to the command, the company moved forward, making towards the main gateway in the encircling wall of the village.

"Halte!" roared Bolke suddenly.

Callie. Corporal Kurz to him, he indicated the village with jerk of thumb.

"What do you make of it?" he growled.

"Make of what?" said the corporal vaguely.

"Blood and fury!" snarled Bolke, with sudden venom. "Are you blind? Does everything look all right to you there, you mule?"

The corporal stared dubiously in the direction of the village.

"There are few signs of life," he observed slowly. "One would almost think the place was deserted!"

"Exactly!" rapped Bolke. "I don't like it! There is no guard at the main gate. Where is the garrison?"

The corporal shrugged his shoulders helplessly.

"I will send you forward with a reconnoitring force of forty men," continued Bolke. "We will follow ready to support you should anything be amiss."

"But what can be amiss?" exclaimed the corporal.

"Anything!" snarled Bolke.

So Corporal Kurz was dispatched at the head of a small reconnoitring force, which included Paul, Desmond, Esterharn, and Lemarne.

As they advanced over the hot, loose sand towards the village, rifles at the trail, it seemed to them that they were indeed advancing either upon a deserted village or upon a village of the dead.

Nothing stirred. There were no signs of life at all, and more than one weary Legionnaire felt a tingle of excitement.

Closer and closer towards the main gateway the wary Kurz led his men. Following slowly, at some considerable distance behind, came the remainder of the company.

One hundred and fifty yards of ground lay between the reconnoitring force and the sun-baked wall—one hundred yards—eighty yards—

Then, without warning, the walls became alive with yelling, white-robed Arabs. Long barrels of muskets slid into view. Added to the hubbub came a ragged crash of firing as frenzied volleys were poured into the advancing legionnaires.

At Sunset.

KURZ went down almost at once, a bullet through his throat. As one man the reconnoitring force threw themselves full length to the sand, and, with a coolness and pre-
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that they would not desert until they had settled their score with Bolke.

An hour later the company marched, with Sergeant-Major Bolke in sole command. For the Lieutenant Villiers was too sick a man to travel. There followed long, weary days of incessant marching over hot and burning sand, with every hour holding its threat of swift and sudden attack by some overwhelming force of Arabs. More than once they had brushes with marauding and hostile tribes, and steadily the death-roll mounted.

"Why," whined Lopez, the Spaniard, at the end of one gruelling day—"why do we go to Zukra?"

"Le bon Dieu alone knows," grunted a perspiring Legionnaire. "We are not paid our halfpenny a day, mon enfant, to ask questions."

"We go to reinforce the garrison at Zukra," said Esterharn. "I know that, for I have it from Corporal Kurz."

At long last, towards the evening of a blazing day, the worn-out, stumbling company came within sight of the grey mud walls of the little fortified village of Zukra.

"Behold it!" growled Lemarne, who,

a tonic on the weary men. Heads were held higher and the step perceptibly smartened. Mouths were too parched and lips too cracked for singing, but a few hardy souls struck up a croaking chorus, to which the others swung along.

Within a kilometre of the village Sergeant-Major Bolke halted the company and proceeded to address them.

"Now, pull yourselves together, you scum!" he ordered roughly. "See to it that you make a decent entry. I'll give the first man that stumbles punishment drill for a week!"

His little ratlike eyes roved over them. Sangdieu! What dogs they were! How he hated them!

In justice to Bolke, it is necessary to observe for a moment his mental unrest. Amongst the men of his company were some who were eagerly awaiting an opportunity of knifing him in the back. He knew it. But the devil of it was he could not be sure who those individuals were.

Lemarne, Hotzman, and Zimmermann!

Yes, he would stake a year's pay that they were the guilty ones. But he could not prove it—could not be certain.

If only that dog Kalgar had spoken! And then there was the English boy, Blake. An opportunity of removing

cision wholly heroic under that devastating fusillade, returned the enemy's fire.

There was no cover for them—nothing save the open sand—and they suffered terribly under that spitting hail of lead.

But Bolke, magnificent soldier that he was, had made up his mind as to his course of action without an instant's hesitation. Behind him lay the implacable waste of desert, into which it was impossible to retreat with men as weary as were his. Apart from that, no company under his command ever retreated.

He could draw off, however, out of range. But when darkness fell there would undoubtedly come a surprise attack in which, for all he knew, he would be hopelessly outnumbered.

The only alternative was to go on and, braving that deadly fire, attempt to oust these Arabs at the point of the bayonet.

How many did they number?

Bolke neither knew nor cared. If he and his men were to be wiped out by overwhelming odds in the narrow streets of Zukra, then that would be but the fortune of war. If, on the other hand, there was a fighting chance of clearing these pestilent Arab scum out of the place, then he and his depleted company would do it.

