

"THE FOOL of the SCHOOL!" A sparkling school story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars inside.

# The MAGNET 2<sup>D</sup>





# 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., The Flectway House, Farrington Street, London, E.C.A.

**H**ERE'S a scientific puzzler which Harry Evans, of Denbigh, asks me:

## HOW MUCH AIR IS THERE

surrounding this old world of ours? Well, scientists have calculated that the gases which form the atmosphere extend to a height of 820,000 miles from the earth's surface. The atmosphere, of course, gets rarer and rarer the higher you go, and so far no one has been able to reach a greater height than ten miles above the earth's surface. That height, as you may remember, was attained by an Austrian professor, who ascended in an air-tight chamber attached to a balloon. But balloons without men in them have gone much higher than that, and the record height was attained by a balloon which carried registering instruments. It went up twenty-two miles.

Aeroplanes are being built now which will fly at tremendous heights and, because of the lessened air resistance, will achieve hitherto unheard-of speeds. The people in them will be enclosed in air-tight compartments, and oxygen apparatus will be carried to supply them with the necessary fresh air.

So far, no aeroplanes has gone higher than 43,166 ft., but this record, which is held by the United States Navy, is likely to be broken before long.

"A Regular MAGNETITE," of Margate, asks me:

## WHAT IS A PILOT JACK?

This consists of the flag of any country with a narrow, white band all round it. Thus the "Pilot Jack" of this country is a Union Jack, surrounded by white; the Pilot Jack of France is the familiar tricolour surrounded by white, and so on. The flag, when flown from the bridge halyards, means "I want a pilot." But if a ship is approaching a foreign shore, and has not the Pilot Jack of that particular country aboard, she flies the flag which stands for "S" in the International Code of Signals. This is very much like any country's Pilot Jack, for it consists of a blue oblong surrounded by white. It is

the direct opposite of the "Blue Peter," which is a white oblong surrounded by blue. The Pilot Jack is flown by ships when they are approaching a country; the Blue Peter is flown by them when they are about to depart.

**W**OULD you like a useful Sheffield steel pocket-knife? Of course you would! Well, it's your own fault if you haven't received one from me yet! I am of my lucky readers this week is B. Bagshaw, of 97, Victoria Street, Sheerness-on-Sea. He gets a pocket-knife for the following amusing yarn:

Seotsman (running behind bus): "How much to Victoria?"

Conductor: "Twopence."

Seotsman (having run a considerable distance): "How much to Victoria now?"

Conductor: "Fourpence! You're running the wrong way!"

Try your luck, chums! I've got plenty more prizes yet to hand out to you!

I wonder how many of you know which is

## THE LONGEST SENTENCE IN THE WORLD?

No, this isn't a catch! I don't mean "A life sentence!" Would you believe that Victor Hugo, the famous French author, once wrote a sentence which contained 823 words? Naturally, I can't quote it here; but if you are sufficiently interested, you'll find it in the novel "Les Miserables." In addition to the words, it contains 93 commas, 51 semicolons, and four dashes. How would you like to be told to write out that sentence a couple of hundred times?

**I** AM not quite sure whether Sam Bennett, of Hanley, is trying to pull my leg or not. He asks me

## AN OLD, OLD QUESTION.

In other words, he wants to know: "Where do flies go in the winter-time?"

It might interest him to know that no fly has ever been known to live from autumn to spring. Although health authorities in this country have tried to discover a fly that has lived through the winter, they have not been able to do so. The house fly only lives for a few weeks, even in warm weather. So now you know!

When next you write to me don't forget to ask me any questions that might be puzzling you. Here is a selection of

## RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to various queries propounded to me by readers:

**What is the Weight of a Man's Brain?** (Eric Williams, of Chorlton): The average weight of a man's brain is 3 lb. 8 oz. A woman's brain is lighter, and weighs about 2 lb. 11 oz.

**How Far is it Possible to See?** (K. B., of Heaton): Gazing into the heavens, we can see to the farthest visible star, which is hundreds of millions of miles away. On the world itself, it depends upon the height we are. Looking out to sea from a height of about twenty feet on a clear day we can see about twenty miles.

**How to Make Sure of Your MAGNET Every Week?** (Roy Sayers, Yarmouth): Fill in the order form on this page as instructed and hand it to your newsagent. A copy of the MAGNET will then be reserved for you regularly every Saturday.

**A Country Where Negroes Rule White Men?** (Jim C., of Whitehaven): This is the republic of Haiti, in the West Indies. Formerly a French possession, it is now a negro republic, and all official positions are held by blacks. The history of Haiti is almost an unending succession of revolutions, massacres, and internal warfare.

**What is the Difference Between "Moonlighters" and "Moonshiners"?** ("Inquirer," of Darlington): The "Moonlighters" were a secret society which flourished in Ireland about fifty years ago. "Moonshiners" are makers of illicit spirit in the mountain districts of America.

**H**AVE you got one yet? Got what? Why, one of the splendid real leather pocket wallets which I'm waiting to hand out to readers who send along prize-winning letters! Stuart Hamner, of 92, Frederick Street, Caledonian Road, Islington, N.7, gets one this week for the following:

Billy Bunter is never alert, Or he wouldn't have handed a squirt That was full of red ink To Frank Nugent, whose wink Told that something was "on" for a cert!

Get down to it, chums! I've plenty more wallets waiting for owners!

There's a rattling fine issue in store for you next week, chums!

## "THE VANISHED SOVEREIGNS!"

By Frank Richards,

is the title of our long complete Greyfriars yarn, and I can tell you that it is well up to this splendid author's tip-top form.

Then there's a thrill-packed instalment of Hedy's Scott's wonderful air war yarn a special issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," and the shorter features as usual.

Drop-me a line or two when you have time, won't you?

YOUR EDITOR.

## Saturday is MAGNET Day.

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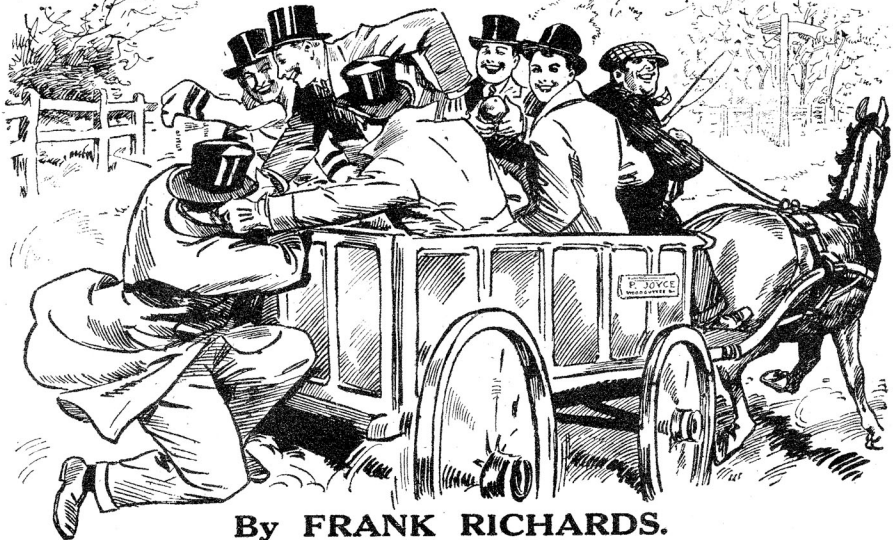
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# THE FOOL OF THE SCHOOL!



By FRANK RICHARDS.

Here you will read of Horace James Coker, who gives his Form master a pain, for Coker, poor fellow, will play the fool—and lands into trouble again!

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Coker Comes a Cropper!

"SCOOT!"  
"Oh, really, Coker—"  
"Buzz!"

Billy Bunter neither scooted nor buzzed. He blinked with indignation.

On the first day of term there was the usual swarm of Greyfriars fellows on the Platform at Courtfield.

They crowded along the local train which was to carry them on to Friar-dale, the station for Greyfriars School. As usual, the supply of seats was not equal to the demand; and, also as usual, nobody wanted to wait for the second train.

It was enough to make any fellow indignant, therefore, to behold Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, standing in the doorway of a first-class carriage, which, excepting for Coker, was empty, keeping guard over it like Horatius at the bridge in ancient times.

Fellows who came along hunting for seats stared into the carriage, glared at Coker, and told Coker what they thought of him.

Coker did not seem to care two straws what they thought of him.

Some fellows seemed disposed to proceed from words, which had no effect on Coker, to actions which might have had some effect on him.

But Horace Coker was so big and so burly and so muscular and so ready for trouble that most fellows thought better of it.

Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth, stood for a full minute telling Coker their opinion of him—a frightfully uncomplimentary opinion. But they went along the train rather hastily when Coker made a motion to step out.

Hobson of the Shell, who was made of sterner stuff, stated that he was coming into that carriage, Coker or no Coker, and manfully strove to make his words good. But, as a poet would say, it booted not. Hobson hit the platform so suddenly and so hard that he did not consider it worth while to make a second attempt.

Even when Loder, who was a Sixth Form man and a prefect, came up Coker did not shift.

But in acknowledgment of Loder's standing as a Sixth Form prefect, Coker condescended to explain that he was keeping the carriage for his friends Potter and Greene and some other Fifth Form men.

Loder gave him a long, long look. It was impossible, of course, for any Greyfriars man to hit a prefect. But, impossible as it was, Loder could not help thinking that Coker would do it if he tried to barge into that carriage. All sorts of awful punishments would have fallen on the reckless Horace afterwards, but would not have mended Loder's nose if Coker's hotty punch had landed on it. Loder, suppressing his feelings, walked on.

If Coker had not given way to a Sixth Form prefect, he was not likely to give way to Billy Bunter, who was only a Remove fellow—the least considerable

fellow in a Form that was utterly inconsiderable in Coker's lofty eyes.

Briefly he commanded Bunter to scoot and buzz, and gave him no further heed. Standing in the carriage doorway he looked over the heads of the swarming crowd, trying to pick out Potter and Greene and the other Fifth-Formers for whom he was so thoughtfully keeping seats.

Coker wondered whether the silly asses were going to lose the train and leave him in an empty carriage for the run to Friar-dale.

He had told them plainly that he was going to bag a carriage, and all they had to do was to come along and occupy the bagged carriage.

Where they had disappeared to was rather a mystery to Coker.

It did not occur to his powerful brain that Potter and Greene, having had his company all the way from Lantham to Courtfield, felt that they were entitled to a rest from it on the way from Courtfield to Friar-dale.

It did not occur to Coker that any fellow ever could want a rest from his exhilarating company.

Naturally he did not guess that while he was bagging that carriage and guarding it for his friends, his friends had packed into another carriage and were feeling happy and satisfied at getting that rest from Coker which they felt they needed.

Coker was not likely to guess that. "Where the dickens are those silly fatheads?" asked Coker, addressing

space. "Haven't sense enough to catch a train when a man goes ahead and bags a carriage for them! Lot of good looking after them. Fat lot of good, I must say!"

"I say, Coker—" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Coker stared down at him, realising that Bunter was still there, though he had been told distinctly to scoot and buzz.

"Roll away, you fat dummy!" said Coker. "If you're waiting for a thick ear you won't have to wait long."

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles with a devastating blink.

"Look here, there's lots of seats in that carriage, and I'm jolly well coming in—see?" he hooted.

Coker laughed.

Even had he not been keeping seats for Potter and Greene and the rest, he would hardly have allowed a fag of the Lower Fourth to travel in his carriage. Coker was rather too particular for that.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" hooted Bunter. "Do you want me to lose the train, you silly idiot?"

"What?" roared Coker.

"Silly idiot!" hooted Bunter.

That was enough for Coker of the Fifth. In calling Coker a silly idiot Bunter was—contrary to his usual custom—telling the truth. But Coker did not welcome painful truth like this from a fag of the Lower Fourth.

He jumped down from the carriage.

"By gum, I'll—"

"Ow! Keep off, you beast!" gasped Bunter.

As Coker jumped forward, Bunter jumped back. He did not see where he jumped; he had, of course, no eyes in the back of his head. Bunter landed on a Remove fellow's foot as that Remove fellow came towards the train. "Ooooooooop!" roared the victim.

It was Bob Cherry, of the Remove, in whose face Bunter's fat head had crashed. Bob had a powerful voice, and now it was heard on its top note. Also, Bunter's heel had jammed on his foot—hard, and seemed to have hurt it.

"Ooooooh! You potty elephant! Yarooop!" roared Bob. He hopped on one leg in anguish.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were following Bob to the train. They reached the spot as Horace Coker reached Bunter.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as a fat ear was taken between a finger and thumb that seemed like a vice. "Oooh! Leggo! I say, you fellows, rescue!"

Bob Cherry was, as the French say, hors de combat. He was wholly occupied with his damaged foot and face. But the other members of the famous Co. heeded the call. Bunter was only Bunter; but he was a Remove man, and so the other Remove men naturally flew to the rescue. Possibly, too, they were not reluctant to have a little trouble with Coker. On the first day of term the heroes of the Remove were full of beans.

They collared Coker on all sides. Coker had only time to give Bunter's fat ear one squeeze. Then he had to defend.

"Bump him over!" said Harry Wharton cheerfully; and Coker of the Fifth, much to his surprise and wrath, was bumped over with a heavy bump. He hit the platform harder than Hobson had hit it. It seemed rather like an

earthquake to Coker, and for some moments he lay and spluttered wildly.

During those moments Harry Wharton & Co. packed into the carriage that Coker had been so carefully guarding. Bob Cherry hopped in, and his chums followed him fast. They had hardly hoped to find an empty carriage in the crowded train; but, owing to Coker, they found one, and naturally they lost no time in taking possession of it.

"I say, you fellows, there's room for me!" gasped Billy Bunter.

"Roll in, barrel!" said Nugent. Bunter rolled in.

Horace Coker gained his feet. From the carriage that had been empty, and was now full, the cheery faces of the juniors grinned at him. Doors were slamming along the train. Coker, gurgling for breath, glared at his carriage—his no longer. The engine shrieked, doors banged, Coker gurgled. Harry Wharton waved a cheery hand at Coker.

"Good-bye, old bean!"

But it was not to be good-bye. Coker made a rush and a bound. A porter, about to slam the door, was barged back, and Coker went into the carriage headlong, in a wild nose-dive. He sprawled wildly among legs and feet that seemed innumerable. But he was in, and the door slammed after him, and the train moved on out of the station—with Coker of the Fifth, and the Famous Five of the Remove mixed up in a tangle on the floor.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### "Hop It!"

"I SAY, you fellows—yaroooooh!" roared Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Yaroooh! Help! I say—yawwwp!" yelled Bunter.

Billy Bunter often yelled when he was not hurt. But on the present occasion he had cause to yell. He was hurt.

Coker's wild dive into the carriage had hurled the fellows in it right and left. Billy Bunter sprawled over, and over him sprawled Coker, and over Coker sprawled the other fellows. It was a terrific mix-up.

Bunter, being undermost, felt the worst.

He felt like a fat pancake.

He gurgled and gasped and howled. "Gerroff! Oh crukey! You're squish-squish-squashing me! Ooooooogh. Wow!"

I say, you fellows—grooooooh!"

"I'll smash you!" roared Coker.

"Collar him!"

"Sit on him!"

"Scrag him!"

Coker struggled up desperately. Coker was a powerful fellow, though not quite powerful enough to deal with five sturdy juniors all at once. He rose as far as his knees; and his knees were planted on Billy Bunter's podgy back. The juniors clung to him like cats. There was a horrible gurgle from Bunter, as all his blood escaped from him like air from a punctured tyre.

"Urrrrrrrrrrgh!"

Bunter collapsed.

Coker got no farther than his knees. Many hands dragged him over again—fortunately, off Bunter. The fat Owl was really in danger of bursting. He rolled aside, gurgling spasmodically, leaving room for Coker to be flattened down on the floor.

Coker was flattened down. He made frantic efforts to rise, but with five Removites holding him down, he had to

stay down. He heaved another earthquake. Famous Five like an earthquake.

Had Coker got on his feet, hitting out right and left with his hefty fists, as he intended, there was no doubt that Coker would have done some damage. Obviously, it was safer to keep Coker where he was.

"Leggo!" roared Coker. "You young sweeps, will you lemme gerrup?"

"Not quite!" said Harry Wharton.

"Pin him down, you men!"

"The pinfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Gerroff! Lemme up! I'll—"

"Sit on him! Here, Bunter—"

"Grooooooh!"

"Sit on him, Bunter—that will keep him quiet, if anything will."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Ooooh! I say, you fellows—groooooh! I'm winded! Ooooh! I'm hurt! Woooooh! Ooooooh!" gasped Bunter. "I say, help a fellow up! Oooooop!"

Johnny Bull heaved Bunter to his feet. With another heave he sat him down—on Coker.

"Sit there, old fat bean—"

"Oh gum!" gasped Coker, as Bunter's avoidruppos landed on him.

"Oh, my hat! Oh crukey!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Sit tight!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear old Coker!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Always hunting for trouble, and always finding it."

"Will you lemme gerrup?" shrieked Coker.

"There isn't a seat for you, old bean," answered Wharton. "Carriage full! We can't let you stand—it wouldn't be respectful to the Fifth. Stay where you are, old chap. You're welcome to the floor!"

"I—I—I'll—"

Coker heaved again like an earthquake.

But with Billy Bunter safely lodged on his chest, and his arms and legs safely held, Coker heaved in vain.

The famous Five sat down, breathless, but smiling. They still held Coker. Nugent and Hurree Singh had a wrist each; Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull had an ankle each. Wharton rested his feet on Coker's waistcoat, as an additional precaution, though really Billy Bunter's weight was enough to keep him where he was.

They smiled down at Coker.

Coker did not smile.

It looks like the career of the Famous Five of Greyfriars would have come to a sudden termination on the spot. Fortunately, looks couldn't.

"I—I—I'll smash you!" gasped Coker.

"Take it calmly, old bean," said Bob.

"After all, we've let you into our carriage."

"I'll smash you!" shrieked Coker.

"You're repeating yourself, old bean."

"I'll smash you!" Coker's vocabulary seemed limited; but it was very emphatic.

"Ho's only got one record," said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker made another effort. But it was in vain. Coker was helpless. The train ran on towards Friardale, and Coker was still on his back on the dusty floor, helpless in the hands of the Philistines.

Billy Bunter settled down comfortably on his chest. Billy Bunter was grinning now.

"Oh, you young scoundrels!" gasped Coker. "Wait till we get to Friardale, and I'll mop you up! Those silly



asses, Potter and Greene—if they'd caught the train—I'll jolly well punch them when we get to Greyfriars! Will you young villains let me scorpion?"

"What are you going to do if we let you get up?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"Smash you!" roared Coker.

"What an inducement to let him get up!" remarked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The inducement is terrific."

"You young sweeps! You'll have to let me loose at Friardale—and then—just you look out!" gasped Coker.

That was Horace Coker's only consolation. When the train stopped, the

"Pull one of his paws this way," said Harry. "Now one of his hoofs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker resisted frantically. But his resistance was of no avail. His left leg was bent, his ankle approaching his right wrist. Wharton tied the two together, with Coker's necktie.

Coker spluttered with fury.

Friardale was in sight now; the train slowed down into the station.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are!" said Bob Cherry. "I suppose we'd better help Coker out! Like a hand, Coker?"

"All right now, old bean?" asked Bob, as Coker was set up on the platform, on his single available leg.

"You—you—you—"

"Hop it, old thing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker hopped. He had to hop, or go over. He hopped frantically. Greyfriars fellows, swarming from all the carriages along the train, stared at Coker, wondering what on earth he thought he was up to.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter. "I say, look at Coker! He, he, he! Look at him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You will till I get loose!" hissed Coker.

"He, he, he!"

Bunter chortled; but he departed as he chortled. Coker would get loose sooner or later; and Bunter did not want to be on the spot at the time. The fat Owl vanished.

"Hop it, Coker!" chuckled Bob.

"You—you—I'll—I'll— Oh



As Bunter dodged back to avoid Coker, his fat head crashed into Bob Cherry's face and a fat heel jammed hard on that worthy's toe. "Ooooooh!" roared Bob. "You potty elephant! Yarooooop!"

juniors had to let him go. And then—

Then there was going to be slaughter. Coker, glaring, waited. He could do nothing but wait. It was not a long run to Friardale. Coker had to make that run on his back on a dusty floor. There was no help for that. But reprisals were coming. Once he was on his feet, with his hands loose—

Harry Wharton regarded him thoughtfully.

The Famous Five could handle Coker, on his feet or off his feet. But they did not want to emerge from the carriage at Friardale in a struggling heap, mixed up with Coker.

Wharton leaned over Coker, and jerked off his necktie.

"Mind lending me this?" he asked politely.

"You young villain—"

"You—you—you—" Words failed Coker.

Reprisals were off. With a foot tied to a wrist, Coker could not even get on his other foot without help. Once on his other foot, he would have to hop. The idea of showing up on a crowded platform, swarming with Greyfriars fellows, hopping on one leg, was absolutely infuriating to Coker. But there was no help for it. The mighty had fallen, and great was the fall thereof!

The train stopped. Harry Wharton threw open the door. Billy Bunter rolled out, chortling. The Famous Five helped Coker out. It was really kind of them, for Coker could not possibly have got out unaided, and unaided he would have gone on in the train. But it was clear that Coker felt nothing like gratitude for their kindness. He glared at them as if he could have eaten them.

crikey— Ooooh!" Coker hopped furiously.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked away and left him hopping.

"Potter!" yelled Coker. "Greene!"

Potter of the Fifth gave him an astonished stare.

"For goodness' sake, what is that idiot Coker up to?" he whispered to Greene. "What game's this?"

