

**GREAT SENSATION ! Publication of Private Correspondence
between the Editor of "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY and
Herbert H.Locke, Esq., M.A., Headmaster of Greyfriars School.**



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(A grand incident in the great tale of school life contained in this issue.)



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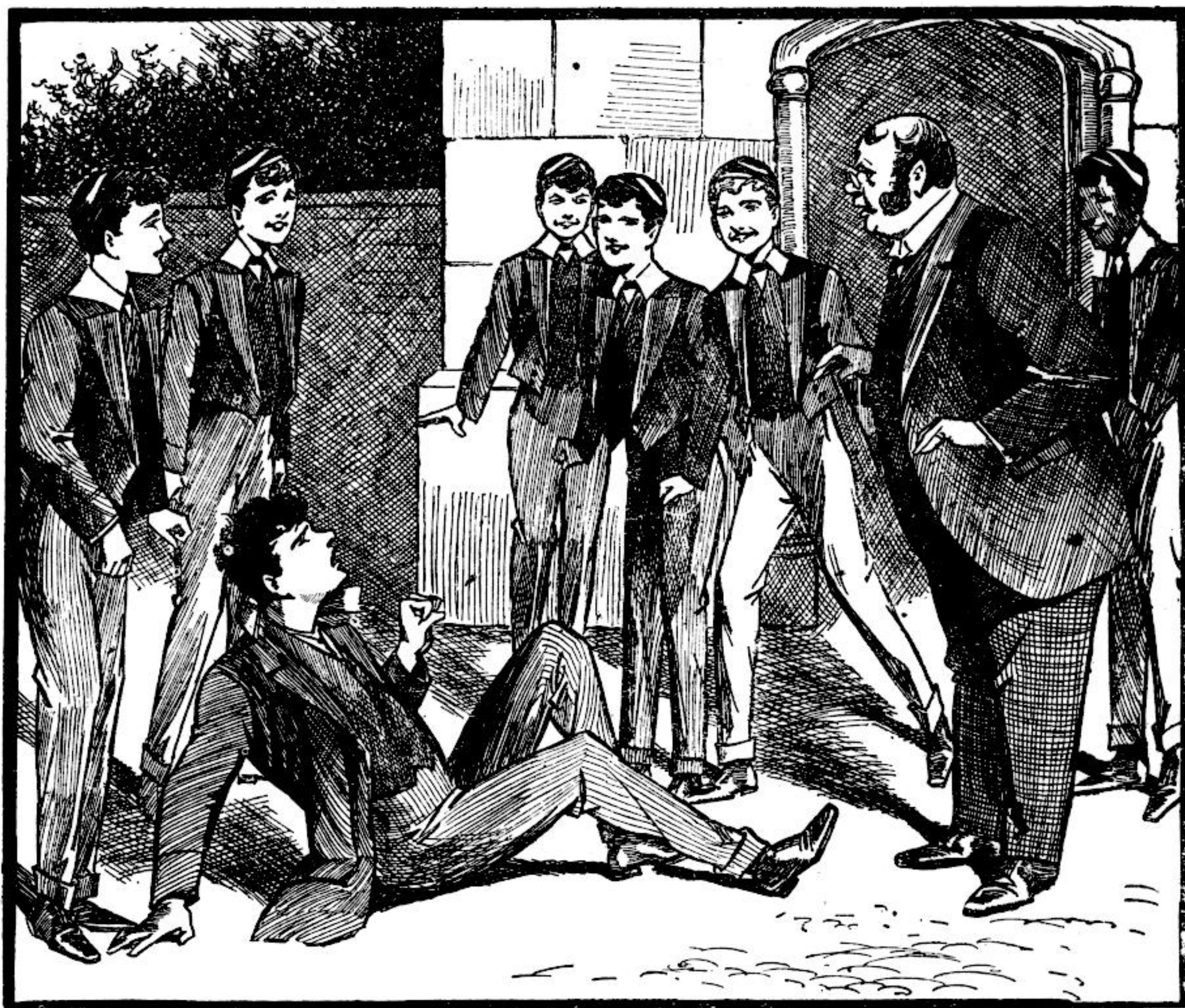
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A New, Long, Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



The Fifth-Form master gazed blankly at the dishevelled, crimson, gasping Fifth-Former. "Coker! What is the meaning of this?" (See Chapter 5.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Extraordinary!

"**S**OMETHING very special!" said Coker.
Coker of the Fifth spoke thoughtfully. He was looking thoughtful. That remark was, in fact, the outcome of several minutes' deep reflection.

Coker's study-mates, Potter and Greene, looked bright and anticipative. They were watching Coker's face. They were watching, too, the letter in his hand, which he had just been reading. They were watching, with still

greater interest, the banknote he had taken out of the letter. On that banknote the magic figure "£10" could be seen. It was no wonder that the manner of Coker's study-mates was kind, considerate, and respectful. They watched Coker with affectionate solicitude; they hung upon the words that fell from his lips, as though those words were pearls of great wisdom.

Never had their feelings of friendship for Coker been so deep and sincere. At that moment, they would have done anything for Coker. They were prepared to let him read out the letter from his Aunt Judy, if he liked.

"Very special!" repeated Potter.

"Very!" said Greene, rubbing his hands.

"It's a half-holiday to-morrow," said Coker, looking at them thoughtfully.

"So it is," said Potter, with a nod.

The next day was Wednesday, which was always a half-holiday at Greyfriars. But Potter was ready to regard Coker's statement as a new and original discovery.

"Couldn't have happened better," said Coker.

"It couldn't, old chap!"

"Luckily, I'm in funds," went on Coker. "And Aunt Judy has sent me a tenner, too. Money won't be short."

"Good old auntie!" murmured Potter, in deep appreciation.

"We'd better talk it over," continued Coker. "Under the circumstances, it's got to be something very special indeed."

"Rely on us, old chap," said Greene.

Coker nodded.

"Yes, I depend on you fellows to back me up. With this tenner, and the few quid I had left, we shall have plenty of tin. And I don't care if there isn't twopence left, so long as the celebration is worthy of the occasion."

Potter and Greene simply grinned with delight. With themselves, as it happened, money was tight. That happened with them not infrequently; indeed, carping fellows had been heard to remark that it accounted for a lot of their great regard for Horace Coker. But that was a libel. Coker was a fellow you couldn't help liking, if only you knew how to get on with him. It was only necessary to let him have his own way in everything, and to listen to him as to an oracle; in fact, to give him his head generally. Then Coker was quite easy to get on with.

There was no doubt whatever that Potter and Greene would help Coker, to the very best of their ability, to spend his tenner, and the few quid he had in addition. They were prepared to devote the whole of the half-holiday next day to that noble purpose. Friendship could go no further than that.

Their thoughts were already busy. Potter was thinking of a motor-car trip—the car to be stood by Coker—with a whacking picnic—also to be stood by Coker. He already pictured in his mind several other attractive items—to be stood by Coker. Getting rid of that tenner, in fact, would be quite easy, if only they put their minds into it. That they were ready to do.

"First and foremost," resumed Coker, "there will be a feed—something on a rather lavish scale."

"Hear, hear!"

"No blessed stale buns from the school shop. I think I'd better give an order at the bunshop in Courtfield; the best they can supply, and plenty of it."

"You do have such ripping ideas, Coker, old man!" said Potter admiringly.

"You see, it's a special occasion," said Coker. "At a time like this, the least a chap can do is to show his appreciation of the way the Colonies are backing us up against the Huns."

Potter stared. Greene rubbed his nose.

"The—the Colonies!" said Potter.

"Yes; Canada, for example."

"Kik-kik-Canada!"

"Certainly!"

Potter wondered whether it was softening of the brain. He had sometimes suspected that Horace Coker was subject to it. What the Colonies, Canada, for example, had to do with a feed on an extra lavish scale in Coker's study, was a deep mystery which Potter and Greene could not fathom.

"You know how splendidly the Canadians have done," said Coker. "They saved the day when the British line was in danger of being broken, through those filthy Huns using poison gas! Any fellow who isn't proud of the Canadians is a Hun himself."

"Ye-e-es," agreed Potter. "They—they were ripping! Topping! But about that feed——"

"Yes, keep to the point, old chap," said Greene.

Coker stared.

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"That's the point, isn't it?" he demanded.

"That—that is?" stammered Greene.

"Of course."

"Oh," said Potter, "we—we're going to have that feed in honour of the Canadians saving the British line?"

"It's rather late in the day," said Greene. "But it's a good idea. In fact, if you like, Coker, we'll have another celebration in honour of the Australians. They've done magnificently at the Dardanelles, you know."

"Now that's what I call a good suggestion," said Potter heartily. "And if the tin will run to it, we'll celebrate the New Zealanders in the same way. The New Zealanders have shown splendid pluck, you know; simply splendid!"

Coker wasn't listening. His expansive brow was wrinkled in thought again.

"A first-class feed," he said. "That's a chief item. But there must be something a bit more striking than that; something very special."

"What about a run in a car?" asked Potter.

"Eh! That wouldn't be any good."

"Oh, well a big picnic!"

Coker shook his head.

"I was thinking of the school cadet corps turning out," he said.

Again Potter wondered if it was softening of the brain.

"The school cadet corps!" he murmured.

"Wha-a-at for?" asked Greene.

"For a grand reception," said Coker.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Drawn up under arms in the Close," said Coker, warming to his subject. "Flags flying, you know."

"Flags!" said Potter faintly.

"And some music," said Coker.

"Mum-mum-music!"

"Yes; something or other playing the Maple Leaf for Ever, you know. Then we shall want somebody at the head of the reception—somebody important. Better ask our Form-master. Old Prout's patriotic. He'll do it."

"B-b-b-but——"

"And cheers from the whole school!" said Coker. "A really striking reception from all Greyfriars."

"But—but is somebody coming?" gasped Potter dazedly.

Coker snorted.

"Your Aunt Judy?" asked Greene.

"You silly ass!" said Coker. "Do you think I should want old Prout and the cadet corps to turn out to meet my Aunt Judy?"

"Then—then what's the little game?" stuttered Potter. "What the thunder——"

"You fellows will put your best bib and tucker on," continued Coker, unheeding. "None of your spotty collars to-morrow, Greene."

"Why, I—you——"

"And you get a decent necktie for once, Potter."

"What's the matter with my necktie?" demanded Potter indignantly.

"And put on your toppers, of course, and brush 'em," said Coker. "Your topper looks like a busby as often as not, Greene."

"Why, you ass——"

"We must get Prout to take the lead; he's an imposing old johnny, and will do it a treat," said Coker. "You agree with that?"

"Yes—no—we—you—that is——" said Potter, in a dazed state.

"I'll go and speak to him at once," said Coker. "Nothing like striking the iron while it's hot."

Coker strode to the door.

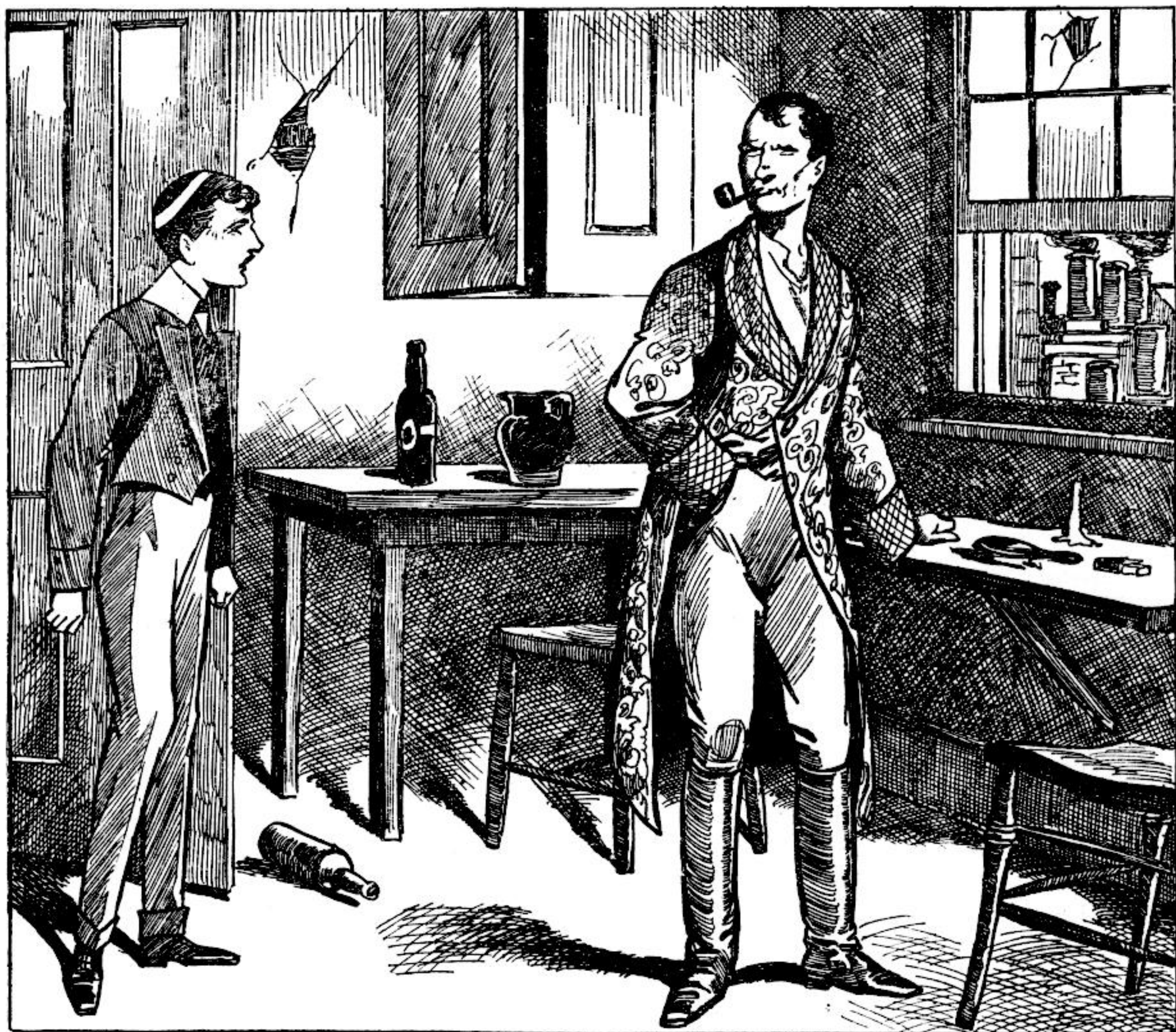
"But what——" gasped Potter

"But what——" yelled Greene.

But Coker was gone. His heavy footsteps died away down the passage, and Potter and Greene were left to themselves, staring at one another. Potter tapped his forehead significantly.

"I always thought it was coming," he said. "And it's come!"

And Greene agreed that it had undoubtedly come.



"Welcome, my young friend," said Mr. Snooks, turning a rather puzzled look on Skinner. "Those features—I have seen them before." "I was looking on the other day when you were fired out of the theatre," said Skinner. (See Chapter 7.)

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Little Too Lofly!

"THE surprisefulness is terrific!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian member of the Greyfriars Remove, made that remark as he came into No. 1 Study.

It was tea-time in No. 1 Study. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent had a festive spread on their hospitable board. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Squiff were there, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had just arrived—a little late.

There was a grin upon the dusky face of the Nabob of Bhanipur, and he looked also a little perplexed.

"Where does the surprisefulness come in, my coloured tulip?" asked Bob Cherry. "Has somebody told you that your English isn't the variety that is spoken by the nobility and gentry?"

"It is the proceedfulness of the esteemed Coker," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The amazefulness is great!"

"Oh, Coker!" said all the juniors together.

Their tone implied that they weren't surprised at anything Coker did. They had left off being surprised at Coker of the Fifth.

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"But what is the latest proceedfulness, which causes the terrific surprisefulness and amazefulness?" asked Bob.

"Our Cokerful friend must be off his esteemed onion!" said Hurree Singh. "I have heard the remarkfulness of the august Potter and Greene. They are talking to some of the esteemed Fifth, and they say that Coker's onion is completely off. He is going to stand a feastful feed in his study to celebrate the victory of the Canadians, which occurfully happened some time ago, and he wishfully desires to call out the school cadets."

"Great Scott!"

"What on earth for?" asked Harry Wharton.

"That is a deep mystery, and the esteemed Potter fears that Coker's esteemed onion is rocky. I hear too that Coker has been to Wingate, our esteemed captain, about it. Wingate has refusefully declined to call out the cadets."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The esteemed Coker is ratty, and he called Wingate names, and the august Wingate chased him out of his study with a cricketful bat, so Skinner says——"

"Good egg! Bravo, Wingate!"

"Then the great Coker spoke to the cadets himself, and asked them to come out to-morrow, ignoring the esteemed Wingate. He offered to captain them himself."

NEXT
MONDAY—

"A LANCASHIRE LAD'S LUCK!"

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

"My hat!"

"And they replied ruefully and roughly," said Hurree Singh, "and Courtney of the Sixth has a swollen nose, and Coker has a bump on his head."

"Coker's on the warpath again," grinned Bob Cherry. "But what on earth's the little game?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh shook his dusky head.

"I do not know, only that Coker has received a tennerful note from his august aunt, and is rollfully flush with money. The probablefulness is that he is off his esteemed rocker."

There was a heavy tread in the passage.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's coming here!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

There was no mistaking that tread. Only Coker's heavy feet could have made the Remove passage ring in that way.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked towards the door, with anticipation. Hurree Singh's account of Coker's mysterious "proceedfulness" had interested them. If Coker was coming to No. 1 Study on the warpath they were quite ready to see him. They had no objection to chasing him out with a bat, if that was what he wanted.

The door bumped open, and the great Coker appeared. He looked a little flushed and excited. Matters had apparently not been going prosperously with Horace Coker.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry affably. "Have you come to tea, Coker?"

Coker snorted. When Coker was angry or excited he had a snort like a war-horse.

"I don't generally come to tea with fags!" replied Coker.

"What I like about Coker," remarked Squiff admiringly, "is his polished manner. Chesterfieldian, isn't it?"

"I've come here," said Coker, "to speak to you kids. I've just seen Wingate. Wingate's a fool!"

"Then there were a pair of you!" remarked Frank Nugent.

"And Wingate wasn't the biggest one!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Don't give me any of your cheek," said Coker, breathing hard. "I've had enough cheek from those dummies in the Sixth. I'm not standing any from fags in the Lower Fourth. Mind that!"

"Is that what you've come here to tell us, Coker?" asked Harry Wharton politely.

"No. There's something I want you to do for me."

"Oh!"

The juniors could not help grinning. Coker had apparently come to ask a favour. Coker's way of asking a favour was certainly remarkable.

"Go ahead," said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "Always pleased to do anything for you kids in the Fifth, Coker. You want some help with your lessons?"

Coker made a movement towards Bob as he asked that humorous question. Coker was not great in class, but he was not likely to ask assistance in lessons from the juniors of the Remove. He restrained himself, however.

"Or you want some tips about cricket?" suggested Squiff. "If that's it, rely on us. We'll teach you how to hold a bat——"

"You cheeky sweep!"

"And how do bowl without braining any of the field," said Squiff. "It won't be easy, but we'll do it."

Coker looked at Sampson Quincy Iffley Field as if he would eat him.

"Or if it's your stage club that's in difficulties we'll rally round," said Nugent. "We'll give you some tips about acting, Coker. You need them."

"I don't want any of your rot!" roared Coker. "I'll tell you what I want. I've asked Wingate to call out the school cadets to-morrow for the reception. My cousin's coming. Wingate won't do it."

"Go hon!"

"Too bad!" said Wharton sympathetically. "Did you explain to Wingate that your cousin was coming?"

"Of course I did."

"And he refused?"

"Yes."

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"Then I can't understand it," said Wharton, with a shake of the head. "Wingate can't know how important your cousin is. I suppose he is important—being your cousin, he must be something out of the common. But I'll tell you what. Why not telephone to Wapshot Camp——"

"Eh?"

"And ask them to send over a battalion of Territorials?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Coker breathed hard.

"I haven't come here to lick you, Wharton."

"How lucky—for you!"

"My cousin's coming to-morrow, and naturally I want to have a striking reception. I expect all Greyfriars to rally round."

The Removites stared at Coker. That the great Horace had an enormous opinion of himself they were aware. But that he should expect all Greyfriars to rally round because his cousin was coming was surprising, even from Coker.

"Wingate won't call out the cadets for the occasion," said Coker. "I've had some words with him. I told him James would like it. He said James could go and eat coke. I told him what I thought of him. Then I tried the cadets, and there was trouble. They're all fools. Courtney won't be able to use his nose to smell with for some time, though."

"Is there anything special about your cousin, besides being your cousin?" Squiff inquired. "Of course, that's rather special. But is there anything else?"

"Of course there is, you young duffer!" said Coker. "It's my cousin from Canada."

"Is that very special?"

"He's a Canadian. He's in the Canadian contingent, and he may come in khaki," said Coker. "Now do you understand?"

"Oh!" said the juniors.

The mystery of Coker's extraordinary "proceedfulness" was explained at last. They admitted that Coker had a right to be a little excited over a visit from his cousin, if that cousin was in the Canadian contingent.

"He lives in Alberta," said Coker. "That's in Canada."

"Go hon!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were quite aware that Alberta was in Canada, and they were really not in need of geographical instruction from Coker.

"Some of his pals were done in by the poison gas," said Coker, "and he's coming over to lend a hand at making those filthy Huns squirm for it. Well, he's coming over here to-morrow—some time in the afternoon—and there's going to be a first-rate celebration. Tain't every chap at Greyfriars who's got a cousin in the contingent, I can tell you. But Wingate won't call out the cadets for a grand reception. As I think I mentioned, he's a fool. He said James wouldn't like to be guyed like that. Thinks it would be guying him. Silly ass, you know!"

