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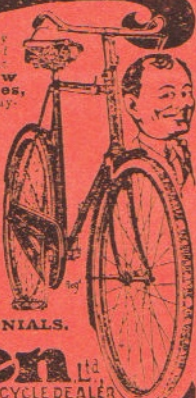
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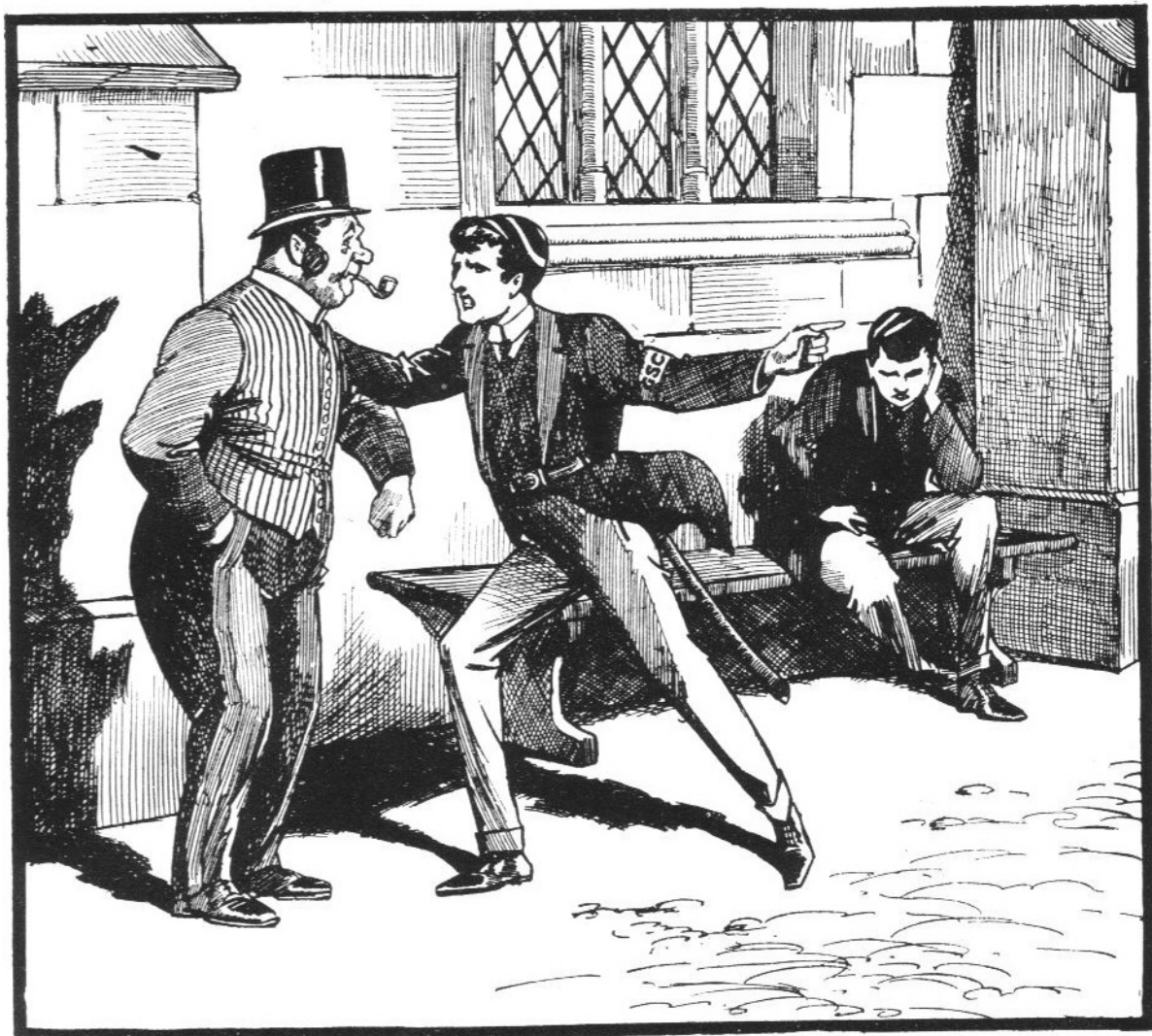
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SPECIAL CONSTABLE COKER!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



"Shut the gates, bedad!" roared Fitzgerald, grasping Gosling by the shoulder and shaking him. "Quick! Quick!" "Which I ain't got any horders to shut the gates in the middle of the afternoon," snorted Gosling. "If you young gents 'ave been drinking—" "The Germans!" shrieked Fitzgerald. (See Chapter 11.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A "Special" Occasion.

"I FEEL that it's up to me!"

Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, made that remark in a thoughtful sort of way.

Coker and Potter and Greene were adorning the School House steps with their persons. Potter and

Greene were glancing occasionally in the direction of the school shop, across the Close. They, too, felt that it was up to Coker—for it was getting near tea-time, and Coker was in funds, and they weren't.

Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of the Remove, were sitting in a row on the stone balustrade on the other side of the steps, sunning themselves in the bright

spring sunshine. They had noticed the thoughtful frown on Coker's face, and were watching him with considerable interest. At any other time Coker would have been wrathful at the cheek of mere fags in the Lower Fourth lounging on the steps, while he, the great Coker, was honouring that spot with his lordly person. But now he did not even notice them. It was evident that the powerful brain of Coker was working at high pressure, and that he was blind to trifling considerations at that moment.

"Up to you Cokey?" said Potter.

"Yes; I feel that it is," said Coker firmly.

"I was just thinking the same," remarked Greene.

"Jolly near tea-time. If you've decided that it's up to you, Coker, we'll come and help you do the shopping."

Coker frowned.

"This isn't a joking matter, Greene."

"But I'm not joking," said Greene, with a stare. "I suppose you mean it's up to you to stand tea in the study, don't you?"

"No, I don't."

"Oh!" said Greene, disappointed. His interest in the subject vanished at once, and he began to whistle "Tipperary."

"Shut up that row, old chap," said Coker. "This isn't a time to whistle."

"Why isn't it?"

"There's something a bit more important to be done than whistling. When the old school is in danger, it's up to Greyfriars chaps to stir their stumps a bit, I should think."

Potter and Greene stared at Coker. Then they looked round the Close, and down to the gates, and over the elms. They could not see any danger. Harry Wharton & Co. looked more and more interested. Now that Horace Coker had finished thinking he was evidently going to deliver himself of the net result.

"In danger?" repeated Potter.

"I suppose you're joking?" said Potter, after some thought. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"You ass!" said Coker, glaring at him. "What are you cackling at?"

"Your little joke," said Potter.

"I wasn't joking."

"Then what were you doing?"

"I'm speaking seriously," said Coker. "The school being in danger, I feel it's up to me to take a hand."

"B-b-b-but where's the danger?" stuttered Potter. "The Huns haven't landed in Pegg Bay by any chance, I suppose?"

"I suppose you haven't forgotten that a Zeppelin flew over the place, and dropped a bomb on us?"

"Well, it only blew up the gym," said Potter. "Those blessed Huns can't drop bombs for toffee. I can't see any Zeppelins now." Potter squinted up at the blue sky. "Not a Zepp in sight! And if a Zepp came zepping here again, I really don't see what you could do, Coker. You couldn't go for it with a ruler or an Indian club, I suppose?"

"If you're going to be funny, George Potter—"

"I'm not," said Potter. "I'm willing to leave that to you. It's more in your line."

"Get your hat!" said Coker.

"M-m-my hat! What for?"

"To come down to Courtfield with me."

"To the bun-shop?" asked Potter hopefully.

"No!" roared Coker.

"Then what for?" demanded Potter. George Potter did not want the trouble of walking down to Courtfield for nothing.

"We're going to swear," explained Coker.

Potter and Greene were petrified for a moment.

"We're going to what?" gasped Potter.

"Swear."

"Well, my only aunt Selina!" said Potter. "I'm jolly well not going to swear, and if old Prout heard you suggesting such a thing, you'd get it in the neck, Horace Coker. You blessed blackguard!"

"You silly ass!" roared Coker. "You don't understand!"

"No, I'm blessed if I do!" said Potter tartly. "I know I'm not going to swear. I understand that much."

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and you can understand it, too. Besides, if you want to swear, what's the good of going to Courtfield for that? You can go behind the wood-shed and swear if you want to so badly."

"Mind you don't get heard and reported, that's all," said Greene. "I must say, I'm surprised at you, Coker. I didn't think you were that kind of chap."

"You—you burbling idiots!" howled Coker. "You don't understand. We're going down to the police-station to swear."

"Why, we should get run in if we did!" ejaculated Potter, in increasing astonishment. "And whom do you want to swear at—old Grimes? I can just fancy his face if a fellow should walk in and swear at him! My hat!"

"Will you listen to me?" shrieked Coker.

"Not if you're going to swear," said Potter resolutely. "I'm not a particular chap, but I draw a line at that."

"I—I—I've a jolly good mind to dot you in your silly eye!" snorted Coker. "Listen to me, you howling chump. We're going to swear—"

"We're not!"

"I'm not, anyway."

Potter and Greene seemed quite decided about that. They were shocked at Coker. Coker glared at them in great wrath.

"We're going to swear—" he repeated.

"Oh, cheese it!"

"As special constables!" shrieked Coker.

"As what?"

"As which?"

"Special constables, you fatheads!" shouted Coker. "You have to swear—"

"Special constables are not allowed to swear," said Greene. "It's one of the rules that they have, to be civil and polite. Besides, even if we wanted to swear—which we don't—how could we swear as special constables when we're not special constables? You don't mean to say they have special words?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. burst into a sudden roar. Coker's meaning had dawned upon them, though Potter and Greene did not seem to grasp it yet. Coker did not heed the juniors. He was glaring at his chums as if he would eat them.

"If you'll leave off burbling, you asses, I'll try to make you understand!" he said. "We're going to swear as special constables. Special constables have to swear when they're taken on—at least I believe they do. They swear to love, honour, and obey, and—no, that isn't it. They swear something or other about obeying orders and guarding the realm and the King, or something. Well, that's what we're going to do. There's been a Zeppelin around here once, and there may be myriads of German spies, for all we know; and it's up to us. As we're not old enough to go to the front, we're going to swear as special constables."

"Us!" gasped Potter. He understood at last what Horace Coker was driving at; but he was still more astonished.

"Yes, us!" snapped Coker.

"Oh, my only hat!"

"Our Form-master's a special constable," said Coker.

"You know, a special constable has to go on duty when he has time, and report suspicious circumstances and things, and arrest anybody who does anything, or something like that. I dare say they give you a book of rules when you swear in. Suppose, for instance, you come on a German spy. If you're a special constable, you take him in charge."

"If he'll let you," suggested Potter.

"I'd like to see the German spy who would stop me!" said Coker truculently. "Now, enough jaw! Come on! It's up to everybody to do his little bit at a time like this—and we're going to do ours. What's the matter with you?"

Potter and Greene seemed to be suffering from internal convulsions. They were used to Coker, and they thought they knew every kind of an ass he was. But he had succeeded in surprising them. Coker glared at them impatiently.

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"What are you sniggering at, you silly idiots? Are you coming with me, or are you not? I'm going, anyway."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Greene.

"You cackling fathead!"

"I'm not coming," gurgled Potter. "Oh, Coker, you ass! I'd like to see their faces when we march in to ask to be special constables! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why shouldn't we?" demanded Coker, frowning.

"Well, we're not old enough, for one thing," gasped Potter, "and—and, I believe, they don't make special constables of schoolboys, as a rule. You go, by all means, and tell us what they say when you come back."

"I suppose you're funk, that's the fact of the matter," said Coker scornfully. "Well, I'm going. I feel that it's up to me."

"May we come, Coker?" asked Harry Wharton meekly. "I should like to be a special constable."

"Take me, Coker," implored Bob Cherry. "I should awfully like to be a special constable."

"Lemme come, Coker," said Squiff. "I won't promise to swear; I'll leave you that little bit, but—"

Coker glared at the heroes of the Remove.

"Shut up, you cheeky fags! Do you want me to knock your heads together?"

"Yes!" said the Famous Five, with one voice.

"The yesfulness is terrific," added Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian member of the Remove. "Come onfully, my esteemed and ludicrous Coker!"

Coker never refused a challenge, and he never counted odds. He made a rush at the Famous Five, to sweep them off the balustrade at one fell swoop. In an instant the juniors closed round him, and Horace Coker found himself suddenly sitting on the steps, in a dazed and breathless state. Before he recovered, the chums of the Remove were sauntering away across the Close.

"Oh!" gasped Coker. "The cheeky young villains! Oh, my hat! I'll jolly well run them in, if they cheek me—when I'm a special constable!" Coker scrambled up and dusted down his trousers. "Look here, you pair of cackling duffers, are you coming?"

"Not this evening," chuckled Potter. "Tell us how you get on, and if they take you we'll join, too."

Horace Coker snorted and walked away towards the gates. The Fifth-Former had made up his mind, that was clear. If his study-mates refused to back him up in his new enterprise, he was going alone. Coker felt the call of duty to the service of his country, and he would not let the call pass unheeded.

"My hat!" gasped Potter. "He's really going."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Greene. "Ha, ha, ha!"

In about ten minutes nearly all Greyfriars knew that Coker of the Fifth was gone to Courtfield to be sworn in as a special constable. And quite an army of fellows were waiting for Coker to come back—Bob Cherry declared that it was up to the whole school to recognise Coker's patriotism, and give him an ovation—especially if he came back a full-fledged special constable. But it was generally agreed that that was a very big "if."

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Coker Surpasses Himself!

"SISTER ANNE—Sister Anne, do you see Coker coming?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Squiff, the Australian junior, was keeping watch in the road. The old gateway of Greyfriars was crowded with fellows. Harry Wharton & Co. had put off all other engagements to greet Coker when he came back from Courtfield.

They were keenly interested in Coker's new venture. They had supposed that they knew every kind of an ass Coker was. But Horace Coker was full of surprises. They had not suspected that he was this kind of an ass.

"He cometh!" called out Squiff.

There was a general crowding forward of the juniors. They all wanted to see Coker come back. Would he come with "pride in his port, defiance in his eye," as the poet expresses it—a full-blown special? It did not seem probable. The juniors suspected that Horace Coker had met with a slight disappointment in Courtfield, and that his valuable services on behalf of the King and country had been declined.

It needed only one look at Coker to ascertain that he wasn't a special. He came tramping along the road with

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his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and a frown upon his brow. He hardly saw the grinning crowd of juniors as he tramped up to the gates. He was deep in wrathful thought. But the juniors made their presence known through the medium of a howl of merriment. Then Coker stared at them.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Is it all right, Coker? Have they taken you on?"

"No!" snapped Coker.

"Perhaps they didn't like your swearing!" suggested Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But you don't mean to say that they declined?" exclaimed Peter Todd, with a look of great astonishment. "What were they thinking of, Coker?"

Coker gave a bitter smile.

"Don't ask me what they were thinking of," he said; "I don't believe they know themselves. How this country is to keep its end up against Germany I really don't know, with such blessed duffers in authority!"

And Coker snorted contemptuously. Apparently the Courtfield authorities considered that King and country were safe enough, unprotected by Coker.

"But did you tell them who you were?" said Todd, still greatly surprised. "Did you explain that you were Coker of the Fifth?"

"Of course I did!" snapped Coker.

Among Coker's many other great gifts was a complete inability to see when his leg was being pulled.

"Did you mention your Aunt Judy?" pursued Todd.

"My Aunt Judy! No. Why should I?"

"Ah, that's where you made a mistake!" said Todd, with a shake of his head. "You should have told them about your Aunt Judy and her umbrella. You remember how she came down here when you were in the Shell, and made the Head put you into the Fifth, by chasing him round his study with her brolly—"

"She didn't!" roared Coker.

"Well, that's how I heard it," said Todd. "Young Tubbs says he heard the Head shouting for help."

"You silly young ass—"

"You take my tip and start your Aunt Judy on them," said Todd. "When they see her and her umbrella they'll make you a special constable at once—an extra-special one if you like—"

Peter Todd had to dodge before he could get any further. Coker made a dive at him, but the active Peter eluded him, and Coker strode on into the gateway with a frowning brow, followed by a ripple of laughter.

"Poor old Coker," murmured Bob Cherry; "always putting his hoof into it! I should like to see Coker as a special constable, mounting guard over the village tuck-shop."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Potter and Greene were at tea in No. 5 in the Fifth Form quarters, when Horace Coker strode into the study. Potter and Greene greeted their distinguished study-mate with smiles. His expression was enough for them. It was only too clear that he had not been taken on as a special constable.

"Any luck?" asked Potter.

"No. They're all fools!"

"Too bad!" murmured Greene.

"All idiots!" said Coker.

"Never mind; have tea," said Potter. "There's a sardine left; it's a bit lonely."

"All thumping jossers!" said Coker. "Actually told me they didn't make schoolboys into special constables! Laughed!"

"Laughed!" said Potter. "Like their cheek, Coker. Something must have struck them as funny, I suppose. Now, I wonder what it was?"

"I wonder!" said Greene.

"Not that it makes any difference to me," said Coker; "I don't easily give up a good idea when I've taken the trouble to think it out. After all, I don't think much of those Courtfield special constables. Rather a dowdy lot, in fact. Look at that ass Howlett, the estate-agent, sticking outside the market as he does, looking like a born idiot, with the nippers chipping him. When I come to think of it, I've got a better wheeze."

"Going to have tea?"

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"Hang tea!"

"Well, we've really waited for you," said Potter amicably. Potter and Greene were in the unpleasant state known as stony, and their tea had been very meagre. They would have been very pleased to restore Coker to good-humour, and see the study table replenished out of his overflowing funds. "We've left you that sardine—"

"Bury it!"

"Well, it's nearly time it was buried," said Potter. "It's really too bad their nipping you in the bud like this, Coker, considering that the Zeppelins may come along zepping at any time, and then you would be very valuable. But let's have tea now."

"I'm thinking of that—"

"What—tea?"

"No, fathead! The Zeppelins. Special constables are needed—badly needed. The school ought to be guarded. We require a force on the spot. Suppose some beastly Huns landed in Pegg Bay—they might! They sneak out in their submarines, and they might land somewhere and burn the place before the Territorials could get over from Wapshot. I suppose old Tozer couldn't stop 'em. We need a force of special constables on the spot to run them in."

Potter and Greene stared at their chum. It was only too clear that some great scheme was working in Coker's mighty brain, but they could not guess what it was. They were wondering, too, if they were ever going to get any tea.

"You fellows will have to back me up, and we'll get all the Fifth into it," said Coker.

"Into what?"

"The Grexfriars Special Constables."

"The which?"

"As the official organisation hasn't brains enough to make use of really first-class material, I don't see why there shouldn't be an unofficial force."

"My hat!"

"Our duties will be to guard the school, to watch for German spies and arrest 'em, keep order generally, and deal with any Zeppelins if they come."

"How?"

Coker did not answer that question. He had not had time to think that bit out yet.

"It's a topping idea," he said—"simply topping! The Fifth Form Special Constables!"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Greene.

"I shall draw up rules for the organisation, and every constable will have a badge—an armlet," said Coker. "Truncheons will be provided by the commanding officer."

"Who'll be the commanding officer?"

"Me, of course. Brains will be required for that. I'll make you two fellows sergeants. I shall be inspector. Arm-badges and truncheons will be enough—special constables don't have uniforms. As soon as the force is formed, I shall review it in the Close. It will make the whole school feel safer."

Potter was about to remark that it would make the whole school feel like bursting their ribs; but he remembered that tea depended on Coker. So he said, in a tone of awe-stricken admiration, that it was just like Coker to think of a stunning idea like that. Coker nodded assent.

"Well, you see, I've given the subject a lot of thought," he explained. "At a time like this it's up to everybody to do his little bit. Tain't enough to wave a flag and howl Rule Britannia and send ninnepence to the funds. A fellow ought to do something. Just think of it! If a gang of filthy Huns got ashore and tried to burn down the school! They've got a special down on schools and libraries and cathedrals and things. And the spies, too! We know there was a German spy caught here; and the whole country simply swarms with 'em. Then, if any prisoners escape from the concentration camp at Wapshot, we could nail 'em. Man did escape once, and gave a lot of trouble. If we'd had our special constabulary going then we could have roped him in. You see, the idea is simply topping."