"Goodness knows!" gasped Greene.

"Here, let's get out—don't let people think we know him!"

Potter and Greene departed in haste. Everybody in Friardale station was staring at Coker; and his friends in the Fifth were not at all anxious to claim the acquaintance of a fellow who was making such an extraordinary exhibition of himself.

"Potter!" shrieked Coker. "Greene!"

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Potter and Greene were gone.  
 "Hilton—Blundell—"  
 "Oh gad!" said Hilton of the Fifth; while Blundell, the captain of that Form, gave Coker one surprised and scornful stare, and swung away.  
 "Go it, Coker!" yelled Skinner of the Remove. "Hop it!"  
 "What's he up to?" exclaimed Hobson of the Shell. "What is Coker doing this for?"

"Must be mad!" said Hoskins.  
 "Mad as a hatter!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Go it, Coker! Hop it!"  
 Coker hopped. He hopped wildly. He had to hop! Yells of laughter on all sides showed that the public were enjoying the performance.

Wingate of the Sixth, came striding along the platform. Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, was not laughing—he was frowning. He grabbed Coker by the shoulder, and glared at him.

"You silly ass!" he hooted. "What are you up to? Haven't you any sense? If you want to play the fool, can't you do it in private? Do you want people to think that Greyfriars is a lunatic asylum, or what?"

"Let me loose!" gurgled Coker. "Can't you see? I'm tied? I can't get loose—Lemme loose, you idiot! That gang of fags tied me up like this, you dummy—"

"Oh!" said Wingate. He realised that this was not an intentional performance on Coker's part. He was not hopping for the fun of the thing.

He dragged off the the knotted necktie. Coker was free at last. Amid roars of laughter, Coker of the Fifth rushed for the station exit, barging fellows right and left in his hurry. He wanted to find the Famous Five; and he wanted to find them quick,

and he wanted to find them **ba!** He tore out of the station, red with rage, leaving the crowd of fellows behind him rocking with laughter.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Coker Asks for More!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. strolled cheerily out of the station into the village street.

The school omnibus was waiting, and Billy Bunter was already in it, and other fellows were getting in. Other fellows, who preferred to walk on a sunny spring day, were starting for Friardale Lane. The Famous Five followed the walkers.

As a matter of fact they wanted to keep clear of Coker.

They were not always, perhaps, the most peaceable and orderly youths imaginable. But there were masters about, as well as Sixth Form prefects; and a wild and whirling scrap in Friardale High Street was not the thing.

If Coker wanted more—as doubtless he did, for Horace Coker never knew when he had had enough—it was more judicious to give it to him at Greyfriars. There, the Famous Five were ready to hand out all that Coker wanted, and a little over.

"May as well keep clear!" Harry Wharton remarked. "I saw old Prout rolling about—and Quelch may be in the offing!"

And the Famous Five walked down the old High Street, and turned into Friardale Lane. They had left Coker hopping on the station platform; but there was no doubt that he would emerge before the school bus filled up and started.

The cheery five exchanged nods and greetings with old acquaintances as they went. In the lane outside the village, they came on another old acquaintance—Mr. Joyce, the wood-cutter, jogging away in his cart.

The cart was empty, Joyce having apparently disposed of his load of logs. The old wood-cutter glanced down at the juniors, and touched his hat.

"You young gents like a lift?" he asked.

"Not a bad idea," said Harry. "I thought we might pick up a lift in the lane. Glad to see you, Joyce. Room for all of us?"

"Bags of room, sir," said old Joyce; and the chums of the Remove clambered into the cart, and joggled on cheerily.

"We shall get in before the crowd," remarked Bob Cherry. "The bus won't be along for a quarter of an hour yet. I wonder if Coker is still hopping?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The hopefulness of the esteemed Coker was terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "and the boiffulness of his absurd temper was also great!"

"We'll be ready for him, if he butts into the Remove passage," said Bob.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Coker!"

From the direction of the village, coming up the lane at a burst of speed, appeared a burly figure.

"It was Coker of the Fifth, going strong."

Evidently Coker was not still hopping. Coker had ceased to hop, and set out on the trail of vengeance. He was putting on quite a creditable score. Anyone who had noticed Coker might have supposed that he was in an unusual hurry to get to school.

The Famous Five grinned at him from the joggling cart.

Unless Mr. Joyce whipped up his horse, Coker was evidently going to overtake that cart. The chums of the Remove did not seem alarmed, however. They had considered it better to give Coker what he wanted at Greyfriars. But if he insisted on having it on the spot, they were not the fellows to say him nay.

Coker came charging up the lane. He glared round in search of the juniors, who, he knew, could not be very far ahead. He sighted the five grinning faces looking over the back of the cart; and shook a large size in fists at them. Then he put on a spurt, and came panting up behind the cart.

"Got you!" he gasped.

"The gotfulness is not terrific, my ridiculous Coker."

"Get out of that cart!" roared Coker.

"To hear is to obey, of course," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is a boot on the other leg," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The hearfulness is not the absurd obeyfulness, my esteemed Coker."

The cart joggled on. Coker kept pace behind, glaring up, while the Famous Five grinned down. Mr. Joyce looked round at Coker, grinned a slow grin, ejaculated "My eye!" and drove sedately on.

"Will you get out of that cart?" bellowed Coker. "I'm going to mop up the road with you. Do you hear? Get out!"

Coker, evidently, was only anxious for the Famous Five to be within his reach. What had happened in the railway carriage might have warned Coker that, even within easy reach, the Famous Five were a tough proposition,

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and that it was really more judicious to keep them out of reach! But lessons were wasted on Coker. Coker of the Fifth was there to thrash those cheeky fags; and it did not even occur to his powerful brain that, as Hurree Singh expressed it, it might be a boot on the other leg!

As the cheery quintet showed no intention of getting out of the cart to oblige Coker, Coker naturally decided to turn them out. He jumped at the tailboard and caught hold to clamber in. "Stop!" he shouted. "Joyce, do you hear? Stop!"

Old Joyce gave him another grin and drove on.

Coker clambered at the tailboard. "All hands repel boarders!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

The chums obeyed the order. Coker's hat was pulled down over his ears, then Nugent took hold of one of his ears, Hurree Singh held the other, and Bob Cherry grasped his nose.

"A long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yarooooooh!" yelped Coker.

He could not use his hands, he needed them to hang on to the tailboard, while his feet dragged along the dusty lane as the cart joggled on. His nose and his ears were at the mercy of the enemy. That nose and those ears seemed to suffer severely, judging by the fearful yells that came from Coker.

"Hold on to him!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "I've got an orange here! Coker can have it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaning over the helpless, infuriated Coker, Johnny Bull squeezed the orange down his neck.

"Ooooooh!" gurgled Coker.

He made a frantic effort to scramble over the tailboard into the cart. Harry Wharton gave him a gentle shove on the chest and pushed him back again. Coker hung on behind, his feet dragging, with orange-juice and pips squeezing down his back, and his nose and ears still held by the enemy.

"Yooooooh!"

"Stick it, Coker!" chortled Bob Cherry. "We'll keep it up as long as you do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Coker did not stick it. If he had not had enough, he had at least had enough to go on with. He dropped off the back of the cart and sat in the road, with a bump and a roar.

"Good-bye, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five waved their hands as the cart joggled on, leaving Coker sitting in the middle of Friardale Lane, breathless, dusty, dishevelled, and in a state of wrath compared with which the celebrated wrath of Achilles was no moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Coker in the Cart!

"E" RE you are, young gents!" said Old Joyce.

The old woodcutter drew the cart to a halt at the corner of Redclyffe Lane, by which lay his homeward way. Harry Wharton & Co. jumped down. It was only a short walk to the school from that spot.

"Many thanks for the lift, Joyce!" said Harry.

"Not at all, sir! But, I say, you young gents better 'urry!" said Mr. Joyce. "Ere he comes."

"Oh, my hat! More Coker!"

"The morefulness is terrific."

"Coker's a jolly old sticker!" chuckled Bob.

Up the winding lane came a beat of running feet. Coker of the Fifth burst into view again. Coker evidently still wanted more. His face was crimson, his hat was askew, he was dusty and he was untidy. But his wrath was unabated, rather it was intensified.

"Good old Coker!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Coker, old man, race you to Greyfriars!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The racefulness is the proper caper!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And the chums of the Remove, turning their backs on Coker, started at a rapid trot for the school. They really felt that Coker had had enough, though he was far from realising it himself. Coker was going strong; but he was feeling the effects of his exertions, and it was easy for the juniors to beat him in a foot-race to the school. If Coker chose to pursue them there and come charging in at the school gates looking like a wild Indian on the warpath, that was Coker's affair.

"Stop!" yelled Coker breathlessly.

#### WANT A POCKET WALLET?

Then make up a  
GREYFRIARS LIMERICK!

One of this week's  
USEFUL PRIZES  
has been awarded to

Tom Collins, of 12, Royland Road, Loughborough, Leics., who submitted the following winning effort:

**Billy Bunter once posed as a blade  
And believed that his fortune he'd made.**

**But the horse came in last,  
Hope and fortune went fast,  
Leaving Bunter broke and dismayed.**

**Get busy on YOUR effort, chum!**

The Famous Five, laughing, vanished up the lane.

Coker, panting, gasping, breathing dust and wrath, came up to the cart. He was quite aware that he would never overtake the elusive Removites in a foot-race. Neither did he desire to arrive at Greyfriars School like a wild Indian. He wanted to overtake the Famous Five before they reached the school, and deal with them with promptness and dispatch. On foot he could not do it. But there was a horse and cart at hand. Old Joyce had dismounted to lead the horse up Redclyffe Lane, which was hilly and steep. Coker grabbed the reins from his hand.

"Lend me this cart, Joyce!" he gasped.

"Eh?" ejaculated the old woodcutter. "I'll tip you five bob! Ten bob if you like! Anyhow, I want it!"

"Look 'ere——" gasped Joyce.

But Coker did not "look there." Coker had no time to waste on the owner of the horse and cart. He whirled the horse's head away from the astonished woodcutter, clambered in, grabbed the whip, dragged at the reins, and yelled to the horse.

"Gee up!"

"Look 'ere, Master Coker——" roared old Joyce indignantly.

"Follow on and you can have the cart!" yelled back Coker. "I shall catch up those young scoundrels in a few minutes!"

"Look 'ere——"

Crack, crack! rang the whip, and the horse gave a convulsive start and leaped into motion. Old Joyce rushed on behind.

"Look 'ere," he howled, "don't you whip that 'orse, sir—he's fresh, he is! You take care of that 'orse! You mind he don't bolt! You 'ear me, Master Coker, you young idgit?"

It was doubtful whether Coker heard. It was certain that he did not heed. If the horse was fresh, that was all to the good, from Coker's point of view; he wanted speed out of that horse. With a fresh horse and a light cart empty behind him he was likely to get the speed he wanted and catch up those cheeky young rascals before they could escape. When he caught them up Joyce's whip would come in handy.

He cracked and whacked with the whip, and the woodcutter was quickly left behind. Coker was getting speed out of that horse. It was a young horse and a strong horse, as it needed to be to pull Joyce's loads of logs up hill and down dale. The empty cart rocked behind as the horse gathered speed. Sometimes a wheel left the ground—sometimes two. There was no doubt that Coker of the Fifth was getting the speed he wanted out of that horse. In a few minutes it dawned upon him that he was getting more speed than he wanted.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry looked back at the sound of galloping hoofs. "Oh, my hat! Look out!"

"Great pip! Keep clear!" yelled Johnny Bull.

The Famous Five scattered into the hawthorn hedges on either side of the lane. They stared at Coker. The horse and cart passed them almost like a flash.

Coker was dragging at the reins now. Having overtaken the Famous Five, the next item on the programme was to stop, dismount, leave the horse and cart for Joyce to collect, and deal with the Removites. But it was the horse, not Coker, who was now in charge of the programme. Coker wanted to stop. The horse didn't. The horse won!

Past the staring chums of the Remove the cart went, rocking and clattering Coker yelling at the horse, dragging at the reins, and yelling and dragging in vain, utterly unheeded by the quadruped.

"Oh crickey!" gasped Nugent. "He's belted!"

"The boldfulness is——"

"Terrific!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Poor old Coker!" gurgled Johnny Bull. "I hope he'll get to Greyfriars in one piece!"

Really it looked doubtful. The horse was undoubtedly rather fresh. Wild whacking and cracking from Coker had excited him into an almost frantic state.

Coker fancied that he could drive—but that was only one of Coker's many fancies that had no foundation in fact. He couldn't—and the horse knew he couldn't. The horse took no notice whatever of Coker. He charged on wildly, with tossing head and clattering, galloping hoofs, and Coker dragged and dragged in vain. He dragged with terrific energy, and there was a sudden snap as the reins parted.

The horse was young, but the harness was not. That harness had served a succession of horses since old Joyce had started in business as a woodcutter in the reign of Queen Victoria. It had been extensively repaired in its time. No doubt it had its weak spots. Coker evidently had found one of them. The

reins gave way under the strain, and Coker was seen to up-end all of a sudden and disappear backwards into the cart. A crash and a howl floated back to the ears of the Famous Five.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Poor old Coker!"

The chums of the Remove dashed after the cart. They hoped to help what was left of Coker after his wild career. But the horse, quite unrestrained now that the reins were gone, was going at a wild gallop, and the rocking cart disappeared from their eyes.

Coker, in the cart, clambered to his feet, holding on. He was dazed and dizzy. He still fancied that he could drive; but even Coker did not fancy that he could drive without reins. He stared right and left, looking for a soft spot to fall on if he jumped. But the cart was going too fast for a jump. It rooked from wheel to wheel and raced on, and Coker wondered, with horror, what would happen if he met a car. Luckily he did not meet a car.

He heard a jingle and a snap. Some more of the harness seemed to be going. "Oh crumbs!" gasped Coker.

He was not thinking of the cheeky juniors now. He had forgotten the Famous Five. His thoughts were wholly concentrated on Horace James Coker.

Greyfriars was in sight, grey old walls and ancient roofs showing over the trees. But there was no chance of stopping unless an accident supervened. The horse rushed on past the school gates. Old Gosling, the porter, stared out at the gateway, his ancient eyes almost popping out of his gnarled visage at the sight of Coker in the cart. But Coker was gone from his gaze in a twinkling. "My eye!" gasped Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere! My eye!"

"Oh crickey!" groaned Coker. "Oh gum! Oh jiminy! The brute will take me on to Courtfield if something doesn't happen! Yaroooh!"

Something did happen. It happened suddenly. Two wheels slid over the edge of a ditch as the cart shaved it too closely. Coker hardly knew what happened. He knew a second later that he was sprawling headlong in a hedge. He sprawled and struggled and sat up. An up-ended cart lay in the ditch, with fragments of harness adhering. "Up the road went a galloping horse with other fragments of harness swinging and jingling. Evidently the traces had parted in the shock."

"Oh crickey!" gasped Coker.

He crawled back to the road. The horse vanished in the direction of Courtfield Common, going strong. Coker stared at the cart. He could do nothing with that cart. He had to leave it where it was. No doubt old Joyce would come along and find it, sooner or later. Whether he would find the horse was another matter. From the rate at which the fiery steed had disappeared, it seemed likely that he would have to be looked for in the next county, or the next but one.

Coker, anyhow, was fed-up with both the horse and the cart. He turned and tramped back to the school. How many bruises and bumps he had collected he did not know. At a rough guess he would have said about a million. He was feeling like a dismal, deteriorated, dilapidated wreck of Coker of the Fifth as he limped away to the school gates.

He arrived there as five juniors came trotting up. They were glad to see Coker all in one piece. They had really

feared that Coker might be scattered by mount and stream and sea.

"Oh, here you are!" gasped Wharton. "Glad you're still alive, Coker!"

"The gladfulness is preposterous!"

"Enjoy the drive?" asked Bob Cherry.

Coker did not answer. He did not charge the Famous Five and mop up the earth with them. He was feeling too utterly wrecked and done for, even to give those cheeky fags what they deserved. Treating them, therefore, with lofty and crushing contempt, Coker of the Fifth limped, gasping, in at the gates of Greyfriars. And the Famous Five, quite uncrushed, followed him in, chuckling.

— — —

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### First Day of Term!

"SEEN Smithy?"

Skinner of the Remove looked into Study No. 1, and asked that question.

Wharton and Nugent were rather busy there, getting their study to rights.

First day of term was a busy day at Greyfriars.

The old school, after weeks of solitude and silence, was in a buzz of voices and trampling feet.

Form masters were in a state of tart temper. They had plenty to do: To the irreverent eyes of youth they rather resembled hens collecting their chickens. Fellows were bagging studies, unpacking bags and boxes, looking for old acquaintances, larking in the passages. Not all the Remove, so far, had given in their names to Mr. Quelch, the master of that Form. Several Remove men had been asking where Smithy was. Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was rather an important man in the Remove, having been elected captain of the Form last term. Smithy did not seem to have turned up yet; neither had his chum, Tom Redwing. Harold Skinner was hunting for Smithy up and down the House, and he looked into Study No. 1 at last to inquire for the Bounder.

"Smithy!" repeated Wharton, looking round. "No!"

"Haven't seen him," said Frank Nugent. "Look in his study!"

"I've looked. Nobody there," said Skinner. "I suppose Smithy's coming back to-day?"

"Blessed if I know!" answered Wharton, rather curtly. Skinner looked at him.

"Oh, I forgot you were on fighting terms with old Smithy!" he said agreeably. "I suppose there's going to be rows this term. Did you see anything of him in the hols?"

Wharton did not answer.

He did not want to discuss the Bounder, especially with Skinner. It was only too probable that there would be "rows" that term, as Smithy was now captain of the Remove, and plenty of fellows did not expect that Harry Wharton would leave him peacefully in possession of the captaincy. But Wharton hoped—though he hardly believed—that Smithy would come back for the new term in a better mood, willing to let bygones be bygones.

"Look here," said Skinner sharply. "I want to see Smithy. I've got something to show him that will interest him."

Skinner had a newspaper in his hand. It was folded, but the juniors could see the title on it: "Sporting Snips." Apparently it was a racing matter in which he expected Smithy to be interested.

"Well, he's not here, ass!" said

Wharton. "Go and look for him if you want him!"

"I can't find the chap! He must be coming to-day, I suppose. Everybody seems here, except Smithy and Redwing. Look here, do you know whether he's coming back?" demanded Skinner.

"How should I know, ass?"

"Didn't you see him in the hols?" demanded Skinner. "I know he was at a place in Surrey near your place." You must have seen something of him."

"Yes," said Wharton briefly.

"Oh, you had rows with him in the hols—what?" grinned Skinner. "Is that it?"

"Find out!"

"I've found out!" chuckled Skinner. "Look here, do you know whether Smithy's turning up to-day or not?"

"I don't know anything about him, and don't want to," said Wharton curtly. "Go and look for him; and you'd better shove that racing paper out of sight before a prefect sees it."

"Bow-wow!"

Skinner shoved the folded paper into his pocket and left the study, still hunting Smithy. Wharton and Nugent went on sorting out their property. A fat face and a large pair of spectacles looked in at the doorway.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Roll away, barrel!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, you fellows, Smithy hasn't come in yet!"

"Blow Smithy!"

"Well, I expect you're glad, old chap," said Billy Bunter, blinking at Wharton through his big spectacles. "I say, I've heard a fellow say that Smithy isn't coming back yet. If he doesn't turn up, Wharton, you may have a chance of dishing him—what? Rather a joke on Smithy if the fellows turned him down to his away. You might be able to wangle it, old chap."

"You fat chump!"

"I'm giving you a tip, old fellow. I'm fed-up with Smithy," said Bunter.

"He treated me rottenly in the hols. Kicking a chap, you know, when a chap dropped in to friendly way. I might give you my support. I've got a lot of influence in the Form, as you know. Are you having supper in the study to-night?"

"Harry Wharton laughed. Billy Bunter's valuable support in "dishing" Smithy apparently depended on supper in the study.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said the fat Owl. "I'd rather have supper in the study than the do in Hall. A fellow Smithy knows said that he wouldn't be coming back yet. It's a jolly chance for dishing him; and, of course, you're keen on it. Let's talk it over, over supper, shall we, old fellow?"

"Fatehead!"

"Look here, Wharton!" hooted the Owl of the Remove. "Am I coming to supper with you or not? I want to know. Plenty of fellows are asking me. I'm giving you the first choice. Now—yes or no?"

"Yes, certainly," said Harry, laughing. "You can come to supper with me if you like, fatty."

"Right—no, old chap!" said Bunter affably. "I'll come! Mauleverer wants me, but I'll tell Mauly I can't come to his study. I'd rather have supper with you, old chap."

"Quite welcome," said Harry. "I'm having supper in Hall—"

"Eh?"

"You can come if you like—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent, quite entertained by the expression on Billy Bunter's fat face.

"You—you—you silly chump!" roared Bunter. "If I'm going to have supper





The nearside wheels of the cart slid over the edge of the ditch, and Coker was pitched into the hedge. At the same moment there was a rending crash as horse and cart separated. "Oh crikey!" gasped Coker.

in Hali you needn't ask me, I suppose. You silly ass! I thought you meant supper in the study. Go and eat coke!"

And Billy Bunter marched out of Study No. 1, evidently to look farther in search of a study supper.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter stopped at the doorway, and blinked back.

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Well, ass?"

"If you're too jolly mean to stand a study supper first night of term, you needn't jolly well think that I'm going to back you up in dishing Smithy. The fact is I think it's rather rotten of you."

"What?"

"Rotten!" said Bunter, with a scornful blink through his big spectacles.

"Mean! Trying to dish a fellow behind his back——"

"Why, you—you—you——" ejaculated Wharton. He had just unpacked a Latin dictionary. He picked it up.