"Good old James!" said Squiff. "I suppose we can call him 'Jim'?"

"Let me catch you calling him Jim, and I'll warm you!" said Coker. "Now, as Wingate won't call out the senior cadets—being a fool, as I've mentioned—it's occurred to me to have the junior cadets out."

"Oh!"

"Rifles and marching kit, and so on," said Coker. "Of course, your junior cadet bizney is all rot. I know that. But it's better than nothing. And, as I shall take command, I'll see that you don't make fools of yourselves."

"You will, by gum!"

"Yes. Now, I want you to turn out this evening for some practice, so that I can get you into something like order," said Coker. "Then you won't be so likely to fall over one another's feet and play the giddy goat generally to-morrow afternoon at the reception. See?"

"By Jove!"

"Of course, it's an honour for you," said Coker, "and I don't know what my Cousin James will think of being received by a gang of silly fags. But, as I said, it's better than nothing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"What are you cackling at?" demanded Coker, with a glare.

The juniors roared.
"You've got such a nice way of asking a favour!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You make a fellow feel that he'd do anything for you—I don't think!"
"The don't-thinkfulness is terrific!"

"'Nuff said!" said Coker autocratically. "Now, when can you turn out for practice?"

Harry Wharton reflected.
"What about February 30th?" he asked.
"Eh?"

"Or about the date of the Greek Kalends?" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Look here——"
"Do you see the door, Coker, old scout?"
"Eh—yes! I see it. Why?"

"Would you mind getting on the other side of it?"
"And shutting it after you?" added Nugent.
"I don't want any cheek," said Coker. "I think I've mentioned that before. I've had enough of that from the Sixth. Now——"

"I'll tell you what," said Wharton, "we don't mind turning out in full force to-morrow afternoon. We'll do it, on one condition."

"I don't make conditions with fags," said Coker. "But you can go on."

"Thanks! The condition is that you keep off the grass, and don't chip in or say a single word. We can't have a silly ass bothering us!"

"You young idiot! I shall take command, of course."
"Then it's no go! Good-bye!"

"Fare thee well!" said Bob Cherry. "Shut the door after you, Coker."

"If you're asking for a hiding, I'm feeling just inclined to give you one!" roared Coker.

"Go ahead!"
"Are you going?"

"No, you're going!" said Wharton. "We give you one minute to get out of the study! I'll time you, mind!"

"On your neck or on your feet—just as you like!" said Squiff.

"Time up! Now—— Yaroo!" roared Wharton, as Coker suddenly rushed on him. "Yow-ow! Leggo, you wild lunatic! Rescue! Yah!"

Coker's patience was exhausted. He yanked the captain of the Remove out of his chair, and was proceeding to administer punishment, when the whole Co. piled on him. Coker discovered—as he had discovered several times before in dealing with the Famous Five—that he had bitten off more than he could masticate.

The juniors closed on him, and hands grasped him on all sides.

"Chuck him out!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah!"

Crash!
"Oh, crumbs!" stuttered Coker, as he landed in the passage. "Oh, my hat! I'll—I'll—— Yow-ow-ow!"

"Now, come in and have some more!" shouted Wharton.

"Groooh! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Gimme that bat!"

"Leave off, you young villain!" shrieked Coker. "Oh, my hat! Keep that bat away! I'll pulverise you! I'll—— Oh, lor'! Oh, crikey!"

Coker fairly ran. There were half a dozen bats and stumps at work on him at once, and Coker really could not stand it. He fled down the passage. Skinner of the Remove was on the landing, and he burst into a yell of laughter. The next moment he yelled in quite a different manner as the great Coker smote him.

"After him!" roared Johnny Bull.

The Removites rushed in hot pursuit. Coker, leaving Skinner yelling on the floor, went down the stairs three at a time. His visit to No. 1 Study had not been a success.

Harry Wharton & Co. returned, breathless, to the

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study. They did not see anything more of Horace Coker. Apparently, the great Horace had abandoned the idea of calling out the junior cadets for the great reception.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Great Wheeze Going Begging!

COUSIN JAMES was a general topic at Greyfriars that evening.

Nobody seemed to have heard of Coker's Canadian cousin before, but he was very much heard now.

Coker had not received much encouragement in his scheme of grand reception. Coker was lacking in tact.

The fellows all agreed that Coker's Canadian cousin was probably a ripping fellow. He was coming over to fight for the Old Country against the Prussian barbarians, and that showed that he was a good sort. They agreed that Coker had every right to be proud of him, and that it was a feather in anybody's cap to have a relation in the Canadian contingent.

But Coker had not gone the right way to work.

Coker was too high-handed. Coker prided himself on having a heavy hand with fags; he said it was his system. But the fags could hardly be expected to like or approve his system.

Coker was receiving plenty of support in his own study. Potter and Greene were backing him up, having been enlightened as to the reasons for Coker's curious proceedings, and being relieved of their fears that it was softening of the brain. But it was certain that the school cadets wouldn't turn out under arms, under the high command of Coker. Neither senior nor junior cadets had the slightest desire or intention to do so.

But it was learned that Coker's Form-master, Mr. Prout of the Fifth, had consented to receive the distinguished visitor with becoming ceremony. Mr. Prout had a gift for making little speeches, and he was quite prepared to make a little speech on the occasion of the visit of Coker's Canadian cousin.

The distinguished visitor was coming by the four o'clock train to Friardale, so all Greyfriars learned. Coker had booked a car from the Courtfield garage to go to the station and meet him. Coker did everything in style.

Coker's regard for his cousin was really creditable, as Cousin James was quite a stranger to him. Coker's uncle had settled in Canada years before Coker was born, and Cousin James had been born there. It was his first visit to England, as Coker explained, and Coker meant to make a good impression upon him. Bob Cherry expressed a hope that the Canadian variety of Coker was superior to the home-grown article.

"We'll give him a cheer, anyway," Bob remarked, in the junior common-room that evening. "I dare say he's an awfully good sort, you know, and he can't help Coker of the Fifth being his cousin. If Coker wasn't such a thundering ass——"

"But he is!" said Nugent.

Skinner of the Remove joined the chums in the common-room. Skinner was grinning.

"You've heard about Coker's cousin?" he asked.

"Yes; a little bit," said Bob.

"We haven't heard of anything else lately," said Wharton. "Is there any more news about him? Has Coker engaged the orchestra from the Courtfield Theatre Royal to play him into the school?"

Skinner chuckled.

"No; but I've been thinking. It's about time that Coker was taken down a peg or two, and this is the time!"

Wharton shook his head.

"Not while his cousin's here, Skinner. Coker's every kind of an ass, but we'll give him a rest while Cousin James is here."

"But that's the chance," urged Skinner. "It seems that Coker has never seen his cousin before."

"Well?"

"So he won't know him by sight."

"Naturally, as he's never seen him. What are you driving at?"

ANSWERS

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"A LANCASHIRE LAD'S LUCK!"

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

"The cousin's coming by the four train," went on Skinner. "Well, suppose he arrived earlier?"

"Eh—why should he?"

"It's a jape, of course. If you fellows like to raise a quid, I'll arrange the biggest jape we've ever played on the howling idiot!"

"Quids are scarce in these hard times, my son," said Bob Cherry, "and we don't want to jape Coker to-morrow."

"But it's the catch of the season," urged Skinner. "I've been thinking it out. Coker don't know his cousin from Adam. Suppose a chap came in early to-morrow afternoon—a chap in big boots, and a slouch hat, and so forth—and called himself Coker's cousin——"

"What!"

"Coker don't know anything about him, excepting that he's a big chap," said Skinner. "Well, I know where to get a big chap who'd play the part. Think what a high old time he could give Coker—scoffing the feed, you know, and——"

Wharton shook his head again.

"It's a good wheeze," he admitted; "and Coker's been asking for it. But we don't want to rag while the Canadian cousin is here."

"No. Must draw a line somewhere," said Bob Cherry.

"You mean you don't want to whack out the quid," growled Skinner. "The man I know would do it for a quid, and he's an actor."

"We mean what we say," said Harry Wharton. "If it were anybody else, I'd lend a hand at once. But Coker's cousin is a Canadian soldier, and we don't want to jape him. Let it drop!"

"Rats!" said Skinner. "I'm not going to let it drop!"

"Now, look here, Skinner——"

"Bow-wow!" said Skinner, and he walked away, evidently full of his new idea.

Skinner was a humorist; and, besides, he had not forgotten the mighty smite Coker had given him in the Remove passage an hour or two ago.

The Famous Five exchanged glances.

"I don't like the idea," said Wharton uneasily. "It would be funny, but——"

"Bad form," said Johnny Bull.

"But we can't stop Skinner, I suppose."

"Skinner will stop fast enough if he has to raise the quid himself," grinned Bob Cherry.

But Skinner was not easily stopped. Skinner did not mean to waste the mental efforts he had expended on thinking out that wheeze. Certainly, Skinner had no intention of squandering his own money on it; Skinner was very careful with his money. But he hoped to find other humorists who had a little cash to spare. He had no difficulty in finding plenty of fellows who were "up against Coker." He started with Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. He found that youth nursing a thick ear—a present from Coker of the Fifth.

"I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of that galoot Coker, one of these days," Fish confided to Skinner. "I'll teach him to thump the years of a free American citizen. I was simply remarking, sir, that some day Canada would be annexed to the Yew-nited States, and he heard me, and gave me a sockdolager—a regular sockdolager. Look at my year!"

"Serve you right!" said Skinner. "I—I mean, like his cheek! Fishy, old man, I've got a scheme for making him sit up to-morrow."

"I guess I'm on," said Fish eagerly. "Count me in! I'm your antelope."

"There's a chap in Courtfield," said Skinner. "Chap named Montgomery Snooks. He's an actor, and he's been sacked from the theatre for getting squiffy. Well, I came across him the other day, and he's hard up. What do you think of the idea of rigging him up in big boots and a slouch hat, and planting him on Coker as his cousin from Canada?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Fish.

"Good idea—what?" grinned Skinner.

"First chop!" said Fish gleefully. "Coker don't know his Canadian cousin by sight. Ha, ha, ha! Why, the fellow could play him no end of a game; especially if he comes here squiffy. Ha, ha, ha!"

"It would work," said Skinner.

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"Work like a charm!" said Fish. "Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ka! What a lark on Coker!"

"The chap would do it for a tip," said Skinner. "He'd do anything for a tip. I could arrange it with him for a quid."

"You couldn't spend your quid better," said Fisher T. Fish heartily. "I wish you luck, old chap."

"Ahem! I—I wasn't thinking of my quid. I mean, I'm rather short of tin. War-time, you know. I'm thinking of raising the tin—ahem!—among the fellows, and I thought you——"

"Eh?"

"If you'd like to stand half——"

"I guess I don't think it's much of a jape after all," said Fisher T. Fish. "I don't calculate it would work, anyhow. Skuse me; I guess I've got to get on with my prep."

"I say, Fishy——"

But Fishy was gone.

Skinner gave a discontented grunt, and looked for another victim. He found Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove.

"I've been looking for you, Bunter," began Skinner.

Bunter blinked at him through his big glasses.

"Well, here I am," he said. "The fact is, I wanted to speak to you, Skinner. I've been disappointed about a postal-order."

"What?"

"It's owing to this blessed war, you know," explained Bunter. "My postal-order has been delayed——"

"Have the Germans captured the Post Office?" asked Skinner sarcastically. "You can go and eat coke!"

"I say, Skinney, old chap——"

Skinner walked away. He was not looking for a chance to cash Billy Bunter's celebrated postal-order in advance.

He interviewed Hazeldene next; but Hazel wanted to borrow half-a-crown from him. He tried Bulstrode; but Bulstrode was stony. He tackled Bolsover major, who chuckled gleefully at the bare idea of that ripping joke on Coker, but had a sudden engagement elsewhere when Skinner came to the question of cash.

"Well, of all the rotters!" murmured Skinner. "It's the joke of the season, and it's going begging. Mean rotters!"

Skinner was so set on that great joke that he was actually tempted to use his own cash for the purpose. But he stopped short of that heroic extreme. He felt that that would be carrying the joke too far. So the great wheeze still went begging.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

No Encouragement!

"I CALL it rotten!"

Thus Coker.

There was a frown upon the brow of Horace Coker. Matters did not seem to be going entirely to the satisfaction of the great Horace.

Potter and Greene looked sympathetic. They nobly concealed their smiles.

"Rotten!" repeated Coker, with emphasis. Coker stood on the study hearthrug, with his hands driven into his trousers-pockets, laying down the law as usual. "To-morrow my cousin's coming, and nobody seems to care a tuppenny rap."

"Rotten!" murmured Potter.

"A chap in the Canadian contingent," said Coker warmly. "Now, you know what the Canadians did. They saved the British line, when those disgusting Huns were using the poison gas! They stood up to it, and saved the situation; General French himself said so. Now, if they hadn't saved the line, the line would have been broken."

That statement appeared incontrovertible to Potter and Greene, and they did not seek to controvert it. Potter repressed a desire to ask Coker whether he had worked that out in his head. It was no time for jokes.

"If the line had been broken," resumed Coker, "the filthy Huns would have come on; they've got plenty of pluck when they're four or five to one. The line once

broken, our fellows might have been shoved right back, and the Huns might have taken Calais."

"They might," agreed Potter. "I hardly think they'd have got quite as far as that, but they might."

"Taken Calais," repeated Coker. "Then they would have worked that dodge of laying mines in the Channel to keep our Fleet off, and sneaked their boats across some dark night and landed in England. Then, if they'd done that, and if they'd got enough Huns landed, and if our men weren't there to stop them, they'd have taken Dover and marched on London."

"What a lot of 'ifs'!" murmured Potter.

"Greyfriars being in Kent, we should have seen the Huns quite early. They're dead nuts on schools and churches and cathedrals and things; they always set fire to them first. Greyfriars would have been burned to the ground."

"Oh, dear!"

"So you see how it is," said Coker. "The Canadians saved Greyfriars from being burned to the ground. And yet here's my Canadian cousin coming to-morrow, and the school cadets won't turn out."

"Too bad!" murmured Greene. "I had no idea of the awful danger we had so narrowly escaped, Coker."

Coker looked at Greene rather suspiciously. But Greene was as grave as a judge.

"Naturally, I expected the whole school to rally round and back me up," said Coker. "The school cadets under arms would have made a good impression. I think Wingate might have agreed if I'd let him take the lead. But, of course, I told him that the command would have to be entirely in my hands. Under the circumstances, I couldn't say less."

"Ahem!"

"And those Remove kids were simply cheeky when I told them I'd make them do, as being better than nothing," added Coker.

"You put things so nicely!" murmured Potter.

"So the cadets are off—quite off," said Coker. "It would have made a splendid impression, and showed James that we're not all asleep in the Old Country. But that's all off, and I call it rotten!"

"There's the feed!" hinted Potter.

Coker nodded.

"Yes, the feed will be a success. I've sent an order to the bunshop for the best they can provide, and plenty of it."

"Hear, hear!" said Potter and Greene.

"And old Prout's going to make James a speech," said Coker. "British flag, Old Country in peril, Colonies rallying to the rescue, hands across the sea, and all that. The Fifth Form will stand round and cheer."

"Will they?" said Greene doubtfully.

"They will!" said Coker, with emphasis. "After James is gone, I shall make it a special point to talk to any chap who doesn't cheer, and ask him to have the gloves on with me."

"Oh!"

"The scene," said Coker, "will be impressive. I haven't been able to engage any musicians, unfortunately, but British cheers will make the what-do-you-call-it ring!"

"The welkin?" suggested Potter.

"That's it—British cheers will make the welkin ring?"

"What is a welkin?" asked Greene.

"Blessed if I know—that's the way of putting it," said Coker. "Don't ask idiotic questions, Greene, old chap. But that isn't all. You see, my cousin's never been in England before—he comes straight from Alberta. Naturally, he will be interested in seeing British school life, and we're going to show him something of our school games. Of course, as a Briton, he'll be interested in cricket. Canada ain't like the States, you know, a blessed mixture of every kind of johnny under the sun. Canada's British—the real genuine article. So it stands to reason a Canadian would like to see something of our cricket."

"There's no match on to-morrow," said Potter.

"I'm going to arrange one."

"Oh!"

"The Fifth Form eleven will turn out," explained Coker. "Under the circumstances, Blundell will hand me the captaincy for the occasion."

"My hat! Has he said so?"

"I haven't asked him yet. But as a reasonable chap he can't refuse. You see, I want my cousin to see some

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really first-class cricket—the Fifth Form at its very best. So, of course, I must have a hand in it."

"Oh!"

"We'll play the Shell," said Coker. "I'll speak to Hobson about it. There will be tea in the Rag after the match, and all the cricketers will come—both teams. The whole thing is going to be done in style."

"Oh!"

"I'll go and speak to Blundell about it now," said Coker. "I shall play him in my team, of course. But on this occasion I shall be captain."

Coker left the study. Potter smiled. Greene winked at the ceiling.

They waited for Coker to return, smiling—prepared to look serious again as he came in. Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, was a good-natured chap, and he would very probably have fixed up a match for the entertainment of the distinguished visitor. But handing on the captaincy to Coker was quite another matter. For Horace Coker's cricket was a sight for gods and men and little fishes.

Doubtless Blundell would play, if politely requested; but it was pretty certain that, so far from handing the captaincy to Coker, he would not even play Coker in the eleven.

"Hallo!" murmured Potter suddenly. "Listen!"

Along the Fifth Form passage came the sound of a raised voice. It proceeded from Blundell's study, and it was the booming voice of Horace Coker. Apparently Blundell of the Fifth wasn't listening to reason.

There was the sound of a scuffle shortly afterwards.

Then a door opened violently, and there was a bump in the passage. Potter winked at Greene, and Greene winked at Potter.

Coker was coming back.

They composed their faces solemnly as he came in. He limped a little, and there was a red flush on his nose, and his hair was untidy.

"All serene?" asked Potter blandly.

Coker gasped.

"No. It's not all serene. Blundell's a fool. You'd hardly believe it," said Coker, breathing very hard, "but he laughed—laughed in my face—when I proposed captaining the form eleven to-morrow. And what do you think he said?"

Potter could guess, but he did not venture to do so.

"He said he wouldn't even put me in the eleven," said Coker. "He said that if my cousin had a taste for funny cricket, he could go and see it on the cinematograph. He said he wasn't going to make that kind of an exhibition on the cricket-ground here."

"D-d-d-did he?" murmured Greene.

"He did! Of course, I punched his head. I couldn't do less, under the circumstances. Then they chucked me out," said Coker. "Blundell and Bland, you know, pitched me out of the study. They were quite ratty."

"W-w-were they?"

"Yes; after my cousin—at least, the Canadians—had saved Greyfriars from being burned to the ground," said Coker bitterly. "There's gratitude!"

"The cricket-match won't come off, then?" remarked Potter.

Coker stared.

"Eh! Of course it will come off! Didn't I say that it would?"

"Ye-es, but——"

"I shall decline to play the Fifth, that's all. I think very likely James would be interested in junior cricket," explained Coker. "I am thinking of arranging a match between the Shell and the Remove, and I shall captain the Shell. Hobson will stand out."

"You—you don't think there may be trouble with Hobson if you ask him?"

"Well, Hobson is a reasonable chap. I used to be chummy with him when I was in the Shell—if he'd had my brains, he'd have passed into the Fifth with me——"

"If he'd had your Aunt Judy," murmured Potter.

"What did you say, Potter?"

"Nothing, old chap. Go on."

"Of course, I don't stand a lot of familiarity from a Shell fellow now I'm in the Fifth. But I shall be civil to

NEXT
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"A LANCASHIRE LAD'S LUCK!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
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Hobby. I'll go and see him after I have bathed my nose." Coker went to bathe his nose. Potter and Greene did their preparation, but they suspended that work every now and then, and listened. They wondered what was happening in the Shell quarters.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

More Trouble!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. came out into the sunny quad the next morning in a merry mood. Bob Cherry was propelling Lord Mauleverer along by the collar. The slacker of the Remove had decided to stay in bed after the rising-bell. Bob Cherry had decided that he wouldn't. Bob had his way. He often performed such friendly little services for his lordship.

For once, Lord Mauleverer was one of the first down from the dormitory—Bob Cherry's powerful grip on his neck being the cause.

"Here we are again!" said Bob cheerily. "Now I'll race you round the Close, Mauly."

Lord Mauleverer groaned.

"Don't!"

"It will do you good," urged Bob. "Now, you run as fast as you can—"

"Oh, dear!"

"And I'll run behind you. Every time I get near enough I'll give you a thump in the back—see?"

"Begad!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Coker!"

Bob Cherry released Mauly, who promptly beat a retreat.

Coker of the Fifth was bearing down on the Removites. Harry Wharton & Co. were prepared for war. They supposed that Coker was seeking vengeance for the happenings in No. 1 Study the previous evening. But Horace was not on the warpath this time.

"Where did you get that nose?" asked Bob.

"Never mind my nose," said Coker. "Look at Blundell's eye, if you want something to look at. I want to speak to you kids. I had a little talk with Hobson last night about cricket—"

"We heard you!" grinned Nugent. "It sounded like a bombardment. The furniture must have suffered."

"Hobson was cheeky," explained Coker. "I told him how it was—that—that I intended to captain the Shell eleven in a match to-day, to entertain my cousin. Hobson refused to stand out. There was a bit of an argument. If three or four of the cheeky young sweeps hadn't piled on me, I should have given Hobson the licking of his life. Still, he looked rather a wreck, and he won't be so cheeky next time. But never mind that. I want you kids to play the Shell this afternoon, to entertain my cousin with some cricket."

"Any old thing," said Harry Wharton, good-naturedly. "Whom are we to play?"

"You can fix up a match with the Fourth."

"I'll ask Temple."

"Good! Fix it about five—only a single-innings match, you know; there will be plenty of light. My cousin doesn't get here till four. I shall be on hand to captain the team."