"Absolutely IT!" said Potter heartily. "What about tea?"

"We ought to celebrate an idea like that," said Greene.

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casually—"a sort of special feed in honour of the special constables."

"Well, that's not a bad wheeze," said Coker unsuspiciously. "We want a good many fellows to take it up—not much good having only us three. I want to get all the Fifth into it, and perhaps some of the bigger fellows in the Shell. The Sixth will be allowed to join if they behave themselves, and don't try to come the senior over their commanding officer. Of course, I shall keep the strictest discipline in my force. Any fellow who gets his ears up will be whopped on the spot. I can't say fairer than that."

"Ahem! We'll talk it all over—at tea."

"Better get to work recruiting first," said Coker briskly. "Every chap who's willing to join is to come to tea, and we'll discuss the plan of campaign. You fellows can help me recruit. Come on! Strike the iron while it's hot! There may be a German raid to-night, for all we know!"

Potter and Greene looked at one another. But the prospect of an extra-special feed decided them—they were hungry. So they marched forth with Coker to begin recruiting for the Fifth-Form Special Constabulary of Grexfriars.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Coker's Very Latest!

BILLY BUNTER rolled into No. 1 Study, where the Famous Five were at tea. Billy Bunter's fat face was expanded in a broad grin. A fat chuckle announced that he was in possession of an unusually good joke.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Nothing doing!" said Harry Wharton. "This isn't a loan office. Clear out!"

"I've come to tell you the joke," said Bunter indignantly. "It's the joke of the season—the very cream—Coker's latest! He, he, he!"

"Oh, we know Coker's latest!" said Sampson Quincey Ifley Field. "They put the lid on him at Courtfield."

"He, he, he! That isn't the latest. I've just heard it. I happened to hear 'em talking in the Fifth-Form passage. Blundell of the Fifth was nearly killing himself with laughing. He, he, he!"

"Well?"

"I'll try that cake," said Bunter, suiting the action to the word. "Any more tea in that pot?"

"Yes," growled Nugent. "It's staying there."

"Oh, really, Nugent! I've taken the trouble to come here and tell you the latest joke—"

"Well, what is it?" demanded Bob Cherry. The Famous Five were quite keen to know what was Coker's latest.

"Am I going to have any tea?"

Nugent poured out the tea.

"Thanks, Franky!" said Bunter, blinking at him through his big spectacles. "Four lumps of sugar, please, and plenty of milk. You don't mind if I have some more of this cake? It's rather good."

"What about Coker, my esteemed fat Bunter?" demanded Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"He, he, he!" Bunter almost choked over the cake. "Oh, it's the giddy cream! He's—he, he, he—he's—he, he, he!"

"What is he doing, fathead?"

"He's—he, he, he!—recruiting—he, he, he!"

"Recruiting!" exclaimed the Famous Five, with one voice.

"Yes. He, he, he!"

"Rats! Bosh! How could Coker recruit? Let that cake alone!"

"Honest Injun!" said Bunter, still operating on the cake, which was disappearing at a record rate. "He's recruiting for the special constables."

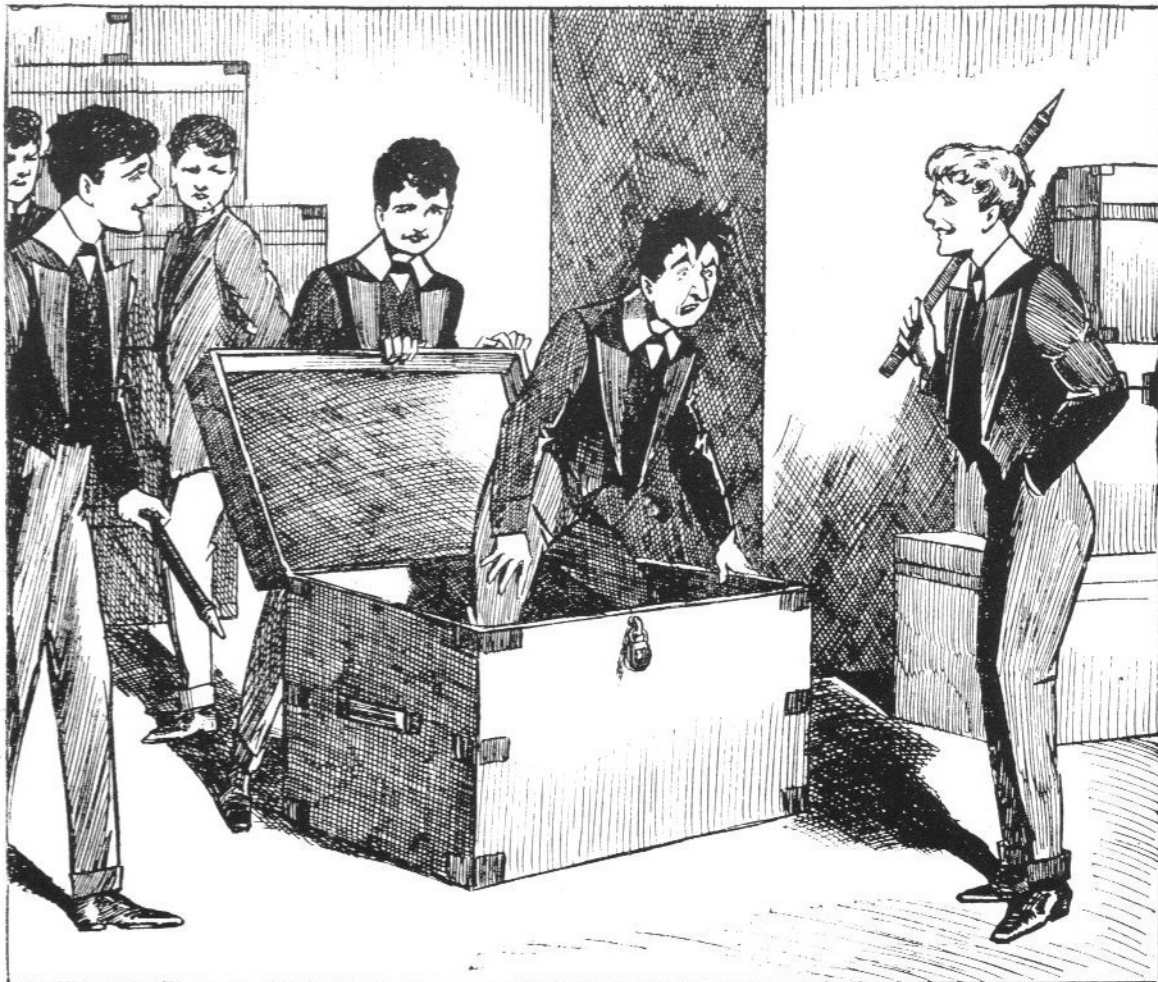
"Where?"

"In the Fifth."

"Wha-a-a-t!"

"The Coker specials—he, he, he! He's starting a force of Grexfriars special constables—he, he, he!—and he's captain—he, he, he!"

"Oh, my hat!"



Wharton threw up the lid of the big trunk. A tousled head and a scarlet face rose into view, and there was a yell. "Fishy!" Fishy was yelling, too. "Ow! Mercy! I guess I'm a neutral! You can't shoot a free American citizen! I ain't a Britisher—I'm a neutral!" (See Chapter 13.)

"Great Tipperary!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Study No. 1 rang with merriment. Coker was evidently determined to be a special constable; and if the powers that be would not appoint him, he was going to appoint himself. Coker was a sticker!

"Oh, my aunt!" murmured Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "That news is worth a cake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But is it true?" said Wharton.

"Honest Injun!" repeated Bunter. "I heard Blundell telling Bland, and they were cackling like anything. But it's catching on, all the same. Potter and Greene and Fitzgerald and Smith major and Grundy are in it already. They're going to have truncheons and a badge. He, he, he!"

"But—but what—why——"

"Coker's standing a special feed to all who enlist——"

"Oh!" said Bob Cherry. "That accounts for the milk in the cocoanut. Coker will get plenty of recruits for the feed, anyway!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coker's drawing up a set of rules," went on Billy Bunter. "He's going to be commander-in-chief, and they're going to arrest German spies and Zeppelins——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"And there's going to be a review in the Close to-morrow afternoon——"

"Oh, my hat!" said Squiff. "That will be worth seeing. Coker will get a good audience, at any rate."

"Only the Fifth in it?" asked Nugent.

"Coker's going to get recruits from the other Forms—he, he, he!—if they'll come. Only big chaps and good fighting men admitted! He, he, he!"

"A chance for little us!" grinned Squiff.

"Chance for Bunter," said Bob Cherry solemnly. "If there's a stunning feed for all recruits, Bunter, you're wasting time on the last fragment of that cake. Why don't you join Coker's army?"

Billy Bunter started. He had not thought of that.

"You're a big fellow—sideways, at least," went on Bob encouragingly; "and you're a tremendous fighting man. Didn't you lick Fishy the other day? You could capture a German spy—if he were bound hand and foot and blindfolded. Go and join before the list closes."

"There's the feed, anyway," said Wharton. "You could distinguish yourself as a special feeder, if not a special constable, Bunter."

"My hat!" said Bunter. "Blessed if I don't join! Coker will have to make it worth the fellows' while, or they won't keep it up. If he has a route-march and a picnic afterwards at the end of it, and feeds in the

study after reviews, and so on, it's worth while to join. Blessed if I don't!"

"Hurry up, and get in early before the rush," advised Squiff. "There'll soon be standing room only in Coker's study."

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study in great haste. Coker's study was a land of plenty—a land flowing with milk and honey—owing to the whacking remittances Horace received so frequently from his affectionate Aunt Judy. To be "on" in that scene it was worth while to join the Fifth-Form Special Constables, or any other force of constabulary in the kingdom. The Owl of the Remove lost no time.

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled as the fat junior rolled out. Whatever kind of recruits Coker obtained for his new army, he was not likely to jump at Billy Bunter—unless it was for the purpose of pitching him out of his study.

The Famous Five went on with their tea; and about a quarter of an hour later Fisher T. Fish looked in, grinning. The news of Coker's specials was evidently spreading.

"You fellows coming?" asked Fish.

"Whither?" asked Squiff.

"You've heard of Coker's dodge?"

"Ha, ha—yes!"

"I guess I'm joining," said the Yankee junior. "I guess it's a good thing."

"You're only a neutral. Neutrals can't become special constables," grinned Nugent.

"I guess they can—Coker's sort of specials! There's a whacking feed in his study, and money is tight. I'm joining for the feed. I guess you fellows would be wise to come along; Coker's simply rolling in spondulics, and the feed will be a regular corker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Waal, are you galoots coming?"

"I guess not," grinned Bob Cherry. "I calculate we'll wait and see how you galoots get off, Fishy."

Fisher T. Fish hurried away. The chums of the Remove grinned. Squiff, however, was soon looking thoughtful. The active brain of the Australian junior was working.

"Coker will get his force," said Squiff. "Some of the chaps will join for the feed, and some for the fun, and there will be a force—of sorts. Now, my idea is that we can't let Horace get all the limelight in this way. If there's a review of the Fifth-Form Special Constables to-morrow, there ought to be another review, of—"

"Of what?"

"The Remove Extra-special Constables."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We can make badges quite as well as Coker can," argued Squiff. "I think our badge ought to be worn round the leg instead of the arm—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And nice paper cocked hats, like the clowns wear in the circus, would be effective—"

"Oh, my hat!" gurgled Bob Cherry.

"And, as we are short of truncheons, cricket-stumps or pickers would do, and would come in useful if the Coker constables cut up rusty!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Already there were rivals in the field. And the chums of the Remove discussed Squiff's idea with great keenness, and while Coker was planning the arrangements for the special constables, Harry Wharton & Co. were equally busy in forming the rival body—the extra-special constables.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Recruits!

HORACE COKER was in his study, with a thoughtful frown on his face, a stump of pencil in his hand, and a sheet of imput paper before him. Coker was very busy. Potter and Greene were busy, too—shopping in the tuckshop, on Coker's account, and giving orders that made Mrs. Mimble open her eyes wide. Coker was not the kind of fellow to spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar. He had plenty of money, and, as he loftily announced, he was willing to spend it to the last half-

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crown in the service of his country. That the Coker specials would perform valuable services for their country there was not the slightest doubt; as the gentleman in the "Mikado" remarks, "Of that there wasn't a shadow of doubt, no possible probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever!"

Coker was prepared to feed his constables up to the chin, if they on their side were prepared to do their duty for King and country. And they were—so long as they were fed up to the chin, at least.

Already, in his mind's eye, Coker saw himself bagging German spies galore and capturing Zeppelins by the gross. He wondered how it was that this nobby idea had never occurred to him before. That such a force was needed was proved by the fact that a raiding Zeppelin had appeared in that part of the country. Suppose—it was possible, if not probable—that a gang of Huns should land for a raid on the coast; there would be panic, of course, and Horace Coker—always in his mind's eye—saw himself rising to the occasion; quelling the panic, riding the storm, as it were, bringing order out of chaos by the sheer force of his personality, and by means of that splendid organisation—the Greyfriars Special Constables!

He was very busy now drawing up the rules. Of course, rules were needed. There would have to be discipline—lots of discipline. Coker's authority would have to be unquestioned. He would give his orders, guided by the light that was in him. For the constables, it was a case of "theirs not to reason why, theirs not to make reply, theirs but to do and die!" That had to be understood at the start.

So Coker drew up his rules with great thoughtfulness and care, while he waited for Potter and Greene to come in with the tuck—the tuck to be followed by the recruits. Quite a crowd of fellows were coming to the feed—even Hobson of the Shell had forgotten his old feud with Coker, and joined. The accommodation in Coker's study was likely to be taxed to its utmost.

The list of rules was already growing under Coker's hand.

Rule 1. All orders to be obeyed without any rot.

Rule 2. Any fellow disobeying orders to be immediately whopped.

Rule 3. Revues to be held every half-holiday, under charge of Captain Horace Coker, and to be followed by a meeting in Coker's study. Refreshments.

Rule 4. Root marching when ordered by Coker. Refreshments.

Rule 5. In case of the enemy landing, meshures to be taken by Horace Coker for dealing with them. Meshures to be taken to quell any panick at once, orders being given by Horace Coker.

Rule 6. In case of a Zepelin appearing in the offing, meshures for seeing same to be taken, under orders from Horace Coker.

Rule 7. Badges to be worn on the arm when on duty, same to be supplied by the commanding officer, Horace Coker, free and gratis for nothing.

Rule 8. Special constables to be armed with truncheons, which will be supplied by the commanding officer, Horace Coker, on same terms as above.

Horace surveyed that list of rules with considerable satisfaction. He had expended a good deal of brain power on those rules, and, really, they seemed to meet the case very nicely. No member of the Greyfriars Special Constables could have been in doubt, after reading those rules, that Horace Coker was in command, with the most full and ample authority.

After a little more thought Coker added another rule.

Rule 9. Further rules will be added as required, by Horace Coker, according to his own judgement.

Coker was admiring his handiwork, with complete satisfaction, when footsteps came along the passage. Coker looked up, expecting to see his chums. But it was a round, fat face, adorned with a large pair of spectacles, that looked in. Coker raised his hand commandingly.

"Cut off, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter did not cut off. He rolled in, blinking at Coker.

"It's all right—"

"Travel along, I tell you!"

"I've come to join."

"Eh?"

"I'm going to be a Special Coker Constable," explained Bunter. "Where's the feed?"

Coker snorted.

"We don't want fat owls in our force, you silly tub!" he said. "Cut off, and don't be funny!"

"Oh, really, Coker! I'm a recruit, you know."

Potter and Greene came into the study, laden with packages. Bunter's round eyes glistened behind his glasses at the sight of them.

"Hallo! What's that barrel rolled in here for?" asked Potter.

"Oh, really, Potter! I'm going to join."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at!" howled Bunter. "I'm going to be one of the specials. I'll do the cooking for you, if you like."

"Kick him out!" said Coker.

"I say, Coker, I should be awfully useful, you know," urged Bunter. "I'll stick to you through thick and thin—"

"Stick to the grub, more likely," said Potter. "Outside!"

"Oh, really—— I say, you fellows—— Oh, crumbs! Yah!"

The new recruit was helped out of the study. He shook a fat fist at the Fifth-Formers, and rolled away disconsolately. There was no room for William George Bunter in Coker's new army.

Fitzgerald and Smith major and Grundy and several other fellows arrived, and Hobson of the Shell. There was soon a goodly crowd in Coker's study. Coker fastened up the sheet of rules on the wall, while Potter and Greene unpacked the tuck and prepared tea. The Fifth-Formers gazed in some surprise at the list of rules.

"What's that, Coker darling?" inquired Fitzgerald.

"Rules," said Coker.

"Oh, the rules of the game?" asked Smith major.

"It isn't a game, Smith major. They're the rules of the Greyfriars Special Constables," said Coker. "You fellows had better take copies, or learn them by heart."

"Ahem! I'll learn them by heart," said Grundy, with a wink at the other recruits. "I didn't know you were a member of the New Spelling Society, Coker."

"I'm not," said Coker.

"Oh, I thought you were, by the orthography!" said Grundy blandly. "My mistake. I say, ought there not to be some instructions, as well as rules? About collaring the Zeppelins, for instance? I've never collared a Zeppelin yet, and I don't know how it's done."

"I shall give orders when the occasion arises," said Coker, with dignity. "Hallo! What does that Fourth-Form kid want?"

Wilkinson of the Fourth looked in.

"I've come to join!" he announced. "My hat, that cake looks ripping! You can put my name down, Coker."

"I'll put you down, if you don't clear off!" growled Coker. "Nobody under the Shell is allowed in the force."

"What rot! Couldn't you make a Veteran Reserve, and put us in that?" asked Wilkinson.

"Get out!" roared Coker.

Wilkinson sniffed.

"Well, I was only after the feed, if you want to know," he remarked, with great frankness; "as for your silly special constables, I wouldn't be found dead along with em!"

And Wilkinson shot along the passage before Coker could reach him. Horace Coker frowned.

"We shall have to stop those blessed fags applying for admission," he said. "It makes the whole thing absurd."

Fitzgerald chuckled.

"Put 'em through a medical examination," he suggested. "Recruits ought to go through a medical examination. Lave it to me!"

"I don't want any jokes in connection with my special constables, Fitz."

"Lave it to me, dear boy, and I'll be as sober as a judge," said Fitzgerald, with a wave of the hand. "Holy Moses, that feed looks simply topping! Coker, old man, sure, I'd follow ye to death or glory, or both, if you keep this up."

"Hear, hear!" said the special constables heartily.

"Pile in!" said Coker.

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ONE
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The recruits sat down round the table, or wherever they could find anything to sit on, and piled in with great gusto. There was no doubt that it was a topping feed, and if such feasts were to be repeated on the occasion of every review and "root" march, it was probable that Coker's followers would be extremely loyal. After all, as Fitzgerald privately remarked, it would be a game, and would fill up leisure hours until cricket started in earnest. Horace Coker looked upon it as anything but a game. From the Coker point of view, it was a deadly serious business. But, of course, it was possible for opinions to differ on that point.

The feed was going strong when there was a tap at the door, and Fisher T. Fish of the Remove looked in. Fish's eyes glittered at the sight of the festive board. He had missed tea in Hall, and he was stony. He was prepared to join anybody or anything just then.

"I guess I've looked in to see about this new splendid idea of yours, Coker," said the American junior affably. "You'll excuse me remarking it, but it is simply a corker. I guess it puts the lid right on."

Coker had been about to direct Fisher T. Fish to take himself off, but the keen Yankee junior's "soft sawder" disarmed him.

"Sorry, Fishy," he said, quite politely; "but no juniors are allowed in our ranks."

"Oh, I guess you can make an exception for me," said Fish, hungrily eyeing the table. "I guess you want a fellow about my size, Coker—just a few. I guess I'm the real white article, you know—the very galoot you've been looking for."

"Sorry!"

"Oh, think again!" urged Fish. He insinuated himself into the study. He was prepared to butter up Coker to any extent. A "galoot" couldn't be particular when he was stony. And, as Fishy would have expressed it, he was so hard up that if Buckingham Palace had been for sale for ten cents, he hadn't sufficient durosks to purchase the door-knob. So he was not likely to let Coker's feed escape him if he could help it.