So they went forward at the double, bayonets glittering in the rays of the setting sun. And with every pace they took a man would stumble and go down, pitching face-foremost to the sand.

There was something superb about that desperate rushing of the gate; for, swept by a veritable hail of bullets, the Legionnaires never faltered.

Grim ending, this, to their long, weary, march over five hundred miles of burning desert sand! Well, was it not on a par with the ill fate which had dogged them from the first? And whether they died or whether they lived, they would remain steadfast to the end.

The reconnoitring force, with half their number lying in still and inert heaps, were keeping up a steady fire, and many a yelling, white-robed fiend was suddenly and permanently silenced by a bullet through the heart or brain. A full score of the Arabs lay dead at the foot of the outer side of the wall where they had fallen. How many lay similarly huddled on the inner side could only be conjectured.

Covered by the fire of Paul and his comrades, the main body, led by Bolke, pressed onwards to the gate.

"Forward, Legionnaires!" screamed Bolke.

The Arabs were firing, reloading, and firing with frantic haste, and their bullets exacted a fearful toll. But never

was the magnificent discipline of the Legion more in evidence than in those awful moments when haggard, grim-faced men ran the full gauntlet of death-dealing, whining lead.

The gate was reached and entrance won. But here the way was blocked by shrieking, white-robed demons armed with great curved and flashing swords and sharp-pointed, stabbing spears.

Next instant the two opposing forces met and swirled in a seething sea of whirling steel and struggling, shouting men. But remorselessly, relentlessly the Legionnaires pressed on, their crimson bayonets thrusting, parrying, lunging, and running wet with Arab blood.

Above the tumult of hoarse shouting and clash of steel on steel sounded the bellowing, roaring voice of Bolke, now cheering on his men, now mouthing hideous blasphemy. His face, with its blazing eyes and livid, snarling lips, was that of a fiend. At the head of his men, in the very thick of that terrible hand-to-hand struggle, he fought with a savage ferocity engendered in black rage and superb courage.

"They give!" he roared. "Forward, Legionnaires!"

Desperately, with slashing, hacking blades, the Arabs strove to stem the advance of the blue-coated infidel dogs. But always those bloodstained bayonets pressed forward. Men, shrieking with the agony of mortal thrusts, went down with ghastly spouting wounds, to be trampled underfoot.

Far to the west, beyond the desert rim, the sun was sinking red—grim setting to those scenes of blood and carnage which were making a shambles of the narrow streets of Zukra.

The Arab resistance was fast lessening now, and suddenly, like wildfire, panic spread. They could not hold these devils of Legionnaires whose dripping bayonets were steadily advancing along that street of blood which was piled with dead and dying.

Panic became a rout. As though realising the futility of further resistance, those Arabs who were left cast their weapons from them and sought safety either in frenzied flight or in grovelling, abject surrender.

The victory was complete. But of that company which had marched from Sidi-bel-Abbes a thousand strong, less than three hundred now remained alive.

(Three hundred survivors! What lies ahead of them in the terrible fortress of Zukra? There are unexpected and thrilling developments in next week's instalment. Be sure you read it, chums!)

THE FOOL OF THE FIFTH!

(Continued from page 24.)

chance, helped the Greyfriars men to win. But that did not alter the fact that Coker had gone right over every imaginable limit, and that what he had done could not possibly be overlooked. Undoubtedly, there was a hectic time in store for Coker of the Fifth.

The Bounder and his party were home before the footballers. When they came in the first person they saw was Horace Coker. Coker lay down on them.

He glared at Wharton.

"How many goals did Rookwood win by?" he asked.

"None!" said Harry, laughing.

"What?"

"Greyfriars won!" chuckled Bob.

Coker jumped.

"Greyfriars won!" he repeated.

"Just that!"

"With that cheeky fag playing!" gasped Coker.

He seemed unable to believe his ears.

"It was that cheeky fag that kicked the winning goal!" chortled Bob.

"Ain't you glad? Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker almost staggered.

"Better find somewhere to hide, Coker!" grinned the Bounder. "Wingate will be back soon. If he finds you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors went on their way, leaving Coker looking quite dazed.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! We've won, Bunter!"

"Have you?" said Bunter. "What about tea? It's jolly late, but I've been waiting for you fellows. I've been disappointed about a postal order—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a great and glorious celebration in the Remove passage that evening. The winning goal in the Rookwood match was the great topic. But there was another topic almost as thrilling, and that was—what was going to happen to Coker?

Probably Coker was asking himself that question, too, for it was certain, beyond the possibility of doubt, that something was going to happen to Coker!

THE END.

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