"That's what I think," said Bunter, with lofty scorn, "and I shall jolly well tell the fellows so, too! Scheming—that's the word—scheming—scheming behind a fellow's back! I'm bound to say that I despise you! I'm bound to say——whooooooooooooop!"

The dictionary flew.

Crash!  
Billy Bunter caught it under his chin.

Bump!

"Oh crikey! Yow-ow-owooooop!" roared Bunter, as he sat down in the Remove passage.

"Have another?" asked Wharton, picking up a Latin grammar. "Keep where you are for a tick——"

"Ow!"

Bunter did not keep where was for a tick. He did not keep where he was for the tenth part of a tick. He picked himself up with wonderful swiftness, considering the weight he had to lift, and vanished along the Remove passage.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### The Heavy Hand!

"HERE, Skinner!" rapped Coker of the Fifth.

Horace Coker of the Fifth Form was not in a good temper.

Coker was, as a rule, a good-tempered and genial fellow. It was only necessary to give him his head, to agree with everything he said, and to listen to his words as if they were pearls of wisdom to keep Coker in a good temper.

But a lot of things had happened, on this particular day, to ruffle the serenity of the great Horace.

Potter and Greene somehow had missed him at Courtfield Station, and the carriage he had so carefully guarded for them had been invaded by a mob of fags, who had treated Coker in a way that might have ruffled any fellow's temper. And his adventure with Mr. Joyce's horse and cart had not soothed Coker. He had heard later from Mr. Joyce, who had recovered the cart but

seemed doubtful about recovering the horse.

It was not Coker's fault, of course—it was really the fault of those cheeky fags. But even Coker could not imagine that it was Mr. Joyce's fault, and he realised that he was responsible for the runaway horse. That horse was lost, stolen, or strayed and if he stayed lost, stolen, or strayed, Mr. Joyce made no secret of his intention of holding Coker of the Fifth responsible.

It was rather a worry. Horses cost money, and though Coker of the Fifth had plenty of money, and could always obtain a fresh supply from his affectionate Aunt Judy, still, it was a worry. It meant a large sum—large even for the wealthy Coker—and it meant, too, that the fellows would laugh if they got to know about it. Coker still fancied that he could drive, and he could hardly account for what had happened to Mr. Joyce's horse and cart in his masterly hands. He was unwilling to let all Greyfriars know that he had driven the woodcutter's horse and cart into a ditch, and that the cart had been wrecked, and that the horse had departed for parts unknown. It was in reality one of those accidents that no fellow could help. But it was not a thing Coker wanted talked about.

Fellows, as a matter of fact, often laughed about Coker. The way he played football made them laugh. Coker was not a humorist, yet often and often

he could not open his mouth without setting the table in a roar.

Only to-day, for instance, he had remarked casually in the Fifth Form games-study that he was going in for cricket pretty hard this season. What there was to laugh at in that remark was simply a mystery to Coker. But every fellow in the games-study had yelled.

No doubt they had been thinking of the way Coker would play cricket when he got going. They had seen him play cricket—and the mere remembrance was an entertainment.

This sort of thing irritated Coker. He had sagely decided to say nothing about the catastrophe to the woodcutter's horse and cart. As likely as not—in fact, more likely than not—fellows would take it as one more reason for idiotic cackling. Coker had had enough of their cackling.

After that wild adventure Coker had felt no used-up even to give the young rascal of the Remove what they so richly deserved. But he had recovered since, and he had told Potter and Greene that he wanted them to come with him to the Remove passage.

A few minutes later Potter and Greene had mysteriously disappeared.

Coker was looking for them when he came on Skinner of the Remove in the quad. Skinner, for his part, was looking for Smitty. Everybody had turned up long ago, but Skinner could not find Smitty. He was anxious to find him. There was a tip in "Sporting Snips" that he wanted to show the Boulder. Skinner had brought that valuable paper from home for the special purpose of telling Smitty about that tip. Such goods, of course, were contraband at Greyfriars School; a fellow found in possession of a racing paper was booked to "bend over" and suffer for his sins. But Harold Skinner was a law unto himself in such matters.

Skinner had no time to waste on Coker. When Coker called to him, in the authoritative tone natural to so great a man, Skinner only gave him a careless glance and hurried on.

He was heading for the school shop to look for Smitty there. He was not yet aware that Herbert Vernon-Smith was not coming back that day.

Coker stared after him angrily.

Coker never could get it out of his head that he was in the position of the ancient person who said "Do this!" and he doeth it. When he called out: "Here, Skinner!" it was proper for Skinner to run up and ask respectfully what was wanted.

Instead of which, Skinner, intent on his own affairs, passed Coker by like the idle wind which he regarded not.

Coker was already wrathful. Now he was wrathier. He had been checked that day by Harry Wharton & Co. More cheek from a fellow like Skinner was altogether too thick. Coker had only been going to ask Skinner whether he had seen Potter and Greene, who had vanished so strangely just when Coker wanted their help in a raid on the Remove passage. But as he rushed after Skinner, his intentions were not so pacific. Five cheeky juniors in a bunch were rather too much for Coker to handle. But he could handle Skinner with ease—and he did!

His grasp fastened on the back of Skinner's collar, and the junior was whirled round.

There was a yell from Skinner. "You silly ass, Coker! Leggo, you fool!"

"Fool, eh?" said Coker grimly. "Nice

way for a fag to talk to a Fifth Form man! I called to you—"

"Leggo, you idiot!" howled Skinner, struggling. "I'll hack your shins!" "Will you?" grinned Coker. "I'd like to see you do it! Oh—ow—yaroooh—yoww—wpp!"

Coker had said that he would like to see Skinner do it. He ought, therefore, to have been pleased when Skinner did it.

But he did not seem pleased.

On the other hand, he seemed enraged and exasperated. He gave a roar of pain and wrath, letting go the junior for a moment.

Skinner jumped to escape.

But the enraged Coker jumped faster. He grasped Skinner again before that hapless youth could get away. Skinner, in desperation, hooked his leg, and brought Coker down; but Skinner went down with him.

Coker's hand rose and fell.

It was only his open hand—he disdained to punch a shrimp like Skinner. But Coker's hand was a large size in hands—and it was hard and heavy. It seemed like a flail to Skinner as it landed.

Smack, smack, smack! "Oh crickey! Yaroooh! Whooop!" roared Skinner.

He struggled frantically. His cap came off, his necktie floated out, a button burst from his waistcoat, and a folded newspaper slipped from his pocket. Skinner heeded none of these things. Coker's hefty smacks filled his thoughts, to the exclusion of all other matters.

With a terrific effort Skinner tore himself loose at last and fled. A streak of lightning had nothing on Skinner as he departed from the spot.

Coker panted.

"Come back, you young sweep!" he roared.

Possibly even Coker did not expect that command to be obeyed. Anyhow, it was not obeyed. Skinner vanished.

"Well, that's a lesson for the cheeky young tick!" gasped Coker. "By gum, I'll teach these fags manners this term! I'll show 'em—my only hat, what's that?"

"That" was a newspaper at his feet, with the striking title of "Sporting Snips."

Coker picked it up.

He stared at it in disgust.

"My hat! A racing paper—and a kid in the Remove! Precious young rascal! I've a jolly good mind to give him some more! That young tick must have dropped it! Well, he won't see it again."

Coker put the paper under his arm and walked away.

Strictly speaking, Coker had no right to interfere with the shady proceedings of Harold Skinner. Certainly, Skinner was a young rascal; and it would have been the duty of any prefect who had found him with "Sporting Snips" to take the paper away, and cane him into the bargain. But Fifth Form men were not invested with the authority of prefects; and really it was no business of Coker's.

But minding his own business had never been one of Coker's weaknesses.

He was indignant, and he was disgusted. He walked off with that paper under his arm, with the intention of sticking it into the fire as soon as he went into the House. Certainly that was about the best thing that anyone could have done with it.

But that racing paper was still under Coker's arm as he came up to the House steps, and met Loder of the Sixth.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Loder in Luck!

**L**ODER of the Sixth Form gave Coker an inimical glance. Loder had not forgotten that trifling incident at the station, when he had allowed the burly Coker to overhear him. Hardly any other Sixth Form man would have stood cheek from a Fifth-Former, however big and burly; and Loder was irritated and humiliated by the recollection. In that mood Gerald Loder would rather have liked the burly Horace to check him again, so that he could come down heavy, and show Coker of the Fifth who was who, and what was what. His eyes fixed inimically on Horace Coker as that burly youth came swinging up the House steps, and that was how he came to observe the paper under Coker's arm. And at sight of it, Loder's eyes almost popped out.

"Coker!" he rapped. Loder was astonished, of course. Any fellow who carried "Sporting Snips" about the school might have been expected to keep it dark; even a well-known ass like Coker. Loder himself, as a matter of fact, patronised that special publication, and drew therefrom much of the knowledge of horses that helped him to get rid of his pocket-money. But Loder certainly never allowed anyone to see him walking about the quad with such a paper under his arm. Astonished as he was by Coker's recklessness, Loder was still more pleased. Horace Coker had out-faced him, made him feel small; and now he had Horace on the hip, so to speak.

"Stop!" rapped Loder authoritatively. Coker stopped and stared at him.

His manner was hardly respectful. Coker made no secret of the fact that he did not think much of the Sixth.

"Hallo, what's up?" asked Coker. "I'm in rather a hurry!" By the way, have you seen Potter and Greene? I'm looking for them."

"Never mind them now," said Loder. "Hand over that paper at once."

Loder made his tone as domineering and unpleasant as he could; and in that line, the bully of the Sixth had had a lot of practice, which makes perfect. His tone was so very domineering, and so very unpleasant, that it might have excited the ire of a fellow more patient than Coker.

Coker gave him a grim look. "What did you say?" he asked; not that he was in any doubt as to what the Sixth Form man had said, but it was the only retort he could think of for the moment. He wanted to say something crushing, something scornful; but Coker's brain was not rapid in its movements. It worked; but it worked slowly. That was the best Coker could manage on the spur of the moment.

"Give me that paper at once!" snapped Loder, still more disagreeably. "Did you say give you this paper?" demanded Coker. As a crushing, scornful retort it lacked punch; but again it was the best Coker could think of on the spot.

"And follow me!" added Loder.

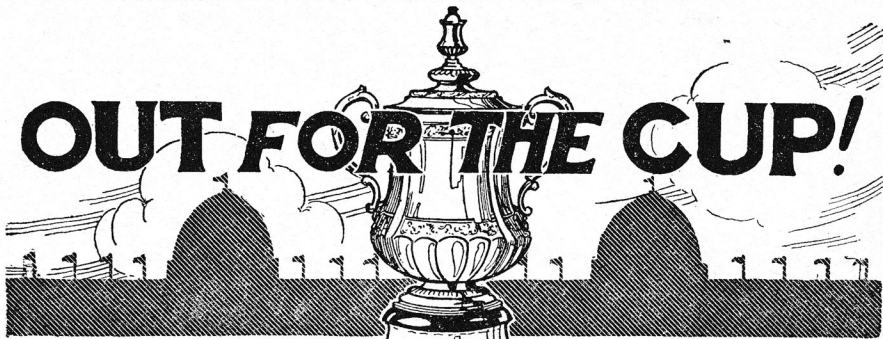
"Follow you!" repeated Coker blankly. "Did you say follow you, Loder?"

There was a certain sameness in Coker's retorts. Even Coker was aware of that. He was really not good at back-chat. But what his words lacked in pep, he made up in his looks, giving Loder a glare expressive of contempt and defiance.

"I am going to take you to your Form master!" said Loder.

(Continued on page 12.)





A brief review of the Big Personalities who will do battle at Wembley for the most coveted of all Soccer trophies—the F.A. Cup!

### Stage-Fright!

**E**VERY young footballer who dreams at all, dreams of the day when he will appear in a Cup Final. Since the second Saturday in March twenty-two players have known that, bar accident, this dream would be fulfilled. The lucky ones, the plucky ones, or perhaps, most of all, the skilful ones, are those who wear the colours of Newcastle United and Arsenal.

How glad they will be when the day comes! The period of waiting is a nerve-racking time. I had a reminder of this when I came back from the Astor Villa ground in the company of the Arsenal players just after they had scraped through the Semi-Final against Manchester City—scraped into the Final by a last-minute scrambled goal. From one of the players of Arsenal came a heart-felt expression: "How I wish we could play the match next week!"

When the great day comes, twenty-two players will trip out of the dressing-rooms at Wembley, and ninety-five thousand people will greet them with a tremendous cheer. There will be introductions to Royalty—the most trying thing about a Cup Final, as one player put it to me—and then off! Who will win—Arsenal or Newcastle? Nobody knows. But I think I could tell you if I knew which set of players would first get over the stage-fright which is inevitably associated with these games.

Let me tell you something about the players who will be at Wembley this year—the lucky lads, as we might well call them. As keeper of the goal of the Newcastle team there is Albert McInroy. So far as I know, he is going to have an absolutely unique experience—that of playing in a Cup Final on his birthday. It would be possible to think of a lot of presents, but there is no birthday present which McInroy would so greatly appreciate as one of those gold medals which would tell the world that he had been in a Cup-winning team.

There ought to be no real cause for surprise at Newcastle United being in the Cup Final this season. That is the way their centre-half Davidson put it to me. He lives at his home in the far north, in Wembley Avenue. Obviously he ought to know how to get to Wembley, and I can tell you that Davidson has done his bit in showing his colleagues the way there. Hughie Gallacher, the centre-forward of Chelsea, would bear me out. Davidson was the man who kept Hughie from putting Chelsea in the Final and keeping Newcastle out of it.

Scores of footballers—really good ones—have played in the game for years and years without ever realising the dream of appearing in a Cup Final. Yet the Newcastle team contains a boy player, Harry McMenemy, who will realise the dream in this, his very first season in top-class football. What luck!

McMenemy, who is a Scot, of course, had not even played in a first-class Scottish side when he was signed on by Newcastle United last summer. I don't know whether he will be nervous or not, but I do know one man who will be watching at Wembley who will be nervous about him—his father.

### Strange Coincidences!

**T**HERE are many strange coincidences connected with this coming Final Tie. The captains of the respective teams play in the same position—that of right full-back. James Nelson is the Newcastle man who will receive the trophy at the end of the game if his team

is successful. While should it happen that Arsenal are the winners, then it will be Tom Parker who will be the first to receive the congratulations of Nelson, for the two are really good friends.

Nelson has already appeared in one Cup Final, and he was then on the winning side for Cardiff City, with Arsenal as the losers. There is a chance of English Cup history being made in this Final, too. Twice for Bolton Wanderers, and once for Arsenal, David Jack has been on the winning side in an English Cup Final. No professional player has more than three English Cup winners' medals, so there is a chance for David to establish a new record. He won't be any the less keen because his watch-chain is so well decorated already.

In some ways the luckiest lad of all the twenty-two on the field at Wembley will be Clifford Bastin, the Arsenal outside-left. He only celebrated his twentieth birthday about five weeks ago, and yet he has tasted all the sweets of success which the world of football can hold out.

### A £10,000 Goal!

**B**ASTIN has played for England, he has played for Arsenal in a Final Tie which they won, and he played for Arsenal in their championship-winning team last season. Arsenal paid £2,000 for this "infant prodigy" to Exeter City some time ago. I wonder how many thousands of pounds he has brought back to the club in exchange? Just think of this one incident. It was Bastin who scored the goal in the last few seconds of the Semi-Final of this season against Manchester City. That goal won the match, and took Arsenal to the Final. The difference between Arsenal being in the Final and not is a matter of nearly ten thousand pounds in hard cash. Romance still lives in football, and truth is still stranger than fiction. The story of Bastin proves these things.

And so we could go on telling of the big personalities of this coming Cup Final—of Weaver, the half-back who can throw the ball farther than any other player of modern times—of Boyd, the Newcastle winger who has scored more goals than any other player in the two teams—of Herbert Roberts, the Arsenal centre-half, who is commonly known as P.-c. Roberts, because of the way in which he holds up and "arrests" opposing centre-forwards—and of Alex James, the game's prize juggler. A match of big personalities. That is what this Final Tie undoubtedly is.

But just a word should be said about the great day itself from another point of view—the preparation for it. I don't know how the players will sleep during the night before the match. I don't know what dreams will disturb their slumbers. But it is not likely that they will stay in bed very late. They will be up for a good breakfast; then a stroll at easy pace through the lanes near the hotels at which they will stay, and the names of which they will try in vain to keep secret; and then just a light lunch—a piece of toast, a bit of fish, and a cup of coffee.

Passing the time on the big day before going to the ground always presents a difficulty, but the managers usually get over it somehow. These managers will try to make certain that the players do not get to the ground too early. A long period of waiting is not good for the nerves.

And when it is all over, please don't forget—one for the loser!

## THE FOOL of the SCHOOL!

(Continued from page 10.)

"You're going to take me to my Form master!" stuttered Coker. Really, Coker seemed to be taking a parrot for a model in this conversation with Loder of the Sixth.

"Certainly," said Loder, almost gloating.

"Well, my hat!" said Coker; an original remark at last.

"Now——" said Loder.

"If you've done being funny," said Coker, "I'll get on."

Without waiting for a reply, he got on.

"Coker!" roared Loder.

Unheeding, Coker of the Fifth stalked on.

Several fellows who had been looking at them, grinned. Loder coloured with vexation.

He almost rushed after Coker and grabbed him by the shoulder. But not quite.

Coker, big and burly as he was, was as amenable to the authority of a Sixth Form prefect as any other fellow at Greyfriars. Prefects, of course, were expected to exercise tact in dealing with seniors; and not to throw their weight about recklessly. Still, there was no doubt that a Fifth Form man had to sit up and take notice when a Sixth Form prefect told him so to do. Even Blundell, the great and glorious captain of the Fifth, a tremendous blood, might, in theory, at least, have been told to bend over; though it had never happened and was never likely to happen.

Coker, in his own estimation at least, was a greater man than even the magnificent Blundell. It made Coker smile to think that Loder fancied he could order him to follow him—like a Remove or Third Form fag!

Smiling contemptuously, Coker went on his way.

Loder was left crimson and furious. He had the power of the asphalt. He could have called on Coker to bend over. He could have whopped Coker, and never had Loder so keenly desired to whoop anybody.

But Coker was such a reckless, unthinking ass! He was the fellow to land out, regardless of the fitness of things.

Even bunking Coker for punching a prefect, would not have replaced Loder's nose, had Coker's knuckles pushed it half-way towards the back of his head.

So Loder did not rush after Coker and enforce his authority as a prefect. Leaving Coker to march off triumphantly to the games-study, Loder tramped away to see Mr. Prout.

To Mr. Prout, master of the Fifth Form, Loder made his report—a report that almost made Prout's scanty hairs stand on end.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "It is surely impossible! Loder, are you not mistaken? A facing paper, you say——"

"I saw it quite plainly, sir."

"You are absolutely certain, Loder?" Mr. Prout seemed unable to believe it, and he was undoubtedly very unwilling to believe it.

At a big school like Greyfriars there were black sheep; that was unavoidable, as there are black sheep in every flock. Every Form master admitted the probability that there were black sheep in the Greyfriars flock. But no Form master was willing to admit that any of the black sheep could be found in his own particular Form.

Yet, if this was true, there was a very obtrusive and reckless black sheep in

Mr. Prout's flock. A fellow who not only brought a racing paper into the school, but walked about with it under his arm for all the world to run and read, so to speak—it really was the limit.

"The paper was 'Sporting Snips,' sir—a well-known racing paper which gives tips for the races," said Loder. "I have seen it—hem!—on railway bookstalls. Coker refused to hand it over to me, or to follow me into your presence——"

"Bless my soul!"

"I leave the matter in your hands, sir!" said Loder.

"Quite so—quite so!" said Mr. Prout, very much perturbed and flustered.

"Where is Coker now?"

"I think he went to the games-study, sir. Probably, now he has been detected, he may destroy the paper——"

Prout was flustered and shocked and indignant, but he was slow. Loder wanted to see him get into motion. He wanted Coker snaffled with the evidence still on him.

"I will see the boy at once!" gasped Prout. "Bless my soul! 'Sporting Snips'—a boy in my Form! A boy in my Form—'Sporting Snips'! Goodness gracious!"

Prout rolled out of his study, portly and ponderous, rather like an ancient Spanish galleon under full sail. He headed for the games-study.

Loder smiled after him.

Coker, he rather fancied, would be sorry for having checked him at Court-field Station. A severe reprimand; a long detention; possibly even a caning; perhaps a report to the Head—one or all of these would be meted out to the reckless young rascal who carried his racing papers about for all the school to see. Loder of the Sixth strolled away cheerfully, feeling that he was in luck.

### THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

#### The Benefit of the Doubt!

"O H, here you are!" grunted Coker.

There were a dozen of the Fifth in the games-study—an apartment which belonged to that Form. Among them were George Potter and William Greene, for whom Coker had been searching.

Coker had come into the games-study chiefly because there was a fire there, and he was going to shove Skinner's paper into the fire. He had found Potter and Greene quite by accident.

But for that accident he would not have found them; not till supper-time, at least, when the hamper Coker had brought from home was to be whacked out among Coker's friends—a time, of course, when all Coker's friends would remember him and rally round him.

He had already looked in the games-study for Potter and Greene, and drawn it blank, and after he had gone out Potter and Greene had supposed themselves safe there. Coker was anxious to find them, but they were not anxious to be found.

"I've been looking for you men!" said Coker accusingly.

"Well, here we are, old bean," said Potter rather guiltily.

He wondered rather dismally how he was going to get out of the raid on the Remove without offending Coker to the extent of being excluded from a whack in Aunt Judy's hamper.