"Eh?"

"You're surprised," smiled Coker.

"Yes, a little."

"Of course, I shall explain to James that I don't usually play with fags. But he will see the difference between my play and your fag play, anyway," said Coker condescendingly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, Bob Cherry?"

"I'm thinking of the difference between your play and our fag play," grinned Bob. "Cousin James will be sure to notice it, unless he's blind."

"Certainly; but I don't see anything to cackle at," said Coker. "Now, that's arranged!"

"Not quite!" said Wharton. "There's one point—"

"What's that?"

"We're not looking for a new captain in the Remove. Thanks all the same!"

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"Now, look here, Wharton—"

"You see, we'll do anything we can to entertain your cousin, as he comes from Canada," said Wharton. "But we draw the line at having you in our team, Coker. Flesh and blood can't be expected to stand that, you know!"

"You see, you're such a howling ass!" explained Johnny Bull.

"The assfulness of the esteemed Coker is——"

"Terrific!" said Bob.

Coker pushed back his cuffs.

"I've had some trouble with Wingate and Blundell and Hobson," he remarked. "I'm not standing any cheek from you fags. Am I going to captain the fag team this afternoon or not?"

"No fear!"

"Too much of a good thing, Coker."

"Ask the Second!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Hands off, you howling chump!"

But Coker did not "hands off." He had a short way with fags—it was his system. On this occasion the fags had a short way with Coker.

As the great Horace began to distribute cuffs, the Famous Five collared him, and Horace assumed a suddenly horizontal position. He did not remain there, however. His arms and legs were seized, likewise his hair, and he was whirled off the ground.

"Frog's-march!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leggo!" roared Coker. Why I—I—I— Yaroooooh!"

The grinning juniors rushed him round the Close. It was very pleasant in the Close in the early morning sunshine. But it was not pleasant that morning for Coker.

He struggled furiously in the grasp of the Removites as they rushed him on. There was a roar of laughter from other juniors as they came pouring out of the School House. Squiff and Tom Brown and Vernon-Smith and Skinner rushed to lend a hand, and Bolsover major and Mark Linley and Penfold and Peter Todd. There were so many hands on Coker that Coker almost disappeared from sight. But his voice was still heard.

"Yow-yow-yow-yow-yooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Right round the wide Close went Coker, amid a laughing and jeering crowd of merry Removites. Potter and Greene looked out, and smiled.

Coker had evidently been looking for trouble again, and finding it. Horace had an amazing gift for finding trouble. If there was any trouble going, anywhere, at any time, Horace Coker was safe to find it.

Back to the door of the School House came the merry crowd, with the unfortunate Coker wriggling spasmodically in their midst.

"Boys! What—what——"

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, looked out of the doorway. There was amazement in the plump face of Mr. Prout.

"Boys!"

"Cave!" gasped Nugent.

"What is it you have there—what is it?"

Mr. Prout soon saw what it was. The juniors dropped Coker almost at his feet, and bolted. The Fifth-Form master gazed blankly at the dishevelled, crimson, gasping Fifth-Former.

"Coker!" he ejaculated.

Coker sat up.

"Grooooooh!"

"Coker! What is the meaning of this?"

"Gerrrooogh!"

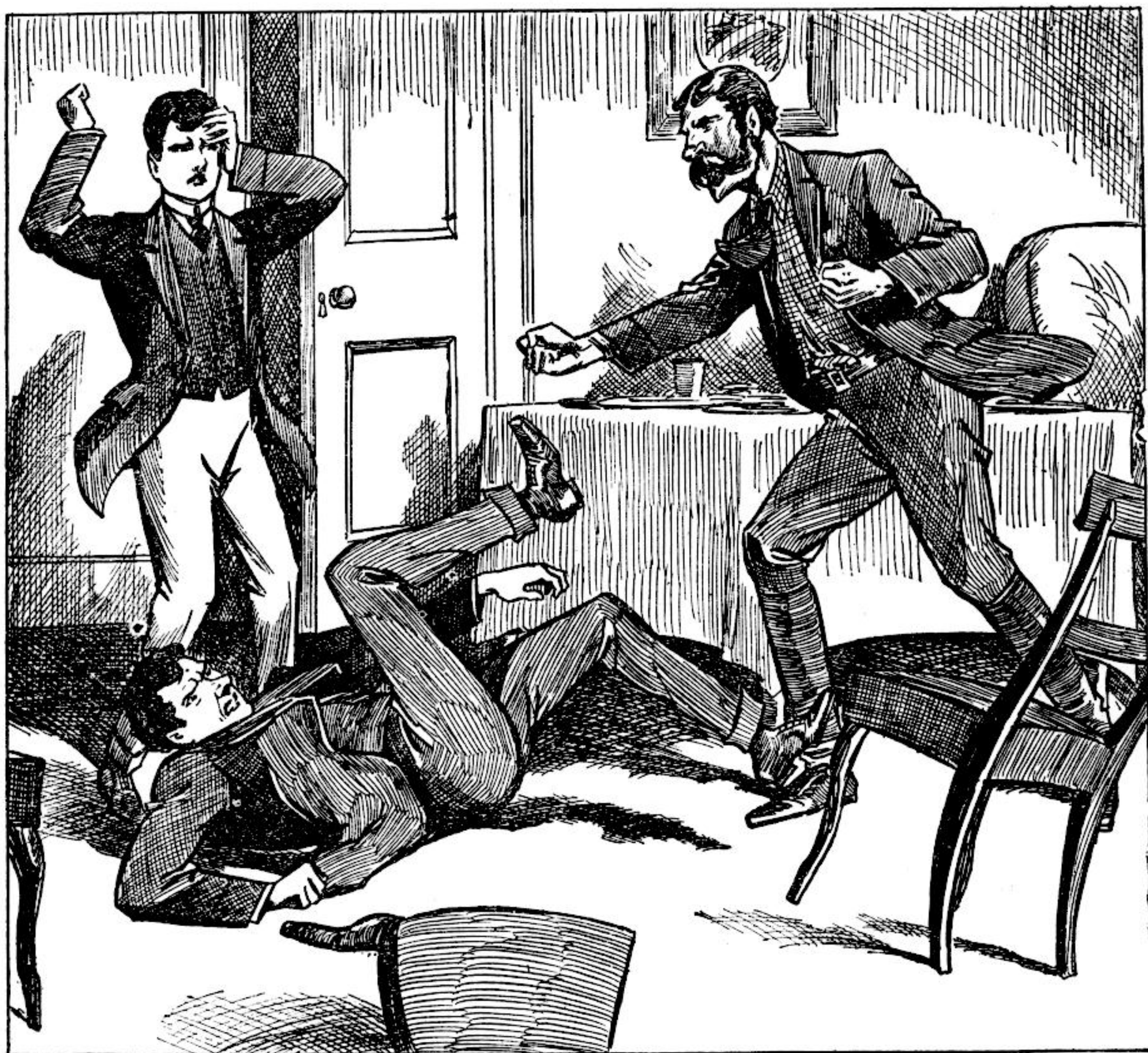
"Answer me, Coker!" shouted Mr. Prout.

It wasn't possible for Coker to answer till he got his second wind. Meanwhile he gasped and gurgled.

"Gerrrrrrrrg!"

"I am surprised at you, Coker. You are in the Fifth Form, yet you play these ridiculous games with juniors in the Close!" said Mr. Prout severely. "I am very much surprised at you, Coker. Horseplay of this sort is not suitable to a boy in the Fifth Form. You will take a hundred lines."

And Mr. Prout swept indignantly away, leaving Coker stuttering.



Cousin James' fist shot out suddenly, and Coker landed on his study carpet with a crash that shook the study.
(See Chapter 10.)

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Being Kind to Coker!

SKINNER was very thoughtful that morning. Skinner was a humorist, and he was very unwilling to relinquish that humorous scheme of planting Montgomery Snooks, late of the Courtfield Theatre Royal, upon Coker as his Canadian cousin. Skinner was trying to think out the knotty problem of the quid. Montgomery Snooks would do it for a quid, as he told a dozen fellows; but Montgomery Snooks was not going to do it for Skinner's quid.

But where was the quid to come from, that was the question.

Skinner wrestled with that problem, feeling that it would be a crying shame if so splendid a jape should be spoiled for want of a miserable quid. He was prepared to spend anybody's quid on it—excepting, of course, his own.

Harry Wharton also had food for thought that morning. His chums noted that he was wearing a frown of deep reflection.

The fact was that the captain of the Remove was in doubt. Coker's proposal to the captain of the Remove eleven had been received with ridicule—naturally enough, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 397.

considering the kind of cricketer Coker was, and his cool cheek in taking it for granted that the Remove would take orders from him.

But Wharton was thinking it over. And—though it required an effort—he felt that, for once, the great Horace might be given his head. After all, a member of the Canadian contingent was one whom the Removites would delight to honour, and if it would entertain him to see Coker playing cricket, why, let him be entertained. If he had any sense of humour, certainly he could not fail to be entertained by Coker's cricket.

After morning lessons, Harry Wharton informed his chums the result of his cogitations.

"Suppose we give Coker a chance?" he remarked.

"Not in our team!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, opening his eyes wide.

"Yes."

"Oh, rats!"

"Bosh!"

"The boshfulness is terrific!"

"Are you off your rocker, Wharton?"

The replies of the Co. were not very encouraging. But the captain of the Remove stuck to his point.

"You see, it's a special occasion," he said. "Coker is

a thundering ass, of course, and he's got too much nerve. But, after all, his cousin is coming from Canada, and if we can show him any civility——"

"But Coker can't play cricket."

"I know he can't; but we might give him his head for once, and make him happy. He isn't a really bad sort, you know; and it's decent of him to make a fuss of his Canadian cousin."

"Well, ye-e-s; but—but it will be too comic! It would make us all look asses to have that duffer in our team!"

"And the silly ass would think that we were afraid of him, perhaps," growled Johnny Bull.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him think what he likes. I think we might do it—and it's a lark, anyway, to see Coker playing cricket. If you fellows agree, I'll make the offer."

The Co. exchanged glances, and there was a unanimous silence for some time. But Bob Cherry nodded at last.

"Oh, go it!" he said. "It will be a lark, anyway."

"Penfold's going home this afternoon, so he will have to stand out," said Harry. "I'll let Coker take my place. It will be only good-natured, you know."

"Too jolly good-natured!" growled Johnny Bull. "But we'll stand it. I only hope he won't brain any of us."

The Co. having agreed to that great sacrifice, Harry Wharton looked for Coker. He found Coker and Potter and Greene in the Rag. That apartment was being knocked into shape, as Coker expressed it, ready for Cousin James.

Coker had phoned an order to the Courtfield florist, and flowers had arrived in large quantities, and the chums of the Fifth were decorating the room. Potter and Greene were privately of opinion that the cash would have been much better spent in extra supplies of tuck. But it was useless to point that out to Coker. Coker was bound to have his way.

Horace Coker frowned as Wharton came in and glanced round him, apparently for some instrument of punishment.

"Getting on nicely," remarked Wharton affably.

"There's the door!" said Coker.

"Thanks; I've noticed it before! About that cricket-match, Coker——"

"I've decided not to have a cricket-match," said Coker frowning. "I expected some of the fellows to feel a little gratitude, considering that the Canadians saved Greyfriars from being burned to the ground. I've been disappointed."

"If you'd care to captain the team this afternoon, we'll play," said Wharton, with exemplary meekness. "I've spoken to Temple of the Fourth."

"Oh!" said Coker.

"In fact, we're at your orders—for one occasion only!"

"Huh!" grunted Coker. "I suppose you've thought it over, and decided not to miss a chance of getting a good cricketer into your fag team for once."

"Ahem! Exactly!"

"Blessed if I haven't a good mind to chuck you out, instead of playing for you!" said Coker. "But I'm a good-tempered chap. I'll do it!"

"Thanks, awfully!"

"Fix the match for five o'clock, and, for goodness' sake, get the best men you can!" said Coker. "Your fag-play won't amount to much, anyway; but don't give my cousin James the impression that they're all duffers at Greyfriars. However, he will see me play."

"It's a go!" said Wharton.

And he departed, smiling. The great concession had not been received as a concession at all by Coker. He regarded himself as conferring the favour. But that was to be expected from Coker.

The news was received with surprise in the Remove. Most of the fellows took it as a joke, and opined that Coker's Canadian cousin would kill himself laughing when he saw Horace playing cricket. Temple of the Fourth smiled, when he was told, a smile of satisfaction. The Fourth were not quite up to the form of Harry Wharton & Co. at cricket. But with Coker in the Remove ranks, Temple & Co. had a chance of securing the victory that they had yearned for for ever so long.

"We shall beat the Remove this afternoon," Temple

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remarked to his chums, Dabney and Fry. "They've got a Fifth-Former playing for them. Ahem!"

"Coker?" asked Dabney and Fry, in a breath.

"Yes."

"Then we shall beat them hands down," said Fry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "Hurray!"

So Coker's presence on the cricket-field would be welcome, at least, to the opposing side. He was sure of satisfying somebody.

At the dinner-table Wharton was still looking a little thoughtful. He had done a good-natured thing, but the thought of Coker in the Remove ranks was not gratifying. Neither was the thought of being licked by the Fourth—a very probable contingency now—gratifying either. But he had done it now, and it was too late to think about that.

Skinner, the humorist, was looking decidedly morose.

A dozen fellows, at least, had agreed with Harold Skinner that his projected jape upon Coker would be the jape of the season if it came off. But with singular unanimity they agreed that it was up to Skinner himself to find the necessary cash. It was in vain that Skinner pointed out that he provided the idea—the ripping idea!—and that common fairness and the principle of division of labour required that other fellows should find the money. The other fellows did not seem to see it. One or two, indeed, admitted that there was something in what Skinner said, but they happened to be fellows who were "out" of tin, and so could not help.

Even Lord Mauleverer had declined. Mauleverer rolled in money, but for once he was close with it. He told Skinner it would be rotten to jape Coker while his Canadian cousin was there, and did not even listen to how it was to be done. He walked off before Skinner could expound his great plan. His lordship had been Skinner's last hope, and he had failed. The joke of the season was still going begging.

After dinner Skinner came out looking more morose than ever. He was thinking deeply, and he sought Lord Mauleverer. He had thought of a new tack. His lordship was resting on one of the benches under the elms. Lord Mauleverer could do with a lot of rest. He looked apprehensive as Skinner came up.

"Mauly, old man——" began Skinner.

"No, I won't!" said his lordship.

"Eh? You won't what?"

"Won't lend you a quid!"

"I don't want you to lend me a quid, you ass!"

"Oh! Then what are you so jolly friendly for?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

Skinner scowled. It was quite a curious circumstance that whenever Skinner was specially friendly fellows seemed to be on their guard against him. In that they resembled that knowing gentleman of old, who feared the Greeks when they came with gifts.

"It's quite a different matter, Mauly," said Skinner.

"I don't want to jape Coker. Let Coker alone when his cousin is coming!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Never mind Coker now!" said Skinner. "Hang Coker!"

"Then what is it?"

"You've been to the Theatre Royal in Courtfield?" said Skinner.

"Yaas, I believe I went there once," said Mauleverer.

"I dare say you noticed a chap, called Snooks, who played the Wild West parts?"

"I don't remember."

"Do you ever remember anything?" growled Skinner.

"Yaas, sometimes."

"Well, that chap has got the sack," said Skinner.

"Sorry!"

"He's right down on his uppers."

"Horrid!"

"I was thinking that you might feel inclined to lend him a helping-hand, Mauly, as you've plenty of dubs," said Skinner reproachfully.

"Dear me! Does he want his boots mended?"

"His boots? No! Why?"

"You said he was on his uppers, didn't you?"

"Yes, fathead! I mean he's hard up."

"Horrid!" said Lord Mauleverer sympathetically. "I

was hard up once. At the seaside, you know. I lost my purse. It turned up in a trunk afterwards, and my pocket-book, too. I only had four quid in my pockets in loose change. I shall never forget it!"

"You thumping ass!" howled Skinner. "This chap I'm speaking of isn't hard up with four quid in his pocket. He hasn't got fourpence."

"Well, fourpence wouldn't be much use to him, would it?"

"What I was going to say is, if you felt inclined to let the chap have a quid, I'd take it to him," said Skinner. "I'm going down to Courtfield on my bike."

"You're awfully good," said Mauleverer.

"Well, a chap ought to be charitable."

"Yaas."

"Then you'll let him have a quid?"

"I don't object, dear boy."

"Hand it over then!" said Skinner.

"Eh?"

"Hand it over!"

"Hand over what?"

"The quid, of course!"

"My dear fellow, you're dreaming," said Lord Mauleverer. "I meant that I don't object to letting him have a quid, if you like to give him one. You can do as you like with your own money."

"You—you—you—" stuttered Skinner.

"Good-bye, dear boy! I'm jolly glad to see you turnin' out kind and charitable like this. Some of the fellows say that you wouldn't part with money for anythin'," said Mauleverer.

And Lord Mauleverer ambled away, smiling gently, leaving Skinner looking positively Hunnish. It dawned upon Skinner that his lordship knew a thing or two more than he had given him credit for.

"Slacking ass!" growled Skinner. "I believe he guesses. Now there's my last chance gone, and I shall have to chuck it unless"—Skinner felt his ear, which still bore traces of Horace Coker's heavy hand—"unless I stand it myself. Snooks wouldn't do it for nothing. There's the feed, and he can't have fed very heartily since he got the sack—that might tempt him, a jolly good feed for nothing. And—and as Coker's cousin, he could ask for anything he wanted. He could make Coker send out for some whisky. And—and if he's to do it for five bob—"

Skinner walked away to the bike-shed. The joke was too good to be wasted, and the humorist of the Remove had come to the desperate resolution of "springing" five shillings of his own money if Mr. Montgomery Snooks, late of the Theatre Royal, would play the part for that moderate sum.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Snooks at Home!

HAROLD SKINNER jumped off his bike in a little seedy street in Courtfield. He knew where to find Mr. Montgomery Snooks at home. Skinner knew all sorts of things that the other fellows did not know. He mounted the public staircase of a cheap lodging-house, and knocked at the door of an apartment that was as near the roof as the builder could put it.

"Enter!" called out a deep voice.

Skinner grinned and entered. Mr. Snooks could not say "Come in!" like a commonplace person.

Mr. Snooks was at home. He was at the window, a little window that gave an extensive view of roofs. Chimney pots in great variety bounded the horizon. Mr. Snooks was in deshabille. He was wearing the thick cord trousers and heavy riding-boots in which he had played his thrilling parts in the Wild West dramas at the Theatre Royal. He wore, also, a flowered dressing-gown, in the last stages of dilapidation. There was a pipe in his mouth, but the bowl was empty. Mr. Snooks was enjoying the lingering flavour left by the last tobacco he had consumed. On the rickety table stood an empty bottle.

The bottle was quite empty, and had probably been so for a long time, for Mr. Snooks was not sober, a state he was not likely to be in when there was anything in the bottle.

"Welcome, my young friend," said Mr. Snooks, turning a rather puzzled look on Skinner. "Those features—I have seen them before!"

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EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"I was looking on the other day when you were fired out of the theatre," said Skinner.

Mr. Snooks frowned.

"I've heard about you, you know," said Skinner. "The only good actor we've ever seen at the Courtfield Theatre."

Mr. Snooks smiled.

Like many gentlemen of his profession, he preferred flattery in chunks.

"Excuse my dropping in like this," said Skinner; "the fact is—"

"Alas! I have but few callers now," said Mr. Snooks sadly. "Where is now the fashionable crowd that sought Montgomery Snooks in the hour of his prosperity? In the hour of adversity, young sir, they are far, far away! Glance at my humble abode. Little would you dream that the time has been when a whole street has been blocked by the cars of the titled and fashionable crowd that came to win a few careless words from Montgomery Snooks."

Skinner certainly wouldn't have dreamed of anything of the kind. Probably Mr. Snooks himself had only dreamed it.

"Too bad!" said Skinner. "Not engaged again yet?"

"I am still seeking a shop," said Mr. Snooks, "and, ridiculous as it appears, I am short of money. Though our acquaintance is of the slightest, I should not refuse the loan of half-a-crown, if you were to offer one, my young friend."

"Very likely," assented Skinner. "Then you're free for this afternoon? You could take something on—sort of private theatricals?"

Mr. Snooks's dull eye brightened.

"I am at your orders," he said at once. "In happier days many and many is the time that I have thus appeared in the halls of the wealthy, and delighted the eyes of—"

"H'm! This isn't exactly the halls of the wealthy," said Skinner. "The fact is, the—ahem!—remuneration would be slight."

Mr. Snooks' face fell again.

"Five bob!" said Skinner.

Mr. Snooks laughed sardonically.

"Five bob?" he repeated. "You offer me, Montgomery Snooks, five bob—five miserable bobs? Ha, ha!"

"Well, you see—"

"Ha, ha!" repeated Mr. Snooks, still sardonic.

"Well, if it isn't good enough, I may as well get off," said Skinner, somewhat nettled.

Mr. Snooks raised his hand.

"Stay! I do not refuse—in fact, I accept!"

"Oh, good!" said Skinner. "Besides, there's something else; a splendid feed, as much as you can eat of the very best."

"Anything to drink?"

"That depends. If you're careful you'll be able to make Coker send out for anything you like."

Mr. Snooks's eyes glistened. They dwelt for a moment on the empty bottle, and he sighed. He thought of a full bottle—of several full bottles—and his face shone.

"My dear young friend, you give me new life. In this weather I am somewhat afflicted with thirst. I'm your man! What's the game?"

"It's really a joke," explained Skinner. "I've seen you doing humorous parts, and how—ahem!—splendidly you did them. Chap at my school—a fatheaded ass, named Coker—is expecting his cousin—man from Canada, that he's never seen before. I want you to come in as Coker's cousin. Wild West rig, you know; put it on thick, and say you're James Coker, from Alberta, come over to join the Canadian contingent."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Mr. Snooks, evidently startled.