"You see, you want a galoot with some brains in this hyer enterprise," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess you'll let me in Coker."

Fitzgerald rose to his feet.

"Lave it to me, Coker," he said. "No reason why Fishy shouldn't join if he's medically fit. Trot in, Fishy!"

Fisher T. Fish trotted in with great satisfaction. Fitzgerald's face was as grave as that of a judge on the bench; and Fishy, with all his Transatlantic cuteness, did not suspect that the Irish senior was pulling his leg. Fitzgerald closed the door of the study, and turned to Fisher T. Fish, and the rest of the special constables looked on, subduing their smiles.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Medically Examined!

HORACE COKER looked a little grave. He was not quite sure whether these proceedings of a humorous nature did not cast some reflection upon the seriousness of the great idea. It would never do for Coker's Special Constabulary to be supposed to be a humorous concern. However, he gave Fitzgerald his head.

Fitzgerald fixed a serious and inquiring look upon Fisher T. Fish. The Yankee junior was eyeing the table. "Look at me, recruit!" said Fitzgerald. "Fix your eyes on me. I am the medical examiner. My uncle is a doctor, so I know all about it. Are you cross-eyed?"

"Nope."

"It seems to me that your eyes are turned in the direction of the grub, though you are looking at me. You must be cross-eyed."

"I'm not!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "And I guess I don't see any reason for a medical examination."

"We can't admit the physically unfit, you young duffer! How old are you?"

"Nearly fifteen," growled Fish.

"Where were you born?"

"Noo York."

"Are your lungs, heart, and head quite sound?"

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"Yep."
 "No madness in the family?"
 "Nope."
 "Then appearances are deceptive," said Fitzgerald.
 "However, we are not going to reject you on mere appearances. Open your jacket."

Fish opened his jacket. Fitzgerald placed the end of a ruler over his heart and listened very carefully at the end of the ruler.

"Say ninety-nine," he commanded.

"Look hyer—"

"Say ninety-nine."

"Ninety-nine," growled Fisher T. Fish.

"Louder."

"Ninety-nine!"

"Louder, please!"

"NINETY-NINE!" howled Fish.

Fitzgerald shook his head.

"Very wheezy," he remarked. "Now say a hundred and ninety-nine."

"Doctors don't make you say that, I guess."

"This doctor does. The examination for the Coker Special Constables is very strict. Only the best men admitted. Now, then."

"Hundred and ninety-nine," grunted Fish.

"Now say one thousand one hundred and ninety-nine."

"I guess—"

"Buck up! You're wasting the time of the court."

"One thousand one hundred and ninety-nine!" howled Fish.

Fitzgerald laid down the ruler and shook his head solemnly.

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that your lungs are affected," he said, "but I have my doubts—I have my doubts. Now I must try your head."

"My cabeza's all right."

Fitzgerald, unheeding, put the ruler to Fish's head and listened.

"Say prancing Prussian pigs purloined papa's peppery pickles," he directed.

"Prancing Prussian pigs purloined papa's peppery pickles!" snorted Fisher T. Fish.

"I'm affreez there's no doubt of it," said the medical examiner.

"No doubt of what, you jay?"

"The head is affected," said Fitzgerald.

"Why, you—you galoot—"

"Very weak," said Fitzgerald—"very weak indeed! Liable to fail entirely under a sudden strain. Rejected."

"Look hyer, I guess I'm as fit as a fiddle, and my cabeza is the only one at Greyfriars with any brains in it!" said Fisher T. Fish indignantly.

"Are you willing to be inoculated?" demanded Fitzgerald.

"Nope."

"Rejected."

"I guess inoculation isn't compulsory, you know," said Fisher T. Fish—"not even in the Army."

"It isn't compulsory, but you have to be done," explained Fitzgerald. "That's the rule in the Army, and the rule in Coker's Special Constabulary. If you like to be done, all serene—otherwise, there's the door!"

"But you can't inoculate, you jay!"

"Didn't I tell you my uncle was a doctor? You lave it to me."

"Look hyer—"

"Rejected!" said Fitzgerald, with a wave of the hand. "Get out! I can't waste time on you. I've got a lot of recruits to see, and my time's valuable."

Fisher T. Fish cast a longing glance at the table.

"I—I guess I'll be done," he said.

"Oh, good! Shows you're plucky," said Fitzgerald. "It won't take long. You can be inoculated against anything in these days. It used to be only small-pox; but, bless you, the medical profession have been bucking up, and they've changed all that. You can be inoculated

now against typhoid, battle, murder, and sudden death—against measles, mumps, black-eyes, and bankruptcy. Just a prick in the arm—only knocks you up for twenty-four hours or so—and, if you recover, you're safe from disease, dumplings, and doctors—the three most fatal complaints of modern times! Ready?"

"Yep."

Fisher T. Fish might be an ass, but he knew very well that there was no real inoculation to be feared in Coker's study, so he was prepared to let Fitzgerald go ahead. He didn't mind the Fifth Formers having their little joke so long as he had a big feed.

"Roll up your sleeve," said Fitzgerald.

Fish rolled up his sleeve.

"Hold him, Grundy and Potter, in case he struggles!"

"Certainly."

"Hyer, I say—"

Grundy and Potter held Fisher T. Fish firmly. There was no escape for him now, whatever the inoculation might be like. Fitzgerald opened a large pocket-knife. Fisher T. Fish eyed it with alarm.

"Hyer, you're not going to jab that into me!" he howled.

"I've forgotten my lancet," said Fitzgerald. "This is all right. I only have to make a hole and shove something in—any old thing will do! I always use ink!"

"You—you dangerous mugwump!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish, beginning to struggle. "If you shove any ink into my arm—"

"This fear of inoculation is extraordinary," said Fitzgerald, in quite the manner of a medical man. "Considering the vast benefits it has brought to humanity, it is amazing that the ignorant jib against it in this way. Think, you ignorant person, once you are inoculated, you are perfectly safe, even if a bomb dropped from a Zeppelin right on your head. You can be inoculated against bombs now! it's the latest thing. If you live in a seaside resort, you can be inoculated against bombardment. In fact, you pays your money and you takes your choice, only there's nothing to pay in this case. This triumph of medical genius is bestowed free of charge. Stop wriggling, you young ass! Do you wish to risk carrying infection all over the country by refusing this splendid safeguard against anything and everything?"

"Lemme go, you villain—"

"Hold him!" said Fitzgerald. "Having gone so far we must finish the job, even if we reject the recruit afterwards. We allow you a certain range of choice, Fish. Do you prefer to be done with red ink or black ink?"

"Yow! You mad idiot—"

"Blindfold him," said Fitzgerald. "He's afraid of the sight of blood. I shall not shed more than about a gallon. Put this bag over his head."

"Yow-ow! Help!"

Fisher T. Fish's head disappeared into the bag. The Yankee junior struggled furiously, but Potter and Grundy held him tight. Fitzgerald poked the knife against his bare arm, and Fish gave a muffled howl.

Fitzgerald made a sign to Greene, who picked up the teapot and started trickling tea into a basin. Fisher T. Fish heard the trickle, and he shuddered with horror.

"Hold the basin well under his arm," directed Fitzgerald. "Don't spill a lot of blood on the carpet; we don't want to spoil Coker's carpet. My hat, how it's flowing! Sure, I shouldn't have thought that skinny fag was so full of it! Keep still, Fish. If you wriggle like that, you'll make the blood flow too fast, and you may perish from loss of gore. Faith, I wonder whether I've touched an artery!"

Trickle, trickle, trickle went the tea into the basin. As Fisher T. Fish could see nothing but the dark inside of the bag, he was naturally alarmed. His skin was not cut at all, as a matter of fact, but he had felt the point of the knife on it, and he had no doubt whatever that there was a huge gash.

"Ought you to have made that cut an inch deep, Fitz?" asked Potter.

"Oh, a good inch!" said Fitzgerald.

"Great snakes!" wailed Fisher T. Fish, inside the bag. "Lemme go! An inch deep. You villain, you're bleeding me to death!"

"Have a little pluck, kid. You can't be a special

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Grundy and Potter held Fisher T. Fish firmly. There was no escape for him now, whatever the inoculation might be like. Fitzgerald opened a large pocket-knife. Fisher T. Fish eyed it with alarm. "Hyer, you're not going to jab that into me!" he howled. (See Chapter 5.)

constable without a little pluck. Don't let that blood flow over the carpet, Greene."

"Better get another basin," said Greene; "this one only holds a pint."

"Hand up another basin, Smith!"

"Here you are!"

"Blessed if I don't think I must have touched an artery, after all!" said Fitzgerald, in a thoughtful tone. "Like a blessed stuck pig, isn't he? Still, it will stop when I shove the ink in. The question is, whether I'd better use ink or gum. Keep that basin steady!"

The teapot went on trickling, and Fisher T. Fish was almost fainting with terror by this time. If he had lost all the blood that the trickling seemed to indicate, there was no doubt that an artery had been touched. So powerful is imagination, that Fish, believing that he was bleeding profusely, already felt a faintness coming over him. He made one more effort to escape, and yelled for help.

"Murder! Help! Fire! Yow! Help, help!" came in muffled tones from the inside of the bag.

Fitzgerald made a sign, and the Fifth-Formers released the Yankee junior. Fisher T. Fish staggered. He tore the bag from his head, gasping.

"Ow! You mugwumps! Oh, you dangerous lunatics!"

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I guess I'm bleeding to death! I'll call in the police about this! Ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tain't a laughing matter, you jays!" shrieked Fish. "I've lost about a gallon of blood. I feel faint all over! Ow!"

The Fifth-Formers yelled with laughter.

"I guess I'm going straight to Mr. Quelch to show him my arm!" yelled Fish. "I guess I'll teach you to play dangerous tricks like this! Look at my arm! Why—what—" Fisher T. Fish stuttered, as he looked at his arm him-self.

There was no trace of a wound upon it. He blinked at the basin, which was half-full of cold tea, and simply gasped.

"Why, you—you mugwumps! Then you were only pulling my leg—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fish grinned feebly. He still had an eye on the feed.

"I—I guess I can take a joke," he stuttered. "I—I— It's funny! Ha, ha, ha! Now I'm a member of the special constables. I guess I'll have tea!"

"You've guessed wrong," chuckled Fitzgerald; "you haven't been inoculated. As you make such a fuss about

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it, I decline to go through with the operation. You are rejected. Get out!"

"I guess—"

"This isn't a guessing competition. Get out!"

"Look hyer—"

"Well, if you will have it," said Fitzgerald, taking up the knife. "Mind, no yelling this time. I was only testing you before, but now I'm going to inoculate you in real earnest. Hold him—"

Fish did not wait to be held. He tore open the door and scooted from the study, leaving the Fifth-Formers roaring with laughter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Specials!

THE next day there was a half-holiday, and Coker was very busy.

So were Harry Wharton & Co.

The early part of the afternoon was spent by Coker in the town of Courtfield. He had purchases to make at the Emporium. All the appurtenances of the Coker constables were to be provided by Coker, as he stated in the rules, "free and gratis for nothing." It was left to Coker to do the shopping, as well as to pay for it.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not trouble to do any shopping for the Extra-special Constables of the Remove. Money was tight—and, besides, they could depend upon their own efforts. They were very busy in No. 1 Study while Coker was busy in Courtfield. A large number of the Removites had entered into the scheme with great delight, especially Fisher T. Fish, who was keen to avenge his rejection from the ranks of the constables by hurling ridicule upon the constabulary.

When Coker came back, he called a meeting of the constables in his study. Nearly all the Fifth had enrolled themselves now. Some of them thought it was a good idea, if only Coker could be prevailed upon to resign the captaincy. Others thought it would be fun, anyway. And no one was blind to the advantage of picking up stunning fees for nothing.

Probably that was the greatest inducement. Coker did things with a lavish hand, and in his study the horn of plenty did not cease to flow. If that cornucopia had run dry, it was possible that the constabulary would have fallen off, too. But Coker was in great funds, and the special constables were in great form.

There was a round dozen of them—a force big enough, in Coker's opinion, to give any number of German raiders fits. They came into the study with much curiosity to see Coker's new purchases.

The purchases were piled on the table. There were a dozen stout sticks—Coker not having been able to obtain real truncheons at a short notice. There were a dozen belts, to which the sticks were to be attached. And there were a dozen armlets, somewhat like Red Cross armlets, but instead of a red cross, they bore an inscription of initials—

"G. S. C."

The initials, of course, stood for "Greyfriars Special Constables."

"You shove these on your arms," said Coker. "Look quite business-like—what?"

"Oh, ripping!" said Potter.

The special constables put on the armlets.

Then Coker handed out the belts, which were buckled on, with the thick sticks slung to them.

Coker & Co. were in warlike array now.

"Jolly well wish we could fall in with some Germans now!" said Coker regretfully. "But they keep on gassing about coming, and they never come."

"Too late for them now," said Fitzgerald. "The giddy Kaiser has left it too long. England is now prepared!" Coker glared.

"If you are going to be funny, Fitzgerald—"

"Troth, and it's sayrious I am!" said Fitzgerald. "Sure I'd run Kaiser Bill in, meself, if he had the cheek to come here now! But he won't! Fitzgerald shook his head. "You know what a stunning spy system those putrid Prussians have. They'll soon get to know this. In twenty-four hours all Germany will know about the Greyfriars Special Constables. And the Kaiser will understand

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that he's left it too late! I can see him gnashing his teeth—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, what are you up to, Coker?" asked Fitzgerald, as Coker drew a stump of pencil from his pocket and approached the sheet of rules that ornamented the study wall.

"Putting in a new rule," said Coker grimly. "Better read it."

The heroes of the Fifth read the new rule. It ran:

Rule 10. Any silly idiot cracking jokes while on duty is to be scragged on the spot. By order of Horace Coker.

"Now, come on!" said Coker. "Mind, all those rules have got to be kept. Punishment is handed out by the commander-in-chief, with his club, on the spot. Follow your leader!"

Coker led his flock from the study.

The sight of a dozen fellows marching downstairs with armlets, belts, and clubs naturally attracted a good deal of attention. Wingate and Courtney of the Sixth, who were chatting in the hall, left off chatting, and gazed at Coker & Co. in great astonishment.

"Hallo! What's the little game?" demanded Wingate.

Coker eyed the captain of Greyfriars haughtily.

"It isn't a game," he said coldly.

"Sure, it's awfully sayrious," said Fitzgerald. "I don't see what you gossoons are laughing at."

"But—but what—" gasped Wingate.

"We are the Greyfriars Special Constables," explained Coker.

"The—the what?" yelled Courtney.

"Greyfriars Special Constables, enrolled by me. The Sixth are admitted," said Coker. "We shall be glad to welcome you as members. Of course, it will have to be understood that you don't come the prefect while on duty. We shouldn't stand that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, Wingate?"

"But—but what are you going to do?" demanded Wingate, without replying to the question. "Arrest the fags?"

"We are going to keep guard against Zeppelin raids—"

"Oh!"

"Run down German spies and capture them—"

"Ah!"

"Look out for secret wireless installations, that are used for sending information to Berlin."

"Um!"

"In case of a landing of the enemy, we are going to oppose him and drive him off, if possible."

"If possible! Oh!"

"Anyway, we shall hold the fort till reinforcements arrive. At present we have no official recognition. All the officials in this country are silly idiots, excepting Kitchener. But when we have done really good service the official recognition will come along all right. If we capture dangerous German spies, even the War Office will wake up and see that we are worthy of recognition."

"B-b-but where are the German spies?"

"Pooh! There are lots and lots about!" said Coker. "They flash lights to the Zeppelins, and give signals to the raiders, when they come to shell the bathing-machines. We shall probably catch them in the act one of these times. Then there are the naturalised Germans. We're going to keep an eye on them. The Home Office is a jolly good deal too easy with naturalised Germans. Of course, they get naturalised so as to be able to spy more easily. I shan't have any mercy on them."

"Oh, my hat!"

"If you'd like to join, Wingate—"

"Not this afternoon, thanks!"

"Then you can go and eat coke! Lucky for Greyfriars some of us have got some pluck!" said Coker.

"Why, you silly ass—"

"Silence! You're not allowed to call a special constable names—you may get run in," said Coker. "Get out of the way."

"Why, I'll—"

"March!" said Coker.

Wingate and Courtney, to their astonishment, were shoved out of the way, and the special constables marched

on. The two prefects glared after them in great wrath. Prefects were awfully important personages—but apparently Coker did not consider them so important as special constables.

The specials marched out into the Close, where they were greeted by a cheer. A horde of fags gathered round to stare at them.

"Make way!" shouted Coker.

"Oh, my eye!" said Tubb of the Third. "Walk up, gents! This is better than a cinema! Ow! Leggo my ear, Coker, you beast!"

Tubb rubbed his ear and howled as the constables marched on. Grinning youths who came too close were rapped by the constabular batons, and there were more howls. The Fifth-Formers were not disposed to be grinned at by fags. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, met the party in the Close, and he stared at the armlets, the belts, and the clubs.

"Dear me," said Mr. Prout, "whatever does this mean, Coker?"

"It's a review of the Greyfriars Special Constables, sir," said Coker proudly. "We're training ready for the Germans, sir. Would you like to witness the review?"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Prout, in astonishment. "This is—is extraordinary! What a very extraordinary idea, Coker!"

Mr. Prout did not stay to witness the review.

Coker formed up his men in the close. At a respectful distance—for fear of the constabular clubs—a crowd gathered to watch them. Harry Wharton & Co. were not visible in the crowd. They were busy elsewhere.

"Now line up, and look alive!" said Coker. "Form in line! Hold up your chest, Greene! Don't hang about like a sack of coke!"

"Why——" began Greene indignantly.

"Don't jaw in the ranks! Right wheel!"

The special constables right-wheeled.

"As you were!"

Tramp! Tramp!

"March!" said Coker. "Put your beef into it! Left—right, left—right! Are you trying to tie your silly legs into a knot, Potter?"

"Never mind my legs!" growled Potter.

"What are you grinning at, Fitzgerald?"

"Was I grinning, bedad?"

"Remember Rule 10, Constable Fitzgerald. This is a serious matter. Now then, get a move on you! Left—right—left——"

A sudden yell from the fags in the distance made Coker look round. He stared—and the special constables stared. The sight that dawned upon the eyes of Horace Coker made him turn almost purple with indignation.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Extra-Specials!

FORTH from the School House came another party of twelve, marching in order with solemn faces. They had bands round their right legs—they could hardly be called armlets, as they were worn on the leg—perhaps leglets was the right term. On the leglets, so to call them, were the initials "G.E.S.C." On their heads they wore paper cocked hats, of the style made familiar by clowns in the circus ring. In their hands they carried cricket stumps, sloping over the shoulder, like rifles.

Coker stared at them petrified.

That the young rascals of the Remove would dare to parody his constabulary force in this manner was almost incredible. But evidently they had done it.

Not that the Remove party bestowed any attention upon the Coker crowd. They marched along solemnly, unmoved by the shriek of laughter that had greeted their appearance, and lined up opposite the special constables. Then Wharton proceeded to put them through their paces.

"Tenshun!"

The Remove band came to attention.

"Right wheel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Left wheel! Both at once! Look alive!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My—my only hat!" gasped Coker. "The cheeky young scoundrels! This is what they call a jape, I suppose! My word!"

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ONE
PENNY.

Some of the Fifth Form special constables were grinning. But Coker was not grinning. His brow was black with wrath.

He strode away towards the Removees. Wharton did not seem to see him coming. He continued to rap out orders in the gruff voice and manner of a drill-sergeant, and the juniors continued to go through extraordinary evolutions. Horace Coker grasped Wharton by the shoulder.

"Hallo!" said Wharton, looking round. "Don't interrupt, Coker. Can't you see we're busy?"

"What are you up to?" roared Coker.

"Eh? This is a review."

"The reviewfulness is terrific, my esteemed Coker," came a voice from the Remove ranks.

"You young sweep!" shouted Coker. "What do you mean? What are those young asses got up like that for?"

Wharton waved his hand.

"Get away, Coker! Don't interrupt the review of the Greyfriars Extra-Special Constables!"

"The—the what?"

"Can't you see the leglets?" demanded Wharton.

"The what?" shrieked Coker.