"What on earth have you got there, Coker?" asked Price of the Fifth, staring at the paper under Coker's arm. "I'd keep that sort of thing dark if I were you."

"Eh! What do you mean?" asked Coker.

It had not occurred to Horace Coker's powerful brain that his possession of "Sporting Snips" might be misunderstood. He did not even know why Loder had dropped on him, only supposing that the Sixth Form ass was throwing his weight about as usual.

"Dash it all, Coker, that's rather thick!" said Blundell of the Fifth, frowning. "Don't bring that kind of stuff in here."

"What the thump do you mean?" demanded Coker wrathfully.

"I mean what I say!" answered the captain of the Fifth tartly. "The best thing you can do with that rubbish is to shove it into the fire before you're seen with it."

"I'm going to," said Coker, puzzled. "But what——"

All the Fifth Form men in the room were looking at Coker curiously, and it annoyed him.

They were surprised. They knew, of course, that Coker was every sort of an ass. But he had never been suspected of being anything worse than a silly ass. There were fellows in the Fifth, like Hilton and Price, who took an undue interest in "peegees," and sometimes sneaked out of the school to see a man about a horse. But they weren't blatant about it like this. If they consulted a racing paper it was in the strict seclusion of their study.

Coker had never been supposed to be a fellow with blackguardly tendencies. But seeing was believing; the Fifth Form men had eyes in their heads, and could trust the evidence of their eyes. If Coker had gone to the bad during the Easter holidays, and was bringing his shady proclivities back to school with him, the least he could do was to draw a decent veil over his rotten conduct.

Walking into the games-study with "Sporting Snips" under his arm, as a fellow might have walked in with the "Holiday Annual," was altogether too thick. All the Fifth Form men thought so.

Coker, of course, did not understand. He was puzzled and irritated by the glances cast at him.

"Oh, my hat! Here comes Prout!" exclaimed Greene.

There was a heavy tread outside, and if it was not a hippopotamus it was Prout. There were no hippopotami loose at Greyfriars, so obviously it was Prout.

"Get that out of sight, Coker, you ass!" gasped Potter.

"Look here, Potter——"

"I tell you it's Prout."

"Well, what about it?"

"Oh, my hat!" said Potter.

He could say no more. If Coker did not mind his Form master seeing "Sporting Snips," Potter had to leave him to it.

Coker lounged towards the fire. He did not hurry. He saw no occasion for hurrying. The fire was low, and Coker stirred it together before he dropped "Sporting Snips" into it.

"Sporting Snips" began to smoulder as Mr. Prout rolled majestically into the games-study.

Mr. Prout glanced round him.

"Coker! Is Coker here?"

"Here, sir!" said Coker. "Do you want me?"

"Loder has reported to me, Coker, that—that——" Prout broke off and stared at the smouldering paper in the grate. "Bless my soul! What

paper are you burning, Coker? Upon my word!"

There was a dead silence in the games-study.

Coker was caught, there was no doubt about that. Really he had asked for it. Now the chopper was coming down.

"Coker," said Prout in a deep voice, "I doubted—I could not help doubting—the report made to me by a Sixth Form prefect. I came here hoping to find that there had been a mistake—a misapprehension. There is no mistake. There is no misapprehension. I find you in the act of destroying—the obnoxious newspaper which Loder saw in your possession! Had it been destroyed before I arrived I might still have doubted. Doubt is no longer possible."

Prout paused; not for a reply, but for breath. Prout was an eloquent gentleman, but his eloquence was often marred by a shortness of wind.

"But, sir," gasped the amazed Coker, "what—?"

"Here, sir," boomed Prout—"here I am, as I have said, in loco parentis! You have ventured—you have dared—to bring into the school—a a periodical devoted to—horse-racing, to betting, to gambling on the turf. It is only too clear an indication of the habits—the pernicious habits—you have acquired while away from this—from these scholastic shades! Such hardihood—such impudence—such brazen effrontery I—"

Coker almost staggered.

"B-but, sir—" he gurgled.

"Follow me!" boomed Prout. "I shall take you to your headmaster! I shall place the matter before Dr. Loder! I shall acquaint him, sir, with the iniquitous tendencies you have developed while away—"

"But—but—but what have I done, sir?" gasped the bewildered Coker.

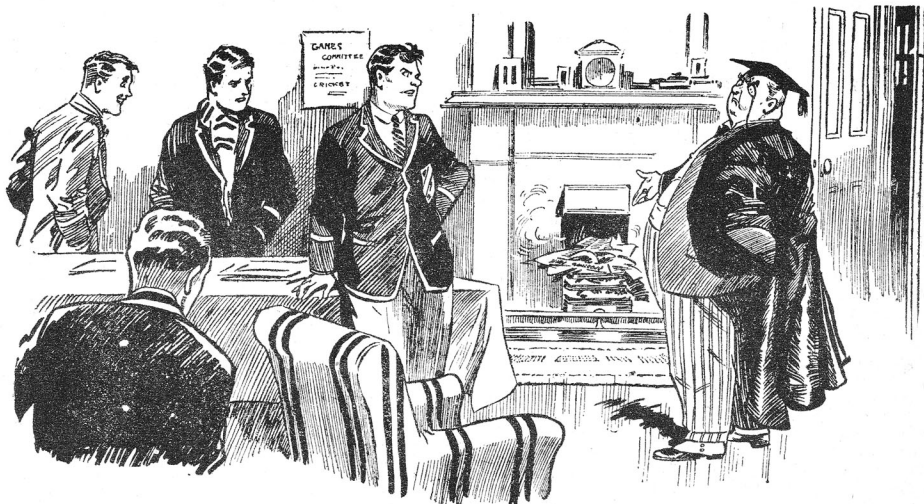
"Boy! That periodical—that ob-

"Upon my word!" said Prout.

The Fifth-Formers stood silent. They hoped that Coker would "get by" with it, as Price expressed it. Prout seemed in doubt.

"If your statement is correct, Coker, you have placed yourself in a position liable to be very seriously misunderstood," said Prout, at last. "No such paper should be in possession of a Lower boy; but the Fifth Form have no authority over Lower boys. You have acted, Coker, as if you were invested with the authority of a prefect. I hope that your statement is correct, Coker! I shall, at all events, give you the benefit of the doubt! But I warn you, sir"—Prout's boom grew deeper—"I warn you, that I shall bear this matter in mind! I shall observe you, Coker! Far be it from me to doubt the word of any member of my Form, but—"

Far as it was from Prout, it was clear



Mr. Prout rolled majestically into the games-study and approached Coker. "Loder has reported to me, Coker, that—that—" The Fifth-Form master broke off suddenly and stared at the smouldering racing paper in the grate.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "What paper are you burning?"

Having got his second wind, Prout boomed on:

"Coker, what does this mean? I need not ask you what it means; the fact is only too clear! Coker, I am shocked! I am ashamed! A boy in my Form—"

"May I ask what's the matter, sir?" inquired the amazed and puzzled Coker.

"Have I done anything, sir?"

The Fifth-Formers exchanged glances. They wondered whether Coker expected to carry it off with cool audacity like this.

"Have you done anything?" gasped Prout. "Coker! Boy! With your proceedings during the holidays I have nothing to do. In vacation you are under your parents' care; a school-master's responsibility ceases on the last day of term. But here, sir, I am responsible; here, sir, I am in your parents' place; here, I am in loco parentis!"

Prout loved a classic tag, and "loco parentis" was his favourite. All the Fifth knew that he would not get through without lugging in "loco parentis."

noxious periodical—" Prout's plump forefinger pointed to the smouldering racing paper.

Coker began to grasp it. Slowly as his intellect worked, it did work under pressure.

"Oh, that!" gasped Coker. "I—I see! That's what that fool Loder thought, I suppose! The silly ass!"

"Coker!" boomed Prout.

"That paper wasn't mine, sir!" explained Coker. "I wouldn't touch such rot with a barge-pole! I took it away from a fag."

"Oh!" ejaculated Prout.

"Great pip!" whispered Price to Hilton. "Does the silly ass really think he will get by with that?"

Hilton shrugged his shoulders.

"Coker!" If what you state is correct—" Prout was surprised and taken aback.

"I hope you don't doubt my word, sir!" said Coker warmly. "I had to whop a cheeky fag, and he dropped this rotten paper. I brought it in to burn it. Naturally, I wasn't going to let the young sweep have it back. That's all, sir."

that he did doubt! Really, Coker's explanation was rather lame.

"Coker, in the event of any repetition of such an incident, no such explanation will serve you!" boomed Prout, and, with that final boom, he rolled out of the games-study.

Prout was glad to give Coker the benefit of the doubt. He did not want to believe that there was a black sheep in his Form, whatever there might be in other Forms. But there was a thoughtful and dissatisfied frown on his plump face as he rolled away.

Potter drew a deep breath when he was gone.

"Thank goodness!" he said. "You're in luck, Coker!"

"What the dickens do you mean?" asked Coker.

"It's fool's luck!" said Price. "No other fellow would have got by with it! Gratters, Coker!"

"If you think that rotten paper was mine, Price—" roared Coker.

Price laughed.

"My hat! Is that what you men are

(Continued on page 16.)  
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FEELING PECKISH? IF SO—

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No. 94.

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

Greysfriars Herald

Edited by HARRY WHARTON, F.G.R.



April 23rd. 1932.

ARE YOU FIT?

Can you run a mile without getting out of breath? Can you box and wrestle? Can you swim? IF YOU ARE NOT an athlete, come to FISH'S ATHLETIC SCHOOL in Study No. 14, and learn how to BE ONE!

FORM-MASTER'S CONFERENCE

Special Report—By One Who Wasn't There

The Press were excluded from the Meeting called in Masters' Common-room, last week. We are quite certain, however, that the following account of the conference isn't far wide of the mark:

The Chair was taken by Mr. Prout, whose weight caused it to fall to pieces. On rising, Mr. Prout, who was greeted with jeers and catcalls, said it did his heart good to be able to address his colleagues on this suspicious occasion. It reminded him of a very different occasion, when he was hunting grizzlies in the Rockies. If he might digress—

At this point, Mr. Twigz hurled a tomato at him, and the Chairman sat down to gouge it out of his eyes. Mr. Quelch rose, and said that this was a most important hour in the history of the School. Possibly, some of them were aware that we were engaged on an exhaustive History of Greysfriars, and if his colleagues would grant him a bare three or four hours—

A tomato from Mr. Twigz prevented Mr. Quelch from finishing his remarks. Mr. Moberg, taking his place, said that you mistake he wished to call attention to was food. In his opinion, the cook provided too moosh currant-pudding, and not enough snails and frogs. Now, in la Belle France—

Monsieur Charpentier said no more. A tomato, flung with unerring aim by Mr. Twigz, entered his mouth, and temporarily put his vocal apparatus out of action.

Mr. Wiggins was next on the list. He announced that he had written out a long speech, which he would have pleasure in reading out.

Mr. Twigz: "Not if I know it, old bean!" (Emphasised by tomato!) Mr. Capper said he had something very important to say, but he had forgotten what it was. If they would all remain silent for a few hours to give him a chance to collect his thoughts—

(Here, Mr. Capper was crowned with tomatoes from Mr. Twigz.)

Mr. Hacker said he had a new theory of cooking. If they were not objectionable, he proposed to demonstrate on Mr. Twigz, and—

Apparently, however, there was an objection. It came in the shape of a ripe tomato from Mr. Twigz!

Mr. Lascelles, speaking with difficulty in the din caused by masters cleaning away tomatoes, said that he thought Twigz ought to be punched on the nose, and by George, he was the man to do it! Mr. Lascelles, without further ado, punched Mr. Twigz on the nose; afterwards, sitting up on a rice tomato, he proposed to demonstrate on Mr. Twigz, and—

The conference concluded with a vote of thanks to Mr. Prout for the efficient way in which he had conducted the proceedings, and the remainder of the evening was devoted to social recreation in the shape of leap-frog and "touch."

BUNTER ON A DIET

TRIUMPH OVER TUCK

GREAT FASHION COMPETITION

GOOD TASTE WINS PRIZE

Not to be outdone by our contemporaries, we are running a Fashion Judging Competition, this week. Herewith we give you a description of the fashions worn by three leaders of fashion in the Remove one morning this week. All you have to do is to place them in their order of merit, and post your decision to the Competition Editor, The "Greysfriars Herald," in time to reach him by the eighth post on the umpteenth of October last.

The fashions have already been judged by the celebrated actor, William Wibley, who has placed them in their correct order. The sender of the first envelope opened, containing the fashions placed in this order will be awarded the prize. By the way, we almost forgot to

mention that the prize is all the winter courses to order from the tuckshop—so long as he pays for it!

Here they are, then! Now, go in and win!

FASHION A. (Worn by H. Vernon-Smith): Top-hat, plus-fours, velvet jacket, purple tie, and carpet slippers.

FASHION B. (Worn by Lord Maul-ever): Pith helmet, bell-bottomed trousers, open waistcoat, rolled-up shirt-sleeves, patent shoes, white spats, red tie, dickyey, and mittens.

FASHION C. (Worn by H. Wharton): Cloth cap, dinner-jacket, riding breeches, wooden clogs, and woollen muffler.

Nothing hard about it, is there, lads? All you need is good taste and discriminating judgment.

"Help yourself to jam-tarts, fatty!" remarked Bob Cherry, strolling into the tuckshop recently with a fond retailer's remittance in his hand. "My treat."

Bunter, who was sipping a glass of lemonade at the counter, looked round and nodded.

"Thanks, Cherry; but as it happens, I'm not hungry!" he said calmly.

Bob and the other customers promptly threw faints. Dame Mimble, concluding that the old Porpoise had at last become certifiable, bed for her life.

"N-n-not hungry?" Bob managed to ask, when he had come round.

"Not a bit!" said Bunter cheerily. "I had dinner only three hours ago!"

"Well—oh—hat!"

"Bosh," went on Bunter, "I shall be having a cup of tea and a biscuit in less than a couple of hours! No offense, I hope, old chap?"

"Not a bit, old bean!" grinned Bob. "But what's the big idea? Feeling all right in the top-story?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Can't a chap start dining without being looked on as potty?"

"Not when his name's Bunter!" said Bob. "There's some deep, dark mystery behind this, if I'm not mistaken! Out with it, fatty!"

"Look here, Cherry—there's no mystery at all! If you think I'm dieting because my Uncle Nat promised me fifty quid, when I reduced my weight to ten stone, you're jolly well mistaken!"

The secret was out! Bunter was going to the unheard-of length of refusing grub, because he hoped thereby to become the possessor of the sum of fifty pounds!

"Now, we understand!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Glad it's not so bad as it looked! I suppose the rest of the family don't come into it?"

The last, as Bunter minor of the Second strolled in.

Sammy Bunter was grinning. Bunter major glared at him.

"Look here, if you think you're going o' sponge on me, Sammy, just because I'm coming into fifty quid—"

"That's where you're wrong!" giggled Sammy. "I've just had a letter from the mater. She says that Uncle Nat hasn't been responsible for his actions lately, and they've sent him away into a nursing-home, suffering from nerves and mental trouble!"

"WHIA-A-A-T?" shrieked the Remove Porpoise.

In about three seconds he had flung himself off the stool, hooked a letter from Sammy's pocket, read it, and kicked Sammy out of the tuckshop.

After that, he rolled up to the counter again.

"Thanks very much for your invite, Bob, old chap!" he said affably. "Naturally, I wouldn't think of letting an old pal down!"

"But I thought you said—"

"Jam-tarts, Mrs. Mimble!" bawled Bunter.

The dieting effort had ended!

STOTT'S GREAT STUNT

Bounder's Strange Power

There was considerable excitement in the Lower School this week, when it was learned that an enormous packing-case which had arrived for Stott contained a balloon.

Stott, who explained that it had been given him by an uncle, who had formerly been an enthusiastic balloonist, superintended the unpacking of the antique aeronautical vehicle. He informed us that his idea was to take it to Wembley for the Cup Final, and overcome the ticket shortage difficulty by ascending just outside the gates.

Having assembled it, Stott borrowed Coker's pump, while Coker wasn't looking and proceeded to inject air into the bag. He continued to do this at intervals for several days, at the end of which period he discovered that the bag contained a number of holes, through which the air had been escaping.

Gosling was prevailed on to patch up the balloon, and the pump was brought into action again. After about twelve hours of solid pumping, something like a balloon seemed to be rising out of the ruins, and after twenty-four hours, the bag was so full that the balloon had to be anchored down to the ground to keep it from rising.

We regret to have to report that

it was at this juncture that there was a sudden violent explosion. When Stott and the spectators had sorted themselves out, they found

Vernon-Smith, our wild and woolly Bounder, has lately developed a weird gift of second sight. With astonishing ease he reads people's thoughts so well as to be able to tell what they are going to say!

Smithy is going about his daily tasks quite unaffected by the stir he has created. Strolling across the quad with him yesterday, we asked him to show us what he could do.

Bunter happened to be rolling towards us at the moment. Smithy, without a moment's hesitation, said:

"He is going to say, 'I say, you fellows, I'm expecting a postal order!'"

Bunter reached us. His first words were, "I say, you fellows, I'm expecting a postal order!"

A few yards farther on, we ran into Monsieur Charpentier.

"He's going to say, 'Bon jour, mes enfants!'" the Bowler prophesied.

"Bon jour, mes enfants!" remarked Froggy, immediately after.

Really, it was quite unnamy! It seemed even more so when we returned to the House and ran into Quelch.

"He's going to say, 'Vernon-Smith! You have broken detestation. Bend over!'" Smithy forecast.

A moment later, Quelch stopped. "Vernon-Smith! You have broken detestation. Bend over!" he rapped out.

We hurriedly buzzed off—fascinating though Smithy's company had been.

It really is extraordinary, though, isn't it? We used to think we'd no faith in thought-reading and all that, but we must say, it fairly beats us!



that the only part of the balloon left was the basket.

If Stott still wants to see the Cup Final, our suggestion is that he utilises this for the purpose of disguising himself as a tuck-hammer addressed to the grandstand!

LAWYER TURNS INVENTOR

Todd's Patent Fire Escape

Peter Todd, the well-known Remove lawyer, gave another proof of his versatility this week, when he demonstrated his patent new fire-escape.

The escape takes the form of a long, thin steel ribbon which unwinds from a small fixture hooked to a window-sill. Everybody agreed when Peter explained its simple mechanism that it was the work of a genius.



The demonstration, which was a tremendous success, was given by W. G. Bunter, who agreed to assist for a small consideration of ten jam-tarts and five doughnuts. Prompt at three o'clock on Wednesday, the arranged time, Bunter was

attached to the end of the ribbon, and thrown out of the window of Study No. 7, to the accompaniment of cheers from the assembled crowd in the quad below.

There were loud exclamations of admiration when Bunter was seen to be descending at terrific speed from the window-sill fixture above him. These exclamations increased considerably when the ribbon unwound completely and came away. Todd had apparently forgotten to attach it properly when he wound it on the spool.

We are pleased to be able to relate that Bunter landed harmlessly on the necks of Loder and Carne of the Sixth, who were passing beneath at the crucial moment. Loder and Carne seemed a little perturbed by the incident, and began to talk excitedly in a language which nobody present was able to understand. Bunter, on being picked up, said that he had suffered no ill-effects beyond a broken collar-bone, a dislocated spinal column, and half a dozen smashed ribs.

Todd proposes to give another demonstration shortly. The demonstration is held up for the moment, owing to a lack of tickets for the privilege of taking the jump.

No doubt this difficulty will be speedily overcome. Readers wishing to help Todd, are advised to call round at Study No. 7. Apply early and avoid the rush!

BE SUCCESSFUL IN EXAMS!

"Here's How!" Says Tom Brown

Some days ago, I happened to be passing a Form-room, when the Upper-Fourth were going in to be examined.

I couldn't help noticing that they didn't look awfully bucked about it. Matter of fact, they reminded me of hunted rats!

It brought the fact home to me, that most fellows approach the examination-room in the way that you do, nothing whatever about the subjects of the examination. Fortunately, this doesn't matter.

What does matter is that you take it in a wrong spirit. Hence, this inspiring article on "How To Be Successful In Examinations."

The way to do it, chaps, is to barge in, as if you were going to a bun-fight. Shoot out of your study, slide down the banisters, do handspings and cart-wheels across the hall, and fling yourself into the examination with a loud

cheer. This will put you in fine fettle for the ordeal.

We now reach the burning question of what to do when you start on your paper. I take it for granted that you know nothing whatever about the subjects of the examination. Fortunately, this doesn't matter.

What does matter is that you take it in a wrong spirit. Hence, this inspiring article on "How To Be Successful In Examinations."

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THE DIFFERENCE

A correspondent writes to ask us the difference between Bob Cherry and Masters' Common-room. Nothing easier! One's full of beans and the other's full of has-beens!

Answer every question decisively. Let this be your golden rule. If you're wrong, as, of course, you will be, your firm and decisive air will make the examiner nervous. Then to one he doesn't know you'll come through with the answer himself, and A. Shant!

I venture to state that if you answer all the questions on these firm and business-like lines, you'll come through with flying colours.

## THE FOOL OF THE SCHOOL!



(Continued from page 13.)

thinking?" asked Coker, glaring round at the condemnatory faces of the Fifth.

"Well, wasn't it yours?" grunted Blundell.

"Didn't you hear me tell Prout?" yelled Coker.

"You weren't stuffing Prout?"

"Stuffing Prout! Why, you cheeky ass—"

"That's enough!" said the captain of the Fifth. "Don't bring any more of your racing papers into this room, that's all, Coker! You'll get the Fifth a bad name with that sort of thing."