"Say you caught an earlier train than you expected, or something like that. Wolf the feed and lead Coker a dance—any old thing, so long as you make him sit up. He's got ripping tommy—cold chickens, and jelly, and everything. It's a feast for a giddy prince! I suppose you haven't lived on the fat of the land lately?"

"Owing to the rapacity of my landlady, I have not

lunched to-day," said Mr. Snooks. "A base, trivial matter of four shillings has stood between me and further supplies of the necessities of life."

"Then you must be peckish," said Skinner. "Coker's been spending pounds on that feed, and you can scoff as much as you like. He'll receive you with open arms, and you can play the game all right. And there's five bob in cash."

"But—but suppose he should tumble?"

"He won't! He's idiot enough for anything. Of course, you can put on some whiskers, or something—a regular, rip-snorting cowboy, you know!"

Mr. Snooks grinned.

"It's only a jape," said Skinner; "we're always japing Coker. He was born for that special purpose, I believe!"

"But it seems to me that I shall be obtaining the feed on false pretences."

"Don't I keep on telling you it's only a jape?"

"You ask me to pawn the honour of Montgomery Snooks for five shillings—five miserable and inadequate bobs!" said Mr. Snooks scornfully. "It is true that such a sum would remove my present misunderstanding with my landlady, but the self-respect of Montgomery Snooks does not go so cheap, young sir!"

"Then I'll be off!" growled Skinner. "It's only a jape, and there's no need to be highfalutin about it. But if you won't do it you can go and chop chips!"

And Skinner turned angrily to the door.

"Hold!" said Mr. Snooks.

"Well?" snapped Skinner.

"Ten!"

"Five!"

"Ten!" persisted Mr. Snooks.

"Five!" said Skinner, with equal firmness.

There was a pause. Finally, Mr. Montgomery Snooks uttered the words:

"Seven-and-six!"

There was another pause, while Skinner had an inward struggle, and then he said:

"Done!"

And then Mr. Snooks proceeded to garb himself for the part, while Skinner gave him detailed instructions. And finally they parted with mutual satisfaction.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Arrival of James!

"PRETTY satisfactory, I think," Coker remarked. Coker was looking satisfied.

"I think I've arranged everything," he went on. "You fellows will come with me in the car to meet my cousin. I've given orders for it to be decorated with bunting; it will be quite a show."

"Oh!" said Potter.

"When we arrive here Prouty meets James in the quad with a speech, Fifth Form standing round and cheering," said Coker. "Then a light refreshment in my study—ourselves and a select few."

"Oh!" said Greene.

"Then a walk round with James, to show him the school, and then a game of cricket—that will interest him more than anything else, I think. James, in the place of honour, looking on. And I shall make it a point to put in some first-class play. Of course, the fag play won't amount to much!"

"Nunno!"

"The Remove kids are as pleased as Punch, of course!" said Coker. "It isn't every day they get a Fifth-Former into their fag team."

"P-p-pleased?" said Greene.

"Of course. Young Cherry said to me that the match would be such as the Remove had never played before. Quite right, too!"

Potter and Greene fancied they saw a double meaning in that remark of Bob Cherry's, but they did not venture to enlighten Coker. They only smiled.

"After the match, a tremendous celebration in the Rag!" said Coker. "All the cricketers, and all the Fifth—in fact, everybody. Something quite out of the common. Cousin James will see that we know how to

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be hospitable at Greyfriars. What do you think of the programme?"

"Topping!" said Potter.

"First chop!" said Greene.

Coker nodded with satisfaction. He prided himself upon his gift for managing things, and he really thought that he had mapped out that afternoon very nicely. Cousin James from Canada could not fail to be pleased. It was a pity that James Coker couldn't come earlier in the afternoon. Coker felt that. He would have liked, in fact, to make a whole day of it. His genius for making arrangements would have risen to the occasion. Still, there was no doubt that he was cramming a good deal into the short time Cousin James would spend at Greyfriars.

"Only half-past two!" said Coker glancing up at the clock tower. Pity he can't come early. Let's go and have a ginger-pop!"

Potter and Greene assented. The chums of the Fifth were disposing of the refreshing ginger-pop in Mrs. Mible's little shop when there was a buzz of voices in the Close. Bob Cherry's grinning face was suddenly put into the doorway.

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! You here, Coker? He's come!"

"Eh?" said Coker. "Who's come?"

"Cousin James."

"Tain't time yet," said Coker.

"Well, he's come."

"Must have got an earlier train," remarked Potter. "He's got here too early for the speech. Prouty ain't on the scene."

"Come on!" said Coker.

Coker strode from the tuckshop, with Potter and Greene at his heels. They were curious to see the Canadian, and to see what the distinguished stranger was like. The buzz in the Close showed that Coker's Canadian cousin had already attracted general attention.

Potter and Greene weren't surprised at it when they saw him.

A big man was speaking to Gosling at his lodge—a tall, thin man in huge riding-boots, cord trousers, leather belt, red shirt, and loose coat. His face was dark as if with sunburn, and he wore a thick, short beard and long moustaches. On his head was a slouched hat, and under his arm a stock-whip. Perhaps Cousin James had brought that big whip over for the benefit of the Germans; certainly it looked dangerous enough to make the Huns run.

Coker stared at the stranger.

He had expected—at least, hoped—that Cousin James would arrive in khaki. There was something very distinguished in being in khaki, of course. But apparently James had not yet joined his unit, for he was not in uniform. He was in the garb he might have worn on the cattle-ranch in Alberta.

Curious enough the Wild-Western figure looked in the old quadrangle of Greyfriars.

"My hat!" ejaculated Coker.

"Genuine American!" grinned Potter. "Looks as if he's just jumped out of a Wild West show."

"Might have changed his boots, at least!" murmured Greene.

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

"Eh!"

"I suppose my cousin can wear what he likes?"

"Oh, ye-e-es! I—I only——"

"Well, don't be an idiot!"

Having crushed Greene, Coker hurried down to the gates to greet his cousin. The big Western man was talking to Gosling, and his accent was decidedly Western. Coker had not supposed that Canadians talked through their noses in the Yankee manner, but he made that discovery now; at least, with regard to this especial Canadian.

"Waal, I guess my cousin's hyer," the new arrival was saying. "I guess I want to see him, some. Whar is he?"

"Hallo!" said Coker.

The stranger looked round at him as he came up

"This 'ere is your cousin, Master Coker," said Gosling, staring.

"Glad to see you, James!"
"You're my Cousin Horace?" asked the big man.
"Yes, rather! And you're my Cousin James?"
"I calculate I'm that very antelope," said the visitor.
"So this hyer is Greyfriars, is it?"
"Bit of a change after Alberta—what?" said Potter agreeably.
"I guess so. Bit mouldy."
"Eh?"
"Dead-and-alive, if you take my meanin'," said Cousin James.
"Oh!"
"Come on, James!" said Coker, having shaken hands with his cousin. "Tea's nearly ready in my study. You caught an earlier train, I suppose?"
"I guess I'm rather early, Horace."
"All the better," said Coker. He whispered to Potter.
"Cut off and tell Prouty he's come."
Potter cut off.

Coker strolled across the quad with his newly arrived cousin. Cousin James's pronounced attire attracted glances from all sides. The juniors especially admired the red shirt. As Nugent remarked, it was just like the Wild West characters they saw on the stage and the cinema.

"On the stage!" repeated Wharton, when Nugent made that remark. "My only hat!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What is it now?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Is that Coker's cousin at all?" gasped Wharton.

"Eh? I suppose so. He says he is."

"You remember Skinner—"

"Skinner!"

"Yes. His wheeze—"

"But he chuckled that up," said Johnny Bull.

"I don't know that he did. He may have raised that quid; and this chap may be—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "If he's not the genuine article, Coker's swallowed him whole, at any rate."

Wharton grinned. He had opposed that intended jape on Coker. But he could not help admitting that it was funny, if it was so.

"If he's a spoofer, he's doing it jolly well," said Squiff. "Anyway, we can't give him away. He may be the genuine article."

"May be!" assented Wharton. "Anyway, it isn't for us to chip in. If it's Skinner's jape, we can't give Skinner away."

"A still tongue saves a stitch in time," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove regarded Coker's cousin with great interest. Was he Coker's Canadian cousin, or was he Mr. Montgomery Snooks, late of the Theatre Royal in Courtfield? For the life of them they could not tell; never having seen Coker's cousin before, and having beheld the great Snooks only once, and then on the stage. But it was agreed that, if it was Skinner's jape, they had no right to chip in; they reserved the right of disapproving of it, but that was all.

"Halo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Here's Prout!"

Coker and his Canadian cousin had reached the door of the School House. Mr. Prout, imposing in his gown and gold-rimmed glasses, stepped out. Whether it was Coker's genuine cousin or not, the reception was coming off.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Cousin is Thirsty!

"HEM!" said Mr. Prout, by way of a beginning.
A crowd of Greyfriars fellows stood round, looking on. All Coker's friends in the Fifth had gathered to cheer, according to the instructions of the great Horace. Coker's hospitality that day was on a magnificent scale, and his Form-fellows were all coming to the feed; and they were quite willing to cheer Coker's Canadian cousin till the what-do-you-call-it rang, as Horace had expressed it.

"My Form-master, Mr. Prout," Coker explained to his cousin.

Cousin James looked uneasy for a moment, as the Remove fellows noted.

"My Cousin James, sir!" said Coker.

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Mr. Prout blinked at Cousin James over his glasses. He had expected to see a soldierly fellow in khaki, and Cousin James's costume surprised him. But he had prepared a little speech, and he did not mean to waste it.

"I am delighted to see you—hem!" said Mr. Prout graciously. "Hem! I welcome you to Greyfriars, sir!"

"Hear, hear!" shouted Potter, supposing that the time had come to cheer.

Coker gave him a glare.

"Shut up, you idiot!"

"Oh!"

"In these stirring times," said Mr. Prout, "we look about us—and what do we see? I repeat, what do we see?"

Mr. Prout, by looking about him, could have seen a crowd of the Fifth, the Shell, and a bunch of grinning Removites. But he was not referring to them.

"We see a crisis in the history of the world," said Mr. Prout. "We see civilisation in danger of being overrun, and—ahem—ahem!—overwhelmed and extinguished by hordes of German barbarians, as in the days of the Roman Empire. As the earlier civilisation was overwhelmed and obliterated by the hordes of savages from the inexhaustible hives of the north, so—hem!—in these thrilling days modern Europe faces the risk of sharing the fate of ancient Rome."

Cousin James looked puzzled.

"Hear, hear!" said Greene.

Coker jabbed him in the ribs.

"Cheese it, you idiot! 'Tain't time yet."

"Ow!"

"But times have changed," said Mr. Prout, blinking at Cousin James, who blinked back at him. "Times have changed—tempora mutantur. The old civilisation, founded upon slavery, fell from its own inherent weakness. Hem! The modern civilisation, founded upon freedom, will survive. Hem! What do we see when we gaze about us in these stirring times? Slavery—hem!—oppression and misrule are now found among the savages who are seeking to overwhelm civilisation—military despotism—brutal oppression—hem!—these are found among the modern German barbarians. Freedom is on the side of civilisation. From far lands across the sea free peoples rush to arms in defence of freedom."

"Bravo!" came from Potter, sure at last that it was time to cheer.

"Hands across the sea," resumed Mr. Prout, "is no longer an empty expression. It is a realised fact. From the vast plains of Australia, where the—hem!—the gum-tree flourishes in its wild luxuriance, men of British blood are rushing to arms. From the isles of New Zealand, famous for their boiling springs, the sons of the new and wider Britain pour in their—hem!—thousands and tens of thousands. From the illimitable prairies of Canada, where the maple leaf flourishes for ever, the proud sons of Empire pour, to prove on the stricken fields of Flanders that the old race has not deteriorated by transplanting: that it is, in fact, improved and invigorated, and worthy of the finest traditions of Old England."

"Hear, hear!"

"Eloquent, ain't he?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"And you, sir," resumed Mr. Prout, "you come as a representative of the new Britain across the seas, whose noble efforts and sacrifices have awakened a responsive echo in every heart in the Old Country. In the name of the Old Country, sir, I welcome you. It is the proudest moment of my life, sir, when I shake you by the hand!"

And Mr. Prout shook Cousin James by the hand.

Loud applause.

The Fifth Form stood round and cheered, just as Coker had mapped it out in his programme. The Removites helped them.

Then Cousin James said a few words.

Mr. Montgomery Snooks would not have been Mr. Montgomery Snooks if he had not risen to the occasion.

"Sir, in the name of the vast Colony, of which I am a humble citizen, I thank you," he said. "On the wild, rolling prairie, from east to west, from Newfoundland to the smiling Pacific, the cry is 'To arms!' To the remotest mining-town and lumber-camp that cry has reached."

Mr. Montgomery Snooks almost believed that he was a Canadian by this time. "We answer the call. Amid the raging battle, the roll of cannon, and the deadly vapour of the poison-gas, we are ready to rally round the old flag!"

Thunderous cheers.

Mr Prout shook hands again with Cousin James and retired, and Coker marched his cousin in in great triumph, while the Close rang with the cheers.

"Topping!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Cousin Jim is as eloquent as old Prout. But I don't believe that a real Canadian would have said all that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's Skinner? Make him own up!"

"Skinner, you rotter——"

"Skinner, you spoofer——"

A crowd of Removites surrounded Skinner, who had been looking on at the reception in great enjoyment.

"Is it Cousin James, or isn't it Cousin James?" demanded Bob, shaking him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

"Then it's spoof?" demanded Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Prouty will be wild when he finds it out!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Fancy wasting all that eloquence on a tipsy spoofer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep it dark!" gasped Skinner. "This is only the beginning. Coker is going to have a high old time yet. Wait till Cousin James gets squiffy!"

"What?" yelled the Removites.

"Then the band will begin to play!" grinned Skinner.

"But—but——"

"It cost me seven-and-six," said Skinner, "and you fellows ought to whack it out."

"Rats!"

"But—but the chap will have sense enough to keep sober here?" said Wharton, almost aghast.

Skinner chuckled.

"I don't know. I rather think not. I know he's got a flask in his pocket, and he had a big swig before he came."

"Oh, my hat!"

Cousin James had marched into Coker's study. His big boots rang in the passage as he went. The best armchair was pulled out for Cousin James, and he stretched his big person in it, and crossed one leg over the other. Then he pulled out a pipe and filled it.

"You — ahem! — you smoke?" said Coker.

"I guess so."

"Ahem! Here's a match."

Smoking, of course, was not allowed in the studies, but a guest could do as he liked, and Coker felt that the rules could be stretched for Cousin James. Cousin James blew out a pungent cloud of smoke.

"We'll have tea ready in a jiffy," said Coker. Several Fifth-Formers were already busy in the study. "You must be peckish after your journey?"

"Famished!" said Cousin James.

"We won't keep you waiting long."

"More thirsty than hungry, though," said Cousin James, looking round the study.

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"Lots of ginger-pop——"

"Ugh!"

"Lemonade——"

"Grooh!"

"I'll make the tea in a jiffy——"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"You'd prefer coffee——"

"I never drink coffee, Cousin Horace. It's bad——ahem! —for the nerves. Worse than tea in that respect."

"You—you'd like water?"

The expression that came over Cousin James' face at the suggestion showed that he would not like water.

"Anything you like, old chap," said Coker, rather dismayed. He had run through the list of available drinkables.

"I'm a teetotaler," explained Cousin James. "A soldier ought to be a teetotaler. But after a journey in hot weather I generally take a little whisky."

"W-w-w-whisky?"

"I guess so."

"Ahem! We—we don't keep whisky in the study," stammered Coker. "Of—of course I—I could get some."

"Oh, good!" said Cousin James. "This is what I call a warm welcome to the Old Country. I'm not particular about it's being whisky——"

"Good!" said Coker, relieved.

"Rum would do——"

"Oh!"

"Or gin."

"Ah!"

"Anything, in fact," said Cousin James. "A mere nip. Not more than a pint or two."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Potter.

"Luckily I've got my flask," said Cousin James, producing it. "A free gift from—from the commanding officer when he saw us off in the troopship at—at Toronto. Have you got a glass handy?"

Coker had a glass handy. Cousin James proceeded to fill it.

"You—you'd like some water with it?" murmured Greene.

"Yes—I mean I guess so."

Water was provided, and Cousin James added some to the whisky. He did not add enough to make any perceptible difference.

Coker & Co. looked at him. For a teetotaler, Cousin James certainly liked his whisky-and-water strong.

When he had emptied the glass, Coker fully expected to see him roll out of the chair. But Cousin James only smiled. Evidently he had "been there before."

Mechanically the Fifth-Formers went on with their preparations for tea. There was an aroma of whisky added now to the smoke in the study. Coker's enthusiasm for his Canadian cousin had suffered a perceptible diminution.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

High Jinks in Coker's Study!

C OUSIN JAMES sat and watched Coker & Co.

He appeared to be in a high good-humour.

Doubtless his hearty welcome had pleased him, and also the potent spirit had had a mollifying effect.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING YOUR FAVOURITE PAPER.

An important step is being taken in connection with this journal. The golden-coloured cover which has for years been a distinctive feature of the "Magnet" Library is to be temporarily discarded, and a

White Cover, Printed in Bronze-Blue Ink,

is to take its place. The reason for this somewhat drastic change is contained in the fact that there is a shortage of aniline dye in this country at the present time

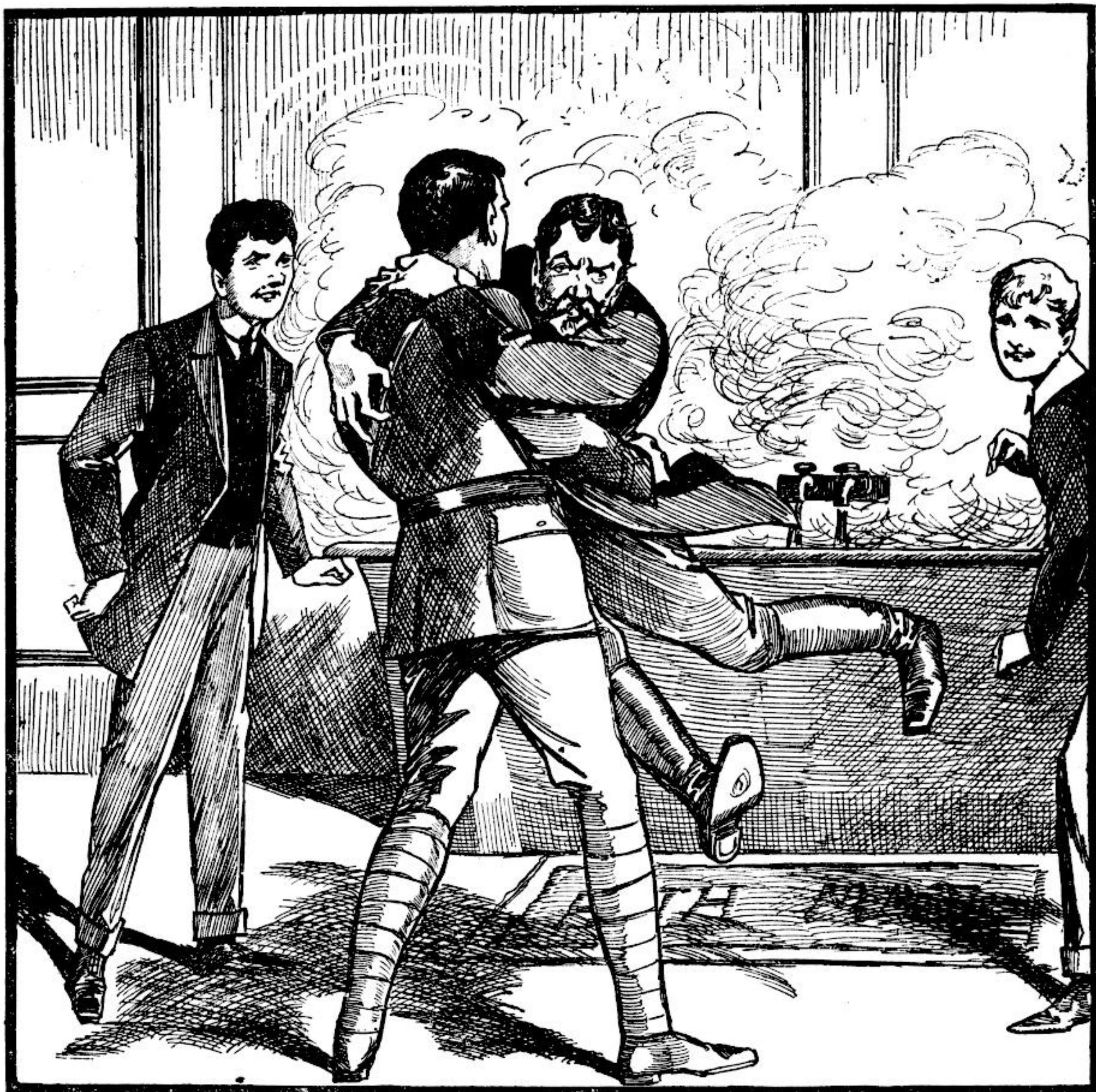
Owing to the Great War

Your Editor trusts that this change will in no way interfere with the extensive circulation of the "Magnet" Library. My readers will, I feel sure, readily realise that

Such a Step is Quite Unavoidable

and that the tone and quality of the contents of this journal will maintain their high standard of all-round excellence.

YOUR EDITOR.



Mr. Snooks threw both arms about James Coker's neck in an affectionate embrace, as he was lifted bodily. "Dear old pal," he said, "we will never, never part——" (See Chapter 12.)

Absent-mindedly he finished what remained in the flask. Then his smile grew still more genial.