"The leglets. Being worn on the leg, they are called leglets. Can't you read? 'G.E.S.C.' stands for 'Greyfriars Extra-Special Constables.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky little beast!" roared Coker. "I'll give you extra-special constables! I—I'll pulverise you!"

"Shush! Get off the grass. You're interrupting the review."

"Go away, Coker," shouted the extra-special constables. "Run away and play!"

Coker was almost choking with fury.

To have the great organisation of the Greyfriars Special Constables brought into ridicule in this manner was too much! It was past the limit. Words failed Coker, he proceeded to action. He simply hurled himself upon Wharton.

"Rescue!" yelled Wharton. "Extra-Special Constables to the rescue!"

"Pile in!"

"Hooray!"

The extra-special constables rushed upon Coker and dragged him off the captain of the Remove. Coker struggled furiously, but the extra-specials were too much for him. He was bumped down on the cold, unsympathetic ground, roaring. Then Wharton set his collar straight, and the extra-specials fell into line, and the review proceeded.

All the spectators were shrieking by this time. Coker staggered to his feet, and limped away towards his followers.

The specials were looking as if they would like to disappear. They were more keenly sensitive to ridicule than their leader. Even the great feast that was to follow the review did not tempt them to go through with it, with that ridiculous body of extra-specials mimicking their evolutions.

"I say, let's get off!" murmured Hobson.

Coker came up gasping.

"You see those young villains?" he stuttered.

"Yes, rather!" said Potter. "Let's chuck it, for goodness' sake!"

"Follow me!"

"Eh?"

"Those young rascals are to be cleared out of the Close. If they won't go, you are authorised to use force."

"Eh? Who authorises us?"

"I do!"

"Oh!"

"Follow me!" roared Coker.

The specials followed Coker. The laughter of the spectators was getting on their nerves, and they were almost as much inclined as Coker to wipe up the ground with the extra-specials. They came on to the attack with a rush.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Constable Cherry. "They're coming! Look out!"

"The lookoutfulness is terrific!"

"Line up!" shouted Wharton. "Extra-Special Con-

stables never retreat from the foe! Stand to your guns—I mean, stir your stumps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Knock 'em over!" roared Coker. "Kick 'em out! Smash 'em!"

There was a terrific collision as the special constables charged.

But the extra-specials "stirred their stumps" with energy—the stumps being cricket-stumps. There were doughty swipes in all directions, and painful pokes. The cocked hats went flying—but the extra-special constables did not fly. They stood their ground manfully.

"Sock it to 'em!" roared Bob Cherry, as his stump cracked on Coker's head, and there was a tremendous yell from Coker.

"Go for them sockfully, my esteemed drums!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Coker roared out an order.

"Draw truncheons!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Crash, crash, crash!

Sticks and cricket-stumps rattled merrily together.

As both parties were highly excited, it was probable that some damage would have been done, had not Mr. Prout arrived on the scene. He came up with a run, his gown flying in the breeze.

"Coker! Wharton! Potter! Stop this immediately! How dare you make this scene in the Close! Immediately I say!"

The combat ceased.

There had been some hard knocks already on both sides. The two parties separated, and glared at one another wrathfully.

"What does this mean?" rapped out Mr. Prout. "How dare you, I say!"

"It's those young beasts!" roared Coker. "Look at 'em! They're making fun of my special constables."

"It's Coker, sir!" gasped Wharton. "He's making fun of my extra-special constables!"

"Your what, Wharton?" ejaculated Mr. Prout.

"Extra-special constables, sir!"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Prout.

"You see, sir, we're bound to go one better than the Fifth," exclaimed Bob Cherry. "If Coker's constables are special, ours are extra-special. And we shall catch as many German spies as he does—exactly the same number, in fact."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You must cease this immediately," said Mr. Prout. "Coker, you are forbidden to play these games in the Close, and the same applies to you, Wharton."

"Games!" shrieked Coker.

"Yes! Now you hear me—"

"But it isn't a game!" bellowed Coker. "It's quite serious, sir. We are special constables, and we have sworn ourselves in to defend King and country—"

"King and country will get on very well without your assistance, Coker. You must stop this nonsense at once!"

"N-n-nonsense!" stuttered Coker.

"Yes. If you wish to play some game, why cannot you play some quiet and amusing game, like marbles?"

"Mum-mum-marbles?"

"Yes, certainly," said Mr. Prout. "Now all of you go indoors at once, and take off those absurd things. Don't argue with me—go at once!"

Coker was past arguing. For the great man of the Fifth to be advised to go and play the quiet and amusing game of marbles, instead of defending his King and country as a special constable, took his breath away. He gave a tremendous snort, and marched off to the School House, followed by his crestfallen specials.

The Greyfriars Extra-special Constables followed in triumph. And yells of laughter followed them. Mr. Prout saw them all safe to their own quarters, so that the battle of specials and extra-specials could not be renewed inside the house.

"Well," said Squiff, as he peeled off his leglet, and sank into the armchair in Study No. 1, "I really think we've done Coker in the eye. He really ought to be grateful to us. We've saved him from making a thumping ass of himself."

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fancy this will be the end of the Greyfriars Special Constables," grinned Bob Cherry. "But, if it isn't, the extra-specials will be ready for duty!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the extra-special constables, feeling that they deserved well of their country, celebrated the occasion by standing themselves an extra-special tea. But the last had not been heard, by any means, of Coker's Specials. Horace Coker was not to be so easily beaten as all that. Reviews in the Close might be barred, but though that item had to be cut out of the programme, the special constabulary was still going strong.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

To Please Coker!

"FIVE quid!" said Squiff.

It was a couple of days after the great encounter of the specials and extra-specials.

Sampson Quincey Ifley Field had just come in on his bicycle, and he found his four comrades in the Close. Squiff leaned his bike against the front of the tuckshop, and joined them. They looked at him inquiringly as he made that cryptic remark.

"Five quid?" repeated Bob Cherry.

"Yes."

"What are you driving at?"

"I've just been looking at old Lazarus's place in Court-field. He's got a collection of war trophies there."

"I've seen 'em," said Harry Wharton, with a nod. "German spiky helmets and big grey coats. Some of the Territorials who've been at the front brought them home—picked 'em up on the battlefield after the Huns had scooted, and kept 'em as souvenirs."

"And sold 'em to Lazarus," grinned Squiff. "I don't know how much Lazarus gave the Terriers for them, but he's asking a good price for them—as war souvenirs. He's got 'em set out in his window, and there's a crowd round the shop staring at 'em. He's got a dozen helmets with spikes—the real thing. He wants thirty shillings each for them."

"I'll wait till they come down to ninepence, and have one," remarked Nugent. "It will make a ripping coat-suit for the study."

"But what about them?" asked Wharton, puzzled. "And what about five quid? You're not thinking of making a collection of Hun souvenirs, I suppose?"

"I'm thinking of Coker."

"Coker?"

"Yes. I suppose you know that the special constables are going great guns? Coker has ordered a route march for to-morrow afternoon. Reviews in the Close are barred. He's going to take his men out for a march along the cliffs, to exercise them, and to study the lie of the land, all ready for the Germans when they land—when! Well, seeing those Hun helmets in old Lazarus's window, put an idea into my head. Why shouldn't the Germans land to-morrow, and give Coker a little occupation? He's so jolly keen that he ought to be gratified if possible."

The chums of the Remove stared at Squiff. Hurree Singh mildly inquired whether he was talking out of his esteemed neck.

"In fact, I've fixed it up with Lazarus," went on Squiff. "Of course, we can't buy the things—they're too dear for us, and we don't want 'em anyway. So I asked Lazarus to lend them to us."

"And he jumped at it?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Not exactly. He agreed to lend us the lot to-morrow afternoon for a payment of ten bob for the loan. That isn't much, whacked out among the lot of us. But we've got to deposit five quid in case of accidents. He thinks it's possible the things may get damaged in our hands. But we get the five back when we deliver the goods again, so that's all right."

"But—but what's the wheeze?" demanded Nugent.

"Can't you see? With a spiky helmet and a big grey coat that covers you from head to foot, you look as much like a Hun as the Kaiser himself. We shall have to make a set of spiky moustaches to match. We can carry the things down to the cliffs to-day, and stick 'em in one of

the caves ready. To-morrow afternoon we go out before Coker starts. When he arrives on the cliffs, he finds that the Germans have landed—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"B-b-but—" said Bob Cherry. "They'll bolt, and give the alarm. It's against the law to give the alarm that the Huns have landed, if they haven't. Coker might be tried by court-martial."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, that's Coker's bizney," said Squiff. "My idea is that it will be interesting to see what the Greyfriars Special Constables do when they're attacked by a German force. My idea is that they will run—"

"Ha, ha! I should say so—"

"We shall have to smuggle out some of the wooden rifles the cadets use in their practice. That will be easy enough. With grey coats, spiky helmets, spiky moustaches, and wooden rifles, I think we shall fill the bill. We can daub our faces with mud, so as not to be recognised. Is it a go?"

The chums of the Remove, chuckling gleefully, agreed that it was a "go."

"Then we've got to find a fiver to deposit with Lazarus, in case of accidents to the props," said Squiff. "There won't be any accidents. Coker & Co. won't show fight. If Coker does, the Co. won't, you bet your hat. They'll streak for home. Now, who's got a fiver?"

Bob Cherry turned out his pockets, and produced twopence. Nugent had a shilling, and Harry Wharton three. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had a sovereign. Squiff went through his own pockets, and produced seven shillings and sixpence.

"Looks like a frost!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Squiff grunted.

"Well, it's rotten to have a good jape spoiled for the sake of a fiver that won't be spent," he said. "We shall have to raise a loan somewhere."

"Hallo, what's on?" asked Vernon-Smith, joining them. "Counting over your hoards, you misers?"

"You're the man!" exclaimed Squiff, clapping the Bounder on the back. "You're an extra special constable, and you can back up the firm. We've got a jape on, and we want a fiver to leave with old Lazarus as a guarantee for his goods. It will be handed back afterwards. How many fivers have you got, Smithy?"

The millionaire's son grinned. Smithy was always rolling in money, and just now he was the right man in the right place.

He opened a little leather purse, and displayed a wad of banknotes and currency notes. He flicked out a fiver with a careless air.

"There you are!" he said.

"Thanks! If anything should go wrong with the goods, and Lazarus should freeze to this, we make it up to you in a week or two," said Squiff. "That all right?"

"Right as rain."

"But there's really no risk. Only ten bob's got to be paid, and we're paying that."

"But what's the jape?"

Squiff explained, and the Bounder chuckled gleefully.

"I'm on!" he said. "And I stand my whack in the ten bob, too. Better get off and get the things, or you'll be out after locking-up."

"Righto! Get your bikes and come along."

The Bounder joined the party, and the six juniors speedily cycled down to Courtfield. Mr. Lazarus, on receipt of the fiver which was to secure him against possible damage to his goods—he knew the Removites, and he thought it very probable that there would be some damage done—handed over the "props."

There were a dozen big spiked helmets, which the wounded Territorials had brought home with them, and afterwards disposed of to Mr. Lazarus. There was still a larger number of the grey-green greatcoats, and the juniors selected a dozen of them. And Mr. Lazarus, who did a regular business in supplying requisites for amateur theatricals, easily found them a dozen spiky blonde moustaches.

The goods were packed up in half a dozen big bundles, and the juniors rode away with them.

The bundles were carefully concealed in a little cave in the cliffs, ready for the morrow, and then Harry Wharton & Co. returned to Greyfriars, getting in just in time for calling-over.

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ONE
PENNY.

That evening half a dozen more of the Remove were taken into the secret, as a dozen fellows were required for playing the part of the invaders.

Peter Todd and Tom Brown, Hazeldene and Bulstrode, Mark Linley and Micky Desmond made up the party.

They were strictly enjoined not to breathe a word, and not a word was breathed outside their own select circle.

They looked forward to the half-holiday on the morrow with great anticipations. Coker of the Fifth was also anticipating the morrow in cheerful spirits.

A route march had been ordered for the special constables. Route marches, certainly, were not a usual exercise for special constables, but Coker had decided that it was a good idea, and Coker's word was law.

And as route marches were to be followed by refreshments, the special constables had no objection to raise. There was no game on that afternoon, and they did not mind a ramble over the cliffs, followed by a big feed at the Anchor Inn.

But the specials firmly refused to wear either belts or badges. It was in vain that Coker stormed. Coker pointed out the rules; he explained that his orders were bound to be obeyed, and that the specials simply had to wear their badges.

The specials declined. Grundy declared that he wasn't going to be a guy. Potter remarked that the route march would not be a success if the specials were followed by a disrespectful crowd, as they would be if they started out badged and belted.

Horace Coker referred them indignantly to the list of rules. He read out Rule 1 and Rule 2 at the top of his voice.

Rule 1. All orders to be obeyed without any rot.

Rule 2. Any fellow disobeying orders to be immediately whopped.

There were the rules, in black and white. But it was all in vain. The special constables struck at the belts and badges; they refused absolutely to wear any outward and visible sign of their rank and status as special constables. They agreed to carry the sticks, which could be passed off, to the public view, as walking-sticks. But badges and belts were "off." A compromise was effected at last; they agreed to put the badges in their pockets, to be stuck on in case of need. As for the belts, Coker was advised to go and bury them.

Coker found himself in a difficult position. Rule No. 2 was plain enough; the rebellious constables were liable to be whopped, and Coker was fully empowered by the rules to whop them. But exactly how he was to whop eleven big fellows was a question not explained in the rules. Moreover, if he had succeeded in the somewhat extensive task of whopping the whole force, it was certain that they would have resigned on the spot, and Coker would have been left without any force at all. So Coker made up his mind to compromise, though reluctantly, and with a bad grace. He did not want his constabulary force to vanish just when he was getting it into working order, and he was not without hopes of capturing a German spy or two during the route march. If there were any German spies doing their nefarious work in the vicinity of Greyfriars it was high time for them to tremble. Coker of the Fifth was in deadly earnest.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Route Marching!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. disappeared immediately after dinner on Saturday.

The twelve juniors sauntered out one or two at a time, and did not meet until they were at a distance from the school. They did not want to risk exciting the suspicions of the great Coker.

But Coker was not bothering his powerful brain about them. After dinner he had to call his specials together and get them to start.

As the tea at the Anchor had been fixed for six o'clock the specials were in no hurry to start. They could easily stroll down to the Anchor in an hour. But that was not Coker's view. He meant to keep his men up to it. The route was to be the real thing—a long tramp, which would exercise the specials, and keep them up to the

mark. Under Coker's direction, too, they were to practise scouting and investigating, en route. Coker thought it quite probable that a wireless installation might be discovered hidden among the cliffs, or some spy in a cunning disguise might be dropped upon. Coker pictured himself marching some captured spy into Court-field, and bringing the blush of shame to the cheeks of those who had declined his services as a full-blown official special.

But it was not easy to get the specials to start. They did not share Coker's keenness. He routed Fitzgerald and Grundy out of the gym, and Hobson out of the common-room, and Potter and Greene out of the study. He gave them strict orders to wait for him by the steps. But by the time he had collected up the rest of his flock they had wandered away. And when he rushed off, breathing sulphurously, to collect them up again, some of the others sauntered off, and then there had to be a fresh hunt. Coker was in a wildly excited frame of mind by the time he got his whole force together, and his voice was very gruff when he gave the signal to march.

The specials marched.

But they refused to march in line or in order. They persisted in strolling with their hands in their pockets. Hobson was especially recalcitrant. Hobson had been Coker's chum in the Shell, and he was always decidedly ratty when he found Horace Coker in the least "Fifth-Formy," as he called it. Hobson proved his independence now by shoving his hands into his trousers pockets, and whistling as he walked.

Coker bore it for a time, but in the lane he called a halt, and proceeded to talk to Hobson.

"Halt!" rapped out Coker.

The specials dragged to a stop.

"What's on?" asked Fitzgerald, looking round.

"Spotted a German spy?"

The specials grinned.

"Better remember Rule No. 10, Fitzgerald," said Coker warningly. "Now, Hobson!"

"Hallo!" said Hobson.

"Don't say 'Hallo' to your commanding officer. Say 'Yes, sir.'"

"Oh, my aunt!" said Hobson.

"Take your hands out of your pockets!"

"What for?"

"Because your commanding officer orders you!"

"Bow-wow!"

"What!" roared Coker.

"I said bow-wow, and I mean bow-wow!" said Hobson. "You're not coming the senior over me, Coker. Go and chop chips!"

"You remember Rule No. 2?"

"Blow Rule No. 2?"

"Very well," said Coker. "Any fellow disobeying orders is to be whopped. Put up your hands."

"Eh?"

"You're going to be whopped, according to Rule No. 2."

"Oh, my hat!" said Hobson. "You start whopping me, Coker, and I'll give you Rule No. 2—on the boko!"

"Is this a route-march or a dog-fight?" Smith major wanted to know.

"Silence in the ranks! Stand at

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attention while this mutineer is punished!" said Coker. "Now, then, Hobson!"

He rushed at Hobson. The Shell fellow put up his hands, and they were quickly prancing round one another, panting and puffing and pommelling. The specials did not stand at attention, in a military sense—but they stood, and gave Coker their attention. They were interested. At this rate, the route-march was likely to show a certain liveliness. There were wild yells from Hobson of the Shell as Coker got his head into chancery. The struggle was terrific.

But Coker was victorious. He was too tough for Hobson. In about five minutes Hobson was reclining in the dust, blinking out of the eye that remained opened, and clasp his nose with both hands. His commanding officer glared down at him.

"Now are you going to obey orders?" roared Coker.

"No!" yelled Hobson. "I'll see you blowed first! Yah!"

"Then you are dismissed from the force!"

"Wow!" said Hobson. "I wouldn't belong to your force at any price, you howling ass! 'Tain't the Fifth of November, nor yet the First of April! Yah!"

"Get out!" shouted Coker.

"Yah!"

"Pitch him into the ditch!" commanded Coker.

"Sergeants Potter and Greene, you hear me?"

"Oh, crumbs!" said Sergeants Potter and Greene.

Hobson of the Shell did not wait for Sergeants Potter and Greene to carry out the orders of the commanding officer. He picked himself up and fled.

"That's settled!" said Coker, dabbing his nose with his handkerchief. "It was really a mistake to let a Shell kid into the force, when I come to think of it. Now, march!"

The specials chuckled and marched again. Coker had made an example of Hobson, and he hoped that that example would not be lost on the force. As a matter of fact, it had had the effect of putting up the backs of the Fifth-Formers. All of them shoved their hands into their pockets as they marched on. Coker led the way with a military stride—and Fitzgerald could not resist the temptation of imitating him with an exaggerated edition of that military stride. The yell of laughter that followed from the specials made Coker look round angrily.

"Fitzgerald!"

"What's the matter now, intirely?"

"What are you doing?"

"Following me leader, bedad."

"Remember rules Nos. 2 and 10, Fitzgerald."

"Sure I remember them. The spelling helped to fix them in me memory," said Fitzgerald, innocently.

"Don't jaw—march!"

Coker marched by the side of his brigade now, and kept his eyes on them. Somewhat to the disappointment of the specials, he made no remark about their hands being in their pockets. They were interested to know how Coker would set about whopping the whole band.

The special constables followed the

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"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What—what does this mean, Mr. Prout? Are you going to a fancy dress ball?" "Really, Mr. Quelch—" "What is the cause of all this excitement?" "The Germans have landed!" (See Chapter II.)

road which led over the cliffs, and came out on the seashore. There Coker called a halt, and took out a pair of field-glasses from a case slung over his shoulder, and raised them to his eyes. He scanned the sea, doubtless in search of a suspicious craft; but, excepting a fishing-boat and a barge, the sea was clear. He scanned the cliffs, probably looking for hidden German spies or wireless installations, but nothing of the kind was to be seen.

"March!" said Coker.

As they advanced along the shore towards Pegg, Coker kept the glasses going. He was very anxious that the specials should not miss any opportunity of distinguishing themselves. As they came in sight of Pegg, Coker scanned the bay with the closest attention. A heavily-built Dutch barque lay off the fishing village, with a fat Dutchman lounging on the deck. Coker watched that craft very suspiciously.

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"Looks suspicious—what?" asked Fitzgerald, with a wink of the eye that was turned away from Coker. The specials grinned.