"I tell you—" raved Coker.

"That will do. If you've got any more of them, better go and shove them into the fire. Prout might look in your study."

"I tell you—" shrieked Coker.

"And I tell you," said Blundell tartly, "that if you bring any more racing papers into the games-study, you'll go out on your neck! That's flat! Now shut up, and don't say any more!"

Blundell turned his back on Coker with that. Coker glared at his back, glared at the other fellows, tramped out of the games-study, and closed the door after him with a bang that rang almost from end to end of Greyfriars.

### THE NINTH CHAPTER.

#### Bunter's Big Idea!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Coker's looking for you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The news that Coker was looking for them did not seem to alarm the Famous Five of the Remove.

Harry Wharton & Co. were gathered in Study No. 13. That study belonged to Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and little Wun Lung, the Chinese. Besides the four owners, there were nearly a dozen other Remove men there when Billy Bunter inserted his fat face in the doorway.

The study was crowded—not to say swarmed. Peter Todd and Tom Brown, Hazeldene and Squiff, Russell and Ogilvy, and other fellows had gathered there, with the Famous Five; their chief object being to dispose of a tremendous cake that Bob Cherry had brought back to Greyfriars with him.

The cake was a huge one, but it disappeared at a rapid rate under the attack of a dozen Removites. Only a few crumbs remained on the dish when Bunter blinked in. Bunter was too late. The fat Owl blinked at the remnants.

"I say, you fellows, if you've got any cake left—"

"This cake is all right!" said Peter Todd.

"Well, if there's any left—"

"Didn't I say it was all right? There's none left."

This, apparently, was a pun. The Removites laughed, with the exception of Bunter. Bunter snorted.

"Well, you might have left a fellow a mouthful!"

"Couldn't be done!" said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "It was only a six-pound cake, Bunter—not a mouthful for you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I call this mean, when I've come here to ask all you fellows to a spread!"

"Whose spread?" asked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! I say, you fellows, do listen to a chap—don't think only of guzzling! Coker's after you—"

"Let him come!" said Bob. "We'll be glad to see Coker!"

"The gladfulness will be terrific!"

"He's coming up the Remove staircase, with Potter and Greene," said Bunter. "They don't want to come. He's fairly dragging them along!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites roared. They did not doubt that Potter and Greene were rather reluctant to join Coker in raiding the Remove. They did not share Horace Coker's penchant for waking up hornets' nests.

"Well look here," said Bunter, "Coker's asking for it! My idea is this! You fellows collar those Fifth Form cads—there's enough of you here to collar them—"

"Lots!" grinned Bob.

"And lock them in a study—"

"Eh?"

"Then they'll be safe!" explained Bunter. "And there will be nobody to stop us from going along to Coker's study—"

"What the thump—"

"There's a hamper there—"

"Oh!"

"I've seen it—"

"You would have!" chuckled Bob.

"Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," further elucidated Bunter. "Coker's coming up here to kick up a shindy. Well, while he's raiding the Remove, we jolly well raid him—see? That hamper—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter did not always find his suggestions adopted with enthusiasm in the Remove. But on this occasion there was a chorus of approval.

"Jolly good idea!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "If Coker's begging for trouble again, we'll give him all he wants, and a little over. Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen! If Coker raids the Remove, we raid the Fifth!"

"Hear, hear!"

Harry Wharton stepped to the door and glanced out. He was in time to see three Fifth Form men enter Study No. 1 at the other end of the Remove passage. Potter and Greene went in first, Coker bringing up the rear. Coker apparently had a suspicion that if he took his eyes off his comrades they might perform the vanishing trick again. He doubted whether they were so keen on backing him up as they ought to have been.

Harry Wharton left Study No. 13, and ran lightly along the passage to Study No. 1. He reached it in a second or two. Coker's powerful voice was audible in the study.

"They're not here!"

"Good!" said Potter. "I—I mean, rotten! After all, they'll keep, Coker."

"They won't keep!" said Coker.

"Hardly worth while wasting time on them, first day of term," remarked Greene.

"Shut up, Greene!"

Harry Wharton slid his hand round the half-open door. He jerked the key out of the lock.

"Hallo, what—" ejaculated Coker, Slam!

Click!

Coker bounded to the door. He dragged at it.

"Why—what—what—why—why we're locked in!" gasped Coker. "Did you see that? We—we—we're locked in!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Greene dismally.

"Locked in!" said Potter. "Oh crikey!"

Coker dragged at the door handle. It was not much use, as the door was locked on the outside. Wharton withdrew the key and slipped it into his pocket.

"Bang! Bang! Thump!"

"Open this door!" roared Coker.

"Who's there?"

"Little me!" answered Wharton cheerfully.

"Is that Wharton? Open the door! I've come up here to thrash you!" roared Coker. "I'm going to pulverise you, Wharton! I'm going to spifficate you! Unlock that door at once!"

Potter and Greene looked at one another. This was Coker's way of inducing the Removites to open the door.

"Will you open this door, Wharton?" bellowed Coker.

"Not quite!" answered Wharton cheerfully. "You're welcome to stay in my study, Coker. I'm going to yours."

"What?" yelled Coker.

"You can stay in my study as long as I stay in your study. Exchange is no robbery!" explained Wharton.

"I'll smash you!" roared Coker.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter's fat squeak was heard in the passage. "It's all right! Wharton's locked them in! I say, come on! I can tell you that hamper—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's crammed—simply crammed! Now Coker's safe—"

"Oh, my hat!" said Potter. Greene almost groaned. The delightful vision of a study supper with Coker faded from their gaze like a beautiful dream.

Coker spluttered.

"You young villains!" he roared. "If you dare to go to my study—"

"You've dared to come to ours, old bean!" chuckled Frank Nugent. "One good turn deserves another."

"I say, you fellows, come on!"

"Don't you dare to touch my hamper!" shrieked Coker.

"We'll leave you the hamper, Coker," said Harry Wharton. "All we want is what's in it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, you're wasting time. Look here, I'm going!"

"Come on, you men!" chortled Bob Cherry. "Coker's asked for this! It may be a lesson to him about butting into the Remove."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter and a trampling of feet outside Study No. 1. Both faded away in the direction of the Fifth Form passage.

Coker gasped. He banged on the door. He thumped on it. He kicked the lower panels. He shouted and he roared. But answer there came none. The juniors were gone. Coker knew where they were gone, and he could guess how they were occupied. He almost foamed.

"My—my hat! The—the young scoundrels!" gurgled Coker. "Think they'll have cheek enough to scoff my hamper, you men?"

Potter and Greene glared at him. They did not think—they knew! They had already said a sad farewell to that study supper.

"You ass!" said Potter.

"What?"

"You dummy!" hissed Greene.

"Eh?"

"You howling chump!" said Potter and Greene together.

Potter and Greene were generally patient with Coker. But their patience failed them now. They were locked in a junior study—to remain there until the juniors chose to let them out. And evidently—only too evidently—there was not going to be any study supper. So there remained no reason why they should not tell Coker what they thought of him. And they told him—loudly, emphatically, and at great length. Coker, equally exasperated, stated his opinion of Potter and Greene with equal loudness and emphasis. Fellows who passed along the Remove passage paused to listen with great interest as Coker & Co. told each other what they thought of one another.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Coker Stands the Spread!

"HAVE another tart?"  
"Try these eclairs!"  
"My hat! This cake is good!"  
"So is this one!"

"You should jolly well try these apple turnovers!"

"I say, you fellows, that cold chicken was a corker—a real corker! You should have had some!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
There was quite an unusual crowd in Coker's study in the Fifth Form passage. More than a dozen of the Remove had arrived there. Wharton had thoughtfully locked the door after they were inside. Coker & Co. were safe; but other Fifth Form men might have looked in, and the Removites were not there for trouble with the Fifth. They were there for Horace Coker's hamper.

It was a large hamper. It was well packed. Coker's Aunt Judy had really done her beloved Horace well.

All sorts of excellent things were there; quantity and quality were both perfectly satisfactory.

Aunt Judith had, no doubt, hoped that that hamper would be appreciated. She could have had no doubt on the subject could she have seen the merry Removites at work on it.

"Whoever made this cake," said Johnny Bull, with his mouth full, "knew how to make cakes!"

"Whoever picked out this pineapple," remarked Squiff, "knew a good pineapple when he saw one!"

"If Coker's aunt made this pudding," said Peter Todd, "I'd be glad to swap Coker's aunt for a couple of my uncles."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"This is home-made jam!" said Nugent. "Coker's aunt knows how to make jam."

"Jever see honey like this?" said Tom Brown. "It's as good as we make in New Zealand."

"Might have put in another chicken!" remarked Billy Bunter. "That one was a corker! But the ham's good!"

"The goodness of these esteemed tarts is terrific!"

It was quite a happy party. The temporary exchange of studies was, from the Removites' point of view, a great success. Coker was welcome to anything he found in Study No. 1. The juniors made themselves welcome in Coker's study. So it was fair all round. But it was probable that the party in Coker's study were enjoying themselves more than the party in Wharton's study.

All the fellows felt that the raid was

justified. If Coker came raiding the Remove, he should expect to be raided in return. Sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander. Coker couldn't expect to have it all one way.

Being justified in scoffing the contents of the hamper, the Removites scoffed them unsparingly.

Billy Bunter was not bothering about whether the raid was justified or not. He did not give any attention to a trifle like that. He gave his whole attention to the hamper.

Huge as the supply was, it faded away under the combined attack of a dozen hungry Removites. But there was enough for all. Even Billy Bunter had enough.

Even Bunter slowed down towards the finish. He had found the cold chicken good. He found the ham good. He found the cold beef good, and the cakes and the nuts and the puddings and pies, the tarts and the buns. But he merely toyed with a box of chocolate creams. They went down slowly, and he consumed hardly a couple of dozen. But he thoughtfully put the rest in his pockets. Bunter was not always gifted with foresight, but in matters like this Bunter could think ahead.

"Well," said Harry Wharton at last, "we've had a jolly good spread!"

"Hear, hear!"  
"Blessed if I think I shall want any supper in Hall! Coker can have supper in Hall!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"If you fellows have finished, we may as well go along and let Coker out. I shouldn't wonder if he's cross by this time."

"I wonder!" chuckled Bob. "The crossfulness is probably terrific."

"I say, you fellows, it was ripping!" Billy Bunter gave a sigh of fat contentment. "I say, that was as good as any feed I've ever had at home at Bunter Court! It was really!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
The feast was over. The hamper remained, and some crumbs and debris in the hamper and scattered over Coker's carpet. Coker, when he returned, could have no doubt that his guests had enjoyed themselves—if that was any consolation to Coker.

Wharton unlocked the door. The Removites crowded out of Coker's study and marched away. They had to pass the games-study to leave the Fifth Form passage, and the door of that apartment was open, and Blundell and several other Fifth Form men looked out at them. The juniors kept a wary eye on the Fifth.

"Hallo! What have you fags been up to?" asked Blundell, eyeing them rather suspiciously.

"Snuff!" answered Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
The juniors scudded on, leaving the captain of the Fifth staring. They arrived in the Remove passage, greeted by a sound of thumping and hammering on the inner side of the door of Study No. 1.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Coker's going it!" chuckled Bob.

"Sounds waxy!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The waxfulness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows, don't open that door for a minute! I—I don't want to see Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Billy Bunter rolled on hastily,

and disappeared into Study No. 7. The other fellows gathered round the door of Study No. 1, as Wharton drew the key from his pocket. Thump, thump, thump! Bang! came from within.

"For goodness' sake, don't kick up that row, Coker!" came Potter's voice. "You'll have the beaks up here!"

"What do I care, you silly ass?" hooted Coker. "Think I'm going to stay locked in here while those young scoundrels are scoffing my tuck!"

"Well, if old Quelch comes up, he will want to know what we're doing in a Remove study!" snorted Greene. "It means a row."

"Blow Quelch!"  
Thump, thump! Bang!  
Wharton inserted the key in the lock, turned it, and threw open the door. There was a yell in the study. The door seemed to have caught Coker as it flew.

"Ow! My nose! Yoooop!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Oh, here you are!" roared Coker. "Now I'm going to smash you! Now I—"

"Thanks for the feed, Coker!"  
"What?" bawled Coker.

"The thankfulness is terrific!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, if you like to go, off you go!" said Wharton politely. "On your feet, or on your necks, just as you like!"

Coker rushed.

Potter and Greene, wiser in their generation, decided to go on their feet. They would have liked, indeed loved, to mop up the Remove passage with the Removites. But they knew only too well who was likely to get the mopping. The odds were altogether too heavy, and Potter and Greene went on their feet, and were glad to go. They departed peacefully, and in haste.

Coker, of course, had to go on his neck. Coker was not the man to count odds, especially when he was boiling with just wrath. Coker fairly hurled himself at the Removites.

There were some wild and whirling minutes in the Remove passage. Coker was rather a handful, heavy as the odds were. But the odds told. Coker went along to the stairs on the back of his neck, with the juniors dragging at his arms and long legs.

He went down the Remove staircase rolling. Potter and Greene had gone quickly. Coker went more quickly still. He did the stairs in record time, with a series of echoing bumps.

What was left of Coker sprawled on the next landing, and spluttered wildly. A crowd of grinning faces stared down at him.

"Have some more, Coker?"  
"Come back and have some more, old bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"This way, Coker!"

Coker staggered up. He gave the yelling Removites a dizzy glare. But he did not come back for more. Even Coker realised that he had had enough. He glared up—but he walked down! And a roar of laughter from the Remove followed him as he went.

(Continued on next page.)



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## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

## Bumps for Bunter!

HERE were two places vacant in the Remove when that Form gathered in the Form-room the next day with Mr. Quelch. Neither Herbert Vernon-Smith nor Tom Redwing had come back yet for the new term. Study No. 4 in the Remove remained vacant. Two or three fellows had thought of bagging that study, as they were entitled to do on the first day of term; but on second thoughts they had left it alone.

The Bouncer was a hard nut to crack, and he was certain to cut up rusty when he came back, if he found his study annexed. And the Bouncer, too, was now captain of the Form. Billy Bunter, among others turned the idea over in his fat mind, but though the fat Owl would have been glad to share Study No. 4 with the wealthy Smithy, he did not want it all to himself. A study-mate was absolutely essential to Bunter. There had to be somebody to stand the tea. So Study No. 4 was left deserted.

Harry Wharton & Co. were not exactly sorry that the Bouncer had not come. They had had trouble with him in the vac, and they could not doubt that they would have more trouble with him at school. And as captain of the Remove, it was easy for Smithy to be a thorn in the side of the famous Co., if the spirit moved him to make himself unpleasant. And the cheery chums of the Remove did not want trouble.

Skinner & Co. missed Smithy. Skinner & Co. were looking forward to the trouble that the Famous Five disliked. Moreover, Skinner was anxious to put the Bouncer on to that "sure snip" in the racing paper he had brought from home.

Perhaps it was not unfortunate for the Bouncer that he missed that sure snip. Even Skinner realised that, when he learned from an evening paper that the horse so earnestly recommended in "Sporting Snips," had come in eleventh.

Fellows wondered why the Bouncer had not come, but his absence did not cause sorrow. Harry Wharton & Co., however, missed Redwing, whom they liked. They knew that Smithy and Redwing had the Easter vacation together, in a "bung" on the bank of a Surrey river near Wharton Lodge; but they had seen nothing of them in the last week of the holidays. They had, in fact, carefully avoided Smithy's bung to keep clear of trouble.

"Queer that Smithy hasn't turned up!" Bob Cherry remarked, after class that day. "I should have expected him to come along bright and early, all ready for trouble."

"The queerness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Well, I'm not keen on seeing Smithy!" said Harry Wharton. "But Redwing hasn't come back, either. I hope he's not ill or anything!"

"Oh, he's never ill—hard as nails!" said Bob cheerily. "I expect they've got leave for a few more days."

It was Billy Bunter who had the news first. Billy Bunter liked to be first with the news. And he liked to make it interesting. He liked to make it startling. Billy Bunter did not care two straws, or one, about either Smithy or Redwing, and did not care why they had not come back, or whether they ever came back at all.

But the matter being one of interest to the Remove, and a subject of discus-

sion, it was up to Bunter, as a Peeping Tom and general disseminator of information, to know all about it. And, as Skinner had remarked, Bunter would always know about things so long as keyholes were made to doors.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter rolled into the Rag that evening, after prep. "I say, poor old Redwing—"

There was general attention at once. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! What about Redwing?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Poor chap!" said Bunter sadly. "Anything happened to Redwing, you fat ass?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"It's rather awful!" said Bunter. "What is?" roared Johnny Bull.

"About poor old Redwing, you know."

Billy Bunter liked to keep his hearers on tenterhooks. The Famous Five and a good many other fellows wanted to hear at once about "poor old Redwing," that cheery youth being generally liked in the Remove. That was quite a sufficient reason for the fat Owl to dole out his news in small quantities. It added to his fat importance as the fellow who knew.

"I can't say I liked the chap much," said Bunter, shaking his head. "Not the sort of chap for this school really—his father was only a sailor or something, or a stoker or a skipper or something. I'm not a snob, I hope; still, a fellow has to draw the line somewhere. I must say I drew it at that chap Redwing."

"You frabjous owl!" "Oh, really, Wharton—"

"If you know anything about Redwing, idiot, cough it up!"

"He doesn't!" growled Johnny Bull. "Only the fat duffer's gammon!"

"That's all you know!" jeered Bunter. "I can tell you I know all about the poor chap. I happened to hear Quelch speaking to the Head—"

"Quelch's keyhole, or the Head's keyhole?" asked Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Will you cough it up, you fat villain?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Well, I'm telling you as fast as I can, only you keep on interrupting a chap," said Bunter. "As for listening at Quelch's keyhole, that's a thing I'd disdain, as you fellows know. Not like some chaps I could name! I wondered what they were speaking about—I mean I happened to be near Quelch's door entirely by accident—"

"Will you cough it up?" yelled Bob. "It was quite a blow to me," went on Bunter. "As I've said, I never really liked the chap, and never quite approved of his being at Greyfriars at all. Still, in his own way, he was all right, I suppose. I wouldn't say anything against him now. He may have been a bit of an outsider. But if he was—"

"Was!" said Harry Wharton. Bunter's use of the past tense in speaking of Redwing gave some of the fellows a shock.

"Yes, poor chap!" said Bunter. "It seems to have happened while he was at that bung with Smithy, you know, on the river."

"What happened?" roared Wharton. "I wish you wouldn't yell at a fellow, Wharton! It makes a fellow jump," said Bunter peevishly. "I suppose it's not my fault if a fellow gets drowned."

"Drowned!" gasped Wharton.

"Well, not exactly drowned," added Bunter hastily. Even Bunter felt that that was rather overdoing it. Bunter never could tell a plain, unvarnished tale—in fact, there was generally more varnish than tale. Still, even Bunter realised that there ought to be a limit. "Not exactly drowned!" grinned

Skinner. "Only partly drowned; a little bit drowned—say, ten per cent—"

"You fat, fooling, frabjous feathard!" hissed Bob Cherry. "Will you tell us what you've been spying out?"

"If you put it like that, Cherry, I shall certainly not tell you anything!" said Bunter with dignity. "Here, keep off, you beast! I'm telling you as fast as I can, ain't I? Smithy isn't coming back yet, because he's got leave to stay with Redwing while he's—"

"Drowning?" asked Skinner. "Is Redwing ill?" demanded Wharton.

"Frightfully!" said Bunter. "Fearfully, in fact! I believe there's some hope—"

"Some hope!" repeated Wharton. "Yes, some faint, lingering hope," said Bunter. "Hope springs infernal in the human chest, you know, as some poet says—"

"Oh crumbs! Some poet!" said Squiff.

"They may pull him through," said Bunter. "They hope to do so. He's lying at that bung—"

"While you're lying here!" remarked Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

Fellows who liked Tom Redwing—most of the Remove—glared at Billy Bunter as if they could have eaten him. It was evident that the fat Owl had picked up the facts, whatever they were. It was equally evident that he was not sticking to the facts. He liked to make his hearers' flesh creep.

"If he's ill, what has he got?" breathed Bob Cherry.

"Well, I fancy it's pneumonia and— and plumbago," said Bunter, "and—a touch of—of scarlet measles."

"Oh, my hat!"

"And complications," added Bunter. "A lot of complications! From what I can make out, he's got pneumonia in both legs—"

"Great Scott!"

"And influenza—"

"In his feet!" asked Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner! He's got— Whoopoo! Yoopoo! Yaroooh! Leggo! Oh crickey! Yow-ow-woooooop!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter, grasped by many hands, smote the floor of the Rag with a heavy concussion. There was a terrific yell.

"Now, you fat villain—" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yooooopoo!"

"Now, what's the matter with Redwing?"

"Yaroooh!"

"Bump him!"

"Oh lor! Oh crickey! Leggo! I'm telling you as fast as I can!" shrieked Bunter. "He's got a cold—"

"A cold!" yelled Wharton.

"Yes, and—"

"Bump him!"

It was out at last! Tom Redwing had a cold! That was what the thrilling news boiled down to. And the Removites, whose flesh had been made to creep, proceeded to reward Bunter for his skill as a dealer in thrilling fiction.

Bump, bump, bump!

"Oh crickey! Oh lor! I say, you fellows— Yaroooooh!"

"Give him another!"

Bump!