"Ready!" said Coker.

Cousin James took a seat at the table.

His eyes glistened as he looked over the well-spread table. Certainly, Coker was "doing" his guest in great style. The best that money could buy had been sent from the bunshop in Courtfield. And there was plenty of it.

Coker was delighted to see that his guest had a good appetite. As Cousin James proceeded with the meal, wonder mingled with delight. But if he had known of the private circumstances of Mr. Snooks, and of his unfortunate misunderstandings with his landlady, he would not have wondered.

Mr. Snooks had breakfasted lightly that morning upon a cigarette, and he had not lunched. He was therefore prepared to do full justice to Coker's generous spread. Indeed, the prospect of a square meal had been his greatest inducement to pay that visit to Greyfriars.

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He certainly made a square meal of it. He travelled through cold chicken, and ham, and beef, and other solids, with a speed that was worthy of Billy Bunter of the Remove at his very best.

Coker nourished a secret hope that he had forgotten the thirst he had mentioned, but the hope was illusory. Cousin James had not forgotten, and the contents of the flask had far from satisfied that thirst. Mr. Montgomery Snooks had a very special thirst, quenching which had, indeed, led to his being "fired" from the Theatre Royal in Courtfield.

"This is really ripping of you, Cousin Horace," said James affably. "This is what a—ahem!—Canadian would expect of the hospitality of the Old Country. Don't let me bother you about that little drink. If it's any trouble, don't get it. But you don't mind my mentioning that I am thirsty?"

"N-n-not at all," said Coker. "I'll—I'll see about it at once."

"I daresay there's a pub near," suggested Mr. Snooks.

"We're not allowed to go into pubs," said Coker, rather flurried. "But—but, of course, I'm going to get you anything you want, James."

"That's awfully good of you. I admit I'm thirsty."

Coker gazed rather helplessly at his friends. Where on earth was he to get the fluid that was necessary to satisfy Cousin James's unearthly thirst? Coker felt that James might have been satisfied with ginger-pop or tea. Naturally, he didn't know much of English customs, but surely he oughtn't to expect whisky in a fellow's study at school. But Coker was nothing if not hospitable. Cousin James had to be satisfied somehow.

Potter and Greene shook their heads; they could not help him. They were not inclined to bike down to the Red Cow or the Cross Keys to get whisky for Cousin James—not by long chalks.

But Fitzgerald made a suggestion.

"Gosling!" he said.

Coker brightened up.

"Good egg! Look after my cousin. I'll be back in a jiffy," he said.

Coker hurriedly left the study. Cousin James did not need much looking after, however. He was looking after himself. From the extent of the meal he was putting out of sight, he might have been expecting a siege.

Coker hurried away to the porter's lodge. Gosling, like Cousin James, was a teetotaler, but he was the same kind of a teetotaler, and Coker knew that there was at least one bottle of whisky in his lodge. If Gosling could be induced to admit its existence he would part with it for a handsome tip, and then everything in the garden, so to speak, would be lovely.

Coker's somewhat worried look was remarked upon as he came out of the School House. Several glances followed him towards the porter's lodge.

"Coker don't seem to be enjoying himself," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Cousin James may be giving trouble," grinned Skinner. "I wonder whether there's anything left in the flask?"

"There'll be an awful row if he gets tipsy here," said Wharton, frowning.

Skinner shrugged his shoulders.

"Coker should be more careful about the relations he asks to Greyfriars," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The best of it is, that that particular cousin of Coker's always gets uproarious when he's been oiling," remarked Skinner. "He was turned out of the Theatre Royal for punching the manager's nose."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I say, you fellows"—Billy Bunter came up chuckling—"I say, you fellows, what larks! I didn't know Coker was a toper."

"A what?" exclaimed Wharton.

"A toper!" grinned Bunter. "I've just heard him; he's trying to get a bottle of whisky from Gosling. He, he, he!"

"For Cousin James, of course!" chortled Skinner. "Now you'll see the fur begin to fly."

Coker came back towards the School House, with a very red face. He was concealing something under his jacket. After Bunter's information the juniors could guess what it was.

Coker passed them, frowning, and returned to his study. Cousin James was still going strong with the eatables. But he laid down his knife and fork as Coker set the bottle upon the table.

"That's ripping!" he said.

"Gosling turned up trumps," said Coker. "He'd just had a bottle in—quite by chance, he said. There you are, James!"

"Thanks, dear boy. Anybody got a corkscrew?"

There was a musical gurgle as Cousin James tilted the bottle over his tumbler. Apparently he was accustomed to drinking whisky from a tumbler. Coker & Co. watched him as if mesmerised. After the amount Cousin James had already consumed from the flask, surely that would knock him over. A wild vision floated before Coker's eyes of Cousin James uproarious in the study. He began

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to wish that his Canadian cousin had not obeyed his country's call.

"This is first-rate," said Cousin James.

"G-g-glad you like it," stuttered Coker.

"A short life and a merry one—what?" said Cousin James, taking another pull. "Wharrer you doing with that bottle?"

"P-p-putting it into the cupboard!"

"Can't you see I've finished this? Hand it over."

"You—you want some more?"

"It's a principle with me," said Cousin James, with a peculiar solemnity, "never to leave anything in the bottle."

"Oh!"

"It's a g-g-great principle!" said James, his utterance thickening. "Always stick to your principles, my boy!"

"My hat!" murmured Potter.

"Stick to your principles, and you'll succeed in life," said Cousin James, after another gulp. "Principle is the great thing in this life, Horace. My principle is, never leave anything in the bottle."

"Oh!"

Clink!

Some of the whisky gushed over the tablecloth, but Cousin James did not seem to notice it. He took another drink, the Fifth-Formers staring at him silently and with apprehension. Then he smiled, a smile of geniality, not to say idiocy.

"If you leave anything in the bottle," he said benevolently, "your landlady will have it as sure as a gun."

"Oh! Yes?"

"I had a slight misunderstanding with my landlady this morning," said Cousin James, blinking at the Fifth-Formers over the swaying glass. "Mrs. Squidge is a good woman, but she drinks."

"D-does she?"

"Yes. The horrible vice of drink, sir, has fastened its claws upon her," said Cousin James. "Gentlemen, I have spoken to that woman with tears in my eyes—with tut-tut-tears, sir. All in vain! Gimme that bottle!"

"There's nothing left in it, James," said Coker, utterly dismayed. "You've spilt some, you know."

"Have—have some water, sir," said Fitzgerald.

"Water!" said Cousin James. "Did you say water, sir? I have taken as my motto through life, sir, the words of the poet:

"You're a fool to spoil good liquor;
Drink it neat, it goes the quicker!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Squiffy, by Jove!" murmured Greene, looking scared.

"I—I say, Coker, I—I think I'll go for a stroll."

Greene executed a strategic retreat from the study. He had had enough of Coker's cousin.

"Faith, and I've got an engagement!" said Fitzgerald.

"Almost forgot it. See you later, Coker."

Fitzgerald followed Greene.

Crash!

The glass slipped from Cousin James's swaying hand, and smashed into pieces on the floor. Cousin James looked at it in surprise.

"Dear me!" he said. "Clumsy! Very clumsy!"

"D-d-don't mench!" said the unhappy Coker.

"Gentlemen, I apologise!"

"It's all right. Sit down, old chap."

Cousin James held on to the table.

"I refuse to sit down!" he replied, with slow distinctness. "I should be sorry to have any difference of opinion with any gentleman present, but I wish it to be understood, once for all, that I refuse to sit down!"

"That's all right!" groaned Coker, fervently wishing that his distinguished cousin was back in Alberta. "Stand up, then."

"What! What did you say, young man?"

"I—I said stand up!"

"I do not wish to be unreasonable," said Cousin James, "but I desire it to be understood that I refuse to stand up."

"Oh, dear!"

Potter cast a longing glance towards the door.

"Don't leave me alone with him," whispered Coker. "Oh, crumbs! How are we going to get rid of him?"

"Perhaps he'll go to sleep!" murmured Potter.

"If any gentleman present," said Cousin James, "desires to insinuate that I am not perfectly master of myself, I hurl back the insinuation in his teeth. I am perfectly sober—perfectly. I am perfectly prepared to carry out my arrangement, though the honorarium is the paltry sum of seven shillings and sixpence!"

"Wh-at!"

"As for you," said Cousin James, fixing a deadly glare upon the unfortunate Coker—"as for you, sir, I will shake the dust of your theatre from my feet, sir, with scorn!"

"Eh?"

"You call yourself, sir, a theatrical manager——"

"I d-d-don't!" gasped the astounded Coker. "Not at all. Nothing of the sort, you know."

"You call yourself a manager?" said Cousin James, unheeding. "Ha, ha! Yet you deprive your theatre, sir, of the only good actor who has ever trod the boards within its walls. As for your insinuation, sir, that I ought to be at the front with the men in khaki, I hurl it back in your teeth!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"My courage, sir, is not to be questioned. But I have higher ideals. For what, sir, is the present struggle being waged?"

"To—to lick the Germans," stammered Coker, as Cousin James paused for a reply, and seemed to expect one.

"That, sir, is the view of the man in the street—the common, pugnacious man in the street," said Cousin James. "Sir, the struggle is for civilisation—for Art, sir, for everything that raises us above the level of Germans and other animals! And you suggest, sir, that I should cease to tread the histrionic boards and bottle myself up, sir, in a khaki coat and go to the front. Sir, my ideals are higher. Sir, I am the civilisation that the British Army is fighting for!"

Coker and Potter simply gasped. Cousin James was beginning to make revelations, and they were utterly astounded.

"Do not curl your lip at me, sir!" thundered Cousin James, so suddenly that Coker jumped.

"I—I wasn't!" stammered Coker.

"You were, sir!"

"I—I wasn't, really!"

"You lie! Down, you dog!"

"Yaroooooh!" yelled Coker.

Cousin James's fist shot out suddenly, and Coker landed on his study carpet with a crash that shook the study.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Two of Them!

"H'E'S at it!"

It was Skinner's joyous chuckle from the passage. The loud voice of Cousin James, and the extraordinary remarks he was making, had drawn fellows to the Fifth-Form passage from near and far.

The bump of Coker on the carpet could be heard the whole length of the passage. The door opened and Potter was seen backing out.

Potter feared that it might be his turn next. Cousin James seemed to have mistaken Horace for some theatrical manager with whom he had an old quarrel, and there was no telling whom he might mistake Potter for. Potter preferred to be in the passage.

A crowd of startled faces looked in at the open doorway.

Cousin James stood with one hand on the table looking down on Coker. Coker was sitting up with a dazed expression on his face, and his hand to his nose. There was a smear of red on that nose. It had suffered from the sudden collision with Cousin James's fist.

"Oh, crumbs!" stuttered Coker.

Cousin James glanced at the sea of faces in the doorway. He drew himself up in a lofty attitude, reminiscent of the footlights. It was such an attitude as Ajax might have adopted when defying the lightning, only Ajax at that time was probably a little steadier on his "pins."

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NEXT
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ONE
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"Ha!" said Cousin James. "Let them all come! Send for your doorkeepers, sir—send for your scene-shifters! From this spot will I be removed only by force. Ha! You have twitted me, sir, with slacking at home while others are fighting the Germans! Spur on your base hirelings, sir, and see how Montgomery Snooks will deal with them!"

"Fighting his old battles over again," grinned Skinner; "he thinks he's in the theatre again, getting the sack!"

"As for you, sir, I spurn you!"

Cousin James spurned Coker with one of his huge boots, and the unfortunate Horace rolled over on his back again. It was an emphatic spurn.

"Yow!" roared Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You laugh!" exclaimed Cousin James. "It has come to this, that I furnish food for laughter to the vile rabble. Ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wharton. "You villain, Skinner——"

"He'll begin smashing things soon," said Skinner cheerfully. "He smashed a window at the theatre, and gave the doorkeeper a black eye."

Coker sat up. Keeping a wary eye on Cousin James, he wriggled towards the door. Mr. Montgomery Snooks burst into a loud and scornful laugh.

"Come one, come all!" he shouted.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Potter. "Prouty will hear him soon. There'll be a row!"

"He ought to be got out, somehow," said Bob Cherry.

Coker wriggled through the doorway, glad to find himself in the passage. Cousin James lurched, and brought up against the mantelpiece. There was a smash, as the clock toppled over and dropped into the fender.

"Breaking up the happy home," said Johnny Bull. "Are all your cousins like that, Coker?"

"Oh, dear! I wish he'd stayed in Canada!" groaned Coker. "What's going to be the end of this?"

"Gentlemen, I will now proceed with my celebrated stock-whip act," said Cousin James, picking up the big whip from a chair. "This act I have performed to crowded halls—when the lack of the base necessities of existence have driven me to the halls from the histrionic boards."

Crash! Crash! Crash!

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great Scott!"

Mr. Snooks's celebrated stock-whip act seemed to consist in brandishing the stock-whip wildly round his head to the utter ruin of everything within reach. Mantelpiece and shelves were swept clean.

"Stop him somehow!" gasped Potter.

"James!" panted Coker. "Cousin James!"

Lash! Coker jumped back as Cousin James made a lick at him with the big whip.

"Go in and talk to him, Coker!" yelled Skinner.

"Oh, scissors!"

"Ha, it is you!" said Cousin James, his rolling eye lighting on Skinner. "You owe me seven and sixpence!"

Skinner backed away.

"Seven and sixpence!" shouted Cousin James. "Seven miserable shillings and a paltry sixpence! Let me get at him!"

"Run for it!" gasped Nugent, as Cousin James came lurching out into the passage, brandishing the stock-whip.

"Ha! They run! They run!" ejaculated Mr. Snooks.

They did run—there was no doubt about that. The whole crowd pelted down the passage. They did not want that thrashing whip at close quarters. Cousin James was dangerous.

Cousin James rushed in pursuit, but unfortunately—or fortunately—his unsteady legs became mixed with the long lash of the stock-whip, and he rolled over and sprawled on the floor.

He sat up dizzily and blinked about him. The passage was clear. Down in the hall the fellows gathered

in an excited crowd. Cousin James held the field—he remained the victor in the Fifth-Form passage.

Coker looked at his wits' end.

"What on earth's going to be done?" he gasped.

"Call Mr. Prout!"

"Call the Head!"

"Call a policeman!"

"He—he said he was a teetotaler," groaned Coker.

"He looks like one!" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, here he comes!" roared Billy Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

There was a general movement of retreat through the quadrangle.

"How's this going to end?" gasped Bob Cherry. "Skinner, you thumping ass, you got him here, and you'd better get him away."

"Thanks!" said Skinner. "I'm giving him a wide berth."

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! Who's this?" ejaculated Bob.

A tall, handsome young man, in khaki, was striding across the Close towards the School House. He looked in surprise at the excited juniors. Bob raised his cap as the young man halted.

"Is my cousin here?" asked the stranger.

"What name?" asked Bob.

"Coker."

"Wha-at?"

"Coker—Horace Coker, in the Fifth Form, I believe," said the young man in khaki.

Bob Cherry gave a yell.

"Here he is, you chaps! It's the genuine article!"

"Eh—what?" ejaculated the newcomer.

"Coker!" roared Bob. "Coker, old man, here's your cousin!"

"Mum-mum-my cousin?" said Coker.

Coker stared at the newcomer like a fellow in a dream. That big, handsome, sunburnt fellow in khaki his cousin! Coker felt as if his head were turning round.

"So you're Horace—what?"

"Yes, I—I'm Horace," stammered Coker.

"Well, I'm your Cousin James!"

"M-m-mum-my Cousin James?" Coker stuttered.

"Mum-mum-mum-my—oh, my hat!"

The Canadian looked puzzled.

"Weren't you expecting me to-day?" he asked. "Didn't your aunt write to you—"

"Ye-e-es! But—but—"

"Well?"

"But my cousin's come!" gasped Coker. "How—how can you be my cousin when he's come already?"

"What! What do you mean?"

"It's a swindle!" ejaculated Potter. "That boozy blackguard ain't your cousin at all, Coker. He's a swindler!"

The young man in khaki looked stern.

"Do you mean to say that somebody has come here pretending to be your Cousin James, Horace?" he asked.

"Yes!" gasped Coker. "A beastly fellow; a regular blackguard! He's got tipsy, and he's wrecked my study. I—I suppose you're my Cousin James, if you say so—"

"I have a note from your Aunt Judith."

"That settles it," said Potter.

Coker's face brightened up.

"I'm jolly glad!" he said. "I've been taken in. I—I was surprised that you—I mean that he—should act like that. He's a regular blackguard! An awful beast! A rotten swindler, too. He said he was my Cousin James. He's as drunk as a lord, and kicking up a row. Oh, dear!"

"Where is he?"

"In the passage upstairs. My hat! I'll have him given in charge—"

"Let me see him!" The young man in khaki looked very grim. "Show me the way, Horace! I want to have a little talk to the gentleman who has borrowed my name."

"This way, James!" chirruped Coker, all smiles now.

Cousin James—the genuine Cousin James—followed

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Coker in; and an excited crowd followed behind. They felt that the interview between the two Cousin Jameses would be interesting to watch.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Drastic Measures!

C OUSIN JAMES the First was sitting on the floor in the Fifth-Form passage when Cousin James the Second arrived on the spot.

James the First had made a manful effort to get on his feet. But his feet were circumstances over which he had no control. They persisted in tangling with one another, and finally James had given it up. He sat on the linoleum, his back against the wall, and a soft, sweet smile on his face. His pugnacity was gone; he was mollified now. He greeted the young Canadian and the crowd behind him, with a look that was benevolence itself.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Snooks, "pray excuse me if I do not rise. Owing to the peculiar formation of this floor, it is impossible for me to do so. As you will observe, the floor is moving rapidly in the manner of a see-saw, and it is out of the question to keep a footing upon it. The floors of this theatre, sir, require seeing to. They are dangerous!"

"So this is the man?" said the young man in khaki.

"That's the rotter, James," said Coker.

"That's the tipsy beast!" said Potter.

The gentleman from Canada stirred Montgomery Snooks with his boot.

"Wake up!" he rapped out.

"I am not asleep, sir! I merely closed my eyes for a moment," explained Mr. Snooks; "the rapid movements of these walls, sir, are somewhat confusing."

"You have been calling yourself James Coker?"

"I beg your pardon!" said James the First, with dignity.

"You have come here as James Coker!"

"You lie!"

"What!"

"Look at me, sir!" said Mr. Snooks. "Do I look as though my name were Coker? Is that a name at all? I scorn the imputation, sir! My name is Montgomery Snooks, well known, sir, in the theatrical world. Managers, sir, have begged me, hat in hand—"

"Your name is Snooks, is it? What are you doing here?" asked the Canadian, his frown melting away. It was not much use being angry with a man in Mr. Snooks's lamentable condition.

"At the present moment, sir," said Mr. Snooks, "at the pip-pip-present moment—pray understand me, I am tut-tut-trying to make myself clear—at the p-p-present moment, I am sitting on the floor, finding it impossible to maintain a p-p-pip-pip-perpendicular attitude, owing to the extraordinary shakiness of this building—"

"I will help you," said Cousin Coker grimly.

He bent down, fastened an iron grip upon Mr. Snooks's collar, and lifted him to his feet. Mr. Snooks hung like a sack of potatoes.

"The beast is quite drunk!" said Greene. "He's been mopping up whisky!"

"Sir," murmured Mr. Snooks, "it is my fixed principle—it has been my principle through life—never to leave anything in the bottle. When I was a small, innocent, blue-eyed child, sir, my grandmother took me by the hand, and bade me never, never forget my principles as I trod the thorny pathway of life. My principle is never to leave— Groooh! Gugug-gig-gug!" finished Mr. Snooks, as the Canadian shook him, and his utterance died away in a gurgle.

"Is there a bath-room near here?" asked James Coker.

"End of the passage."

"He needs a cold douche."

"Good egg! Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Snooks's legs trailed after him as James Coker carried him along the passage. Mr. Snooks was a good size and a good weight, but the man from Alberta bore him along without an effort. Horace Coker, chuckling, threw open the door of the bath-room, and turned on the cold-water tap.

"Fill the bath!" said James Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pour out the Rhine wine, let it flow!" said Mr. Snooks, as he heard the streaming of the water in the bath. "Or, rather, do not pour out the Rhine wine, manufactured by the dirty hands of German barbarians, sir! I am a teetotaler myself, and my favourite drink is rum-and-water."

"What a beauty!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I must say that James the Second is an improvement on James the First."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The bath's full!" said Coker.

"Stand clear!"

James Coker lifted Mr. Snooks bodily. Mr. Snooks threw both arms about his neck in an affectionate embrace.

"Dear old pal," he said, "we will never, never part—"
Splash!

They parted quite suddenly.

Montgomery Snooks descended in a heap into the bath, and disappeared under the cold water. James Coker dragged his head up. Mr. Snooks came up gasping and spluttering and blinking.

"Gerrrrrrrooop!"

"That will sober him," said James Coker.

"Yurrrrrrggg!"

"Do you feel better now?" asked Coker's Canadian cousin.

"Yow-w-ow-owp!"

The shock had certainly sobered Mr. Snooks to some extent. He blinked round him, over the streaming water in the big bath, with understanding in his gaze.

"Where am I?" he stuttered.

"Ha, ha, ha! Having a wash!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"I am wet! There has been a storm!" gasped Mr. Snooks. "Am I in the river? No, I am not in the river! Where am I? Is this a bath?"

"It's a long time since he's seen one," chuckled Skinner.

Mr. Snooks blinked at Skinner.

"Ha! That young gentleman owes me seven shillings and sixpence. Master Skinner, I did not bargain for this, when I agreed to play your little joke on Master Coker. I shall expect a guinea."

"What!" roared Horace Coker, giving a jump. "Skinner, you—you put him up to coming here and pulling my leg. You—you—lemme get at him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner fled.

James Coker burst into a laugh.