"Well, I don't trust these foreigners," said Coker. "It would be just like those Huns to sail under the Dutch flag, and land a force here to burn the village. They might do it and get off before help could arrive—if we were not here."

"Let's board the craft, and sink it, in case," suggested Fitzgerald. "Sure, you know the German Chancellor says that necessity knows no law."

"Don't be an idiot, Fitz!"

"Let's get on to the Anchor," suggested Grundy. "I'm hungry."

"Same here," said Smith major heartily.

"Hark!" exclaimed Coker.

From the cliffs on their right there sounded a sudden, sharp whistle.

It was evidently a signal.

Coker turned his field-glasses at once in the direction of the whistle. It was a very lonely spot. They were a good mile from the village, and they had the shore to themselves. Over the rocks a head appeared in view—and Coker almost dropped the glasses as he spotted a spiked helmet.

The helmeted head disappeared instantly.

"Did you see that?" gasped Coker.

"What?"

"It's a German!"

"Bow-wow!"

"I saw him!" exclaimed Coker excitedly. "Some of the beasts have got ashore—just as I suspected they might. Get your truncheons ready!"

"But there can't be any Germans here!" growled Grundy.

"Fathead! That's all you know! I've suspected for a long time that the villains might try to raid this coast. They may have landed from a submarine, and perhaps they're hiding among the rocks waiting for dark. Pretty asses we should look if they suddenly rushed. Greyfriars to-night and set the place on fire!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look!" breathed Coker, as the head cautiously rose into view again.

The Fifth-Formers stared. There was the spiky helmet—there could be no mistake about that. It disappeared among the rocks again—but all the specials had seen it. They looked at one another queerly. What did it mean? "That's a G-g-g-german helmet!" stuttered Smith major.

"Can't be a German in it," said Fitzgerald, shaking his head. "It's somebody up to a lark."

Coker snorted.

"Well, if it's a lark, there's nothing for you to be afraid of," he said. "My belief is that some Huns have landed from a submarine, or sneaked over in that Dutch ship. Come on!"

"I—I say—"

"Follow me!"

"B-b-but what for? What—"

"We're going to seize that scoundrel!"

"B-b-but suppose there's a crowd of them?" stammered Grundy.

"What do we care?" snorted Coker. "This is what we've sworn in as special constables for. This is where we defend King and country!"

"Oh, come on!" said Fitzgerald. "It's only somebody having a lark."

"Follow me!" rapped out Coker. "Truncheons ready! Charge!"

Coker led the way, charging gallantly over the steep rocks. He slipped, and stumbled over, and roared, but he jumped up again like a jack-in-a-box, and charged on. And the specials followed him, with their sticks in their hands, pretty certain that the wearer of the Prussian helmet was a practical joker, and determined to give him the licking of his life.

THE TENTH CHAPTER. Facing the Foe!

"VORWAERTS!"

It was a sudden gruff shout among the rocks. At the word, as if by magic, helmeted heads rose on all sides among the rocks, like the clansmen of Roderick Dhu of old.

The specials suddenly halted.

A dozen German troopers were fairly upon them—with spiked helmets, long, grey-green military coats, spiked moustaches, and faces muddy and stained.

The sudden appearance of the Kaiser himself could not have startled the specials more.

They stopped, and stood rooted to the ground.

"Donnerwetter! Vorwaerts!"

A dozen rifles were raised to the shoulders of the grey-green coats and levelled at the astounded and startled specials.

Had the word to fire been given, and had a volley followed, Coker & Co. would certainly have been blown to bits.

They hadn't a chance. They were not within hitting distance—but they were at point-blank range for the levelled rifles.

"Surrender mit you!" called out the German leader, in broken English. "Hunds und peegs of Englanders! You surrender mit you at vun time, or ve shoots!"

"Oh, my hat!" stuttered Coker. "Come on! Charge!"

"Run!" shrieked Grundy.

"Bolt!" gasped Potter.

"Surrender, or ve fires mit dem rifles!"

Like snow before a tropical sun, the special constables melted away. They turned and ran like the wind, in deadly terror of hearing the rifles crack behind them, and feeling the bullets crashing into their backs.

But Coker did not run.

Coker might be every variety of a duffer, but Coker had the courage of a lion. All Coker saw was enemies on his native soil, and he charged, brandishing his club.

"Back up!" he roared.

The specials were backing out instead of backing up. Never on the cinder-path had they equalled the speed they put on at that moment. Never had the vanishing-trick been performed so suddenly and completely.

But Coker did not even see them run. His face was to the foe. He had singled out the English-speaking German, and he reached him in a few seconds, and aimed a blow at his head which would certainly have stunned him if the German had not parried it with his rifle.

Coker had no time to deliver a second swipe.

The grey-green-coated ruffians closed round him, many hands grasped him, and he was hurled to the ground.

The German leader pointed his rifle at him.

"Ach! You shall die mit you!"

"Yah!" gasped Coker. "Prussian pig!"

"Vat!"

"Rescue! Back up!"

"Ach! De odds, dey haf run!" said the German.

"And you—you shall be shot mit you at vunce! You are a civilian, and you mix yourself up in der war, isn't it? Ach! All dem snipers are shot, by order of mein Kaiser!"

"Blow your Kaiser!"

"Vat—vat!"

"Hang your silly Kaiser! I'm not a civilian, either!"

panted Coker. "I'm a special constable!"

"Vat is tat?"

"Oh, you silly Hun! Don't you know what a special constable is? Take that rifle away, you silly idiot!"

"I giff you vun minute pefore tat you are shot!"

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

The grey-coated Huns were all uttering threatening exclamations—all in German. They seemed inclined to cut Coker to pieces on the spot. Coker thought that his last hour had come, but his courage did not fail him. If the Huns shot him, they should see how a Briton could face the music. It was really very plucky of Coker.

The German rapped out an order, and Coker was dragged to the nearest rock, and set against it. Then half a dozen rifles were levelled.

Coker blinked at them.

The German officer seemed to hesitate to give the word to fire. Coker took advantage of that hesitation. He made a sudden bound and ran for his life.

"Ach! Mein Gott! Vorwaerts!"

"Donnerwetter! Donner und Blitzen!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp! came the boots of the Huns on the rocks in pursuit. Coker fully expected to hear the rifles crack, but they didn't. He ran his hardest, and vanished among the rocks. The pursuit did not go very far. The Germans returned to the spot where the execution had so nearly taken place. They did not look ferocious now. They were gurgling with mirth.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped the commander, in good English now. "Oh, my only summer hat! Poor old Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What tremendous pluck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I ever saw a foot-race quite so good as that!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "Why, they hardly touched the ground!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Germans threw themselves on the rocks, and roared. In the excess of their merriment, their spiky moustaches came off, and their spiked helmets rolled on the ground. If the Coker constables could have seen them at that moment they would probably have recognised the heroes of the Remove, in spite of their muddy faces.

"But, I say," exclaimed Peter Todd, sitting up suddenly, "those silly asses will give the alarm!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It won't be a laughing matter if they bring the Territorials down on us!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"We'd better clear!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Get this clobber off and get out before the band begins to play!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Helmets and coats and wooden rifles were rolled up in bundles, and the "Germans" promptly cleared off. They followed the path over the cliffs, and, as they reached a high point, Wharton looked back at the lower shore. He burst into a sudden chuckle.

"Look! Oh, crumbs! Look!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A number of men in khaki, with their rifles at the ready, were running along the beach, guided by Coker of the Fifth.

"Ha, ha, ha! There's Horace!"

"Reinforcements already! Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were almost convulsed. Horace Coker had evidently come upon a detachment of Territorials route-marching. His wild and excited tale had brought them to the spot.

"They were looking for the Germans."

"My hat!" said Nugent. "It's lucky we cleared in time! I fancy they'll be wrathful!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If they'd spotted us in Hun clobber."

"Oh, my hat!"

"They might have started shooting without waiting to ask questions."

"Oh, don't!" gasped Peter Todd. "Greyfriars has had a narrow escape of losing its brightest ornaments."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors fled, leaving the Territorials to search for the German raiders. Coker guided them to the spot where he had been so nearly executed by the ferocious Huns.

He did not find any Huns. All he found was a spiky moustache, which had been dropped and left behind in the hurried departure of the jaspers.

Coker picked up that spiky moustache, and gazed at it as if mesmerised. It was evidently an artificial moustache, and equally evidently had never grown on the upper lip of a Hun.

The dreadful truth dawned upon Coker.

He stood paralysed.

But the Terriers also spotted that moustache, and they, too, understood. And the things they said to Coker would have made his hair curl if he had not been so utterly overcome already.

The disgusted men in khaki marched off, leaving Horace Coker rooted to the ground, still holding the spiky moustache.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER. To Arms!

POTTER was the first of the fleeing specials to reach Greyfriars.

He had covered the ground at a speed that did him credit. It looked as if he had the best chance for the mile when the school sports came off.

He rushed in at the gateway, puffing and blowing. His cap was gone. It had blown off, and he had not stopped to recover it. His hair was almost standing upright on his head, whether from terror or the breeze. Perspiration streamed down his face. He dashed up to Gosling, who was in the doorway of his lodge. He was too breathless to speak, but he grasped the porter by the arm and shook him.

Gosling blinked at him in amazement. The only possible conclusion he could come to was that Potter of the Fifth had been drinking. Gosling was naturally disgusted.

"Ere, you 'old yourself up, Master Potter!" he said.

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angrily. "Don't you 'ang on to me! 'Orrid, I call it! I'll report this to the 'Ead!"

"The gig-gig-gates!" stuttered Potter, finding his voice.

"Eh, you go and lie down, Master Potter! That's the werry best thing you can do, in your 'orrible condition! Wot I says is this 'ere——"

"The Germans!"

"Talking about gates and Germans!" said Gosling, with a snort. "For a young feller like you, Master Potter, this is simply 'orrible! If you was an old man like me you might 'ave to take a drop of something 'ot to keep out the cold. But you——"

"The gates—quick—the Germans!"

"Why, my heye! 'The's another of 'em!" ejaculated Gosling, as Grundy came tearing in at the gates.

"The gates!" yelled Grundy, in passing. "The gates—quick, Gosling!" And he rushed on towards the School House.

Gosling almost fell down.

"Two of 'em, tight as a drum!" he gasped. "'Orrible, at their hage! Blow me pink, if 'ere isn't another!"

Greene came tottering in. He was quite blown. He had run all the way without stopping. He sank upon the old oak bench outside Gosling's lodge and gasped.

"Shut the gates, Gosling!" he whispered weakly. "They're coming!"

"Who's coming? Why—— My heye! My 'at! Oh, crickey!"

Gosling's eyes almost started from his head as the rest of the special constables came pouring in. Coker was not with them. Coker was otherwise engaged. But, excepting Coker, the whole band had got home, dusty, perspiring, breathless.

"Shut the gates, bedad!" roared Fitzgerald, grasping Gosling by the shoulder and shaking him. "Quick—the Germans!"

"Which I ain't got any horders to shut the gates in the middle of the afternoon!" snorted Gosling. "If you young gents 'ave been drinking——"

"The Germans!" shrieked Smith major.

"Wot about the Germans?" grunted Gosling.

"They've landed!"

Gosling jumped.

"Landed! The Germans! Wot are you givin' me, Master Smith? Don't you crack your little jokes with me! I'll eat all the bloomin' Germans what 'ave landed!"

"I tell you they're on the shore—crowds of 'em!" shrieked Smith major. "We had a narrow escape. They've captured Coker—or killed him! Bayoneted him, very likely—they're not firing—afraid of giving the alarm, I suppose! I tell you it's so. Close the gates! I'm going to ask the Head to telephone for the soldiers."

"My heye!"

Smith major sped off to the School House. The astonished Gosling could not doubt that the Fifth-Formers were in earnest now. Several of them were dragging the gates shut, as Gosling was slow to move.

In the Close an excited crowd was gathering.

The wild exclamations of the Fifth-Formers and the sight of Gosling locking the gates in the middle of the afternoon, apprised the Greyfriars fellows that something was very much amiss.

When the news spread that the Germans had landed there was a buzz of excitement and alarm. Billy Bunter made a wild rush for the nearest cellar. Fisher T. Fish scudded off to the box-room and crammed himself into a trunk. Some of the bolder spirits rushed for their cricket-bats or Indian clubs with the manful intention of putting up a fight.

The Close swarmed with an excited crowd.

Everybody was talking at once. Where were the Germans? How many were there of them? Were they marching towards Greyfriars? Had they any artillery? Had the Territorials been warned? What was to be done? Everybody asked questions, and nobody could answer them.

The fellows who suspected that it was a false alarm had to be convinced by the terrible tale told by Potter & Co. It wasn't a mere rumour. They had seen the Germans—seen them with their own eyes. They had come upon

them on the shore, and had barely escaped with their lives.

It was only too evident that the specials were in deadly earnest, and it seemed impossible that nearly a dozen fellows could be mistaken.

Smith major rushed into the Head's study without even knocking. The Head was not there as it happened; he was away that afternoon. Smith major pranced out again and sped away to find his Form-master. He bolted into Mr. Prout's study, nearly startling the Fifth Form-master out of his wits. Mr. Prout, who was a tremendous sportsman, and had a formidable array of weapons and hunting trophies decorating the walls of his study, was cleaning a rifle—the celebrated rifle with which he had killed a ferocious buffalo in his younger days. In his surprise, as Smith major rushed in on him, Mr. Prout jumped up and let fall the rifle. The butt landed on his toe, and Mr. Prout, who had a corn upon that toe, uttered a shriek of anguish.

"Ow!"

"Mr. Prout! Mr. Prout!" howled Smith major.

"How dare you rush into my study like that?" shrieked Mr. Prout in a fury, and he grasped the breathless Smith by the collar and shook him violently.

"Yow!" roared Smith major. "Leggo! The—the—Ow!"

"You stupid boy! You young rascal! You——"

Mr. Prout delivered a terrific shake at every word, and Smith major's teeth were almost rattling in his head.

"How dare you! You—you young hooligan——"

"The Germans!" gasped Smith major.

"What?"

"The Germans have landed! They—they're marching on Greyfriars—thousands of 'em!" stuttered Smith, drawing on his imagination a little. "They're coming! Coker's been killed, and we've had a narrow escape! Horse and foot and artillery, sir!"

Mr. Prout released the Fifth-Former. His plump face flushed with delight. Smith major's excitement guaranteed the truth of his information. Mr. Prout's eyes simply danced. At last! Often and often the sporting Form-master had longed for a chance of showing what he could do with his deadly firearms—of illustrating in action some of the dead-shots he had brought off, or hadn't brought off, when he was in the Rockies in '85. A chance of potting Germans made him glow with satisfaction. He made a bound for his rifle, forgetting all about his corn.

"You are sure of this, Smith?" he panted.

"I've seen 'em, sir."

"Good! Then there is no doubt. Order Gosling to close the gates—the school will be defended till help arrives. As a special constable, I have a right to deal with the invaders by force of arms. I shall exercise that privilege. Aha! The Huns shall find that it does not pay them to land upon the soil of Britain!"

Smith major cut out of the study. Mr. Prout was loading his rifle—and nobody liked to be near Mr. Prout when he was loading a rifle.

The alarm was spread all over Greyfriars now. Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master, was staring into the swarming Close in amazement when Mr. Prout strode into his study. Mr. Quelch stared blankly at his visitor. The Fifth Form-master's aspect was striking. His gown was tucked in under a bandolier crammed with cartridges, a leather belt, let out to its full extent, was buckled round his ample waist, and two huge revolvers were stuck in it. He carried his rifle in his hand. His face was ablaze with warlike excitement.

The Huns had a formidable opponent in Mr. Prout. Mr. Prout was a special constable—not of the Coker variety—and, as such, he had a legal right to resist invasion. He was prepared to stand, alone if need be, in the path of the invading horde, and make the Huns pay dearly for their temerity.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What—what does this mean, Mr. Prout? Are you going to a fancy dress ball?"

Mr. Prout shorted. He felt that the question was ridiculous at such a thrilling moment, when he was prepared to shed his life-blood to the last drop in defence of King and country, hearth and home, the flag, the soil of Britain, and the Empire.

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"Really, Mr. Quelch——"

"What is the cause of all this excitement?"

"The Germans have landed!"

"Come, come——"

"They have been seen, and they are marching on Greyfriars. A number of the Fifth Form fell in with them, and barely escaped with their lives. It appears that the unfortunate Coker has fallen a victim to their ferocity. Upon our native soil they would repeat the horrors of Belgium. Coker shall be avenged!" Let them come!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "I am ready!"

"But—but it is impossible!" almost shrieked Mr. Quelch. "We should have received a notification from the military authorities."

"Probably they have been taken by surprise. I have never been wholly satisfied with the military arrangements. Upon many points I have often considered that I could give Lord Kitchener valuable advice. However, there is no time for words. The foe are almost upon us! The gates are locked! I shall defend them with my life!"

"My dear sir——"

"I leave it to you, Mr. Quelch, to take charge of the boys. The Head is, unfortunately, absent. Kindly telephone to Wapshot Camp for reinforcements. Perhaps the Territorials will arrive while I am still keeping them out. They shall enter Greyfriars only over my dead body!"

"But, my dear sir——"

Mr. Prout did not wait to hear. His post was in the danger zone—at the gates. He rushed out of the study, leaving Mr. Quelch gasping. The Remove-master did not telephone to Wapshot Camp for reinforcements. He could not help having his doubts about the accuracy of the information, in spite of Mr. Prout's excitement—or, perhaps, because of it.

He telephoned to Courtfield Police Station, and asked for information. Inspector Grimes, at Courtfield, gave him information. So far as he was aware, the German Fleet was still bottled up in the Kiel Canal, and no Germans had landed on British soil—excepting the usual number of prisoners of war.

Mr. Quelch thought he detected a chuckle over the wires, and he hung up the receiver angrily. Inspector Grimes seemed to have taken the impression that somebody at Greyfriars was in a blue funk over nothing, which was very unpleasant.

Mr. Quelch hurried out into the Close, to make an attempt to quell the excitement. Greyfriars was in a roar from end to end. Mr. Prout was in command at the gate, like Horatius of old. The warlike aspect of the Fifth Form-master made a great impression on the Greyfriars fellows, but when they discovered that his gun was loaded, they gave him a wide berth.

Mr. Prout had rapped out orders in quite a military manner. Nearly all the fellows were prepared to resist the enemy; cricket-bats, Indian clubs, pokers, and tongs simply swarmed in the Close. When would reinforcements arrive—that was the burning question—and Mr. Quelch had not even telephoned for them!

Just inside the locked gates, with the muzzle of his rifle poked through the bars, Mr. Prout was keeping watch and ward. He was prepared to pull the trigger the moment a Hun appeared in sight, without stopping to parley. He disdained to parley with the ravagers of Belgium.

Mr. Quelch laid a hand on his shoulder, and the Fifth Form-master jumped.

"Mr. Quelch! Pray do not hold me! You may disturb my aim!"

"My dear sir——"

"You have telephoned for help?"

"Certainly not! There is nothing the matter. It is a mistake or a practical joke. There are no Germans!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sharply.

"We saw them, sir!" howled Potter.

"Nonsense!"

"They've murdered Coker——"

"His death shall be avenged!" said Mr. Prout. "As soon as the head of the column appears on the road I shall open fire. We shall sell our lives dearly!"

"I repeat——" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"Here they come!" yelled Greene, as there was a sound of footsteps on the road.

Mr. Prout glared through the sights of his rifle.

"Stop!" yelled Mr. Quelch. "Cannot you see that it is Coker?"

Coker of the Fifth was coming up, very tired and dusty.

"Really, Mr. Quelch," said the Fifth Form-master crossly, "I trust you do not think I should fire without ascertaining whether it was friend or a foe! Coker, you must climb over the gate. It cannot be opened now. 'Thank goodness, you have escaped with your life!'"

Coker came to a halt, dumbfounded.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Only a False Alarm!

HORACE COKER had returned to Greyfriars in a decidedly bad temper.

He had seen nothing of his specials on the road. They had not lost a second. But Coker had had no reason for hurrying. He was not in dread of the pursuing Huns, since his interesting discovery of the spiky moustache.

He halted outside the gate, and stared blankly at Mr. Prout.

"Do not stand before my rifle, Coker!" snapped his Form-master. "It is a dangerous place to stand!"