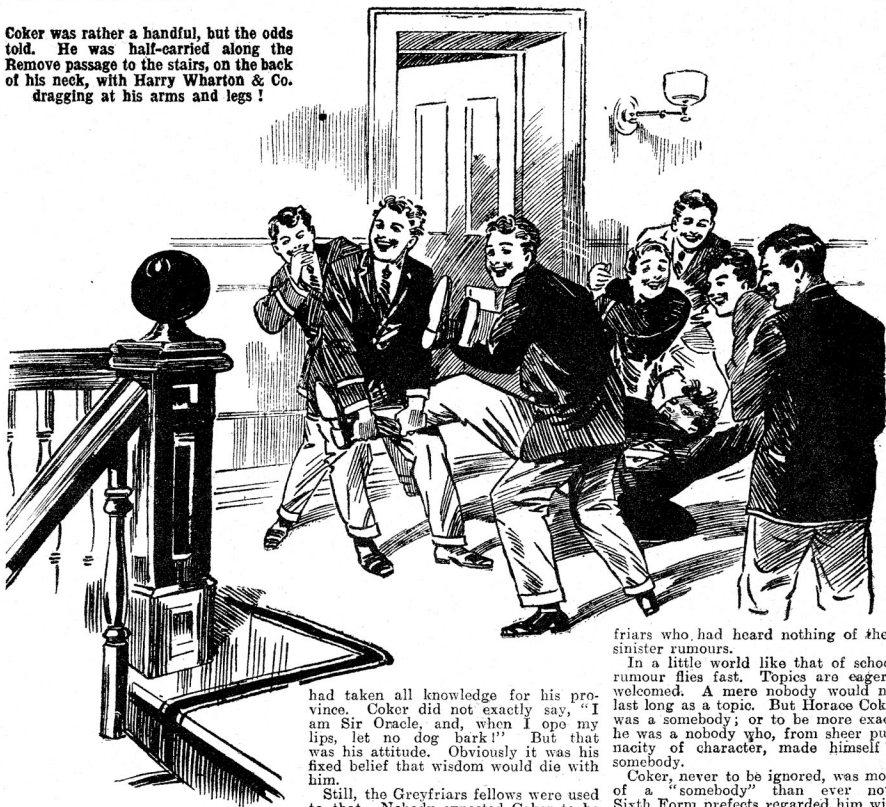
"Yooooo-hooooop!"

"Now, all kick together!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Help! Fire! Rescue! Yarooooop!"

How many feet landed on Billy Bunter before he got out of the Rag he never knew. He did not stop to count.

Coker was rather a handful, but the odds told. He was half-carried along the Remove passage to the stairs, on the back of his neck, with Harry Wharton & Co. dragging at his arms and legs!



Like the guests in "Macbeth," he stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### A Slight Misunderstanding!

"**B** OTHER that horse!" said Coker.

Potter and Greene looked at him.

Coker seemed annoyed.

"That—that what?" asked Potter, with a sidelong glance at Greene.

"That beastly horse!" said Coker morosely.

The term was only two or three days old, but in these two or three days there had been a great deal of talk and a great deal of surmise about Horace Coker of the Fifth Form.

Coker was always more or less in the public eye in term-time. He was so big, he was so noisy, and he was so obstreperous that it was really impossible to ignore Coker.

Frequently, if not incessantly, his loud voice was heard laying down the law on all sorts of subjects. Games were his favourite topic—games being a subject that Coker had, so to speak, exhausted. What he did not know about games was not knowledge. But on other subjects he was almost equally emphatic and dogmatic. Coker's idea seemed to be that, like the famous Lord Bacon, he

had taken all knowledge for his province. Coker did not exactly say, "I am Sir Oracle, and, when I open my lips, let no dog bark!" But that was his attitude. Obviously it was his fixed belief that wisdom would die with him.

Still, the Greyfriars fellows were used to that. Nobody expected Coker to be anything but an ass, and an emphatic ass—the kind of fellow who could be relied upon at all times and in all places to do the wrong thing in the wrong way.

But, though Coker was an ass, given to displaying his asinine attributes with all possible prominence, he was supposed to be a harmless ass. Potter and Greene had said more than once that though old Coker was every imaginable kind of an idiot, there was no vice in him. He had his faults—indeed, their name was legion. They leaped to the eye. But he was—or had been supposed to be—a thoroughly decent chap. Now that general opinion of Coker had to be modified.

Strange tales were told about Coker now. It was said in the studies and the passages that Coker of the Fifth was heading for the sack. It was said that his Form master had a suspicious eye on him. It was said that he had been seen with racing papers—actually walking into the Fifth Form games-study with racing papers under his arm! It was said that Prout had called him to account and warned him solemnly to be careful—to be very careful indeed.

These things, and other things, were said about Coker—for a tale never loses anything in the telling. They were not, of course, said in Coker's presence—Coker had a painful punch, and fellows had to be tactful. Coker, in fact, was the only fellow at Grey-

friars who had heard nothing of these sinister rumours.

In a little world like that of school, rumour flies fast. Topics are eagerly welcomed. A mere nobody would not last long as a topic. But Horace Coker was a somebody; or to be more exact, he was a nobody who, from sheer pugnacity of character, made himself a somebody.

Coker, never to be ignored, was more of a "somebody" than ever now. Sixth Form prefects regarded him with a grim, distrustful eye. Fifth Form men wondered whether he was, after all, the harmless ass they had supposed; or an ass that was not harmless. Lower boys told one another that Coker was "going it." Fags of the Second and Third stared at him in the quad, with thrilling interest, as a fellow who was likely to be called up before the Beak and "bunked." Meanwhile, Coker, clad in obtuseness as in armour of triple steel, went on the even tenor of his way, knowing none of these things.

Potter and Greene had their doubts. They knew Coker. They knew—they could have sworn—that old Coker was only an ass, merely a born idiot, merely that, and nothing more. But that episode in the games-study had staggered them. A fellow who had racing papers about him, and told a lame story about bagging them from a fag—well, what was a fellow to think?

Potter and Greene really did not know what to think. They hoped for the best, while they feared the worst!

Now, at tea in Coker's study, these painful doubts thronged into their minds again. Or rather this time it was not doubt; it was more like certainty. Coker's reference to a "horse"—a beastly horse—could have only one meaning to the troubled minds of his friends.

Coker was evidently annoyed. He had a letter in his hand, which he had

been reading. Obviously it worried him. He did not show his chums the letter, or offer to read anything out of it—which was unusual—for Coker's conversation generally ran on Horace James Coker, and the affairs and opinions of Horace James Coker. Generally, if Potter and Greene saw him with a letter, they had reason to fear that Coker would read out yards of it. It seemed that Coker was getting secretive.

Potter and Greene fancied they could guess why. It was rather disagreeable for them; they hated the idea of old Coker getting bunked. One glance at the well-spread festive board in Coker's study revealed a lot of reasons why his friends should hope that his days would be long in the land, so to speak.

"What horse?" asked Potter, after a long and painful pause.

He hoped that Coker would confide in his friends, when they could give him a little useful advice. Not that Coker was the man to listen to advice! Still, when a fellow was heading for the sack it was up to his friends to do what they could to hold him back.

"Blow him!" growled Coker morosely.

"He's lost!" repeated Greene, quite faintly. This was proof positive.

"Yes!" granted Coker. "Better the brute—lost! This means a pretty stiff pull on me! I shall have to ask Aunt Judy for the money!"

"Oh!" gasped Potter.

"Well, it can't be helped, I suppose," growled Coker. "I shall have to pay the man."

"Pip-pip-pay the man?" stammered Greene. In his mind's eye he saw a red-faced bookmaker waiting to collect money from Coker on the horse that had lost.

"Well, I suppose he's entitled to his money!" snorted Coker. "I can't diddle the man. The horse's lost! Well, that puts it up to me."

Potter and Greene looked at one another. Doubt, of course, was impossible now. But who would have thought it—of Coker?

"I—I—I say, Coker, old man." Potter

felt that he was bound, as a friend, to speak. "I—I'd be careful, old chap. Of course, we shan't say anything about this—"

"Not a word!" said Greene. "But not a syllable!" said Potter. "But outside this study, you know—for goodness' sake, be careful. Don't talk about it outside this study."

"Oh?" Coker stared at them. "I'm not going to talk about it outside this study. I'm not going to talk about it at all. The fact is, I never meant to mention it."

Coker's remarks had been caused by the irritation he had felt on reading that letter. He had forgotten for the moment that he had not intended to make any reference to the mishap of Mr. Joyce's horse and cart. Fellows had enough to cackle at without having that to cackle at, too. He was not going to have the game-study yelling over his exploit in driving a horse and cart into a ditch.

Judiciously, Coker had decided to keep the whole episode dark. It was nobody's concern but his own.

But that letter—which was from Mr. Joyce, the woodcutter, far as Potter and Greene were from guessing so—had naturally annoyed him. The news that the horse was lost beyond recovery was a blow. Whether that horse had set off for a life of untrammelled freedom on the downs, or whether some person or persons unknown had found him wandering and "pinched" him, or whether he had tumbled into a chalk-pit and met with a sad end—was not discoverable. He was lost—gone for good—said Mr. Joyce wanted to know what Mr. Coker was going to do about it—a very natural desire on the part of Mr. Joyce.

But it was annoying and disturbing. In his annoyance and disturbance, Coker had allowed these words to escape him; but now that Potter's remark recalled him to himself, he shut up like an oyster. Potter and Greene were not going to know—nobody was going to know—that Coker had landed a horse and cart in a ditch, that the horse had bolted and got lost, and that

Coker had to pay for his exploits as a driver, and that a dashed old woodcutter was dunning him for the money.

Coker was going to pay the man, of course. Coker was responsible, and Coker was honest. But the less said about the matter, the better.

Coker crumpled the letter and shoved it into his pocket, and went to the door. Potter and Greene looked at one another, and then looked at Coker's back.

"I—I say, Coker, old man—?" stammered Potter.

Coker glanced round.

"Well?" he asked. "Buck up—I've got to see a man outside the school, and get back for lock-up."

Potter rose from the tea-table. He had not finished tea, but he disregarded tea, in his friendly concern for Coker.

"I—I wouldn't go, old man," he said earnestly. "Look here, Coker, take a friend's tip, and give it a miss. Don't see him."

"Oh! Why not?"

"The man's got no real claim on you," said Greene. "Even if the horse's lost, he has no legal claim."

Coker stared at him.

"Think I'm the fellow to diddle a man if he has no legal claim," he hooted. "I don't know whether he has or not; but I know I've got to pay now that the horse's lost."

"Well, if you look at it like that, send it by post!" urged Potter. "Send it by post, and have done with the rascal—"

"Who are you calling a rascal?"

"Well, dash it all, the man must be a pretty rotter!" said Potter, warmly.

"Nothing of the kind," said Coker, angrily. "The man's quite a decent sort, and though it's annoying, he's only asking for his rights. You fellows know nothing about the matter. And look here, don't ask questions. I'd rather you minded your own business."

"Well, if you put it like that—?" said Potter, tartly.

"I do put it like that!" growled Coker. "I'm not going to have this trifling matter made the talk of the Form. As for sending the money by post, I haven't the money, till I get it from Aunt Judy. I suppose you don't think I carry twenty-five pounds in my pocket?"

"Twenty-five pounds!" gasped Greene and Potter together. Evidently—to Potter and Greene—Coker had been "going it."

"I'm going to see the man, and tell him it's all right," said Coker. "Why shouldn't I? What are you fellows goggling at? Anybody might think I was up to something fishy, the way you fellows are goggling at a fellow!"

And Coker, more annoyed than ever, swung out of the study and tramped away down the passage. Potter and Greene gazed at one another.

"Twenty-five pounds!" said Potter.

"And the horse's lost!" said Greene.

"Well, he was bound to lose if Coker backed him—"

"Yes, that's a cert."

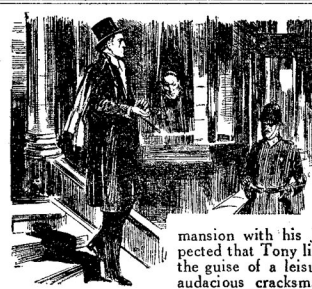
"But—fancy Coker! You've heard him talking about Price having a quid on a horse sometimes! Contemptuous as you like! And now Coker—twenty-five pounds in a lump—on a loser—my hat!"

"And he doesn't seem to see anything wrong in it," said Greene, in wonder. "You heard what he said? Why, if the Head got on to this he would bunk Coker so quick it would make his head swim."

"He's asking for it!" said Potter. "Begging for it—fairly sitting up on his hind legs and begging for it, like a

## The MAN the POLICE couldn't catch!

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dog begging for biscuits. Blessed if I know what we can do about it."

"Well, what can we do?" asked Greene.

Potter sat down again.

"Let's finish tea," he said.

Really, there seemed nothing else to be done. They finished tea.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Hard Hitting!

"HEARD about Coker?"

It would be difficult to calculate the exact number of fellows who asked that question during the next day or two at Greyfriars.

Sixth Form men, meeting other Sixth Form men in the Prefects'-room—the sacred apartment where the great men of the Sixth most did congregate—would say: "Heard about Coker?"

Fags from the Second Form, meeting in the passages and at corners, would say breathlessly: "Heard about Coker?"

All Forms between the Sixth and the Second, had that question on their lips.

Almost every fellow at Greyfriars asked almost every other fellow, in fact, whether he had heard about Coker?

More thrilling than ever was the interest these fags took in Coker—as a man who was bound to be up for the sack sooner or later—probably sooner.

Many fellows felt sorry for Coker. Many said that they would miss him when he went.

Skinner of the Remove, indeed, remarked that Greyfriars without Coker would be like the Fifth of November without a guy!

It was certain that Coker added to the gaiety of existence at Greyfriars. Fellows would miss a lot of laughs when he went.

The Fifth Form men took it rather seriously. Some of them, like Price, laughed; but Blundell stated plainly that it was not a laughing matter, and most of the seniors agreed. The Fifth did not like the idea of a member of their Form being sacked for "blagging."

"If the silly ow' must play the goat," said Blundell, "why can't he play the goat on the Q.T., like that worm Price?"

It was a natural question. Still, nobody expected Coker to do anything quietly. Whatever Coker did was bound to catch the public eye. And the oddest thing was that Coker seemed quite unaware that there was anything shady or fishy about his blatant proceedings. It seemed as if Coker considered that he was a law unto himself, and that what was wrong for others was right for him because he chose to do it. That, indeed, was rather like Coker!

Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove, were quite sorry about it all. They had had so many rows with Coker, they had ragged him so often, that they had quite a friendly feeling for old Horace. It was always pleasant and entertaining to rattle him out when he came up to the Remove passage looking for trouble. They felt that they would miss Coker.

The worst of it was that there was no doubt about it now. It was no longer a matter of rumour—it was a certainty.

Potter and Greene, assuredly, bore Coker no ill-will; they were friendly, they were concerned, they were quite anxious. Still, they had talked rather injudiciously. It was with a good motive—they asked fellows what they could do to keep Coker back from the

"sack" he was heading for. They took counsel with their friends on a subject that was very near their hearts. But the result was that Coker's unthinking remarks on the subject of the horse were repeated up and down and round about.

Coker had been speaking, it is true, of a horse that "was" lost, but his friends had naturally supposed that he was speaking of a horse that "had" lost. They really could have drawn no other conclusion from Coker's cryptic remarks.

Coker's secretiveness—a new thing in Coker—added to the deep cloud of misunderstanding.

Coker was only desirous of keeping dark the circumstance that, having undertaken to drive a horse and cart, he had landed the horse and cart in a ditch. It was quite natural—no fellow would have wanted to talk about such an exploit.

But nobody was going to guess all

### A POCKET-KNIFE

is

### ALWAYS HANDY!

Crack a joke and win one, like J. Groom, of 19, Victoria Avenue, Hunstanton, Norfolk, who sent in the following rib-tickler:



First Musician (as bulldog approaches): "Blow harder on your cornet, Bill; p'raps that'll frighten him away!"

Second Musician: "Maybe it will. But if it don't, where will I get the wind to run away with?"

Note: All jokes and limericks should be sent to: c.o. MAGNET, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.

that, of course. Nobody even knew that he had ever driven Mr. Joyce's horse and cart, except the Famous Five, who had long ago forgotten it. They had not seen the accident. Coker had been far out of their sight when it happened; they knew and suspected nothing whatever about it.

Everybody knew that Coker was worried about a horse that "had" lost, never dreaming of guessing that he was only worried about a horse that "was" lost!

They knew that he had to see a man about a horse—that he had to find the considerable sum of twenty-five pounds on account of that man's demands. Potter and Greene, in their anxious concern for Coker, had let it all out in the games-study, and from the games-study it spread like ripples on the water when a stone is cast in.

The brazen effrontery of Coker was as surprising as anything else. So far from

being ashamed of himself he was obviously as self-satisfied as ever. Secretive as he had grown in some ways he had his own inimitable way of being secretive. It was known—it could not help being known—that he had written to his affectionate Aunt Judy to ask for the sum of twenty-five pounds. He actually wrote the letter in the games-study, with a dozen fellows staring at him. He actually glanced round, while he was writing, to ask how many k's there were in "expect."

Potter felt obliged to speak. He felt that it was up to a friend to put in a word in season.

"Look here, old man, you're not telling Miss Coker what you want that money for, are you?" he asked.

Coker stared.

"Of course!" he answered. "I'm bound to tell her."

"Oh crickey!" said Potter. "But—what will she think?"

"I don't quite see what you mean, Potter."

"I—I mean, mightn't she speak to your father about it?"

"Well, suppose she did?" asked Coker.

"W-w-wouldn't you mind?" gasped Potter.

"Why should I?"

"Oh dear! But—but your pater might speak to the Head?"

"I don't see why he should. But if he did, what would it matter?" asked Coker.

"Oh crumbs!" said Potter; and he gave it up.

If Coker did not mind his headmaster hearing of his reckless and riotous conduct, it was evidently useless to argue with him.

"Can't make you fellows out," said Coker crossly. "You don't know anything about the matter—not a thing! I'm not going to tell you, you fellows are rather tattlers, and I don't want it all over the school."

"Look here, old fellow—" said Greene.

"Don't jaw when a fellow's writing a letter," said Coker.

He finished the letter, walked down to the box, and posted it. He seemed unconscious of the petrified stare that followed him.

"Jever see anything like it?" asked Potter despairingly.

"Does he actually want to be bunked?" said Greene. "What does he think will happen?"

"Does he think at all?" grinned Price.

"Has he anything to do it with?"

Rumours, or, rather, certainties, could not fly all over Greyfriars without reaching the ears of the master of the Form concerned. Prout, of course, heard about it.

Prout was still uneasy in his plump mind about that racing paper he had seen Coker burning in the games-study. Prout was a dutiful Form master, jealous of the reputation of his Form. Prout was worried; he had accepted Coker's explanation of "Sporting Snips" with a mental reservation. He kept a suspicious eye on Coker. He made one or two inquiries in an unobtrusive way. What came to his plump ears worried him more than ever. In Masters' Common-room the "beaks" had got hold of it. Prout knew that there was a topic in Common-room which was not confined to him.

Coming in Common-room he would find Haeker talking, to Capper, and they would shut up like oysters when he appeared. Coming along a passage he would see Quelch in conversation with Wiggins, and they would fall silent as he drew within hearing.

Prout's plump soul was deeply disturbed.

There were lurking smiles in Common-room sometimes. There was something up against Prout in Common-room.

There was always something up against somebody in Common-room, where the beaks, according to some fellows, cackled like a lot of old hens.

It was frightfully uncomfortable for Prout, accustomed to laying down the law in Common-room, and overhearing all lesser mortals with his plump pomposity.

If a follow in his Form was breaking up into reckless, riotous backguardism, and heading for the "sack," it was awful for Prout. More sharply than ever he kept an eye on Coker.

If it was true—he hoped it wasn't, but he feared more and more that it was—if it was true, he was going to make an example of Coker. He was coming down on the delinquent like a ton of bricks. If he could not maintain in Common-room that his Form was spotless—that it was a Bayard of a Form, without fear and without reproach—at least he could make it clear that delinquency was promptly punished in his Form; that a black sheep was rooted out ruthlessly before he had time to taint the flock.

Prout seemed Argus-eyed, these days, watching Coker.

The happy Horace was quite unconscious of it. He wondered why Prout butted into his study sometimes. It seemed to him that Prout gave him more attention than usual in Form, and he was rather surprised to be always running into Prout when he took his walks abroad. But that was all.

Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, decided to speak out plainly to Coker, after long consideration. If the follow was bent on disgracing himself, disgracing his Form, and getting kicked out of the school, Blundell felt that a few plain words would be useful.

He tapped Coker on the shoulder in the quad, and came straight to the point.

"Look here, Coker," said Blundell, "this won't do!"

"Eh?" said Coker, "I'm not a fellow to preach, I hope," said Blundell. "Nobody's ever called me pi. But there's a limit. I advise you to chuck it."

"Chuck what?" asked the bewildered Coker.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" snapped Blundell. "You know what I mean. It's all over the school that you've been seeing a man about a horse, and that you've got to pay out a lot of money."

"My affair entirely!" said Coker haughtily. "I don't see that it concerns you, Blundell. I've no intention whatever of taking you into my confidence over the matter, if that's what you mean."

"Do you think I want to know anything about your goings-on!" roared Blundell. "Don't be a howling ass, if you can help it. I'm warning you that you're heading for trouble—bad trouble! I can tell you that the Fifth are jolly sick with you."

Coker stared.

"Mad?" he asked.

"Wha-a-a?"

"Or only silly?" asked Coker.

Blundell breathed hard and deep.

"Look here," he said, "I've told you it won't do! We don't want a rotten, frowsy, filthy backguard like you in the Fifth—see?"

Blundell would have done wisely if he had guarded with his left while he

was making those remarks. Coker hit out quite suddenly.

Coker, of course, had not the faintest idea what Blundell was driving at, but he was not the man to be called names with impunity.