"So it was a little joke of your schoolfellows, Horace—what?"

"I'll joke him!" bellowed Coker. "I'll skin him! I'll pulverise him! A cheeky Remove fag, by Jove—"

"I shall refuse to leave these premises," said Mr. Snooks, "till I have been paid my seven-and-sixpence."

"You won't leave these premises in a hurry, anyway," said James Coker. "I recommend you to strip and towel yourself down, my man, or you'll catch cold. Lock him in the bath-room, Horace, and we'll deal with him when he's sober."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good!" said Coker.

The Canadian jerked Mr. Snooks out of the bath, and landed him on the floor, gasping like a fish. Mr. Snooks was almost sober now, and he realised where he was, and that he was very wet. He took James Coker's advice, and began to strip and towel himself. He was locked in the bath-room while he carried out that operation, and James Coker took away the key in his pocket.

Horace Coker's face was very cheery as he ushered the genuine Cousin James into his study. The study was rather a wreck, but Horace did not mind that. That drunken rascal was not his cousin after all. His cousin was this fine, upstanding young fellow in khaki—a cousin any Greyfriars fellow might have been proud of. Coker was so relieved and delighted that he could almost forgive Mr. Snooks for the trick he had played.

"You seem to have had a high old time here," grinned James Coker, as he glanced round the study.

"That rotter's simply wrecked it," said Coker. "I hadn't a suspicion, you know. I was expecting you, and he turned up and said he'd come by an earlier train. That young villain Skinner put him up to it, to jape me—"

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ONE
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me, you know. He's some blessed actor, I think. When he's sober, I'll give him a hiding. Look at my nose—the beast punched it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cousin James looked at Coker's nose, and he seemed to regard the incident as funny. Horace did not quite see the fun himself. His nose felt as if it had doubled in size.

"I was coming to the station in a car for you, James; but I suppose you had to walk! It's rotten! I had the car ordered ready, and decorated with flags, you know. And—my hat!—old Prout worked off his welcome on that drunken villain, and—and he's eaten your tea!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'm glad you think it's humorous," said Coker. "We'll jolly soon get another tea—lots of stuff. Pile in, Potter, old man, trot it out! Sit down, James! You can't think how glad I am to see you—especially after that chap. We're going to show you some cricket after tea. It will be a good match, a very good match—I'm playing! Then there's going to be a tremendous celebration in the Rag! Thank goodness that villain ain't you, after all!"

"What are you going to do with him?" asked Potter. "You can't keep him locked up in the bath-room for good."

"I'm going to talk to him when he's sober," said James Coker. "A man of his age and physique can do better than hang about getting tipsy, in these days. He's wanted in the ranks."

"But—but—"

"I'll talk to him presently. Now I'm ready for tea, Horace."

It was a very enjoyable tea in Coker's study, after all; and Potter and Greene were as delighted with Coker's Canadian cousin as was Horace himself. Meanwhile, the unfortunate Mr. Snooks was cooling his heels in the bath-room.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER. A Very Attractive Offer!

TAP!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tap, tap!

A merry crowd was in the passage outside the bath-room. On the inside of the door, Mr. Montgomery Snooks was tapping. He was very sober now, and he realised that he was in an awkward scrape. And he was very anxious to get out.

"Young gentlemen!" came Mr. Snooks's voice through the keyhole.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerily.

"Will you oblige me by opening the door? I have—ahem!—an important engagement elsewhere."

"The key isn't here," chuckled Wharton.

"Couldn't you find another key?" pleaded Mr. Snooks. "I—I am really in a hurry. And—and could you lend me some clothes? My own are very wet."

"They must be!" grinned Bob.

"At the present moment," pursued Mr. Snooks, "I am wrapped in towels. But I cannot appear in public in such scanty attire, and I cannot put on my clothes. Young gentlemen, have pity upon me. It was really, really only a joke my coming here. I did it to oblige Master Skinner."

"And for seven-and-a-tanner!" said Peter Todd.

"I have not yet been paid the seven-and-six. I—I would willingly relinquish the honorarium to get away from this painful situation," groaned Mr. Snooks.

"Can't be did!" said Bob. "Coker's got the key. I suppose you're going to be kept here till the police come."

"Ow!"

"Don't worry, old chap—they make prisoners awfully comfy in these days!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Coker's cousin."

The Canadian came along the passage, with Coker and Potter and Greene. He knocked on the door of the bath-room.

"Are you there, Snooks?"

NEXT
MONDAY—

"A LANCASHIRE LAD'S LUCK!"

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

"Oh, dear! Yes."
 "Sober?"
 "Sober as a judge!" moaned Mr. Snooks. "I am, in fact, a teetotaler——"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker. "You'll have a chance of being a teetotaler for the next three months, my boy!"
 "As for the feed—ahem!—I am sure you will take a lenient view of the matter, when I tell you that, owing to a misunderstanding with my landlady, I had not eaten previously to-day, being, unfortunately, out of a shop," said Mr. Snooks. "These are hard times for gentlemen of my profession—very hard."
 "So you are out of work?" said James Coker.
 "Yes."
 "Hard up?"
 "Stony!" sighed Mr. Snooks.
 "How would you like a good berth?"
 "I'd jump at it."
 "Well, we'll see about that," said James Coker. "The best place for a drunken wastrel is in prison. But suppose you were offered a berth—food and clothes all found, of good quality——"
 "Oh, good!"
 "Pleasant companionship among the best fellows in the kingdom——"
 "Fine!"
 "A good allowance of pocket-money——"
 "Ripping!"
 "And a regular pension in case of disablement——"
 "Topping!"
 "And the most honourable profession in the world at the present time."
 "Sir"—Mr. Snooks's voice was quite tremulous as it came through the keyhole—"sir, you are a generous benefactor. If you can offer me such a berth, I will turn my back for ever upon a thankless theatre and an ungrateful public. But where is such a berth to be found in these hard times?"
 "In Kitchener's Army!"
 "Wha-a-at!"
 "That's it," said James Coker cheerily. "Kitchener offers all that to every chap who enlists. Your King and country need you."
 "Oh!"
 "Think it over," said James Coker genially. "I have come over from Alberta to have a go at the Germans. Why don't you have a go, instead of hanging about boozing yourself to death?"
 "Sir, the claims of Art——" said Mr. Snooks feebly.
 "What are you getting out of Art at the present time?"
 "Ahem!"
 "And what would become of Art, and everything else, if the Huns got here?"
 "Ahem!"
 "Think it over," said James Coker. "You're welcome to stay as long as you like in the bath-room."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "But if you care to do your duty, we'll find you some clothes, and I'll come down to the recruiting-office with you."
 "Sir, Art cannot spare me!" said Mr. Snooks, with dignity.
 "Well, good-bye!"
 "But—but I say——"
 "Time for that cricket, Horace," remarked James, and he strolled away with the grinning Coker. Mr. Snooks's lugubrious voice died away behind.
 A chuckling crowd followed Coker's Canadian cousin down to the cricket-field. Mr. Snooks remained in the bath-room, wrapped up in towels, and doubtless carefully considering the rival claims of Art and his King and country.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER. Coker's Cousin is Entertained!

THERE was a big crowd round the cricket-ground, for the match which was to entertain Coker's Canadian cousin. There were many attractions in that game. Coker's cricket was always worth watching by fellows who had a sense of humour. But Coker's cousin was the centre of attraction.

Cousin James was interested in the cricket. He nodded approval at the sight of the Remove eleven. Harry Wharton & Co. looked very fit. Coker explained to Cousin James that he was captaining the Lower Fourth side.

"It's an honour for them, you know," Coker explained. "I couldn't fix up a senior match. I'm sorry for that; but Blundell is a fool. A good fellow in his way, but rather a fool. The same with Wingate; very decent chap, but a bit of a blockhead. So I've fixed up a junior match, to show you something of our cricket, old chap. You'll find it interesting in parts. I shall open the innings myself."

Coker opened the innings, with Harry Wharton at the other end. The crowd looked on with great anticipation.

Temple led his merry men into the field, and put on Fry to bowl. Fry was a good bowler, though he found it hard to take Remove wickets. But he had no doubts about Coker's wicket.

Coker stood at the wicket in a lofty attitude. He designed his manner to show the state of his opinion with regard to Fourth-Form bowling. He glanced patronisingly along the pitch at Fry.

Cousin James stared.

"Ripping, ain't he?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"If that bowler knows anything, that wicket won't last long," remarked Cousin James. From which remark the Remove batsmen deduced that Cousin James knew something about cricket.

Cousin James's prediction proved correct.

Fry sent down the ball, and Coker, judging it suitable for a regular swipe, stepped out and swiped at it.

Coker meant it for a "sixer."

But it did not prove to be a sixer.

For Coker's bat swept the empty air, with such force that Coker spun half round, lost his footing, and sat on the ground.

Crash!

The middle stump went flying, and the bails were scattered far and wide. The great Coker sat on the crease and blinked at his wicket.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How's that?" shrieked Fry.

"Ha, ha! Out!"

"Out, by gum!" said Coker. "Out, by gad! Extraordinary!"

He walked off the pitch in a dazed state. It always astonished Coker when his wicket went down.

"Bad luck!" grinned Cousin James.

"Amazing!" said Coker. "You won't get much idea of my cricket now, after that fluke. Very unfortunate!"

"I think I've got a pretty good idea of it, all the same," remarked James.

The rest of the innings wasn't very interesting to Horace; but Cousin James watched it with great interest. The Remove were all down for 60, and Cousin James cheered the innings heartily.

But when the Fourth went on to bat, Coker awoke to new life. He gave Cousin James a confident smile as he gripped the ball.

"Keep your peepers open now, James," he remarked. "I'm going to show you some bowling."

"Oh, do!" said James.

Coker did.

The field kept safe out of his reach. They were willing to take ordinary risks, but had no desire to be brained by Coker.

The batsmen were in some danger. At times Coker appeared to be pelting them. Coker took every alternate over. He depended mainly on his own bowling to win the match, as he had told Wharton.

Coker did not take any wickets. But some parties were pleased, for the Fourth-Form batsmen piled up runs on his bowling.

The bowling of Hurree Singh and Squiff did some execution. It was very fortunate that the rules did not allow Coker to bowl all the time. Certainly he would have done so if he could.

Fortunately, he couldn't.

The Removites had agreed to let Coker captain the eleven, in honour of his Cousin James. But they looked

daggers at Coker. When the Fourth-Form score was at 58, with three more wickets to fall, Harry Wharton ventured on a remonstrance. Coker was going on to bowl again, to Dabney.

"Give Inky the ball, Coker, do!" urged Wharton. "They only want three to win, you know."

Coker stared at him.

"You young ass! That's why I'm taking the over," he replied. "If I don't get them out in this over, they beat us."

"You can't touch them," howled Wharton, exasperated. "Give Inky the ball, and don't be a thundering ass!"

"None of your cheek," said Coker, frowning. "I'm captain of this team, I think. Get into your place, and don't jaw!"

Wharton resigned himself to his fate; and Coker went on to bowl. Dabney grinned as he let himself go at the ball. The batsmen ran three, and there was a roar.

"I rather thought we should do it, you know," remarked Temple genially.

"Hard luck, Horace!" grinned Cousin James, as Coker came off, looking a little grave.

Coker nodded.

"Yes, James. I think perhaps it was a mistake after all to play with a fag team. The field was no good, you know. I couldn't bowl and field too; and, of course, a fag field couldn't back up my bowling."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared James.

"I'm not surprised you're amused at their fag cricket," assented Coker. "Ha, ha, ha!"

And Coker walked off with his cousin, in a state of complete satisfaction with himself. He left the Remove players feeling almost homicidal.

Then there was a general movement to the Rag for the great celebration. Cousin James and Coker visited the bath-room. Cousin James tapped on the door, and the feeble voice of Mr. Snooks came from within.

"Lemme out!"

"Made up your mind?" asked James genially.

"Ow! Yes! I'll join Kitchener's Army—I'll join anything—if you'll only gimme some clothes and lemme out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

When Cousin James appeared in the crowded Rag, Mr. Montgomery Snooks came with him. He was clad in dry clothes, which Coker had found for him. He was looking decidedly gloomy. Apparently he had not enjoyed his long imprisonment in the bath-room. But he cheered up when he was given a seat at the festive board at the side of the distinguished visitor.

That feed was a tremendous success. The Rag was like unto a land flowing in milk and honey. Horace Coker was doing the thing in style, as he always did. And even the Remove cricketers felt that they could forgive him for the way he had captained their team.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Snooks, looking round, "some of you have seen me on the boards, in mimic warfare. Some of you have seen me—alas!—in humiliating circumstances, slightly under the influence of liquor. Gentlemen, if you see me again, you will see me in khaki—doing my bit. Master Skinner, you owe me seven-and-sixpence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That seven-and-sixpence," said Mr. Snooks nobly, "shall be sent to the Red Cross. Master Skinner shall send it."

"We'll see that he does!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Gentlemen, farewell!" said Mr. Snooks, histrionic to the last.

And he walked out with Cousin James, carrying his head higher than before, as he was entitled to do. The car was outside, resplendent with bunting. Cousin James & Co. and Mr. Snooks and Potter and Greene crowded into the car, and there were ringing cheers as it buzzed away, nearly all Greyfriars turning out to see it off. The old Close rang and echoed to the cheers for Kitchener's new recruit and for Coker's Canadian Cousin!

THE END.

(Next Monday's Grand, Long, Complete Story of The Chums of Greyfriars, entitled, "A Lancashire Lad's Luck!" is BETTER THAN EVER. Order Now! THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 397.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"A LANCASHIRE LAD'S LUCK!"

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ONE
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FAVOURITE FRIENDS IN FICTION.

No. 6.



Who has not heard of Sexton Blake,
The best detective living,
Before whose presence scoundrels quake
And feel a dread misgiving?
Through his ingenious master-mind
Great issues have arisen,
And rogues of every sort and kind
Have found a path to prison.

From north to south, from east to west,
The great detective travels;
With never-failing skill and zest
Great secrets he unravels.
Affairs of State, of broken vows,
Or any petty meanness,
Are quite sufficient to arouse
His wondrous sense of keenness.

A cheery youth, with heaps of grit,
Clear-headed and persistent,
Who always makes the best of it,
Is Tinker, Blake's assistant.
Through thick and thin, he firmly means
To serve his friend and master;
And many a time he intervenes
To save him from disaster.

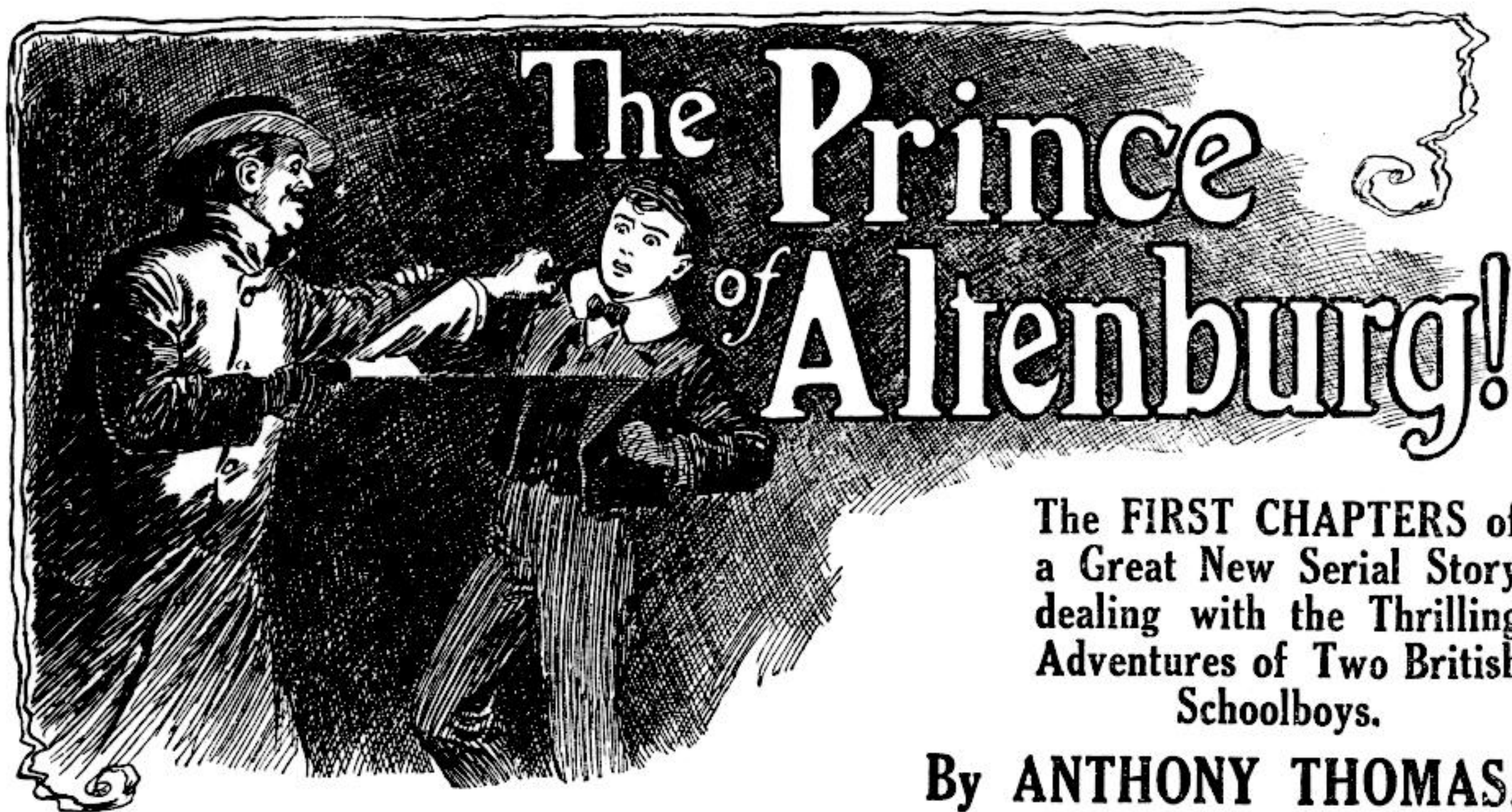
Another man well known to fame
For rapid mystery-clearing,
And stopping cracksmen at their game,
Is brave Detective Spearing,
Who speaks in accents short and brisk
When forming his deductions,
And never falters at the risk
Of meeting serious ructions.

These three, with Pedro counted in,
Will evermore be famous;
And he who thinks that wrong will win
Is quite an ignoramus.
With grim resolve and iron will
They catch red-handed daily
The candidates for Pentonville,
For Dartmoor, and Old Bailey.

The world applauds you, Sexton Blake!
From strength to strength continue!
Still further captures may you make
Requiring nerve and sinew.
Your doings in "The Penny Pop"
Enthral us, oh, so sweetly,
That should you ever "shut up shop"
We'll pine away completely!

Next Monday:
JACK, SAM, & PETE.
No. 7 of this grand new series.

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



The Prince of Altenburg!

The FIRST CHAPTERS of
a Great New Serial Story
dealing with the Thrilling
Adventures of Two British
Schoolboys.

By ANTHONY THOMAS.

THE FIRST INSTALMENT.

Two boys of St. Dunstan's School, JACK DARRELL and TEDDY BURKE, are discovered trespassing by an irate farmer, Mr. Stone.

In order to appease the farmer's wrath, Teddy Burke shows him a copy of a newspaper containing a portrait of THE PRINCE OF ALTENBURG, and leads him to believe that Jack Darrell, who bears a strong resemblance to the portrait, is really the prince, and that they were coming to ask his permission to be shown over the farm.

Mr. Stone is unable to keep the knowledge that a prince is a scholar at the local college to himself, and eventually the news reaches the ears of a person named Lewis Mackay, who is staying in the neighbourhood.

Mackay, under the impression that Jack Darrell is really the Prince of Altenburg, kidnaps both him and his chum, Teddy Burke.

The chums eventually find themselves on board the German submarine V2 and under the care of a person named BARON ZELLING.

The submarine is attacked and sunk, Baron Zelling and the two boys being picked up by the Tronjeim, a Norwegian vessel.

The Tronjeim is then chased and caught by the German cruiser Kielberg, to which the baron and his captives are transferred.

Meanwhile, DERWENT HOOD, chief of the British Counter-Espionage Department, hearing that the baron and the two boys have been picked up by the Tronjeim, goes in chase of that vessel in H.M.S. Chatswood.

(Now go on with the Story.)

Teddy Burke Meets an Old Enemy!

"I'll bet you can't guess the name of the chap I've just seen!" Teddy Burke cried, as he came into the cabin which they occupied on the Kielberg.

They had been some days now on the armoured cruiser. So far, everything had gone all right. The commander of the vessel had been quite decent, and had given instructions that everything should be done for their comfort. A small cabin had been given up to them, and their meals were served here. Baron Zelling, of course, practically lived with the officers, and had even borrowed a naval uniform to take the place of the curious suit he had worn on the Tronjeim.

When Teddy Burke came into the cabin Jack was hard at work with pencil and paper in writing a long account home of his experiences. When or where he would be able to post it he had no idea, but he determined to have it ready if the opportunity came.

He looked up now as Burke came in.

"What fellow have you seen?" he repeated. "I don't know; there's so many of them."

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"A St. Dunstan's chap, I mean," Burke answered. "Be a sport, Jack, and have a guess!"

"A St. Dunstan's fellow on the Kielberg?" Darrell put down his writing, and stared at Teddy. "How on earth has he got here?"

"An officer—swagger uniform, and all that!" Teddy Burke said. "But you'll never guess. D'you remember old Von Bohn? Funnybone, I called him, and he tried to give me a hiding. He was in the Fifth when we were in the Third. Pretty big chap, he was, but not much good with his fists. Now have you got him?"

"Great Scott! I remember the toad now," Jack said. "He left over a year ago. But what's he doing here?"