Coker got out of that dangerous place with a jump like a kangaroo.

"Climb over the gate, you ass!" shouted Potter.

"They'll have you!"

"Who'll have me?" demanded Coker.

"The Germans!"

"What Germans, you fathead?"

"Get in immediately, Coker!" exclaimed Mr. Prout.

"You are in danger! There may be deadly firing on this spot at any moment!"

"But—but what—" stammered Coker.

Then it dawned upon him that his comrades had brought the news of the German landing to Greyfriars, and he understood. Cross as he was at that moment, Coker could not help grinning.

"It's all right!" he exclaimed. "There ain't any Germans!"

"What! No Germans?" shouted Mr. Prout.

"Nunno!"

"Smith major distinctly declared— Potter has informed me—"

"We saw 'em!" howled Smith major.

"They weren't real Germans," explained Coker.

"Not real Germans, Coker! What do you mean? I suppose if they were Germans at all they were real Germans! Are you out of your senses, boy?"

"They weren't Germans at all, sir," said Coker. "It was all spoof! Some beastly silly asses had dressed themselves up as Germans; that was all."

"Rot!" said Potter.

"It's true!" growled Coker. "I met some Territorials, and they searched for them. And I found this." Coker held up the false moustache. "One of the beasts had dropped it after playing that rotten lark."

Mr. Prout's face was a study.

"Then—then the Germans have not landed?" he gasped.

"No, sir."

"Smith major, what do you mean by telling me that false and ridiculous story?" thundered Mr. Prout.

"I—I thought—we all thought—"

"You utterly stupid boys! You have allowed yourselves to be frightened by a set of foolish practical jokers, and you have alarmed the whole school! I shall report this to the Head!"

Mr. Prout strode away, trying to hide his rifle under his gown. His plump face was scarlet, and he would have been glad if the earth had opened and swallowed up that rifle out of sight.

"You may open the gates, Gosling," said Mr. Quelch.

Gosling, grinning, unlocked the gates. Coker came in, dusty and wrathful. Mr. Quelch strode away to the School House, looking very vexed. It was fortunate that he did not suspect that the practical jokers belonged to Greyfriars. If he had had a hint of that, matters would have gone very badly with the heroes of the Remove.

The excitement died away now, but the fellows discussed eagerly, and howled with laughter over, the practical joke that had been played on the Coker Special Constables. There were various theories—it might have

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PENNY.

been fellows in the village, or a party of festive Territorials, or the Illichliffe fellows, or Trumper & Co., of Courtfield School. A little later, when Harry Wharton & Co. came in, guesses were made a little nearer to the facts, especially when the Removites were seen stacking away a dozen wooden rifles, the property of the cadet corps.

Harry Wharton & Co. came into the School House, smiling. They roared when they heard the story of the alarm given by the Coker Special Constables. They had not anticipated that. The joke had gone further than they had planned.

"So it was you?" exclaimed Temple of the Fourth.

"What was us?" asked Bob Cherry, chuckling.

"It was you who scared Coker?"

"Coker wasn't scared. He was as brave as a lion," grinned Squiff. "He charged, while his noble army bolted!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And it was jolly lucky for him that those Germans weren't made in Germany," said Tom Brown. "Coker would be a leader now!"

"Poor old Coker! Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he fetched the Territorials to investigate!" gasped the Bounder. "I should have liked to hear what they said to him afterwards!"

The juniors shrieked.

"And the other silly duffers came streaking back here to give the alarm!" said Temple. "The whole blessed school was in a roar! You should have seen Prouty on the warpath, bristling with revolvers and cartridges!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Any casualties?" asked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Head will be waxy, though, when he hears of it," said Temple. "You chaps had better keep it dark. It's against the law to give a false alarm."

"Imprisonment, without the option of a fine," said Fry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney, with a chuckle.

"We didn't give the alarm," said Wharton. "Coker & Co. did that. Of course, we couldn't foresee that the blithering jabberwocks would come and alarm the whole school."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'd better keep it dark, come to think of it!" chuckled Squiff.

And it was agreed that that stupendous joke on Coker should remain the exclusive property of the Lower School. The practical jokers did not want to receive an official visit from Inspector Grimes; and the matter had gone so much beyond their anticipations that it was quite possible that it might be taken seriously by the authorities, if it came to their ears. As Peter Todd, who knew all about the law, remarked, raising a false alarm of the enemy was punishable under the Defence of the Realm Act. Still, the juniors maintained that they hadn't given a false alarm. It was the Fifth-Form Special Constables who had done that.

"The fact is," said Squiff, in No. 1 Study, "this ought to be looked into. It's a serious matter."

"What is?"

"What Coker's done. Isn't it, Toddy?"

Peter Todd nodded emphatically.

"Under the Defence of the Realm Act, any silly idiot raising a false alarm may be tried by court-martial," he replied.

Peter Todd's father was a solicitor, and Peter's knowledge of the law was implicitly replied upon, in consequence, by the Remove fellows.

"That's it," said Squiff. "Well, Coker actually led a gang of Territorials round to look for the Germans, and Potter brought the false alarm here and caused no end of excitement. They ought to be tried by court-martial!"

"Fathead!" said Bob Cherry. "The court-martial would be more likely to try us!"

"Not the court-martial I'm thinking of. As first-lieutenant of the extra-special constables, I submit that a court-martial should sit in the box-room—"

NEXT
MONDAY—

"WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME!" A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And try Coker and Potter——"

The chums of the Remove yelled.

"And if found guilty, that they be suitably punished. We can't have amateur special constables raising wild alarms in the school like this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The tryfulness of the esteemed Coker would be a wheezy good idea," remarked Hurree Jamet Ram Singh, "but the catchfulness of the great Coker would not be so easy."

"He can be arrested by the extra-special constables, if there's enough of them," said Squiff. "It's clear that an example ought to be made of Coker. It's worth taking any amount of trouble. Now, who says court-martial?"

"Court-martial!" chorussed the juniors.

The bell rang for calling-over then, and the chums of the Remove had to go into Big Hall. Mr. Quelch called over the names, with a very stern brow. The happenings of the afternoon had had a very irritating effect upon Mr. Quelch. He did not share the sense of humour which was so highly developed in his Form. Mr. Prout was keeping out of sight. The Fifth-Form master, for some reason, did not court the public eye just then. He felt that the Greyfriars fellows ought to be given time to forget, if possible, the rifle, the revolvers, and the bandolier.

Two fellows in the Remove did not answer to their names—Billy Bunter and Fisher T. Fish. There was a chuckle among the juniors when it was discovered that those two heroes were absent. Several of the fellows remembered seeing them bolt into the House when the alarm was first given. Evidently they had concealed themselves so thoroughly that they had not learned that it was a false alarm, and they were still in hiding.

"Those asses ought to be looked for!" said Penfold, when the fellows came out of Big Hall. "They may stay hidden all night."

"Bunter must have missed his tea!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Poor old Bunter! He must have been in a blue funk."

Some of the juniors good-naturedly started looking for the two missing heroes. Billy Bunter was unearthed in the cellar, and at the sound of footsteps he burst into a wild yell.

"Ow! Go away! I'm not here! Mercy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh! Ah! I—I say, you fellows, is it you?" gasped Bunter. "I—I thought it was the Germans. Where are they?"

"Still in Germany!" chuckled Squiff. "You'd better go and explain to Quelch that you were in a blue funk! You've missed call-over!"

"Oh, really, Field—I—I wasn't in a funk, you know—I—I came down here to look for—for—for a gun——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm frightfully hungry!" said Bunter pathetically. "I've missed my tea. That beast Potter ought to be scragged for giving a false alarm like that! It's against the law to alarm a chap and make him miss his tea, especially when he's stony and can't go to the tuckshop! I suppose, under the circumstances, you will lend me a bob, Wharton?"

Wharton kindly lent the required "bob," and Billy Bunter scooted. He left the explanation to Mr. Quelch until after he had expended the bob. The more important matter came first.

Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded to look for Fisher T. Fish. But the cellars were drawn blank, and they failed to find him. Up and down the house they went, but it was in vain—the Yankee junior seemed to have vanished into thin air. They gave it up at last. It was time to get on with the court-martial. As Hurree Singh had remarked, the "catchfulness" of the esteemed Coker was the most difficult part of the business, and the chums debated that operation in No. 1 Study; but, as it happened, they were to receive assistance in that enterprise—from Coker!

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THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Under Arrest!

"I'VE got it!"

Horace Coker uttered that exclamation suddenly in his study. He had been thinking hard.

Potter and Greene stared at him morosely. If Coker had got another brilliant idea, as good as his special-constable idea, they were fully prepared to bump him on the floor of the study—hard. They were fed up with Coker's wheezes—not unnaturally. The howls of laughter that greeted the Coker constables now, wherever they showed themselves, made them feel very sore. They could almost have lynched Coker for having thought of that stunning wheeze. Every member of the force had told Coker, in plain English, what he thought of him, and stated with brutal frankness that from that moment the Coker constables ceased to exist. Coker did not despair of bringing them back to their allegiance—that was not what he was worrying about. He wanted to know who had played that practical joke on him, and he had set his mighty brain to work on that subject—with happy results.

"Why didn't I think of it before?" growled Coker. "Of course, it was them!"

"What are you blithering about now?" asked Potter rudely.

"I know who it was spoofed us this afternoon, now I've thought it over."

"I wish I could get near 'em," said Greene; "I'd give 'em spoof!"

It was those Remove kids, of course. They've been up against our special constables from the start. Sheer jealousy, of course, because they haven't the brains to think of such a stunning idea!" said Coker. "I remember now they were gone out when we started."

"And they weren't here when we got in," agreed Potter. "Of course, we ought to have thought of that before. It was those cheeky young beasts! I thought those Germans looked rather small for Huns. Of course, the helmets and coats made 'em look bigger; but they weren't really the proper size in Huns. I wonder where the little beasts got the things from?"

"Never mind that!" said Coker. "What they're going to get now is the point. Get a stick each and come with me. We'll lather 'em till they howl!"

"Good egg!" said Potter and Greene.

For once they followed the lead of the great Coker with alacrity.

With their sticks under their arms, the three Fifth-Formers started for No. 1 Study in the Remove passage. They expected to find Wharton and Nugent there, and they meant to deal with them first. The others could wait. It would be a great consolation to bestow a terrific licking upon the ringleaders of that outrageous jape.

Coker turned the handle of No. 1 Study door, and hurled it open. The three Fifth-Formers rushed in.

Their idea was to give the juniors no chance of dodging out. Coker slammed the door when they were inside.

Then it dawned upon Coker & Co. that the study was simply swarming with juniors. The Famous Five were all there; and Peter Todd and Tom Brown and Mark Linley and Vernon-Smith. And three or four of them dodged in between the visitors and the door at once. Coker & Co. having so kindly walked into the trap, they were not to be allowed to escape again.

"Welcome, little strangers!" chirruped Bob Cherry. "We were just talking about you, Coker."

A yell of laughter followed Bob's remark. The juniors had just been discussing how Coker was to be "collared." Coker had saved them the trouble.

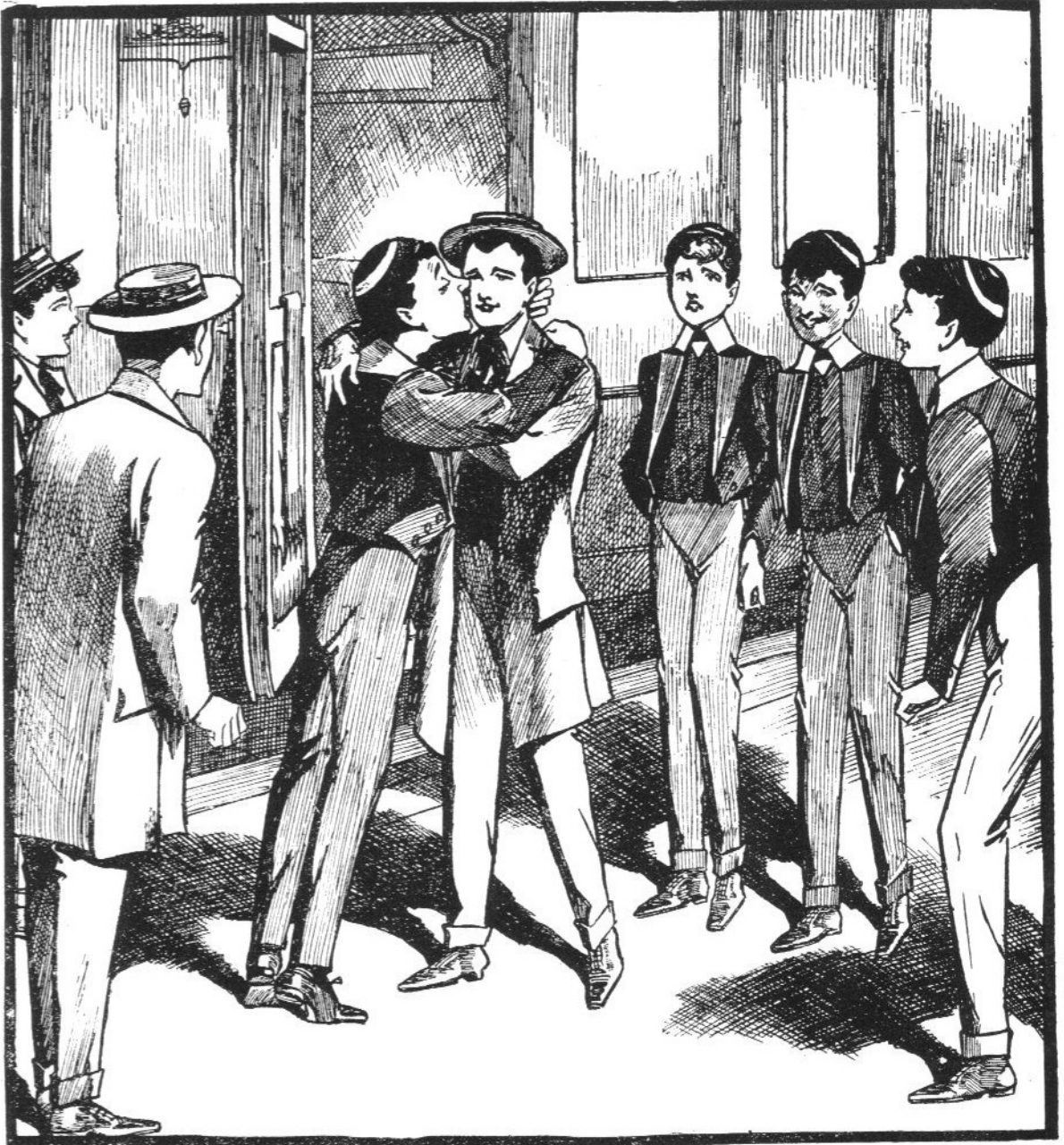
Potter and Greene edged towards the door. This wasn't what they had expected. But the Famous Five were between them and the door. On the table lay a coil of cord. Coker noticed it, and wondered what it was for. He soon knew.

"You young rascals!" exclaimed Coker. "It was you played that trick on us this afternoon! Own up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ownfulness is terrific, my esteemed Coker."

"And we've come here to give you a thumping good



The French juniors embraced one another, to the amusement of the Greyfriars boys. "My hat!" murmured Nugent. "I hope they are not going to treat us all alike."—(See the magnificent story of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled "The Winning Side," in THE DREADNOUGHT, Now on Sale.)

licking," howled Coker. "Pile in, you chaps. It doesn't matter how many there are of the little beasts!"

But Coker quickly discovered that it did matter. For the nine juniors closed in on the three Fifth-Formers like the waves of the sea, and Coker & Co. were simply overwhelmed.

They resisted desperately, but they went down, with the juniors swarming over them.

"The rope!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Here you are!"

"Hooray!"

Coker discovered then what the coil of rope was for. He found his hands dragged together behind his back.

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and tied tightly. Potter and Greene were bound more easily than Coker. Coker had to be rather roughly handled. Horace Coker never knew when he was beaten.

But he was reduced to subjection at last. He lay on the floor gasping, and pouring out terrifying threats till his breath failed him.

"Bring them along," said Harry Wharton. "Better take it quietly, you bounders! It's a serious matter to resist a court-martial."

"A what?" yelled Coker.

"Court-martial! You are going to be tried under the Protection of the Realm from Blithering Idiots Act for raising a false alarm of Huns."

NEXT
MONDAY—

'WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME!'

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Why, you—you——"

"Shut up, Coker! If he makes a row, bung a handkerchief into his mouth—or, rather a cushion—a hanky wouldn't be big enough——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help!" yelled Coker. "Rescue!"

"They'll raise the whole house if they make that row in the passage," said Tom Brown. "Better cut off the gas."

The "gas" was cut off by the prisoners' own handkerchiefs being stuffed into their mouths. Then they could only gurgle. In the midst of the triumphant juniors they were marched out of the study and along the passage. The court-martial was to sit in the box-room. There was more space there, and it was more secluded. Wharton, very sagely, foresaw that the proceedings might be noisy; and he did not want to be interrupted by masters or prefects.

Coker and Potter and Greene, much repenting of that visit of vengeance to No. 1 Study, were hustled along the Remove passage. They wriggled and gurgled, but many hands were holding them, and they had to go. Several more Removites joined in the procession as they went—by the time the box-room was reached, there was quite an army of extra-special constables on the scene.

Squiff lighted the gas in the box-room; the prisoners were marched in, and the door was closed and locked. The box-room was crowded; nearly all the Remove had joined in the proceedings; the court-martial was quite popular.

Empty boxes were dragged out to form the seats of the court. The court-martial consisted of six members; the rest of the extra-special constables formed the public. Harry Wharton, as president of the court, sat on the biggest trunk, with the three prisoners in a row before him, held by Morgan and Ogilvy and Treluce as warders—each of the warders being armed with a cricket-stump.

"Gentlemen, the court-martial is now open! Peter Todd is counsel for the prosecution. Prisoners, do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

No reply from the prisoners; for excellent reasons.

"Prisoners who do not answer questions are adjudged guilty of contempt of court, and are sentenced to be poked in the ribs with the business end of a cricket-stump!"

The warders executed the sentence on the spot, and there came three ferocious gurgles from the prisoners.

"Dear me!" said the president. "They are gagged! I quite overlooked that fact. Perhaps that accounts for their not replying."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ungag them."

The handkerchiefs were jerked away. Coker and Potter and Greene gasped and spluttered.

"You little scoundrels!" roared Coker.

"Are you applying that expression to the members of the court-martial?" demanded the president sternly. "That is contempt of court. You know the sentence for contempt of court. Warders, do your duty!"

The warders did their duty, and there was a yell of anguish from Coker.

"Ow, ow, ow! You're puncturing me! Chuck it! Yow!"

"Silence in court! Now, gentlemen—my only hat!" ejaculated the president, breaking off suddenly, and jumping off the trunk in alarm.

"What's the matter?"

"There's something alive in this trunk."

"What?"

"I felt it wriggling under the lid!" exclaimed Wharton. "Somebody must have shut up a dog or something——"

Wharton threw up the lid of the big trunk. A touselled head and a scarlet face rose into view, and there was a yell.

"Fishy!"

Fishy was yelling, too.

"Ow! Mercy! I guess I'm a neutral! You can't shoot a free American citizen. I ain't a Britisher—I'm a neutral!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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The roar of laughter enlightened Fisher T. Fish. He blinked round him, dazzled by the light. It had been very dark inside the trunk.

"I—I say, I guess—— My hat! You galoots! Where are the Germans? Blessed if I didn't think the Germans had got me! Are they gone?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at, you jays! I've had an awful time in that trunk!" groaned Fish. "I kept the lid open, but when I heard somebody coming I pulled it tight, and then I was nearly suffocated. I calculate I've had a fearful time in that trunk. Ow!"

To judge by the Yankee junior's looks, he had not had a happy time. But he received no sympathy whatever from the Removites. They howled with merriment. Fisher T. Fish blinked round at them, and recovered himself. He "guessed" that the Removites would not be so hilarious if the German foe were at hand, and he banished his terrors.

"I guess there's nothing to cackle at!" he mumbled. "I've had an awful time. Thinking the house was going to be blown up every minute. What's this little game?"