Coker hit suddenly, and Blundell hit the quadrangle with equal suddenness. There was a bump and a fearful yell.

It was followed by a shout on all sides. It was quite uncommon to see a Fifth Form man knock down his Form captain in open quad. Fellows crowded up, with breathless interest.

Blundell was on his feet again in a twinkling. He did not waste any more words on Coker. The time for words was past, and the time for action had come. Blundell fairly hurled himself at Coker.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! This way, you men!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"A fight!"

"I say, you fellows, Coker and Blundell—"

"Great Scott!"

"Go it!"

"Hurrah!"

Fighting in the Fifth was rare. It was beneath the dignity of that sedate senior Form. That made it all the more interesting to watch Coker and Blundell going it, hammer and tongs. Fellows swarmed in a buzzing ring, watching breathlessly.

"Go it, Coker!"

"Go it, Blundell!"

"Man down!" roared Bob Cherry.

Coker was up again in a moment. Boiling with wrath and indignation, he hurled himself on his Form captain.

Hammer and tongs again. Blundell was the better man with his hands, but Coker was hefty. Coker was strong and muscular, and Coker had unlimited pluck and the determination of a bulldog. Coker was not the man to quit so long as he could stand. With a little more science he might have strewed the quadrangle with the remains of George Blundell. But Blundell had the science, Coker's tactics being rather those of a bull at a gate. Still, the captain of the Fifth had his hands full.

"Bravo, Coker! Up again!" roared Johnny Bull.

Coker, down once more, was up almost as if he was made of india-rubber, and rushing on again.

"Jolly old jack-in-the-box, ain't he?" remarked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Coker! Stick to him!"

"Good man, Coker!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as Blundell staggered under a terrific drive, which, by some strange chance, landed where Coker aimed it.

Blundell gasped.

When Coker did get one in, straight from the shoulder, with all his beef behind it, it was rather like a tap from a pile-driver. It gave the captain of the Fifth something to think about.

"Claret's cheap to-day!" chortled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Claret," rich and red, ran down from Blundell's nose in a stream. But he rallied and came on hard and fast, and Coker, hitting out like an excited windmill, sawed the air with thrashing fists, till Blundell put in a jolt to the jaw that stretched Coker on his back.

Having stretched Coker, Blundell walked away.

Potter and Greene helped Coker to his feet. He needed helping. Earth and sky swam round Coker.

"Good old Coker! Good man!" chanted the spectators. Greyfriars fellows knew how to admire pluck, and a fellow who boxed as Coker did evi-

dently had heaps of pluck to tackle a man like Blundell.

Coker spluttered. "Where is he? I haven't licked him yet! Where is he?"

"Come on, old man, come and bathe your face!" said Potter. "Get in before you're seen."

"Well, if he's licked, all right!" said Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker, in his present hammered and harked state, could hardly have tackled a bluebottle. But he was willing to go on. The spirit was willing, though the flesh was weak. He stared round dizzily for Blundell, and from the fact that Blundell was gone, seemed to derive the impression that he had licked Blundell.

"Cheek, you know!" gasped Coker. "Calling a chap names—for nothing! I never said a word to him, and he called me names! Frightful cheek! Well, I've licked him for it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The lickfulness was a boot on the other leg," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Potter and Greene helped away what was left of Coker. The school was left buzzing over the exciting episode. That night Coker was too busy for prep. He was busily engaged in caring tenderly for a highly decorative countenance. His consolation was that he had licked Blundell. Blundell was not feeling bonny; but it was a consolation to him that he had licked Coker. He told the fellows in the games-study that he had given the dashed backguard what he had been asking for, and the fellows in the games-study agreed that it served the dashed backguard right!

In all Greyfriars, Coker of the Fifth was the only fellow who did not know that Horace James Coker was regarded as a dashed backguard.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The Chopper Comes Down!

"I SAY, you fellows! I say! Coker—"

Billy Bunter fairly yelled. It was a day or two later, but the passage of time had not diminished the general interest in Coker of the Fifth.

Fellows no longer asked one another: "Heard about Coker?" Everybody had heard about Coker. They debated how long it would be before Coker was sacked. That was now the interesting question.

So when Billy Bunter burst into the Remove passage, after class, spluttering with excitement, his little round eyes almost popping through his big, round spectacles, the mere name of Coker was enough to draw the fellows at once.

"Coker!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Jolly old Horace bunked?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, Coker's for it!" squeaked Bunter breathlessly. "I say, Prout's taking him to the Head!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Poor old Coker!" said Harry Wharton. "But, really, the man's asked for it—begged and prayed for it!"

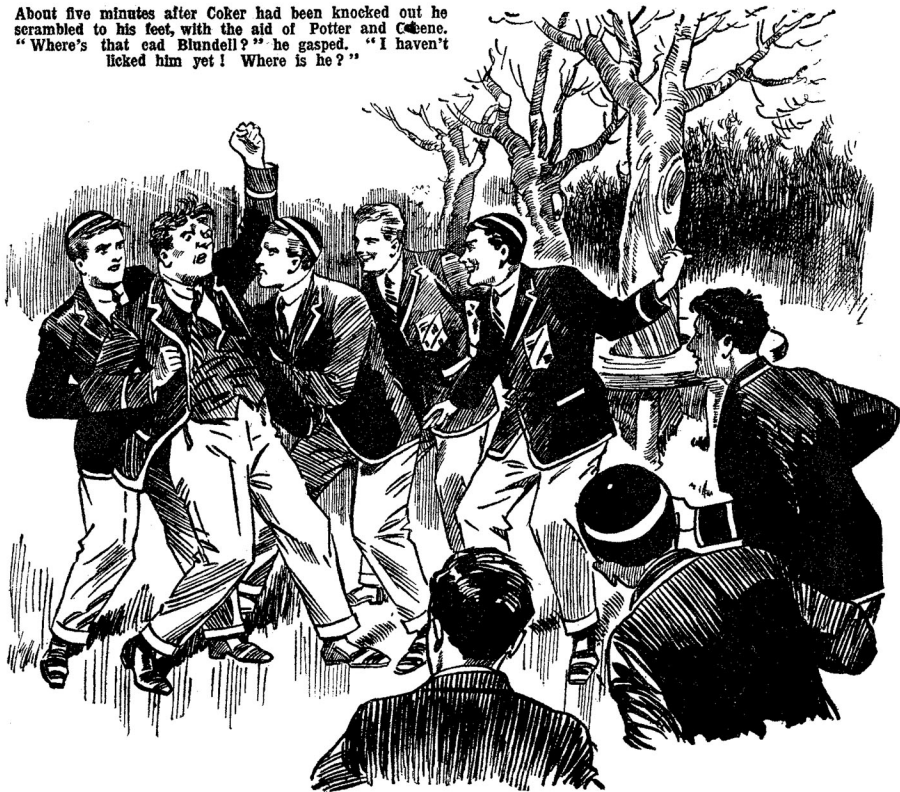
"The begfulness was terrific!"

"I say, you fellows, Prout's taking him to the Head to be bunted! I say, I saw them—"

"Come on!" yelled Skinner.

There was a rush down the Remove staircase. Coker had been so much in the public eye of late that every fellow

About five minutes after Coker had been knocked out he scrambled to his feet, with the aid of Potter and Cobene. "Where's that cad Blundell?" he gasped. "I haven't licked him yet! Where is he?"



wanted to see the thing through—to be in at the death, as it were.

"But what's happened now?" asked Frank Nugent. "Have they found him out? Has he owned up, or what?"

Nobody seemed to know exactly what had happened. It was known that Mr. Prout had sent for Coker to come to his study, and that Coker had gone—not looking in the least alarmed. Other fellows had been alarmed for him; but Coker himself was not in the least alarmed.

Coker saw no occasion for alarm when he went to his Form master's study. He only wondered what was wanted.

When he arrived there he found Mr. Prout with a portentously grave face. A registered letter lay on the table before Mr. Prout. The master of the Fifth fixed Coker with his eye.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Coker. "I sent for you, Coker!" said Mr. Prout, in a deep voice. "I require an explanation from you, Coker. Rumours—sinister rumours—have been going about the school for some time, and they have reached my ears. This afternoon, Coker, this registered letter arrived for you. Exorcising my authority as your Form master, I have opened it."

"I don't mind, sir!" answered Coker cheerily.

"It contains the large sum of twenty-five pounds in banknotes, Coker!"

"Then it's from my aunt, sir!"

assented Coker. "I've been expecting it."

"You are aware, Coker, that no Greyfriars boy is allowed to have such sums of money in his possession. I require an explanation at once, Coker, as to what this money is for?"

"Oh, quite so, sir!" said Coker. "As it happens, I owe the money!"

Prout's portentous face grew more portentous.

"You owe such a sum as twenty-five pounds, Coker?" he boomed.

"Yes, sir!" said Coker cheerily.

"And for what?"

"A horse, sir—"

"A—a—a horse!" stuttered Prout.

He had guessed it—he knew it. Still, it was amazing for Coker to tell him so in this casual, off-hand way!

"That's it, sir," said Coker. "You see, the horse's lost—"

"Bless my soul! You stand before me, Coker, and tell me that that is your reason for requiring this sum of money?" gasped Prout.

"Certainly, sir!" said the wondering Coker. "Why shouldn't I?"

"Good gad!" ejaculated Mr. Prout blankly.

"I'm bound to pay the man, sir, when the horse's lost—" further explained Coker.

"Silence, sir!" boomed Prout. He rose to his feet, towering with indignation. "Enough, sir! More than enough! Come with me! I shall place this money, Coker, in your head-

master's hands. I shall place the whole matter in his hands. Follow me!"

"No need to trouble the Head with it, sir," said the amazed Coker. "I don't suppose he will want to have his time wasted—"

"Silence, sir!" boomed Prout.

"Follow me at once!"

"Oh, very well, sir; I'm sure I don't mind!" said Coker, and he followed his Form master.

Prout's booming voice had been heard as he bade Coker follow him. Many eyes were upon them as they emerged from the study. Prout's frowning brow and glinting eyes drew general attention. They headed for the Head's study—Prout sailing in advance like a Spanish galleon, Coker trailing behind. And like wildfire the news spread that the game was up for Coker—that his Form master was taking him to the Head to be "bunked."

Fellows of all Forms gathered to see him go. Billy Bunter rushed off to tell the Remove. Harry Wharton & Co. were on the spot, with a swarm of other Removites, as Coker, in the wake of Prout, turned into Head's corridor.

The Famous Five gave Coker sympathetic glances. Certainly, they could not doubt that poor old Coker had asked for it. Still, they felt sorry for him. No fellow could approve of his reckless, riotous, rorty goings on; but when a man was up for the sack, a fellow couldn't help feeling sorry.

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It was amazing to all beholders to behold that Coker, though puzzled, did not look at all scared. It really looked as if Coker did not know what was up. He seemed surprised by the universal interest taken in his proceedings. He stared at the crowd that gathered to watch him following in the stately footsteps of Prout. He did not seem to see any reason for all this excitement.

"Smuffed at last—what?" said Loder of the Sixth, with a sneer, as Coker passed him. "They've got you—what?"

"Oh, dry up, Loder!" muttered Blundell of the Fifth. "No need to hit a man when he's down."

Coker paused.

"Who's down?" he inquired. "What do you mean, Blundell?"

"Well, you're up for the sack, I suppose," said the captain of the Fifth. "I'm sorry, Coker, now it's come to that."

"If you're asking for another licking, Blundell, I'll give you one, when I'm through with Prout," said Coker. "Who's up for the sack?"

"Aren't you?" exclaimed Hobson of the Shell.

"Don't be cheeky, you young ass!"

"I say, you fellows, Coker don't know that he's going to be bunked," squeaked Billy Bunter. "He, he, he!"

Prout had disappeared ahead, forgotten by Coker. Having reached the Head's study, Prout made the discovery that Coker was no longer following in his wake. He came back for the happy Horace.

"Coker!" came Prout's booming voice.

"Oh! Yes, sir—coming!" answered Coker.

"Follow me at once!" boomed Prout. Coker marched on after Prout again. Behind him marched half Greyfriars. Coker could not understand in the least the cause of all this excitement and this keen interest in his proceedings. He was angry and irritated and bewildered. It seemed to him that Greyfriars had gone "batty." It seemed to Greyfriars that Coker had.

The door of the Head's study opened, and closed behind Prout and Coker. At the corner of the passage the Greyfriars fellows were packed in a buzzing throng. They waited for Coker to emerge—sacked! Nobody could doubt that he was going to be sacked. Prout evidently thought so—it was easy to read it in his face. Everybody thought so. The amazing thing was that Coker did not think so.

"Is the chap off his rocker?" asked Harry Wharton, in wonder.

"Must be," said Bob Cherry.

"He's going to tell the Head that he's paying a man twenty-five pounds on a horse that's lost!" gurgled Blundell. "And he doesn't know he will be bunked! Mad as a hatter!"

"The mad-hatterfulness is terrific!"

"Poor old Coker!"

With breathless anticipation, the throng waited for Coker of the Fifth to reappear.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Light at Last!

DR. LOCKE laid down his pen and fixed his eyes on Coker of the Fifth. Coker stood before the Head, still unalarmed. Mr. Prout laid the registered envelope on the Head's writing-table. Prout's face was wrathful, but it was gloomy, too—a mixture of wrath and gloom. Prout felt this! An expulsion in his Form was a blow—a heavy blow. It was a

thing he would have to live down in Common-room. It was a thing that the other beaks would not let him forget in a hurry. But there was no help for it. He had to face it. The black sheep had to be rooted out of Prout's flock.

Dr. Locke's face was stern.

Coker might have guessed that the august headmaster had heard something of the sinister rumour that had spread over the school—had Coker himself been aware of them. But Coker wasn't, so he had not the faintest idea why the Head was looking so stern.

Having fixed a stern stare on the unabashed Coker, Dr. Locke changed it into an inquiring gaze at Mr. Prout.

"Sir," said Mr. Prout heavily, "I have brought this boy to you. This matter is too serious for me to deal with as a Form master. I place it in your hands, sir."

"But what—" asked the Head quietly.

Prout tapped the registered envelope with a plump forefinger.

"This envelope, sir, contains the sum of twenty-five pounds, sent to Coker by a relative," he said. "I required an explanation from Coker—"

"Naturally!" said the Head.

"I am bound to say," added Mr. Prout, "that Coker made no attempt at concealment. He admitted everything. He has admitted that it was his intention to pay this large sum of money to a man—some man outside the school—on account of a—a—a horse—"

"A—a—a horse?" ejaculated the Head.

"A horse, sir!" said Prout gloomily.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "Coker has admitted this!"

"He has admitted it, sir! I leave the matter in your hands. Perhaps I may be allowed to add that the boy appears strangely unconscious of the iniquity, the enormity, of his conduct. It is only fair to point out that he is abnormally stupid—the most obtuse boy in my Form, sir—in all Greyfriars—a remarkably, indeed extraordinarily obtuse boy, sir!"

"I have observed that!" assented the Head.

Coker could only stare.

Coker was well aware that he was the brainy man of the Fifth. But this, apparently, was what the beaks thought of him!

It only showed what priceless asses beaks were! Coker had never had a high opinion of beaks. Now it was lower than ever.

Dr. Locke's stern stare was fixed on Coker again. Coker met it fearlessly, with what seemed to the Head and Mr. Prout, brazen effrontery.

"Coker," said the Head, in a deep voice, "after what Mr. Prout tells me that you have admitted, little remains to be said. Nevertheless, I will hear you. Have you anything to say?"

"Nothing special, sir," answered Coker. "Mr. Prout told me to come here, so I came. That's all, sir."

"Have you anything to say in defence of your conduct?"

"I hope there's nothing wrong with my conduct, sir," said Coker, with spirit.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"It is possible, sir," said Mr. Prout, "that the boy is mentally defective? It would certainly appear so."

"I will question him," said the Head. "Coker, do you confess that you have obtained this sum of money to pay to some man outside the school on account of a transaction concerning a—a—a horse?"

"I don't know about confessing, sir,"

said Coker. "I told Mr. Prout so, certainly. I don't call that a confession. I answered him."

"You do not deny it to me?"

"No, sir! Why should I?"

"It was your intention to pay over this money to some man—"

"Yes, sir."

"On account of a—a—a horse?"

"Exactly, sir! You see, the horse's lost."

"No doubt!" said the Head dryly.

He did not expect to hear that Coker had backed a winner.

"You see, sir, it was quite an accident," said Coker. "I know a good bit about horses—"

"What?"

"Rather a lot, in fact, sir, so I was quite taken by surprise when it happened. Still, the horse's lost, so I've got to pay the man. You see that, sir?"

"Mentally defective!" murmured Mr. Prout. "Mentally defective!"

Dr. Locke rose.

"Enough!" he said. "You have said enough, Coker! Whether your present attitude is due to unexamplified stupidity, or to a strange and hardened audacity, I will not pretend to decide. But the fact is clear that you cannot remain at this school. You agree with me, Mr. Prout?"

"Entirely, sir!" said Prout.

"You will go at once and pack your box, Coker—"

"M-u-m-u-m-m-y box!" stuttered Coker, bewildered.

"Mr. Prout will take you to the station."

"The—the station?"

"You will go home to-day."

"B-b-but," babbled Coker, "what am I to go home for, sir?"

"You are expelled from Greyfriars, Coker!"

"Expelled!" he stuttered.

"Certainly! Now leave my study."

Coker did not leave the Head's study. He stood and stared at the Head, as if Dr. Locke's face had been that of the fabled Gorgon, petrifying him.

"Take this boy away, Mr. Prout," said the Head.

"Coker, follow me!"

Coker found his voice.

"Look here! What's this game?" he roared.

"Wha-a-a-at?" gasped the Head.

"What do you mean? If I'm sacked, what am I sacked for?" shrieked Coker.

"What are you driving at? What have I done?"

"Mentally defective!" gasped Prout.

"As I said, mentally defective!"

"Boy," thundered the Head, in wrath, "how dare you! You have confessed to disgraceful conduct—conduct unworthy of any Greyfriars boy! Do you suppose for a moment, Coker, that you will be allowed to remain to carry on your disgraceful gambling transactions in this school—"

"Gig-gig-gambling transactions?" gurgled Coker. "I—I didn't—I wasn't—I never—I—I—I— Blessed if I make you out, sir! Who's been gambling, I'd like to know?"

"Is the boy insane?" gasped the Head. "Coker, I will waste no further words on you! You have confessed to—"

"I haven't!" shrieked Coker.

"Nothing of the sort! I said I'd got to pay a man because the horse's lost. So I have! I can't swindle the man, can I? What's that got to do with gambling?"

"Mentally defective!" crooned Prout. "Mentally defective!"

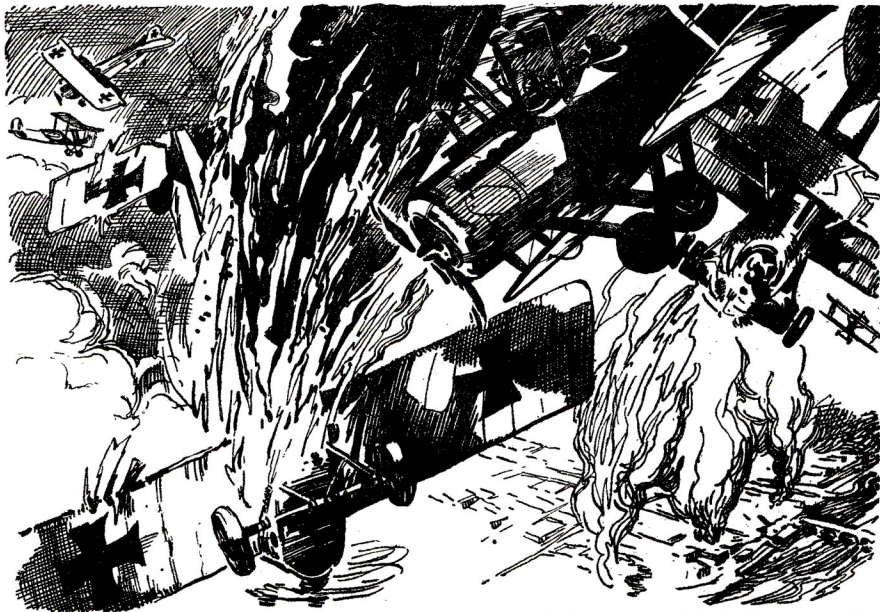
"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke.

(Continued on page 28.)

# WINGS OF WAR!

BY HEDLEY SCOTT.

(See introduction on next page.)



R.One!

**S**ERGEANT WILKINS' movements for the next half hour were decidedly suspicious.

While the officers were at lunch he sauntered casually into the village and entered a certain estaminet.

Pierre Marmot, the innkeeper, shuffled towards him, and invited him to be seated.

"Bon soir, monsieur? Is it wine you will take?"

Wilkins glanced about him, saw three or four Tommies variously engaged in talking, smoking, drinking, and practising their French, and then leaned forward slightly.

"R.One!" he whispered into Pierre Marmot's grubby ear.

The change that came over the innkeeper was remarkable, but it was momentary.

"Why, yes, monsieur," he bowed greatly. "I have champagne. The verree best. Perhaps Monsieur le sergent will step into my humble cellar and select a bottle for himself?"

"That's certainly an idea," agreed Sergeant Wilkins.

Casually he followed the shuffling innkeeper through the flap in the counter and into a small room at the rear of the estaminet. Once in this room the innkeeper straightened himself.

"Greeting, R.One," he said, with great deference. "You have work for me?"

Sergeant Wilkins nodded.

"Be good enough to follow," said the innkeeper. He lifted a trapdoor in the flooring, and tramped noisily down a flight of steps which lay beyond. "The cellar is here."