"A full-blown officer! He's marching about now on the upper deck as though the beastly boat belonged to him. Chuck your writing, Jack, and come and look at the beast!"

"Right-ho!" Jack was on his feet in a minute. "We'll go and greet him for old time's sake. I don't suppose he knows we beat Wilberry this year—probably doesn't care, either. Still, we'll tell him. By Jove, Teddy, doesn't St. Dunstan's seem a long way off now?"

"Yes," Teddy Burke suddenly became serious. "And it's my fault, Jack. Only I wonder sometimes if we'll ever get back there again, and what the Head will say to me when he's told the story. And then your people—"

"Shut up, and don't be an ass!" retorted Darrell. "It's Zelling's fault. Hallo, is that the chap?"

A young officer was walking with measured steps and in a very important manner along the deck towards them.

"That's the chap," said Burke. "Speak to him kindly." The lieutenant was practically facing them when Jack spoke.

"Hallo, Von Bohn!" he said cheerily. "How's this suit you after St. Dunstan's?"

For a moment the officer started, and seemed about to speak. A look of astonishment came into his eyes, and he stared at Jack in wonder. Then, just as quickly, he looked ahead, and walked on again, as though he had never heard a word.

"Well I'm blowed!" Jack exclaimed, when he had passed them. "What a little beast he is! You would have thought he'd have been interested in St. Dunstan's anyway."

"Let's try him again," suggested Burke, and they turned round. Von Bohn had also turned, and was walking back towards them again. He was looking straight ahead, and evidently intended to ignore the other two.

"Hallo, Funnybone!" It was Burke who greeted him as they came level again.

A flush mounted to the officer's face, but he passed them without a sign of recognition. The recollection of an old taunt came into Burke's mind, and, without thinking, he called out again:

"Funnybone! Tell us who stole the pickle-jar, Funnybone?"

Hardly had he spoken, than Von Bohn twisted round, took a short step forward, and brought his open hand with all the force he could across Burke's face.

Now, Teddy Burke was really one of the most amiable fellows on earth. Nor was he the sort to go looking for fights. He had often complained to Darrell that, although he had more fights than anyone else at St. Dunstan's, it was never his wish, because he really didn't care for fighting at all.

Probably it was true. The real trouble lay in the fact that Teddy acted almost as quickly as his brain worked. When he came on deck his sole desire in life was to give a cheery greeting to Lieutenant Von Bohn. Instead, this is what happened.

Barely had Von Bohn's arm drawn back than there was a flash, and a bundle of clothes in which was Teddy Burke was simply hurled at the lieutenant, who was hit in about four places at once. He tried to jump back and defend himself against an onslaught which was to him totally unexpected, for he had the German officer's usual idea that he could do what he pleased.

For a few seconds Burke was a perfect hurricane of fury, and by that time the lieutenant was on the floor. Then for a moment Burke stood still.

"Get up!" he panted. "Get up, and I'll show you! D'you think—"

Half-a-dozen men, hearing the noise, had rushed up. They held Teddy in a firm grip now, while the lieutenant slowly rose to his feet.

He was mad with rage, and could scarcely gasp out his orders. In a minute, however, two men in uniform, slightly different from the others, came running up. Apparently they acted as policemen of the ship, and their methods with Teddy were none too gentle.

Several of the other sailors had now seized Darrell, holding him back from going to his chum's help. A pair of handcuffs were slipped on Burke's wrists, and he was marched below. The other sailors conducted Darrell to the lower deck, and left him free.

The whole incident, from Von Bohn's first attack to the moment when Jack Darrell stood alone, did not occupy more than three minutes. It appeared to him now as an incident on a cinematograph-film which had been run through too quickly.

He wandered back to his own cabin, feeling pretty miserable about everything. What could he do now? He foresaw quite clearly that if he went to Zelling the latter would doubtless use it to his own advantage, and in any case the baron was not likely to do anything to help Burke out of the difficulty.

For an hour or more Jack puzzled over the problem, but got no nearer its solution. Then a knock came at his door, and a sailor entered.

Just precisely what the man said Jack could not tell, but he grasped the fact that he had to follow him. He was led to the upper deck, and to a cabin which had previously attracted his attention. The sailor indicated that he was to enter, and Darrell opened the door and stepped in.

At the table in the centre of the well-furnished room sat the commander of the boat, Captain Diemster. At the side of the table, but some little distance from it, Baron Zelling was sitting, while almost directly opposite him was Lieutenant Von Bohn. Facing the commander was Teddy Burke, two sailors standing behind him as though to prevent him from running away, but the handcuffs were no longer on Teddy's wrists.

They appeared to be waiting for Darrell, and he took his place to the right of his chum. Captain Diemster smiled a little as he watched him.

It is only fair to the commander to say he was perhaps the straightest German sailor who ever stepped on deck. His record, which has been printed since these incidents occurred in every British newspaper, stands in strange contrast to the conduct of most of his race. He was, as a matter of fact, the son of an Irish mother who had married an important German banker, and he would have had a very high place in the German Navy had it not been for the British blood in his veins.

As Jack stood in front of him now the captain eyed him over carefully.

"You are the Prince of Altenburg?" he asked in English.

"No, sir, I am not," Jack answered. "My name is Darrell, son of—"

Baron Zelling interrupted him, and spoke rapidly in German to the captain, who listened quite patiently.

"I see," Captain Diemster nodded. "Thank you very much, baron! I don't think you will be needed on this case any further."

The baron rose.

"No, of course not. But I only want you to understand I have no responsibility for the boy Burke. Shoot him. Do what you like with him. I care not."

The captain nodded, and Zelling left the room.

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ONE
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"Well, Darrell, what is all this trouble about? Will you tell me the story as you saw it?"

The captain smiled again as he asked the question.

Jack told him as briefly as possible. Captain Diemster turned to the lieutenant.

"So you were at St. Dunstan's?" he asked, and Von Bohn admitted it.

A curious look came into the captain's eyes, and he seemed to be looking beyond the cabin and out to sea.

"I, too, was at a school in England," he said. "At Wilbury, not very far from St. Dunstan's. I was in the eleven two years, and we beat St. Dunstan's, I think. However—"

He sat up smartly, recollecting, apparently, that he had other business in hand, and, turning to Von Bohn, spoke to him in German for some time.

Whatever he said seemed to surprise the lieutenant very considerably. Then he turned to Burke.

"Lieutenant von Bohn thinks that the only way of settling your difference is by the method you would have employed at school. I have nothing to do with it. You must fight it out. That's all!"

He nodded. The lieutenant saluted and went out. Jack Darrell and Teddy Burke followed. As soon as they were outside the lieutenant turned to Burke.

"I am going to fight you," he said, but there was not a great amount of enthusiasm in his voice. "We shall fight with our fists, and I shall give you a terrible licking, unless—unless you prefer to admit I am the winner now."

"No fear!" Burke answered. "You may be bigger, but I'll bet I can put you through it!"

"Very well." Von Bohn accepted the inevitable. "I am going to bring my friend, and you have yours."

Ten minutes later the four were in a curious-shaped cabin, just big enough for a decent fight. Von Bohn slowly took off his uniform and handed it to the other lieutenant. Teddy Burke was quickly ready.

At last they stepped towards each other. Burke put out his hand in the usual way for a preliminary handshake, but Von Bohn knocked it away and gave him a gentle blow in the face. It was fair enough, and Teddy accepted it. In a moment they had fallen to in real earnest.

Surely a fight had never been fought under such strange conditions! Into Darrell's mind came the memory of many a combat in which he had backed Teddy Burke at St. Dunstan's, but never one of them had seemed so deadly serious, so terribly determined-as this. The light was none too good, but the two figures before him danced and jumped about like shadows on a screen.

"Time!"

The first round was over, and certainly, so far, it was impossible to forecast the result. Von Bohn had taken lessons from the same instructor as Burke, and though he was not nearly so good and smart, he had a big advantage in height and reach.

The second round began very cautiously. They were moving round each other very carefully and quietly, each watching for an opening, when suddenly both of them dropped their hands. From everywhere, it seemed, came the sound of bugles blowing fiercely and insistently.

Von Bohn's second rushed in between the two fighters, his hand raised.

"Stop—stop!" he cried.

Then he and Von Bohn began a hasty conversation, but Burke's opponent was dressing hurriedly while he talked.

"Another time," he said to Burke. "I must go now. That is the call."

As they went out, another officer came running up. He spoke for a moment to the two lieutenants, then called to Darrell and Burke.

"Come! At once!" he ordered, and they followed him back to their own cabin.

"You must stay there now," he said. "It is not safe elsewhere."

"Why?" asked Darrell. "Is there going to be a fight—or what?"

The officer smiled and shook his head.

"Perhaps! We are ready for it. But we are trying to escape now from an English ship."

A Man's Purpose!

Many times in his life Derwent Hood had faced trying moments, but never had he felt quite so uncertain of himself as on that morning when H.M.S. Chatswood overhauled the Norwegian steamer Tronjeim.

Supposing, and it was quite possible, that the wireless message had been sent by Zelling to mislead anyone who might be on the track of the boys?

He put the idea from him, and many other ideas as well, and tried to insist on his mind believing the fact that once he reached the Tronjeim his troubles would be over.

At last the moment came when, with two of the Chatswood's officers, he climbed up on to the deck of the Tronjeim. The captain was waiting for them, and after the formalities between himself and the officers had passed, Hood was introduced.

"Were you responsible for a message being sent from the Caradoc to say that you had a German named Zelling and two boys, Darrell and Burke, on board?" Hood asked.

"I was," the captain answered, and Hood's heart gave a great bound for joy.

"Thank goodness!" he exclaimed. "I've come after you from England to get hold of them. You see, captain, what has happened is this." And Hood briefly explained his object, and by what right he claimed to have the three transferred to the Chatswood.

"I'm sorry," Captain Waldsen said slowly, "but they're not here now. You see, the Kielberg came up with us and insisted on taking them off."

"The Kielberg!" Hood cried. "But how—" He could not believe it was possible that he had been robbed of his quarry by the very boat the Chatswood was hunting.

But further questioning only proved the truth of the captain's statement. Hood went back to the Chatswood at last, convinced that once again Zelling had outwitted him.

He told the story to Commander Brewis of the Chatswood.

"Now what is going to happen?" Hood asked. "Can Zelling get back to Germany? What are the Kielberg's prospects?"

"Your friend Zelling might get back, I imagine," Brewis said. "But it is going to be a difficult task. It just depends whether the Kielberg is prepared to run the risk of landing him somewhere. They might do that and put the two boys off with him. He could then try and get a boat, say, to Holland, or Norway, or some place like that, and then on to Germany. But unless the Kielberg does land him his number's up."

"How do you mean?" asked Hood.

"I mean the Kielberg has only one end, and I expect they know it on board as well as we do. She'll be sent to the bottom one fine morning, and I hope it's the Chatswood that does it. Of course they might surrender, but from what they say about her captain he'll never do that. Give him his due, he has played his game well."

"Then the chance of my getting Zelling and those two boys is pretty remote?" Hood asked.

"I'm afraid so." And Brewis shook his head. "You see, if they do put them ashore, how on earth are you to know, or how are you going to guess which port they would eventually turn up in? And if they stay on board, I think the chance of their ever putting foot on dry land again is about a hundred to one against. It's rough luck on those youngsters, though. You never told me exactly how they got mixed up in the business, and why the Government's so keen on getting them out of the mess?"

"How on earth the two of them did tumble into the game I can't explain," Hood answered. "But, as I told you, Zelling believes, or did believe, that this boy Darrell is the only original Prince of Altenburg, who actually is at school in England. If this young prince did get into German hands it would be a calamity, as they would undoubtedly use him as a lever to collar Altenburg, or use it as a bargaining basis when the war is eventually over."

"But they haven't got him," interrupted Brewis. "Why not let 'em run away with young Darrell, and kid themselves they've got a prince?"

Derwent Hood smiled.

"You don't know Zelling or his colleagues of the Berlin Foreign Office. They'd stick to it for all they were worth that they had the real prince, and that Britain was lying. They'd terrorise this young Darrell into doing and saying exactly what they wished. It sounds ridiculous, I know; but even if they failed, in the end there would be a tremendous amount of trouble. Probably before we got a chance to step in, and long before the end of the war, they'd have this youngster Darrell installed as ruler in his principality. And it would probably give them a good excuse for putting an end to the Regent, who is the only man whose word could be accepted as final on which was the real prince and which the impostor. Now you can see why our Government want to keep this youngster Darrell, who apparently might be a twin brother of the prince, safe and sound in England?"

"It sounds like a six-shilling novel to me," said Brewis. "But, of course, if it comes to a question of hard lying, I can quite see where the trouble would come in. It sounds brutal, I know; but if Zelling and these two youngsters do get sent to the bottom of the sea it settles the whole matter for good and all, doesn't it?"

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OUR COMPANION THE BOYS' FRIEND, "THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Monday, Every Wednesday.

"It might do," Hood agreed slowly. "But that solution wouldn't help me. For one thing, I should still have failed in my job, and we don't allow for failures in our branch of the Service any more than in yours. And then—well, I ought to have stopped Zelling. I ought never to have allowed him to keep the youngsters for five minutes. I knew he had them, and knew how they'd been kidnapped. If—if those youngsters do come to any harm, Brewis, it will be my fault."

He rose and stood upright. The commander looked at him in surprise. One scarcely expected so much feeling in a Secret Service man.

"Oh, I shouldn't say that!" Brewis answered. "And in any case, my dear chap, the misfortune of their being on the Kielberg is not yours. If, by the grace of the gods, we do sight the Kielberg you won't suggest we refrain from sinking it? Because that's my job, and, if it takes me a year, I hope to do it, or be in at the finish."

"Of course!" Hood nodded, and stood staring through the porthole. "In any case, I'm afraid I can write 'Finis' to my career in the Government service. But until every vestige of hope has gone I'll stick to my job and keep on the heels of Zelling and those youngsters. And then—well, I sha'n't go back to England without them. That's all."

Brewis guessed what he meant, but before he could reply the telephone-bell near him rang sharply. He picked up the receiver and listened.

"Right-ho!" he said at last. "I'll be up with you in a minute."

Then, as he put the receiver back, he turned to Derwent Hood again.

"Are you coming on deck for a blow?" he asked. "I'm rather afraid we're going to put you to a severe test in the next few hours. Carron has just 'phoned down to say he believes the Kielberg is in sight. And Carron never says a thing until he's sure."

After the Chase!

The Kielberg was a faster boat than the Chatswood, but while the British ship was fresh from a thorough cleaning and overhauling, the German boat was badly in need of dry-docking. If it came to a fight the Chatswood had all the advantages, and of that no one was better aware than the commander of the Kielberg.

So that when he sighted the Chatswood he had only one intention in his mind, and that was to get away as quickly as possible. Fortunately, he was not wanting coal, and was probably better off in that respect than his pursuer.

In their cabin Jack Darrell and Teddy Burke discussed the interruption to the strange fight which Burke had been going through with Von Bohn.

"I should have licked the beggar in another round or so," Teddy said. "Didn't they jump, though, when those bugles went? I couldn't quite understand what old Funnybone said when he chased off. Did you get the hang of it?"

"Only that he might be going into a more important fight," Jack answered. "I wonder what is happening exactly? The other chap said it was a British boat which was chasing this one."

A curious change had come over the ship—a change which made itself felt even in their cabin. There was the sound of much hurrying along the passage outside their door, and on the deck above their heads. And the throb of the engines, which had hitherto been almost imperceptible to them, slowly developed louder and clearer. The doors in the passage began to rattle, until from all over the ship there came a steady volume of sound; everything that could move was joining in the general chorus of shaking and rattling, as though in protest against the disturbance which had been forced upon them.

Hour after hour passed. Once one of the men came into their cabin, but instead of the usual substantial meal, he brought them now only coffee and great hard biscuits. Later, he came again, but this time it was only to screw the shutter on over their porthole, putting the cabin in total darkness.

He did, however, turn on the light before he went out, but it was not nearly so brilliant as it had been on previous nights.

"We may as well turn in," Darrell said, after they had exhausted every possible way of passing the time. "I sha'n't take my clothes off, though, in case anything happens."

"Nor I," Burke agreed. "But I wish my beastly watch was going! It's rotten not being able to get any idea of what time it really is."

Darrell's watch was in the same condition. Their long immersion in the sea had effectually put their timepieces out of order. It was particularly annoying to-night, for, with the usual feeling of every schoolboy, they had no desire to go to bed until it was actually the proper time to do so.



"Funnybone! Tell us who stole the pickle-jar, Funnybone?" Hardly had he spoken, than Von Bohn twisted round, took a short step forward, and brought his open hand with all the force he could across Burke's face.
(See page 23.)

But Teddy Burke was certainly tired. His scrap with Von Bohn had done that much for him, at all events, and he was soon sound asleep in the lower berth. Darrell, switching out the light before he climbed into his berth, very quickly followed his chum's example.

Several times he awakened, but everywhere was dark, and it did not occur to him as he lay half-awake that the shutter was still over the porthole. Even if the thought had come to him it would not have helped him very much, for it was quite impossible for him to remove it.

But at last he could sleep no longer, and decided to get up. Just as he was climbing out the cabin door was opened, the light was switched on, and in came their usual attendant bearing more coffee and biscuits.

Teddy Burke was also quickly out. As the man turned to go an idea struck Darrell. He pulled out his watch and showed it to the attendant, and by dint of signs and odd German words succeeded in indicating that he was prepared to do a bargain in the matter of watches.

The man shook his head, but when to Jack's own watch Teddy Burke's was added, and to these a few British coins, which Darrell had still retained through all his adventures, the German gave way. He went out, and returned presently with a cheap German watch, but it was ticking away merrily.

The exchange was quickly effected, apparently to the satisfaction of both. Jack made sure that it was the right time, because at first sight he was astonished. The hands pointed to nine o'clock.

"It's a funny business, Teddy," Darrell said when the man having left them again, they began to eat the biscuits and

drink the strong black coffee. "We must have been asleep, or trying to sleep, for about twelve hours. I wish I knew just what was happening."

"We'll try and find out, when we've finished this little feed," Burke answered. "I'm getting fed-up with life on a German cruiser, and wish we were back on the old Tronjeim again."

"So do I," agreed Darrell gloomily. "I wonder what has happened to Zelling? He's never been near us since we saw him in the captain's cabin yesterday. Let's go and see if we can find him."

They went out, but their progress in the passage was not easy, for the boat seemed now to be tossing and rolling in a manner they had never experienced before. At the end of the passage leading from their cabin a sentry was on guard.

"Back!" he ordered.

Jack tried to argue with him, then mentioned Baron Zelling's name, but the only answer they could get was apparently the one solitary English word the sentry knew, and he repeated that very decidedly.

"Back!" he cried for the fourth time, and at that the two boys decided to return to their cabin, and here they stayed until the man who attended to their personal wants came to take away their cups.

To him they mentioned Baron Zelling's name, and managed to indicate that they wanted to see him. The man went out, and they waited patiently. Probably half an hour had passed before they received any reply, and then the baron came himself.

If their adventures had told the tale on the personal appear-

ance of the two chums it had done so much more on Baron Zelling. He was dressed now in a smart uniform, but even that did not lessen the haggard look on his face. Truth to tell, Zelling was even more weary of this adventure than his captives were. It had meant so much to him to get back safely to Germany with the Prince of Altenburg, and with the knowledge he had been able to acquire while living in England.

But the profit and the honour that were to reward his success seemed farther off than ever. He began to realise that his biggest mistake had been when he decided to transfer from the Tronjeim to the Kielberg. At the time it had all seemed so clever to him, but this morning he had succeeded in seeing Captain Diemster for a few moments, and the commander had been far from polite to him. Nor had he said anything to alter his previous statement that neither Zelling nor anyone on board the ship would ever see Germany again.

The baron sat down now in the cabin and made some attempt to look cheerful. But the noise and the rolling and the tossing did not help him much. It seemed to Teddy Burke, who was not the best sailor of the three, that the rolling had increased even since they came back to the cabin.

"Well?" said Zelling at last. "You wanted to see me, prince? Do you wish to know where we are going, or where we are at present, or why?"

"It was something like that," Darrell answered. "It's pretty dull for us sitting here all the time, not even allowed to go on deck, and with no idea of what is happening."

The baron seemed to understand the point of view and nodded.

"I can tell you nothing. Only the captain knows, but we have escaped from the British boat for the present. And we are running before the storm now. It will be worse presently. I can do nothing for you."

Jack tried to force a laugh, but it was a poor attempt. He had enjoyed in a manner his first experiences, or at least he had imagined he had after they were safely over, and certainly on the Tronjeim they had been happy enough. But he had had his fill of adventure now, and wanted to be back at St. Dunstan's again. When the news had come that they were being chased by a British ship, he had been glad, because to him it had seemed only natural that the outcome of it eventually would be the freedom of Teddy Burke and himself. But this hope had gone from him now.

"It seems a pretty rotten position to be in," he told the baron. "I should hope you feel jolly well satisfied with the mess you've made of things."

Zelling glared at him, and for an instant half rose, as though he would have struck Darrell. Then he dropped back into the chair again and pulled fiercely at his moustache—a trick Jack had noticed before when the baron was angry.

"You need not fear!" Zelling spoke with more spirit now. "We shall get back to Germany yet. I have told the captain so; I tell you so. And I never make mistakes."

He rose from his chair and stood swaying with the motion of the boat, and looked around him with all his old pride and conceit. For a moment both Darrell and Burke almost admired the man for his colossal belief in his own powers.

"I never make mistakes," he repeated. "Remember that! You will come with me to Germany even yet!"

Then he turned away and left them.

"Swagger and swank!" said Teddy Burke, when he had gone. "I never said a word to him—he's got his knife into me, and I'm not out for any more rows just yet. I'm fed up!"