"It's a court-martial. The prisoners at the bar are going to be tried for spreading a false alarm of Huns. You can clear out, Fishy." Wharton closed the trunk, and sat down again. "Gentlemen——"

"I guess I'm on in this," said Fisher T. Fish. "I reckon I'll be on hand when the punishment starts after the time I've had, owing to those silly jays."

"You may take your seat with the public," said the president, with a wave of the hand.

"Where's the seat?"

"Standing room only," said Bob Cherry. "Shut up, Fishy! You're interrupting the court-martial!"

"Gentlemen, the court is now open!"

And the court-martial proceeded to business.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Court-martialled!

"HORACE COKER, George Potter, and William Greene——"

"Oh, shut up! Ow!" groaned Coker, as the sharp end of a cricket stump clumped upon his ribs again. "Ow! Yow! You little beasts! Ow!"

"Silence in court! Horace Coker, George Potter, and William Greene, you are charged with raising a false alarm of the landing of the Huns on British soil. Under the provisions of the Act for the Protection of the Realm against Silly Asses, you are liable to be shot, bumped, boiled in oil, or otherwise punished as the court may decide. Do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

"You silly young fathead——"

"Contempt of court again! The prisoner Coker had better remember where he is," said the president severely. "This court is not to be trifled with, as the prisoner will be made to understand. Warder, do your duty!" Jab-jab! and a howl from Coker.

"Guilty or not guilty?" repeated the president calmly.

"Not guilty!" groaned Coker.

"Not guilty!" spluttered Potter and Greene, as the warders drew back their stumps for a deadly lunge.

"Very well. Counsel for the prosecution, the matter is in your hands!"

Peter Todd stepped forward.

"Gentlemen of the court, it is with profound regret that I make this charge against the three prisoners. They have hitherto borne a good character. But in the present state of affairs, the country being in danger, it is impossible to pass over the offence of which the prisoners have been guilty."

"Hear, hear!"

"I therefore charge them, and I hope to be able to prove the charge, with raising an unfounded alarm in a public school known as Greyfriars, in the county of Kent. They raised this confounded alarm—I mean this unfounded alarm—by a story that the Germans had landed. Upon investigation, it proves that the supposed Germans were some persons playing a practical joke——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Some persons totally unknown——"

Loud laughter in court.

"Gentlemen, I need not dwell upon the serious nature of the prisoners' offence. They might have caused fatalities in the school. I can call witnesses to prove that Mr. Prout was seen loading his gun—a proceeding that might easily have been attended by fatal consequences, both to Mr. Prout himself, and to anyone else within range——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Furthermore, a junior in the Lower School, having hidden himself in the cellar, remained there too long, and missed his tea. When I mention that this junior was William George Bunter, of the Remove, I shall not need to impress upon the court the seriousness of the matter."

More laughter in court.

"But that is not the worst," went on counsel for the prosecution sternly. "At a time like this, when the friendship of the United States is a great desideratum——"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Good word! Go on!"

"When our statesmen are anxious to do everything in their power to stroke the great Republic down the back in the right way, and the newspapers are buttering up that great country so thickly as to cause a considerable rise in the price of butter—at this time, gentlemen, the heinous conduct of these prisoners has caused great and serious inconvenience to a citizen of the United States——"

"Hear, hear!" from Fisher T. Fish.

"That citizen of a great Republic, gentlemen, stands before you. That citizen, gentlemen, is animated by the friendliest possible feelings towards this country, which he kindly condescends to honour with his presence. He enters with a whole heart into the friendly schemes of his patriotic countrymen for roping in our trade while we are at war with the Huns. And this gentleman, this friendly citizen of a great Republic, has suffered more severely than anyone from the false alarm raised by the prisoners at the bar——"

"I guess that's correct."

"Not only, gentlemen, has he been frightened out of his wits——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hyer, I guess——"

"You will say that that is a light matter, as he has very little wits to be frightened out of. Granted! But consider, gentlemen, for hours and hours this citizen of a great Republic has lain inside a trunk, in a state of mortal terror——"

"I guess——"

"In a state, gentlemen, commonly described as blue funk. And at a time like this, when the great Western Republic is showing its friendly spirit towards the Mother Country by putting up the price of wheat, I call

for the most exemplary punishment of the prisoners at the bar, who have caused the gentleman mentioned such an attack of blue funk that he may not recover for a long time——"

"You jay! You magwump——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, that is my case!" Counsel for the prosecution gracefully retired, leaving the court almost in convulsions.

The president rose to his feet.

"Gentlemen, after the eloquent speech of my learned brother, you will not be in any doubt about your verdict. Guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty!" chorused the court.

"Prisoners at the bar, you are found guilty by a duly-constituted court-martial, acting under the provisions of the Act for Suppressing Dangerous Duffers. I hereby sentence you to the extreme punishment. I should order you to be shot, but there is a by-law at Greyfriars which states that no rubbish may be shot here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I therefore sentence you to be severely and severally bumped, and then ejected on your necks, and kicked as far as the staircase. I trust this will be a lesson to you. Gentlemen, execute the sentence!"

"You young villains!" roared Coker.

"Leggo!" shrieked Potter.

"I—I'll smash you!" howled Greene.

But the extra-special constables proceeded to execute the finding of the court, heedless of the sulphurous objections raised by the prisoners. Horace Coker and George Potter and William Greene were severally and severely bumped, with bumps that made the box-room shake.

Then the door was opened, and the second part of the sentence was executed. The three prisoners were ejected on their necks.

Then came the third part of the sentence, and it seemed to the unhappy Fifth-Formers that every boot in the Remove was at work on their persons.

Although their hands were still tied—which was perhaps fortunate for the executors of the sentence—the three delinquents made excellent speed down the passage. They were helped from behind with great energy.

Coker and Potter and Greene reached their study, feeling that life was not worth living. They rolled in, and sat on the floor, gasping. From the direction of the Remove passage howls of laughter could be heard. Coker & Co. were howling, too, but not with laughter.

Their howls brought Fitzgerald into the study, and he kindly untied them. Fitzgerald seemed to be in danger of going into hysterics. Coker was feeling considerably used up, but his courage was high, and he proposed an immediate visit to the Remove passage, for vengeance. Then Potter and Greene's sorely-tried patience gave way. They were fed up with the Remove, and they were fed up with Coker. They fell upon the warlike Horace, and smote him hip and thigh.

Then they retired from the study, slamming the door after them, and leaving Coker sitting on the carpet, trying to get his second wind.

Coker found more trouble that evening.

When the Head returned, and learned of the alarm of the afternoon, he was wrathful. He sent for Coker & Co. He gave them a lecture that lasted ten minutes by the study clock, and wound up by commanding them to let no more be heard of the special constables. He added that if anything more was heard of special constables in the Fifth Form, the special constables would hear from him.

But nothing more was heard of them. Indeed, from that day forth, to rouse Coker of the Fifth to a state approaching frenzy, it was only necessary to whisper in his ear the words "Special Constable."

THE END.

(Don't fail to order next Monday's issue of "THE MAGNET." It contains a fine yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled "WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME!" See that you get a copy.)

23



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THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF OUR NEW SERIAL.



"THE STAR OF

THE CIRCUS!"

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Story
of Thrilling
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Circus Life.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Sir Richard Battingley, a much-travelled scoundrel, has some mysterious reason for wishing the death of Clive Clare, a handsome and daring circus performer, also known as the King of Equestrians. He, therefore, engages another villain, named Paul Murdway, to compass Clive Clare's death for the sum of ten thousand pounds.

Paul Murdway follows the circus in its wanderings, and, under the name of Adrian Deering, leagues himself with a member of Cyrano's Circus, named Senor Miguel Gurez, a Mexican dead shot, to bring about Clive's death.

Several plots which the two villains make, however, fail, but they do not give up their intention of injuring Clive when an opportunity occurs.

Ben Ellis, or Professor Durnette, the King of Lion-Tamers, to give him his stage name, tries to force his daughter, May Ellis, to marry Adrian Deering, in order that the latter may give him two hundred pounds to make good the circus funds, from which he has stolen that amount.

Roly-Poly and Bononi, the two clowns, are greatly troubled by a strange complaint from which Napoleon, the performing donkey, is apparently suffering. Roly-Poly suggests that Bononi administers a powder by blowing it down the animal's throat through a paper tube.

"Are you ready?" said Roly, as Bononi placed his mouth to the end of the tube. "Blow!"

(Now go on with the story.)

Napoleon Blew First!

But before the words were well out of Roly-Poly's mouth Bononi had leapt back two or three yards, coughing, spluttering, and blinking.

His face and hair were smothered with the scattered powder, which he vainly tried to get out of his mouth, nose, and eyes with his handkerchief.

"Gracious 'cavins, Bill! What ever is the matter?" asked Roly, in simulated astonishment.

"Matter!" gasped Bononi. "Why, these here jeroozlems, or spoozlems, or methoozlems, or whatever you call 'em, are no class!"

"You don't mean to say you've got 'em?" anxiously inquired Roly.

"But you said Napoleon had 'em?"

"Certingly; but that powder'll do 'em a world o' good."

"He didn't take the powder!" gasped Bononi.

"What! Didn't you blow?"

"Yes, Joseph, I blew!" returned Bononi, still spluttering.

"I blew right enough, but Napoleon blew first!"

"Well, I'm blowed!" ejaculated Roly, in affected surprise.

"Come to look at yer close, Bill, you do look a little bit dusty. You'd better give him another powder."

"No, Joseph; decidedly not! Scroozlems or no scroozlems, I retire for ever from the veterinary profession!"

"Hee-haw, hee-haw, hee-haw!" from Napoleon.

"Wotcher laughing at?" cried Bononi, looking very sternly at the donkey.

"Hee-haw-aw-aw-aw!" brayed Napoleon again.

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"You wicked, ungrateful creature!" said Bononi. "How dare you exult over my discomfiture! I've a great mind to punish you—I have, indeed!"

"Don't threaten him, William!" put in Roly. "Remember, Napoleon beat you when you came to blows just now. Come to think of it, Bill, p'r'aps it ain't the moozlems, after all; it's very like the hiccups. Just try him with a drink."

"Drink!" echoed Bononi. "Do you want to give him the boozlems? Look here, Joseph," he went on, suddenly catching sight of a twinkle in Roly's eye. "I believe you've been having a game! Why did you say Napoleon had the moozlems?"

"Why, Bill," returned the other, getting to a safe distance, "cause I wanted to see yer give him a powder."

"What! Did you know what would happen, then?"

"No, Bill; I assure you I didn't know—I only guessed! Sorry I cannot linger longer; therefore I will no longer linger. I have a pressin' app'intment with the Kaiser."

"You will have a more pressing appointment with the local coroner if you exasperate me more! Get thee gone! Adieu!"

"There you are mistaken, Bill. I had you. Tra-la-la!"

And with a bound Roly-Poly was clear of the missile which Bononi hurled, and out of the tent.

To one of Clive Clare's vitality the injuries he had sustained in the lions' den—injuries which might have had far worse effects on weaker physiques—promised to be not very serious in his case.

In fact, the careful attention which the doctor had given him, combined with a long night's rest, helped to make him feel pretty much his usual self next day. When, after eating a good breakfast, he strolled down to the circus for the regular morning practice, nothing more than the bandage round his slightly aching head and a feeling of stiffness about his ribs served to remind him of his recent adventure in the lions' cage.

"Ah, here you are!" he said, as presently he encountered May Ellis in a secluded corner of the circus. "How shall I ever thank you enough for what you did last night? You saved my life, May!"

She averted her head, murmuring some commonplace about its being nothing.

"But, indeed, it was a great deal!" Clive burst out, seizing her hands in his. "It is more than I can ever repay. Why, good heavens! What is the matter?" He had managed to get a view of her face, which up till now had been turned from him. "What is the matter, May?"

"Oh, it is nothing, Clive—nothing!"

She again dropped her eyes.

"But there is something!" he said earnestly. "You have been crying—you have something serious on your mind. What is it?"

She did not answer.

"You must tell me!" he pleaded. "Whatever woes you have, I am willing to share—nay, I must share! To see you grieve in silence is to add a greater weight to my heart than the knowledge of your woes would cause. Tell me why you have been crying?"

Still she maintained silence, something like a sob catching her throat.

"May—May, you must tell me!" insisted Clive.

"It is nothing—really nothing!" she said brokenly.

"Ah, but I know it is something! You do not cry for nothing. Tell me, is it your father again?"

Clive almost clenched his teeth as he asked.

She bowed her head, not trusting herself to speak.

"Ah, it is your father! He has been bullying you again. What a brute, after what you did for him last night!"

"Oh, hush—hush, Clive! Do not speak against my father!"

"But I will speak, May! What has he been doing this morning to make you grieve like this?"

"Do not ask me, Clive! It is nothing in which you can help me, and to know it might—might make you hate or despise me!"

"Hate you!" broke out Clive vehemently, seizing her hands. "Despise you? I, who owe my life to you! No, no! Whatever this secret is, since it causes you sorrow, you must tell me! Remember, there are to be no secrets between us. Whatever our joys or woes may be, we are to share them. I insist on knowing what your father has done to-day!"

For answer, she impulsively bent her head forward, and burst into a torrent of tears.

Clive let her cry for two or three minutes.

He plainly saw that something serious was the matter—that it was no use at that moment trying to stem the tide of her grief. She would be better for crying.

Still, he determined not to waver in his resolve to find out the cause of her sorrow. So when her tears had ceased to flow and her slender frame had ceased to tremble from the force of her sobs, he asked her softly and tenderly to tell him all.

The girl, reluctant as she was, could not withstand his manly insistence and sympathy. Slowly then, with averted face, she told of her father's continual attempts to persuade her to marry Adrian Deering, of her father's defalcated accounts, and of his impending disgrace.

"He will be ruined unless this money is paid!" she concluded brokenly. "That is why he insists on my marrying that man Deering, whom I loathe and despise. But Deering is rich, and could save him. I would do anything for my father; I would lay down my life for him. But to marry that man—no, no, that I can never do!"

For a minute or two Clive Clare remained silent. A deep sigh escaped him.

"Clive," murmured the girl, in a low voice, "what I have told you has surprised you. You did not think I was the daughter of a—"

She was going to say "thief," but Clive interrupted:

"No, no," he said, "I wasn't thinking of that. Whatever others may be, doesn't affect you. I was thinking, wondering what can be done. How much money did you say?"

"Two hundred pounds!" she answered, her voice trembling.

Clive was silent again for a moment.

"May," he said presently, bending towards her and speaking earnestly, "I haven't two hundred pounds in the world; but I have something. You must let me help you with that."

"No, dear Clive—no!" she interrupted hastily.

"I say you must let me help you!" he repeated firmly.

"No pride—becoming as it is to you—must stand in your way now. I have nearly ninety pounds in the bank. I can withdraw it in two or three days. That would be something."

"Clive," once more broke in May, with a hollow voice, "I tell you you must not!"

"It would tide matters over, perhaps, for a little time," he went on, unheeding her interruption; "and, meantime, we might find some means of getting the rest of the money together. I'll go down to the post-office at once. Good-bye!"

May Ellis could not trust herself to speak. She tried to restrain him, but in vain. He had gone.

No sooner was he out of sight than the girl ran to her private compartment in the dressing-tent, and, sitting down upon a chair, burst into a fresh flood of tears.

"Oh, how good he is!" she moaned to herself. "Oh, how can I ever repay his generosity?"

While she sat thus in sad communion with herself, Clive, having obtained his bankbook, sped to the Milchester post-office. Ever since he had begun to earn money, he had saved what he could of it. Little by little—a shilling now, five shillings anon—his little store had gradually grown, as saved money always will, into nearly ninety pounds. Of late he had looked upon this little hoard as the basis upon which to start his home, when, one day in the future, he should be married.

It was to be the guardian gold which, in their precarious existence, should keep the hungry wolf from their domestic door. He had watched his little fortune grow by infinitesimal stages with fond, glad eyes—not with the gloating eyes of the greedy miser, but with the happy look of one who knows the true value of money, the happiness it can confer, and the evils it can avert. And now at one fell swoop his laboriously-

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accumulated savings were to disappear. But he thought of it without a sigh.

"It is for May's sake!" he said to himself. "It is the first time I have been able to do anything to save her from sorrow—thank Heaven for the opportunity!"

And, with a step that was buoyant, and a look that was almost joyous, he entered the post-office and filled up the form which was to bring him in the course of the next few days the much-needed money.

Bononi Gets His Own Back, and Roly-Poly Feels Silly.

It was past midnight; the performance at Cyrano's Circus had been over for nearly two hours. Roly-Poly and Bononi had betaken themselves to their joint lodgings, and after partaking heartily of a supper of succulent pork chops, had retired to bed.

For economical reasons, the clowns shared the same bedroom, the two beds, as it happened, being placed against the same wall. Both had got into bed, the light had been put out, and within ten minutes Bononi was giving vent to a series of sonorous snores.

"There's moosic for yer!" murmured Roly-Poly to himself, as he tossed from side to side in the throes of undigested pork. "There's a cantater, hoper, and horrytario rolled into one! Jest fancy a man droppin' off into a sleep like that arter three pork chops and two big 'elphin's o' chipped taters! Sleep! I never knew sich a fellar to sleep as Bill. Mistook his vocation, that's what Bill's done. Bill reely ought to be in grand hoper. Moosic o' that sort 'ud jest do for the stormy tempest, or the forty-year sleep scene in 'Rip Van Winkle.' What a dig-es-ti-on that man must have. William," he soliloquised, as once more he turned restlessly and rearranged his pillow, "I henvys yer, not yer looks, nor yet yer brains; but yer bloomin' talent fer snoozin', which—"

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw! Hee-haw!"

Roly-Poly lifted his ear about an inch from his pillow. He fancied he had heard something; but, listen intently as he might, he didn't hear it again. He replaced his ear on the pillow, and covered his other ear with the bedclothes. At last it seemed as if he would himself be able to doze off now; he was dimly aware of that sublime sensation of sliding off the edge of the world of consciousness into the smooth sea of sleep, when—

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw! Hee-haw!"

Roly sat bolt upright now, and scarcely breathed. Had he heard aright? Was it the voice of Napoleon in reality, or was he dreaming?

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw!"

The perspiration seemed to issue from Roly-Poly's every pore now. What on earth could it be? Was the practical joke he had played on Bononi earlier in the day to bear fruit and haunt him for ever! Roly shuddered as he contemplated it.

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw! Hee-haw!"

Oh, for a light! Where were the matches? The candle was on Bononi's side—how unfortunate! He could not stand this darkness much longer.

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw!" came that sound, twice this time.

"Bill! Bill! For 'Eavin's sake, wake up!" cried Roly hoarsely.

"What's marrer?" yawned Bononi, through the darkness.

"Oh, Bill, wake up! I'll never joke agen!"

"Why, what's up, Joe? Anything wrong?" The awakened Bononi was, in his turn, now sitting up in bed.

"Ah, Bill, but I've had a 'orrible experience! Where did you leave Napoleon, Bill?"

"Napoleon? Why, in his stable, of course! Where should you think I left him?"

"I dunno, Bill—pon me word, I dunno! But ever since I've been in bed I've heard his voice."

"Well, if you heard anything, you've got 'em bad, that's all; and the sooner you sleep 'em off the better it'll be for you. Good-night!"

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw! Hee-haw!"

That fearsome sound again! Roly could endure it no longer. With a wild kind of war-whoop, half of defiance, half of fear, he sprang out of bed, leapt across to where he knew Bononi had placed the matches, struck one, and lit the candle. Then he stared round the room apprehensively.

"Now," said Roly, in a tone which was meant to be firm, but was really very wobbly indeed—"now," he repeated, mopping his moist brow and seizing a poker—"now there's a light, I can bear it." He brandished the poker melodramatically, and added: "Now let the ghosts of all the donkeys as ever lived hinside or houtside o' Cyrano's Circus appear, I'll meet 'em face to face! I fear them not! Let 'em all co—"

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw! Hee-haw-aw-aw!"

As that sound interrupted his outburst, the poker dropped to the floor from Roly-Poly's nerveless grasp, the perspiration broke out afresh, and his knees looked as if they must knock together.

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw!" came that weird cry again.

For a moment Roly glanced at Bononi, from whose direction the sound seemed to have proceeded; then a flash of intelligence—vague enough, it is true—shot through his brain.