Sergeant Wilkins looked about him, sniffed as the stench of a stream which ran practically under the old house assailed his nostrils, and seated himself at an upturned packing case which did duty as a table. For five minutes he was busily writing on a tiny piece of oiled paper, what time the innkeeper kept a close watch on the cellar steps, and talked to himself about the goodness of his champagne, to keep up appearances.

Sergeant Wilkins was finished at last. "Send that without delay," he said. "Now give me the champagne, quick."

Pierre Marmot took the message, slipped it into a tiny metal cylinder, and crossed the cellar. In one darkened corner was a wicker basket from which a moment later the innkeeper carefully took a pigeon. The small cylinder was clipped to a delicate attachment on the pigeon's leg, and the bird was taken to a small grating in the floor.

With impatience on his coarse features, Wilkins watched the grating moved aside, the bird thrust into the opening, and the grating restored to its normal position again. Then Pierre Marmot smiled, placed a bottle of champagne in the sergent's arms, and rubbed his hands with entire satisfaction.

"He will arrive in half an hour, R.One. He flies along the underground

stream until he reaches the open—then up he flies. So"—he waved his hands—"anyone thinks he had settled on the stream for a drink of water. It is clever, yes?"

"Um! We shall see," grunted Sergeant Wilkins. "Now lead the way, or those fools upstairs will be getting suspicious."

But the "fools" upstairs saw nothing suspicious in the shape of a sergent returning with a bottle of champagne, grumbling the while in expressive English on the iniquitous price the innkeeper wanted for it.

"But it is not what you call dear," protested the innkeeper. "It is ze best wine in ze country."

"Stow it!" growled Wilkins. "You blessed Froggies jaw a chap's head off. There's your money."

He flung down a twenty-franc note, opened the bottle of champagne, poured himself out a glass, and pronounced it "not bad." Ten minutes later Sergeant Wilkins was re-entering 256 aerodrome. At a quarter to three the full squadron of Bristol Fighters were out on the tarmac. Sergeant Wilkins himself superintended the loading of the bombs on the bomb racks.

Also at a quarter to three a highly placed official in the German Intelligence Corps was unclipping a small cylinder from the leg of a carrier pigeon.

"From R.One!" he confided to his under officer. "Zo! This is smart work!"

He spread out the message, recorded it, and reached for the telephone. For five minutes his guttural voice spoke into the transmitter. There was a satisfied smile on his square features when he replaced the receiver.

"Two-five-six Squadron have a surprise in store for them," he told his assistant. "Oh! But this is kolossal!"

The under officer obviously thought the same, for he chuckled hugely, and echoed his superior's "kolossal."

"R. One is a very smart man!" he added.

"One of the smartest in the Fatherland's service," was the ready admission.

### Trapped!

"ALL ready?"

That in effect was what Major Locke's upraised, gloved hand signified, as he turned in his pilot's seat and surveyed the Bristol lined up ready to take off. The roar of twenty Rolls engines filled the air, and then rose to even greater volume as the mechanics whipped the wooden chocks away from the undercarriage wheels, what time the Bristol pilots gave their engines more throttle.

In the observer's cockpit of Major Locke's plane, was Bruce Thorburn, happy as a schoolboy to be back at his job of "strafing Huns." Coloured streamers denoting the major's rank, fluttered bravely from the struts of the Bristol as it raced across the aerodrome and rose like a bird as Locke pulled back on the control-stick. In perfect formation the squadron took off, divided into two flights, of which the second was led by the redoubtable Captain Oakley.

Standing up in the rear cockpit and gazing out over the tail, Thorburn waved his hand to Jim and Ron, who followed on either side of him.

The great raid on Douai was "on." Each Bristol Fighter carried three 112lb. bombs—a collection of "eggs" that was calculated to blow a goodly portion of Douai off the map.

The British Intelligence Service had complained that Douai de late had been rather left alone by the air squadrons, with the result that it was now a hive of activity, supplying munitions and troops to a formidable area held by the Germans.

Squadron 256 were going to alter all that.

Circling the aerodrome three or four times and climbing for altitude at full throttle, Locke finally set a course for the Line. Thorburn, to keep himself amused, began to sing. He spotted each familiar landmark, and began to thrill with excitement as the Line was reached. The altimeter needle flickered at 15,000 feet, visibility was particularly clear, and Jerry the Hun seemed to be particularly oblivious of the fact that there was a War "on"—oblivious so far as the air was concerned, at any rate. A few shells scorched their way through space from an anti-aircraft battery; but they fell hundreds of feet short of the two flights of Bristols, and eventually the gunners gave it up.

"Don't like the feel of it, young 'un!" roared Locke through the telephone. "You know what they say—if the anti-aircraft batteries let you through without kicking there's a straffe coming from lurking Fokkers. Keep your eyes skinned!"

Thorburn needed no telling. Like

Locke, he had a feeling that all was not well. So far the journey over enemy territory had been singularly uneventful—a surprising state of affairs when the strength of the invading squadron was taken into account.

The same thought was in the mind of every pilot and observer in Squadron 256. Most of them were hardened flying-men, and the lack of interest Jerry was showing in their progress towards Douai caused a certain uneasiness. Without exception, Squadron 256 had obeyed the major's orders. Not a word as to their destination, time of raid, or strength, had been discussed since Major Locke had issued his orders in the squadron mess-room.

Glimmering under the rays of the afternoon sun lay the town of Douai. Even at the height of 15,000 feet Thorburn could plainly make out the railway station and a number of wagons threading their way like a snake along the track. In a few moments, he told himself, that railway station would be a mass of rubble and ruins; a similar fate was promised the bridge over the river.

Away to the north, looking not much larger than a table-top, showed the Douai aerodrome, reputed to be the home of a famous German flying squadron, of which the celebrated Immelman family were members. Dotted over the aerodrome were the shapes of camouflage aeroplanes, outside their similarly camouflaged hangars. Not much sign of activity there, Thorburn told himself. To all intents and purposes, the German Imperial Air Service was taking a holiday, as well as the anti-aircraft gunners.

Keeping watch over the expanse of sky that settled over the tail of his machine, his hand on the Lewis gun, ready to give any lurking enemy a burst of good British lead should he ask for it, Thorburn waited.

Now Douai lay snug directly beneath them. Locke waggled the joystick, intimating that Thorburn should pull the toggles of the bomb releases.

One, two, three!

The three black, torpedo-shaped objects whirled earthwards directly over their target. Keeping to the course to enable the machines behind to sail over their objective, Locke thundered on. His roving eyes were scanning the sky for the foe; he had a feeling that those innocent banks of cloud directly in the sun's rays were not so innocent as they looked.

He was right.

### WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

*In consequence of plans having leaked out to the press, and in view of the fact that Major Locke—formerly a Secret Service agent, but now Major Locke, D.S.O.—is appointed to take over the command of 256 Squadron, R.F.C.—a Bristol Fighter squadron of great repute stationed "somewhere" in France, Locke's suspicions are so aroused by the strange conduct of Sergeant Wilkins, a newcomer from Inglesham Aerodrome, in England, Jim Daniels, Ron Glynn, and Bruce Thorburn, three veterans of 256, had fallen foul of the sergeant during their course of training at this aerodrome, so they have no cause to like him. Prior to a raid on a German stronghold, Thorburn is examining his Lewis gun in the armory when he sees Wilkins interesting himself in an array of bombs. The look the sergeant gives the youngster as he leaves the armory gives that he has hatred of Thorburn is stronger than ever.*

(Now read on.)

The moment the last machine of the second flight of Bristols had unloaded its bombs the innocent banks of cloud disgorged a squadron of single-seater Pfalz scouts. With the sun behind their backs, the German scouts screeched down upon the Bristols, with guns spitting a leaden hail of death, and in that first bewildering, unexpected raid two Bristols burst into flame and roared earthwards like flaming meteors.

A burst of bullets spanged and spattered across Locke's port wing as he threw the Bristol into a dive and then zoomed up, standing the machine almost on its tail. His own fight followed this manoeuvre to a man, thankful that so far they had escaped that sudden attack without a casualty.

Now it would be a fight on something like-level terms.

The next moment Squadron 256 realised the extent of the trap into which they had fallen; for out of the sun screamed another squadron of German planes—Albatross two-seaters. They cut through the two flights like winged demons of vengeance; and, with horror plucking at his heart, Locke realised that three more of his planes—and that meant six precious lives—were rearing out of control towards the distant earth.

Feverishly Locke reached for his Very-light pistol and gave the "Break formation" signal.

Next second the sky was alive with diving, banking, whirling planes—German and British. But the latter were outnumbered by three to one!

### Heavy Casualties!

THORNBURN was firing his Lewis with commendable restraint. In this terrific dog-fight he knew that every round of ammunition would count; that every time he had to stop to replace an empty drum with a full one precious seconds that might mean life or death would be wasted.

He took heart when he saw his two chums were still alive. Both of them were putting up a stout show against four Albatross machines. Only for a second did he allow his eyes to wander to Ron and Jim, but they proved nearly fatal. While three machines engaged the Bristol above, a Fokker triplane zoomed under its tail and peppered the fuselage with a long burst of bullets. By a miracle not one of those messengers of death did more than pierce the fabric; for Locke threw the Bristol into a roll, stood up and then gained a hundred feet of height with a tricky climbing turn.

His gunsights traced the wicked outline of a Pfalz scout fairly and squarely. A dozen bullets winged straight for the pilot. There was a blinding sheet of flame as the petro-tank exploded, and Locke's first victim in that dog-fight careered towards the ground, a blazing comet of wooden spars and oil-soaked fabric.

Jim and Ron blessed the marksmanship of their respective observers, for between them they accounted for four of the enemy. But the chums' hearts were heavy. Of the twenty Bristols that had set out on that bombing raid over Douai only a dozen now remained.

Jim had caught a glimpse of Lieutenant Wallace wrestling with a plane of which half one wing had been shot away, and felt that if either he or his observer ever sat at Squadron 256



mess table again it would be something in the nature of a miracle.

But it was against the formidable German odds that Jim and Ron proved how much they had learned from the veteran Captain Oakley. Diving, looping, spinning, employing every wile known to acrobatics, the two gave a good account of themselves.

Anxiously, when a second's respite would allow, they searched for Major Locke's machine. Their hearts leaped into their mouths when they saw a Fokker triplane hurtle down on the Bristol's tail, but the anxiety changed to relief when they heard the thunderous rattle of Thorburn's Lewis stand out its challenge. The Fokker veered off, and Thorburn peppered it with a final burst of lead, almost certain that he had winged the German pilot. But he had no time to satisfy himself fully on that score, for out of the blue came two Albatross planes, their converging lines of gunfire missing the Bristol by inches only.

Ratatatat! Thorburn's gun barked out a challenge, then it stopped abruptly. "Jammed!" Thorburn quickly had the gun-casing off, snicked out a pawl spring which had broken, replaced it in a matter of a few seconds, and started to fire again.

Ratatatat! Again the gun jammed. Locke, ceasing to hear the comforting note of the back-seat gun, and being hard pressed by two of the enemy who were engaging him from the front, went up and over in a loop.

As he came out of it his fixed gun, firing through the propeller, sent a leaden hail into the petrol tank of one of the Albatross scouts. It tilted up like a stricken horse, dropped earthwards on its tail, fell into a spiral nose-dive, and thundered to destruction at speed which no human could arrest.

It was war!

Locke cursed his luck at having led his gallant companions into such a trap. Even then the thought was running in his mind that their plans had leaked out to the enemy in some unaccountable fashion.

If ever the squadron got back safely, he told himself, someone was going to pay dearly for this leakage. Now he knew why the anti-aircraft batteries had been so silent; now he knew why the Douai aerodrome looked so peaceful. The camouflaged specks in front of the hangars were not aeroplanes at all—they were dummies!

While these thoughts ran through his mind he waited for the spitting lash of Thorburn's Lewis gun to ring out again. But it was silent. That gun, over which Thorburn had spent so much time and trouble, was useless—Sergeant Wilkins had seen to that. Indeed, it was a marvel that it had functioned as long as it had.

The youngster bawled the news through the telephone to Locke.

Poof! A green ball of fire shot from Locke's Very-light pistol, signalling the Bristols to retreat. Twelve pilots, some with wounds, all of them with planes perforated by the intensive machine-gun fire, saw that signal, zoomed up into some sort of formation, and started to limp for home.

It was a running fight all the way. The triumphant German planes harried the limping Bristols ceaselessly, and it was not surprising, in the circumstances, that two more planes from the famous Squadron 256—one of them piloted by the veteran Captain Oakley—crashed in German territory before the enemy machines, finding themselves too near the

## GREYFRIARS HEROES.

No. 25.

Our Greyfriars Rhymester feels that he cannot leave out the old stagers altogether, so this week's verses are devoted to the hero worshipped by William Gosling—the "keeper of the gate."

**W**HICH Gosling really doesn't care  
For any datted 'ero;  
He 'as his fancies 'ere and there,  
And rather likes old Nero;  
For he's a cove what wouldn't stand  
No cheek from any in the land—  
No, not from peer nor pierrot.

He ougter 'ave been a porter in  
A modern seat o' learnin',  
And not 'ave played the tambourine  
While Venice was a-burnin';  
For when he caught a datted rip  
He'd give him sich a dose o' jip,  
He'd feel 'is brain a-turmin'.

Old Nero these young himps would tan  
With 'uge great whips—yes, rather;  
And Cherry, too, what checks a man  
Who's older than his father,  
Would not feel 'arf so bold and brave  
When turned into a galley-slave  
And sweated to a lather.

And every time young Wharton passed  
And tried 'is little trickses,  
To 'ungry lions 'e'd be cast



British lines for their personal safety, sheered off home.

Then it was the turn of the German anti-aircraft batteries. At a given signal they burst into song, and the sky seemed full of fleecy balls of bursting smoke as shell after shell screamed towards the Bristols.

But the gods of war had taken their toll of Squadron 256 for that day, and out of the twenty planes which had set out ten limped home to the aerodrome—exactly half.

Major Locke's face was strained and grey when he took the roll call after the last machine had landed. He had grown to like all his "boys," and most of them were not old enough to be called anything but that. Exactly half strength. He seemed to be writing his report to headquarters in blood. But that wasn't all the extent of his worries. What had been only a faint suspicion during the raid was now a certainty—namely, that in not one single instance had the bombs dropped over Douai exploded.

Pilots and observers—each had the



And crunched up into nixes;  
While as for Morgan and young Rake,  
They'd both be roasted at the stake  
In just about two tickses.

And all young rips what grins with mirth  
Each time they sees the porter,  
Old Nero would 'ave drowned at birth  
In deep and muddy water;  
But Billy Bunter he would boil  
Inside a cauldron of 'ot oil,  
And Skinner he would slaughter.

In this way he would catch a lot  
Of these 'ere little jokers,  
And pull their teeth out on the spot  
(The tongue as well of Coker's);

And then, o' course, he would contrive  
To flay young Vorning-Smith alive  
With orful red-'ot pokers.

The spirits of these japers cool  
Would swiftly drop to zero,  
If Gosling's job at Greyfriars School  
Was occupied by Nero;  
For 'e'd take care at-once  
That young cheery himps should all be 'ung—  
And so he's Gosling's hero.

samo tale to tell. They had watched the descent of their bombs, but had seen no explosions. The bombs were dud! Locke complained to the authorities, in regulation fashion, but in his heart he felt that the bombs had been tampered with—that their detonators had been removed before they had been loaded on to the machines.

He had Sergeant Wilkins before him and cross-questioned him; but Sergeant Wilkins had no explanation to offer. He had merely superintended the loading of the bombs. Perhaps the last consignment of bombs was dud throughout—he would inspect those that were left with great care, etc.

Wilkins was dismissed, and there for the nonce the matter ended.

That night ten fresh pilots and ten fresh observers arrived at Squadron 256. Twenty new faces graced the board at the evening meal.

(The treachery of Sergeant Wilkins has cost 256 Squadron dearly, but already "E. One" is a marked man. Mind you read next week's full-of-thrills chapters of this weird story; boys!)



# THE FOOL of the SCHOOL!

(Continued from page 24.)

"Can this boy be so stupid that he does not realise that betting on horse-races is gambling?"

"Who's been betting on horse-races?" howled Coker. "I haven't!"  
"Are you out of your senses, Coker? You have confessed that you have done so!"

Coker's eyes bulged.  
"I—I—I have!" he stammered. "What the thump! I haven't! I never did! When did I, I'd like to know? I've never bet on a horse in my life! I wouldn't! I think it's rotten! I'm down on it! I've never—"

"Mentally defective—"  
"Coker, I will hear no more! It is too late now for denials. You have confessed that you intended to pay this sum of money to a man outside the school, on account of a racing transaction—"

Coker almost tottered.  
"I haven't!" he gurgled.  
"Boy!"

"I've got to pay the man because the horse's lost!" shrieked Coker. "What's that got to do with racing?"

Coker's headmaster and Form master could only gaze at him.

"The man can't afford to lose the money," said Coker. "I'm bound to pay him—I'm sure you'd say so yourself, sir, if I told you all about it. It wasn't my fault, of course—still, I'm responsible. The poor old chap has got to be paid for his horse. You see, sir, it's lost. The traces broke—"

"The—the what?"  
"The traces!"

"Traces!" said the Head faintly.  
He had never heard of a racehorse in traces. True, he did not know much about racing.

"It was that rotten old harness did it," said Coker. "When the cart went into the ditch the traces snapped. The horse got away. I'm bound to pay when the horse's lost, sir."

Dr. Locke passed his hand across his brow. He was as bewildered as Coker now.

Obviously, there was a misunderstanding somewhere.

"Coker!" said the Head at last. "If you are in your right senses explain what you mean. Did you, or did you not, lose the sum of twenty-five pounds in betting on a horse?"

"Oh crickey! I mean no, sir! Certainly not!"

Then, what did you mean, Coker, by stating that you had to pay this sum because the horse had lost?"

"I didn't say he had lost—I said he was lost!"  
"Was lost!" repeated the Head blankly.

"I said the horse's lost, and so he is lost!" gasped Coker. "Old Joyce has been hunting for him all over Kent, but he can't be found."  
"Joyce!" repeated Dr. Locke. "Who is Joyce?"

"The woodcutter, sir—old Joyce! I borrowed his horse and cart—"

"His—his—his horse and cart—"

"On the first day of term. The cart went into the ditch, and the traces broke, and the horse bolted. He can't be found. I've got to pay the man as the horse's lost!" spluttered Coker—"I'm bound to. That's why I asked Aunt Judy for the money. I can't let the old man down after borrowing his horse and cart, and the horse getting lost—"

"Goodness gracious me!" said the Head faintly.  
Mr. Prout could not speak.  
He could only gaze at Coker, dumb-founded.

"I'm sure, sir, you'll see that I've got to pay the man," urged Coker. "He earns his living with that horse and cart—"

"Goodness gracious!"  
There was a pause.  
The Head spoke at last.

"Coker! You are not expelled! I—I understand! You may take this money. You may—may pay Mr. Joyce! I am glad to see that you are not—the young rascal you have led your Form master to suppose you were. I am glad to see that you are guilty of nothing but amazing, unexampled, incredible stupidity. You may go!"

"I do," said the Head.  
"Coker went."

When he was gone the Form master and the headmaster looked at one another. Prout was feeling deeply relieved. The misunderstanding had been rather ludicrous; but there was not to be an expulsion in his Form, after all—the other beaks would not have that against him in Common-room. Prout smiled. As soon as the door had closed on Coker the Head smiled, too. His smile became a laugh. Coker, as he went down the passage, heard a most unaccustomed sound from the Head's study:

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
They were laughing!

Coker wondered what on earth they were laughing at!

"Bunked?"  
Fifty voices at least asked that question as Coker came swinging down the passage.

Coker did not look "bunked"; he looked surprised and bewildered and annoyed; but certainly he did not have a bunked look.

"Bunked!" he repeated. "Don't talk rot!"  
"He's got off!" said Bob Cherry, in wonder. "How on earth did he get off?"

"Don't be cheeky, Cherry!"  
"How did you wangle it, Coker?"

"Looks to me as if this school has gone batty," said Coker crossly. "You fellows would hardly believe it, but the Head had some silly idea in his napper that I'd been backing horses—"

"Had he?" gurgled Skinner. "Now I wonder why?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"He, you know!" said Coker indignantly. "Me! Prout seemed to think so, too. I can't imagine why."

"You—you can't imagine why!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"No! It's a mystery to me," said Coker, shaking his head. "Just because I said that I had to pay the man, you know, because the horse's lost. They seem to have misunderstood somehow. I can't make out how! Well, I can't stay here talking—I've got to see the man and pay him. But would you believe it, they actually suspected me of dabbling in betting—backing horses—and that sort of shady rot—me, you know!"

And Coker walked away, leaving a dumbfounded crowd behind him.

Later, the facts leaked out.

Prout told the other beaks in Common-room—glad to be able to tell them that his Form, after all, was a spotless Form, as far above suspicion as Mrs. Cresser. There was, after all, no black sheep in Prout's Form—though it could not be denied that there was a prize idiot! From Common-room it spread over the school, and the fellows roared with laughter when they heard about it.

Coker, it appeared, was not the reckless, riotous, roty roysterer the fellows had lately come to believe him. He was only the priceless ass they had always believed him. The story of Mr. Joyce's horse and cart, and the horse that "was 2 lost, not that "had" lost, was told up and down the passages and studies amid yells of merriment. Fellows were sorry that they had so misjudged Coker. But they had to laugh. They laughed loud and long. Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, could not see anything to laugh at—he was the only fellow who couldn't.

THE END

(Next week's magnificent yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled: "THE VANISHED SOVEREIGNS!")  
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