He lay back in his berth for a time; Darrell simply sat where he was, staring at the opposite side of the cabin.

"I say, Jack," Burke began again presently, "I wish this beastly boat would run ashore or something. It's getting worse, isn't it? How are you feeling?"

"Rotten!" retorted Jack, and decided to get into his berth.

After that the experience they had gone through on the submarine seemed happiness compared with their present feelings. The boat no longer rolled and tossed, but seemed to be flung about, crashing and plunging violently, while every bolt and screw in the vessel seemed to have combined to rattle and cry out with the purpose of making as much noise as possible.

Once or twice the man who brought their meals came in, but perceived that he was not wanted. In a dull, listless sort of way they both lay, anticipating each moment that the end had come, and that the boat would be utterly destroyed. But the crashing, and the rattling, and the throbbing still went on.

Down below, though they did not know, men were slaving at the fires; above, Captain Diemster himself kept watch, and he alone of all on board knew the strange, wild plan that had come into his mind even while the British boat was chasing the Kielberg.

And now while the storm was at its height he kept the ship on the course he had planned.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 397.

OUR COMPANION THE BOYS' FRIEND, Every Monday.

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To Darrell and Burke nothing mattered. And in another part of the ship lay Zelling, still trying to plot and plan, wondering how he could compel Captain Diemster to carry out his schemes, little knowing that the captain had already made up his mind very definitely. In other parts of the boat men went about their duties, and they, too, wondered what the end of it all would be.

How long the storm lasted Jack Darrell did not know. But, after days and days of misery it seemed, there came a time when the ship grew quieter, and when he felt better. He noticed that the coffee and the biscuits were on the table again, and the desire to try them came to him. Getting out of his berth he roused Teddy Burke.

"What time is it?" Burke asked. "And what day is it, anyway? Is it ever going to be daylight again?"

"Don't know—they haven't taken down the beastly shutter yet," Darrell answered. "And that ticker has stopped at nine o'clock. It may have been stopped a week for all I know. But come and have some coffee, Teddy."

After the coffee had been disposed of Darrell attempted once again to go into the passage. But a sentry still stood on guard, and he came back again.

"I wish we could go on deck," he said. "It's so beastly hot in this place. Don't you think it's gone jolly warm, Teddy?"

Burke agreed. But the heat increased rather than lessened. When next their "coffee-and-biscuit-merchant," as Burke called him, came in, they tried to suggest he might remove the covering from the porthole and possibly let in a little fresh air.

He seemed to understand their meaning, and, much to Darrell's surprise, promptly carried out their wishes.

"Where on earth are we?" Darrell gasped the question as he looked through the porthole. Instead of the broad, open sea he saw a stretch of yellowish water, and, beyond that, great trees; they seemed to be sailing slowly through a great forest.

Teddy Burke joined him, and for a time they stood on the chair together, looking on the strange panorama that passed before them. But presently they tired of it, for there was no break in the great wall of trees.

The heat was almost stifling, and when the next meal-time came they regarded it as an inspiration that the attendant brought them, instead of the usual hot black coffee, a huge can of some kind of cool lemon drink.

Night came suddenly; there was no long twilight, but just as though the light had been quickly shut off. As they undressed for the first time for many days, Teddy Burke returned to an old subject.

"Jack," he said slowly, "I never guessed when I tried that trick on old Stone it was going to land us here—wherever it may be. You must feel pretty sick with me—"

"Shut up, Teddy!" Darrell interrupted. "We are in this job together now, and we've got to stick together. There isn't anyone on board who cares a hang for us. I guess old Zelling has begun to feel a bit mad with himself by now. So if we don't look after each other nobody else will. I'm going to stick to you, Teddy, whatever happens."

"And I stick to you, Jack!" Burke answered. "Good-night!"

Both of them climbed into their berths and were soon fast asleep. But it was not for long. A dull, heavy crash awakened them both, and then slowly they felt themselves heeling over.

Jack Darrell had jumped out and turned on the light in a moment. The floor of their cabin was at an angle of about thirty degrees, and it was difficult to keep upright. From the passage outside and from all around them came harsh, guttural shouts and commands.

"I'm getting dressed!" Darrell said, and both of them began rapidly to put on their clothes. Even while they were doing it the door of their cabin was opened, and an officer came in.

"You are dressing?" he asked. "Good! Be quick! Get all you can and follow me."

They obeyed without protest, and, with difficulty, struggled after him from the cabin. On deck the searchlight was playing, lighting up the strangest scene they had yet witnessed. Almost it appeared as though they were in a cave, but the roof was formed of trees. The Kielberg had run ashore, and the men were even now constructing a kind of bridge from the ship to the shore.

"Where are we? What place is this?" Jack asked the officer who had brought them on deck.

He shook his head hopelessly.

"I don't know; no one knows. But I fear the Kielberg will never float again. We are in the hands of our captain now."

(Look out for next Monday's instalment of this exciting yarn. Order your "MAGNET" early!)

GREAT STIR IN THE WORLD OF BOYS' LITERATURE.

THE PUBLICATION OF PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE

Between

THE EDITOR of THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY

and

HERBERT H. LOCKE, Esq., M.A., Headmaster of Greyfriars School.

Before it is decided to place

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD"

on the market as a halfpenny journal, it has been necessary to obtain the complete sanction of the Headmaster of Greyfriars. The worthy Head was somewhat opposed to the idea at first, but gradually yielded under my persuasion; and now that he has given his final assent to the matter, no harm can be occasioned by the publication of the following correspondence which passed between Dr. Locke and myself.

THE EDITOR.

MY FIRST LETTER TO DR. LOCKE.

"The Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.,
August 3rd, 1915.

"Dear Sir,—May I approach you on a matter which is of great interest to all who read my papers?

"You have, of your courtesy, been good enough to allow me to present to my readers certain copies of 'The Greyfriars Herald,' the splendid little paper edited by Harry Wharton. So popular did this free supplement prove that I have been urged to make it a regular feature.

"Have I your permission to place the 'Herald' on the market as a halfpenny weekly journal? I and all my readers will be extremely grateful to you if you will grant this concession.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

"H. A. HINTON, Editor of the 'Magnet' Library."

DR. LOCKE'S REPLY.

"Greyfriars School, Friardale, Kent,
August 5th, 1915.

"Dear Sir,—Replying to yours of the 3rd inst., I regret I cannot accede to your request. My scholars gain quite enough publicity in the "Magnet" Library without having their doings described, and possibly held up to ridicule, through the medium of Wharton's amateur paper.—I am, yours truly,

"HERBERT H. LOCKE, Headmaster."

YOUR EDITOR UNDAUNTED.

"The Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.,
August 7th, 1915.

"Dear Sir,—I really fail to understand the curt tone of your last letter to me. My request to you was a perfectly civil and reasonable one, and calls for common politeness, if for nothing else.

"As Dr. Holmes, the headmaster of St. James's School, has cheerfully given his assent to the publication of 'Tom THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 397.

**NEXT
MONDAY—**

"A LANCASHIRE LAD'S LUCK!"

Merry's Weekly,' I think you might see your way to do the same in the case of 'The Greyfriars Herald.'

"Let me urge you, dear sir, to give the matter your earnest attention.—Believe me, yours truly,

"H. A. HINTON."

THE RETORT COURTEOUS.

"Greyfriars School, Friardale, Kent,
August 9th, 1915.

"Dear Mr. Hinton,—I must apologise for the impolite manner in which my last letter to you was worded.

"I have just summoned the boy Wharton to my study, bidding him bring with him a copy of his magazine, and must say that I am greatly struck with it. I had imagined it hitherto to be made up of mere nonsense, emanating from juvenile minds; but on glancing through it, can see no reference whatever to such desperadoes as Sweeney Todd and Arizona Bill.

"Like my venerable contemporary, Dr. Holmes, I have much pleasure in granting you full and unreserved permission to put 'The Greyfriars Herald' to whatever use you wish.

"With best wishes for the continued success of the journals under your control, believe me, dear sir, yours very sincerely,

"HERBERT H. LOCKE."

YOUR EDITOR'S EXPRESSION OF THANKS.

"The Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.,
August 11th, 1915.

"Dear Dr. Locke,—On behalf of the readers of the 'Magnet' Library, I beg to offer you my sincerest thanks for your great kindness in sanctioning the publication of 'The Greyfriars Herald.'

"I am awaiting the final votes of my readers before deciding to go ahead with the scheme, but that those votes will be of a favourable character I have little doubt.

"With kind regards, and best wishes to yourself and your numerous charges, believe me to be, yours very sincerely,

"H. A. HINTON."

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

MY READERS' PAGE

OUR COMPANION

PAPERS: "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d., Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d., Every Wednesday. "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY "THE PENNY POPULAR," 1d., Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," Price 1d., Every Saturday.

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

For Next Monday:

"A LANCASHIRE LAD'S LUCK!"

By Frank Richards.

Next Monday's splendid story of school life tells of a great story-writing competition organised by a popular weekly paper. The contest attracts three budding authors—Mark Linley, Bunter, and Fish. Billy Bunter's highly-coloured war story, "Through Mud and Blood," is not favourably received by the powers that be; but there is a scheme afoot among the cads of the Remove to rob Mark Linley of his possible laurels. The plot, however, fails through the astuteness of little Wun Lung; and when

"A LANCASHIRE LAD'S LUCK!"

is announced to all Greyfriars, there is no recourse but for Messrs. Bunter, Fish, & Co. to hide their diminished heads.

A HOST OF STUNNING LETTERS!

What the St. Jim's Fellows Think of "Tom Merry's Weekly."

The page of private correspondence, which appears in this issue of the "Magnet" Library, will, I feel sure, be read with the keenest interest by all who have the future of "The Greyfriars Herald" at heart.

In this Wednesday's issue of the "Gem," another and a very interesting page of letters is published, and all the well-known and popular celebrities of St. Jim's plump unanimously for the publication of their pet paper.

Among those who have written to their Editor on the subject are Tom Merry, Jack Blake, Figgins, Fatty Wynn, Skimpole, Grundy, Mr. Railton, and Toby the page. Some of the communications are highly amusing, and will set those who read them in a roar.

In order not to miss this grand page of letters, ask your newsagent to-day to reserve you a copy of this Wednesday's issue of our great companion paper, the "Gem" Library, which also contains one of the most thrilling stories of school life ever written.

GREYFRIARS IN THE LIMELIGHT!

The great story of school life, which will appear in this Wednesday's issue of the "Gem" Library, entitled

"MASON'S LAST MATCH,"

is sure to appeal to all readers of this journal, since it describes in vivid fashion an exciting cricket match between the first elevens of the rival schools.

Order the "Gem" now, that you may see how your favourites fare!

COMMENTS OF A SAILOR'S WIFE!

I often hear from married readers of the "Magnet" Library, and have pleasure this week in giving publication to the following note from a Gillingham lady:

"5, West Street, Gillingham, Kent.

"My dear Editor,—I have been going to write to you for a long time, and when I saw a few so-called readers still expressing slanderous dissatisfaction about your not joining the Army, I could keep silent no longer.

"If I were you, dear Editor, I should not take any notice of these malicious busybodies, and I am sure all your true chums will say the same.

"I am a married woman, my husband being a sailor, and he loves to read the companion papers. I think they are a blessing to any home. When I am feeling sad or lonely, the dear old books always cheer me up.—I remain, dear Editor, your true reader,

"MRS. W. WEST."

Need I say that I thank my correspondent very much indeed for her reassuring comments?

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

H. M. (London, W.C.).—More will be heard of Vernon-Smith anon. Dicky Nugent is twelve years of age.

P. W. (Newport, Mon).—You might try Messrs. Barr & Co., 21A, Bow Lane, London, E.C.

Elsie Clayton (Nairn).—Thanks for your letter and for the flowers you were good enough to send me. The "Magnet" office was a sort of summer-house for a few days! Good luck to you and to your four brothers who are with the Colours!

Jack Hudson (Sussex).—Is Billy Bunter a member of the Famous Five? Certainly not! They wouldn't be found dead in his company. You are a bad lad to smoke "Woodbines." I don't want to moralise, but, really, a boy of your age ought to eschew the weed.

Bobbie Norman (Cork).—The forming of "Magnet" Leagues is a matter which I invariably leave to the initiative of my readers. So you're another "Magnet" reader who has had the honour of shaking hands with Sergeant O'Leary, V.C.? Good! Sorry I can't form an "Exchange and Mart" in these columns.

"A Loyal Reader."—Haden't you better give your name and address when next writing? There are so many "Loyal Readers," you know. Bunter's father is what is known on the Stock Exchange as an "outside broker." Perhaps "broke outsider" would be a better definition.

T. I. T. (Swansea).—Sorry I am unable to grant your request.

A. Painton (Westcliff).—When Mr. Frank Richards is free he will write another story on the same lines as "The Boy Without A Name." Give him a chance, though. He's a man, not a machine.

"A Northern Reader" (Sunderland).—I note your remarks, and will do my best for you.

Harry C. (Norwich).—I am not a pigeon specialist, and therefore cannot advise you in the matter you mention.

M. F. (Holborn).—Greyfriars School is in Kent.

Driver Edward T. (British Expeditionary Force).—Good for you, driver! Stick to the old firm, in spite of the puny efforts of the weak-minded critics.

Cyril P. (Croydon).—The stories you speak of are founded on fact. "The Greyfriars Herald," if my readers will only buck up and send in their letters of approval, will be launched very shortly as a separate paper. I should hesitate very much before making the "Magnet" a twopenny book. Some fellows are not so luckily endowed with pocket-money as yourself, Cyril.

F. C. Kingswell (Tirfield).—We have already had a "Magnet" story entitled "Bunter the Boxer." Thanks for suggestion, all the same.

Ernest D. (Cardiff).—Very many thanks for your letter and for the excellent work you are doing to popularise my papers in Cardiff. Give your Canadian chum my kind regards.

(Continued on page iii of cover.)

REPLIES IN BRIEF (*continued*).

"A Maidstone 'Magnet' and 'Gem' Reader."—Glad to hear you sent your soldier friend a good parcel of "tuck," together with a liberal supply of the companion papers. That's just the sort of thing they want—good grub and good reading matter. It beats all the religious tracts in the world.

N. D. B. and E. G. R. (Aberdeen).—Thanks very much for your letter and loyalty. The finest cricketer in the Remove is Wharton, without doubt.

A. Jeffreys (Woolwich).—When Vernon-Smith will be in the limelight again I cannot definitely say, neither can I tell you exactly how much tuck Billy Bunter could dispose of at one sitting. Certain it is that the average boa-constrictor would be "also ran." The best boxer in the Remove is Bob Cherry, and Bunter's father is a stockbroker.

"Southampton Reader."—There has been a boy named Gadsby at Greyfriars, but it is not the Highcliffe "nut."

George Bennet (Birmingham).—I will see what I can do for you, George.

"Tiger" (Leicester).—Your suggestion that the boys of Greyfriars should play some part in an air raid is nothing new. What price "Carried Away"?

A. T. (Tufnell Park).—You're not a poet, sonny. "Jimmy R." could make rings round you in that particular line.

L. G. Liles (Brixton Hill).—I will keep your kind suggestion before me.

Thomas A. Smith (Montreal).—There is no Correspondence Exchange now running in connection with the companion papers.

Pat Murray (Co. Antrim).—Sorry, Pat, old boy; but if I were to tell you the names of all the occupants of studies at Greyfriars, I should have to cut down the school story a page to make room. And then things would hum!

A. R. B. (Wimbledon).—To raise the price of the "Magnet" to twopence would not be good policy. I have gone into this question before.

Master Joseph Herrick, 42, Edmund Street, Sudley, Manchester, is anxious to form a "Magnet" readers' league in his district.

H. P. M. (Acton).—My best thanks to you for your continued loyalty to the old paper.

"Molly" and "Olga."—No, Harry Wharton is not in love with Marjorie Hazeldene. The attachment between them is one of pure friendship. If you asked me, I should say that the junior who was most enraptured by the charms of Miss Hazeldene is Bob Cherry.

George Jackson (Reddish).—Write to Messrs. Isaac Pitman & Sons, Amen Corner, London, E.C. They will be pleased to supply their "Shorthand Teacher," which costs, I believe, sixpence nett.

"A Bristol Magnetite."—I will keep your suggestion by me.

A. L. N. (near Birmingham).—Of course, Bunter does his prep with the rest. If he didn't, there would be ructions the following morning!

"Jim H. N." (Maryport).—I have already made ample arrangements for supplying our soldiers and sailors with copies of the companion papers.

R. R. S. (Spain).—Delighted to hear from a reader in your part of Europe. Mr. Frank Richards writes for no other papers but the "Magnet," barring, of course, the "Boys' Friend" 3d. Library, when he has time. All good wishes.

Marjory Baugh (Bristol).—Thanks for your letter. The full names of the "nuts" of Highcliffe are Cecil Ponsonby, Arthur Gadsby, Gerald de Vere Vavasour, Harold Merton, and Phil Drury. They are each fifteen and a half years of age.

"Canadian Reader" (Toronto).—I quite agree with you that those individuals who hurl frenzied abuse at the companion papers are "real insane." Happily, however, there are very few boys worthy of the name who haven't a good word to say for the "Magnet" and its brother journals.

Miss G. Treloar (Southampton).—The places you name do not, to my knowledge, exist.

F. B. E. (Limerick).—Yours is a good suggestion, and shall receive my early consideration.

J. Wollin (Kensal Green).—The cost of having your "Magnets" bound will be quite nominal, and I strongly advise you to do it, for it will form an interesting record in years to come, when other readers are clamouring in vain for back numbers. The joke should have been sent to the Editor, the "Gem" Library, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.

Drummer B. Purkiss (Warwickshire Regt., British Expeditionary Force).—Many thanks for writing to me concerning the shortage of "Magnets" in your company. Will Magnetites remedy this state of affairs by sending their spare copies to Drummer B. Purkiss, 2144, Headquarters Co., 1/6th Royal Warwickshire Regt., 143rd Infantry Brigade, British Expeditionary Force?

D. C. W. (Lancs).—There is no weekly story paper dealing exclusively with Highcliffe.

"A Loyal Reader" (Newmills).—If you will write to Messrs. W. & G. Foyle, Booksellers, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C., enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the firm's reply, they will be able to tell you the price of a book on ventriloquism.

Private B. H. Leslie, 11517, 1st Royal Berks Regiment, B Company, 2nd Division, 6th Brigade, British Expeditionary Force, would also highly appreciate a few spare copies of the companion papers. What patriotic reader will oblige?

"Anxious."—In the inter-school cricket matches between St. Jim's and Greyfriars it is natural that the results should vary. If Mr. Clifford allowed St. Jim's to win all along the line, I am afraid the "Magnet" readers would be up in arms instantly, and one could not blame them.

Frank Alderton (Ipswich).—1. The question as to who is the best runner among the Greyfriars juniors is open to doubt. It depends, of course, upon the distance. I should say that Wharton, Linley, and Vernon-Smith were the three crack runners, but I will leave my readers to fight out among themselves who is the best man. 2. Wingate was quite old enough to be accepted for the Army. He was seventeen and a half, and many boys below that age are now serving.

"Brothers" (Glenburgie).—The oldest boy at Greyfriars is Wingate, whose age appears above. I am unable to give the name of the youngest fag.

Frank Scott (Sheffield).—The Christian name of Bull is John. I should have thought this was perfectly clear. Thank you for your good wishes.

Gabriel W. (Manchester).—There is no Correspondence Exchange in connection with this paper. I think you and your chum were silly to quarrel, and if, in spite of the fact that you have apologised to him, he refuses to recognise your existence, then he is not worth having as a chum.

Edgar J. (Ontario).—I always leave the forming of "Magnet" clubs to my own readers. They make their own rules and manage without any Editorial assistance—barring an announcement on my Chat Page.

E. S. G. (Stretford).—I must thank you for backing up my reply to the critics. I leave it to my loyal readers to weed these offensive persons out and deal with them as they deserve.

"X. Y. Z." (Merton).—Harry Wharton's home is in Hampshire. Thank you most sincerely for your loyal letter, which was one of many hundreds I received immediately the "Reply to Critics" was published.

William Lynn (Manchester) writes: "I am sorry I wrote such an insulting letter to you some time back. My chums have told me how foolish I was, and I hope you will tell me through the medium of your Chat that you have pardoned me. You must think I am an awful cad." Thank you, Master Lynn! I am glad that you at least have been honourable enough to express an apology. The best way in which you can show your appreciation of the "Magnet" Library is to wire in and get some new readers in Manchester. Good luck!

"Map-Maker."—A plan of Greyfriars and district appeared some time ago. If you can get some obliging chum to lend you the number in which it appeared all will be plain sailing. If not—well, I feel sorry for you.

"Naval Reader" (Grand Fleet).—Many thanks for your expressions of staunch support! I am hoping that the "Gem" will flourish until "the walls of Jericho" are broken down—which will be never!

M. O'Donovan (Cork).—To do the "hat-trick" is to accomplish a thing three times in succession. Thus, if you get three fellows to read the "Magnet" you've done the hat-trick!

M. A. L. (Sheffield).—I appreciate your loyalty more than I can say. Will you send me your full name and address, as I wish to write and thank you personally?

Trumpeter C. Daley (British Expeditionary Force).—The military authorities will not permit me to do as you suggest.

John Simpson (Bradford).—I believe Bedlam still harbours lunatics. Why not apply?

F. Blunt (R.F.A., Luton).—Far be it from me to insult a soldier of the King, but your letter is the limit. If your comrades in khaki had been permitted to read it, I have no doubt there would have been a "bloody nose and a cracked crown," as some ancient johnny puts it. You had better moderate your transports, Master Blunt.

"A Once Loyal Reader of the Papers" (Wakefield).—I am sorry to hear you have turned your back on the companion papers after all these years. To be influenced by the sneering remarks of a few cads who have written offensive letters to the Editor is extremely silly. Think it over!

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