He bolted over to where Bononi still snored. Holding the candle, he peered close down into the sleeper's face. The face was half buried in the bedclothes, and as Roly gazed he thought he detected a convulsive movement of the sheets and blankets.

He peered closer, and then he distinctly saw Bononi's doubled-up fist cramming the corner of a sheet into his mouth. The flash of intelligence brightened.

With his left hand Roly-Poly snatched at the bedclothes, to disclose Bononi's face, now almost as red as a lobster.

"William," gasped Roly-Poly, "what does this mean?"

But Bononi could not answer. His usually melancholy visage was transformed. Bononi, the clown, who had rarely been known to laugh, was simply convulsed.

"William," again sternly demanded the outraged Roly, "answer me at once! What does this mean?"

"Hee-haw!"

Only once came the sound this time; for, with a blood-curdling whoop, Roly made another grab at the bedclothes, from whence he knew now the sound had undoubtedly come. He snatched back the sheets and blankets, and there, close by Bononi's right hand, lay a dark something—a machine of curious shape and mechanism, with a trumpet-like attachment.

"Ha!" cried the triumphant Roly. "What do you call this, William—what do you call this, eh?"

"Oh, lor! Oh, lor! Oh, lor!" moaned Bononi, in melancholy delight. "Oh, dear me, Joseph, what a lark me and the phonograph have had!"

"Funnigraph, d'yer call it?" cried the exasperated Roly. "I don't see anything funny in it—disturbin' a bloke's sleep with yer confounded brother's voice! William, we've been friends in the past, but now the hepoch is hover and done with. To-night, William, I spare yer; to-morrow'll be branded on yer brain for ever as our day of reckonin'!"

Roly-Poly walked gravely to his bed, and got between the sheets. Then, as he blew out the candle, he added:

"William, I've done with you for the present. After to-morrow I shall say, 'Adieu—adieu!'"

"Ah, there you are mistaken, Joseph!" purred Bononi. "I had you!"

Then the two clowns turned on their sides, and both were soon in the land of dreams.

A Lucky Recovery.

Three days had passed, and Cyrano's Royal Circus and Imperial Hippodrome had moved on to the town of Doverton. In the interim Roly-Poly and Bononi had quite forgiven one another their practical jokes, and were as fast friends and as inveterate practical jokers as ever.

In the same time Clive Clare had spent many hours of intense anxiety. His money was coming, he knew, but a mortal fear was upon him that it might not come in time—that there might be some delay.

But now, on this afternoon, he had gone down to the Doverton post-office, and had found the withdrawal warrant there awaiting him.

With a feeling of joyful relief, he had filled up the receipt, and had been handed close upon ninety pounds in Bank of England notes.

How light of step he was as he went down to the circus that night! He had told May Ellis the fact that he had the money all safe, and she had asked him to keep it until the next morning.

It was in his pocket-book now, safe under his coat. He felt for it, as he changed his clothes in the dressing-tent, preparatory to his performance. Yes, there it was, safe and snug. He went into the ring that night happier than he had been for the past three days.

His turn went off without a hitch. The applause, always vociferous, was to-night deafening. Three times was he called, and three times did he bow his acknowledgments to the audience. Then, light-hearted as a bird, he flew back to the dressing-tent, and entered his compartment.

His mind was still full of that money—the money which was to save off, for a time at any rate, the disgrace and exposure of May's father.

He knelt down to the box on which he had placed his coat; his hand slid into the breast-pocket. As it did so, a

numbness suddenly came over him, his blood seemed to freeze, his face twitched. His hand remained immovable in the pocket.

The pocket-book containing the money was gone!

For a full minute Clive stood there dumbfounded. His hand was empty, his breast-pocket was empty!

With the realisation that his money was gone, everything about him seemed to revolve quickly, as on a swift and mighty wheel. At first he could only grasp dimly the one fact that his money was not where he had left it. For a moment his brain seemed, as it were, caught in a cog—seemed to have stopped dead, rendering him incapable of speculating, or even wondering, where the missing pocket-book could have gone to. Such a state of mental stagnation, however, could not last long. The first shock of bewildering knowledge over, Clive's mind presently began to work in normal fashion. The pocket-book was not where he had left it. Perhaps it had dropped to the ground.

Down on hands and knees he sank, searching here, there, and everywhere, moving boxes and baskets, and seeking amongst the miscellaneous paraphernalia that littered his dressing compartment. In vain! Search as he would, in likely and unlikely places, not a trace of the missing money could he discover.

A deadly sickness of heart came upon him as he reflected on his loss. Not for his own sake, however—although the sudden deprivation of what had taken years and years of careful husbanding to accumulate was serious enough in all conscience—but for the sake of May Ellis. It was to save her father from shame and ruin that he had withdrawn the money; and now it was gone from his possession as irrevocably, to all appearances, as if it had never existed.

A hot flush suffused his frame, to be followed a minute after by a spell of shivering, as of a sudden chill. He sat down on a box, lowered his now aching brow, rested it between his palms, and set himself to think the matter over.

What could he do? His money had disappeared. Where could he look for it? Someone must have taken it. Who could it be? Even as he thus indulged in gloomy ponderings, some words uttered in rather a loud tone of voice struck upon his ear.

"Why, good 'evvings alive!" cried the voice, which Clive instantly recognised as Roly-Poly's. "What ever's come over the animile?"

"The animile! Which?" asked another voice—that of Bononi.

"Why, Bimbo, to be sure, silly one! Bust me if the hape ain't a-goin' into trainin' for a full-blown stationer's shop! Twig the henverlope—court size, sooperfine, hextry double-thick cream-laid, guaranteed not to come unstuck. It's been used, though"—Roly had seized the ape by this time—"and—why, goodness gracious, it's addressed to Senor Miguel Gurez, Hesquire, Bart.!"

"Yes," chimed in Bononi: "but what's that in Bimbo's other paw? Do my eyes deceive me, or is yon dark-hued package a pocket-book?"

"Jeeroosalem! But you're right, Bill! It is a pocket-book."

Roly secured the article as he spoke.

"Right, Joseph! Of course I am right. I was ever remarkable for my perspicacity."

"Percy Cassidy?" observed Roly. "Dunno the gent, Bill. Is he Irish? And what—"

But at that moment Roly felt a hand placed upon his arm, and there, before him, stood Clive Clare, his face flushing and paling by turns, and his frame all a-quiver with excitement.

"Roly," he began, in a voice choked with emotion, "give it to me!"

Roly-Poly turned round in surprise.

"Eh, Clive? Give you what?"

"The book—the pocket-book! It's mine!"

More by Clive's manner than by what he said, Roly-Poly was struck dumb with astonishment. In his astonishment he hesitated, keeping the book clasped tightly in his hand. That moment's hesitation enabled Clive to calm himself a little.

"You are quite right, Roly," he said, misinterpreting the clown's hesitation. "Coming into your possession as it has, you are not bound to give it to the first person who demands it. But I can assure you that the book belongs to me, and only a minute ago I'd given it up as lost. Now, to prove my words, I ask you to open it, Roly. Inside you will find bank-notes to the value of ninety pounds, and on the flap of the book you will find my name and address. Open it!"

Roly-Poly smiled as he held out the pocket-book towards Clive.

"Here, laddie," he said, "take your book: and I'm jolly glad to be able to restore it to you!"

"Open it first, Roly," said Clive.
Two spots of red came into the clown's face now.
"Open it!" he echoed. "Not me. D'ye think I doubt your word, laddie?"

"It isn't that," said Clive hastily and apologetically. "I didn't mean that, Roly. But, you see, where a lot of money's concerned, it's important, and—"

"Here, collar hold of your book, Clive!"

"No, Roly—no! Open it first, and see if what I've said is true."

Roly-Poly held the pocket-book as high as he could in the air.

"Look here, young feller," he said, with all the indignation of which he was capable; "you an' me have known one another fer more than a bit, an' we've bin good pals, ain't we? An' when a good pal o' mine comes to me an' sort o' insinuates as he thinks as how I kinder insinuates—why, then I thinks it's time—that is ter say, I sorter feels as how—"

"Joseph," gently interpolated Bononi, addressing himself to the confused Roly-Poly—"Joseph, don't do it. You will get that fat brain of yours in such a fearful tangle that you will never be able to straighten it out again. Don't do it, Joseph. I implore you!"

"But," expostulated Roly, "Clive here sorter thinks, in a manner o' speakin', as it might be—"

"Did he now, Joe?" interrupted Bononi soothingly. "Well, Clive didn't mean to ruffle you, I'm quite sure. Clive will take his pocket-book—won't you, Clive?"

With a smile, Clive accepted the once more proffered book. He removed the elastic band which held it together, and pulled out of the flap a bundle of banknotes.

"There, Roly, old chap," he said, "you see I've opened it myself. Here are the notes—ninety pounds, as I said—and here's my name and address written inside the book."

"Can't read!" snapped Roly. "An' you can take the notes away; don't want to see 'em!"

"Don't mind him, Clive," chipped in Bononi. "Joe hates the sight of liquor—I mean lucre! But how came you to lose the book?"

"Well, that's just what puzzles me," responded Clive. "It was in my pocket right enough before I went into the ring, and the first thing I did on coming out was to see that it was safe. Ten minutes ago I found it was gone, and searched high and low for it. I suppose Bimbo must have been doing a bit of pocket-picking."

"I don't think he'd go to your pocket, somehow," remarked Roly, with what was, for him, quite a cunning look on his face. "Besides your pocket-book, he'd got somethin' else—this 'ere henvelope, addressed to Senor Miguel Gurez. What's that mean, eh?"

"Well," laughed Clive, quite nappy now that his treasure was recovered, "that only points to one thing—Bimbo's been going through several pockets, I expect."

Roly-Poly shook his head vigorously.

"Scuse me," he said indignantly, "but that there animile's morals is beyond reproach. Bimbo didn't take that book from your pocket, I'll go bail!"

"Then where else did he get it?" asked Clive quite innocently.

"Ah, that's just the question!" returned Roly drily, fixing his eyes first on the pocket-book and then on the envelope which he held in his hand—"that's jest the question."

"Yes," put in Bononi, "this is the question: If Bimbo picked the pocket-book from a pocket, which is the pocket from which Bimbo the pocket-book picked? There's a tongue-twister for you, Joseph—copyrighted in Great Britain and the United States of America, all rights reserved—to supersede that ancient, bewhiskered, hoary-headed, pre-Adamite Peter Piper wheeze, which has been in your repertoire from time immemorial!"

Roly shook his head in mock sorrow.

"You are too funny, William," he said—"too funny to live!"

"Ah, you think so, Joseph?"

"I do, William," responded Roly mournfully—"much too funny to live! You ought to die, Billy—you ought, really! I feel it would be a great and charitable deed for me to take a axe an' slew you. And, oh, Bill, what a bee-yewtiful corpse you would make!"

"Ah, Joseph," reproved Bononi, "you have but one single failing as a clown—you are vulgar without being humorous! I appeal to you, Clive."

But Clive only laughed, repeated his thanks, and turned away, elated at so quickly recovering what, in his first moments of despair, he had given up for lost.

Bononi Does Wickelford's Waxworks a Good Turn.

"What a remarkably small world this is, to be sure! Guess who's here?" And Bononi, having burst suddenly in upon Roly-Poly at their joint lodgings in Petsbury—to which town Cyrano's Circus had come from Doverton—plumped THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 375.

NEXT MONDAY—'WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME!'

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himself down in an easy-chair, and repeated: "Guess who's here, Joe?"

Roly looked up inquiringly.

"What's the excitement, William?" he queried. "Wherefore this dumbfounderment, my friend?"

"I've been round the town—" began Bononi.

"Oh," chimed in Roly, "that accounts for it! You've been round the town, and you've frightened all the natives; and you're scared at what you've done, and you're expectin' the police in a few minutes!"

The sallow skin about Bononi's lips and cheekbones commenced to quiver.

"No, no, Joe!" he remarked; "I'm in dead earnest. As I before observed, I have been round the town; and what do you think I've discovered?"

"Out upon thee, William, for a modern Columbus! How can I tell what you've dish-covered? Pork sassidges, mebbe?"

"Pray be serious, Joseph! You would never guess, so I will tell you. Wickelford is here—here in Petsbury!"

"Wickelford?" repeated Roly calmly. "And who's Wickelford, anyway?"

"As regards Wickelford's World-Famous Exhibition of Moving Waxworks," observed Bononi haughtily, "it may enlighten you somewhat to know that it was with that celebrated exhibition that I graduated as a public entertainer."

"Oh!" ejaculated Roly, quite sympathetically; "it's an old 'shop' o' yours, eh?"

"Exactly. For years I toured the kingdom with Montague Wickelford. At that time he looked like making a very good thing of it—had a couple of hundred figures, to say nothing of lifelike groups."

"And what was your particklar line o' biz, Bill?"

"I! Oh, I was Wickelford's lecturer-in-chief."

"Was you indeed, Bill? Took the audience round with a wand, did yer, tellin' 'em which was Charley Peace an which was the Kaiser, 'cos they wouldn't a bin able to distinguish 'em else, eh, Bill?"

Bononi shrugged his shoulders disdainfully.

"You don't know Wickelford's!" he observed with scorn. "All our figures were lifelike works of art; we were the Tussauds of the provinces. You don't seem to understand!"

"Oh, yes, I do!" retorted Roly; and then burst into song:

"They're just like life—absolutely marvellous!

We interchange the figgers, don't you know;

When Lord Salisbury gets dingy,

Why, we calls him Ranjitsinhji,

In our nobby little waxwork show."

"Rot!" exclaimed Bononi. "You are mixing Wickelford's up with a low penny gaff!"

"Ah, I s'pose you charged tuppence, then, Bill?"

"And sixpence!" roared Bononi proudly. "We were patronised by the nobility!"

"Oh," returned Roly, "the nobs come to see yer, did they? Well, I called it a 'nobby little waxwork show,' didn't I? But there, I won't get at you any more, Bill. What about Wickelford's show?"

"Well, it's here in Petsbury," replied the mollified Bononi. "I haven't seen the show yet, but I've seen the bills—pretty poor lot they are—and I've seen Wickelford. Pretty poor lot he is now!" Bononi sighed. "From two hundred figures he's down to about two score, and a hard job he finds it to pay his way!"

Roly-Poly sympathetically opined that the ups and downs of show life was "summat wonderful."

"Yes," remarked Bononi; "and it's very hard in his case. No fault of Wickelford's that he's come down. He always went straight enough, but misfortune dogged his steps."

"Fancy you bein' a waxwork-lecturer, Bill! said Roly-Poly. "That's where you got the gift o' the gab, I s'pose?"

"Oh, I don't know about that!" responded Bononi airily. "Among my other natural gifts, I certainly cultivated that of oratory whilst travelling with Wickelford's. But, apart from that, Joe, I'd like to do poor old Wickelford a turn!"

"Why, what can you do, Bill—you with no pounds no shillin's and nuppence? Certainly, with a face an' figger like yours, you might make one in the chamber of horrors!"

"Joe!" interjected Bononi, springing suddenly to his feet, "I thank you! Unwittingly you have give me an idea—an idea that may buck Wickelford's show up a bit. I shall want your help, Joe, and I must get Tremaine, the ventriloquist, as well."

(Look out for next week's Instalment of this most amusing yarn. Order your MAGNET early!)



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FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME!" By FRANK RICHARDS.

Great scenes prevail at Greyfriars in next Monday's magnificent story of Harry Wharton & Co., for the news arrives that Johnny Bull, whose dramatic exit from the school some time previously came as a severe blow to his chums, is homeward bound from Australia. Many momentous and exciting incidents come to pass, however, before the burly and good-natured Removite rejoins his schoolfellows; and there are unparalleled scenes of revelry and rejoicing in the "Rag" on the red-letter day.

"WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME!"

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD!"

Those who have taken in our famous little journal for any length of time will know that Harry Wharton & Co., the most popular schoolboys heroes ever created, produce an amateur magazine among themselves, known locally as

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD!"

Extracts from this laughable little journal occasionally appear in our stories; but I am sure my chums would be delighted to have a complete issue set before them. They may obtain this superb treat by purchasing a copy of the

SPLENDID SPRING NUMBER

of our companion paper, the "Gem" Library, on sale this Wednesday. A free copy of "The Greyfriars Herald," easily detachable, is included with the long, complete school tale of Tom Merry & Co., and all lovers of the "Magnet" will fairly revel in this delightful schoolboys' weekly.

A stirring serial story by Fisher T. Fish, a humorous poem by Frank Nugent, and a brightly-written Editorial by Harry Wharton, are a few of the fine array of features which "The Greyfriars Herald" contains; and every one of my chums should order his copy of the "Gem" Library at once, to avoid what will otherwise be a grievous disappointment.

Apart from "The Greyfriars Herald," the magnificent story of Tom Merry & Co. is an absolute masterpiece, and will create a considerable sensation in all circles, being one of the most powerfully-written yarns of modern times.

This Wednesday's great issue of the "Gem" Library will be the first Special Double Number our companion paper has had for some time, and I want all my chums to appreciate this fact by recommending that great feast of reading-matter to all their friends. And whatever you do, don't forget to secure a copy of "The Greyfriars Herald." You will have the treat of your lives!

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

M. C.—The story you mention appeared in the "Dreadnought" a short time ago. I hope it will refresh your memory.

A. Astley (Bootle).—I must apologise for not replying to your letter. I am unable to answer all your questions in this column. If you will let me have your address, I will reply in full. Thank you for your praise of the "Magnet" and "Chuckles."

"An Affectionate Reader" (Richmond).—The finest tale of its kind I can recommend since "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," is "Barred Out," a story of Rookwood School, which appeared in "The Boys' Friend" a week or two back. Whilst on the subject, I may say that the school stories at present appearing in "The Boys' Friend" are well worth reading, since they are written by a man who has a keen eye for every side of school life.

Robert H. Morgan (Holyhead).—Your poem is not at all bad for a boy of thirteen, but the metre is at fault in many places. Try again.

Ethel Bruce (Forfar).—I will bear your suggestion in mind. Many thanks for your loyalty!

"Bab" (London, E.).—A story on the lines you suggest will appear at some future date. Best wishes!

E. D. Wells, 155, Balsall Heath Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, wishes to establish a "Magnet" Club in his district.

"The Lion Social Club" (Surrey).—You certainly have my full permission to advertise the "Gem" in your journal.

Will the following readers please accept my best thanks for their kind letters and useful suggestions:

F. Ewins (Bristol); C. Klein (Torquay); Charles B. Mills (Littlehampton); Dorothy Pidgeon (Kingston); T. Williams (Cardiff); Harry G. Oughton; "Seven Staunch Gemites" (Manchester); "An Australian Girl"; Ivor Howells; "A New Gemite" (Owdham); J. Nappin and Chums (New York City); "Glasgow Reader"; L. Waldo (Cambridge); and "A Girl Gem Reader" (Golders Green).

F. Lester (Westmeon); "A Carlisle Reader"; William Vaughan (Wandsworth); "Two Magnetites" (Hull); "Eunice" (Merthyr); "A Girl Reader" (Sydenham); F. Sedgley (Kingston); Miss Kathleen Tredrea (Auckland); "The Heralds" (Liverpool); Oliver Plumb, and H. M. S. (Brockley).

A. S. E. (Toronto).—You may certainly send an annual subscription to the "Gem" and "Magnet" direct to this office. Glad you like the Talbot yarns.

Peggy H.—You strike me as being a very spirited and enthusiastic supporter of the "Gem" and its brother-journals, and as such I wish you good luck in all your undertakings. I admire your patriotic principles.

"Quill-driver" (North Bermondsey).—Thank you for your letter. At the time you wrote, "The Boys' Friend" was not a companion paper, and I was therefore not responsible for the features you mention. You will see that Master Carlton has amply apologised for his folly, and his unfortunate campaign against the "Gem" is now a thing of the past.

"Dilwyn".—I congratulate you on your efforts to popularise the companion papers in Wales. Your good wishes are heartily reciprocated.

W. Allen & L. Redfern (Cheshire).—You are right in your conjecture. The Form in question contains about forty fellows.

G. F. Anderson.—I cannot understand how your previous letter came to be overlooked, as I make it a practice to answer all communications which arrive at this office, either through the post, or on this page. Eric Kildare, George Darrel, and James Monteith are the names you require.

The Editor

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