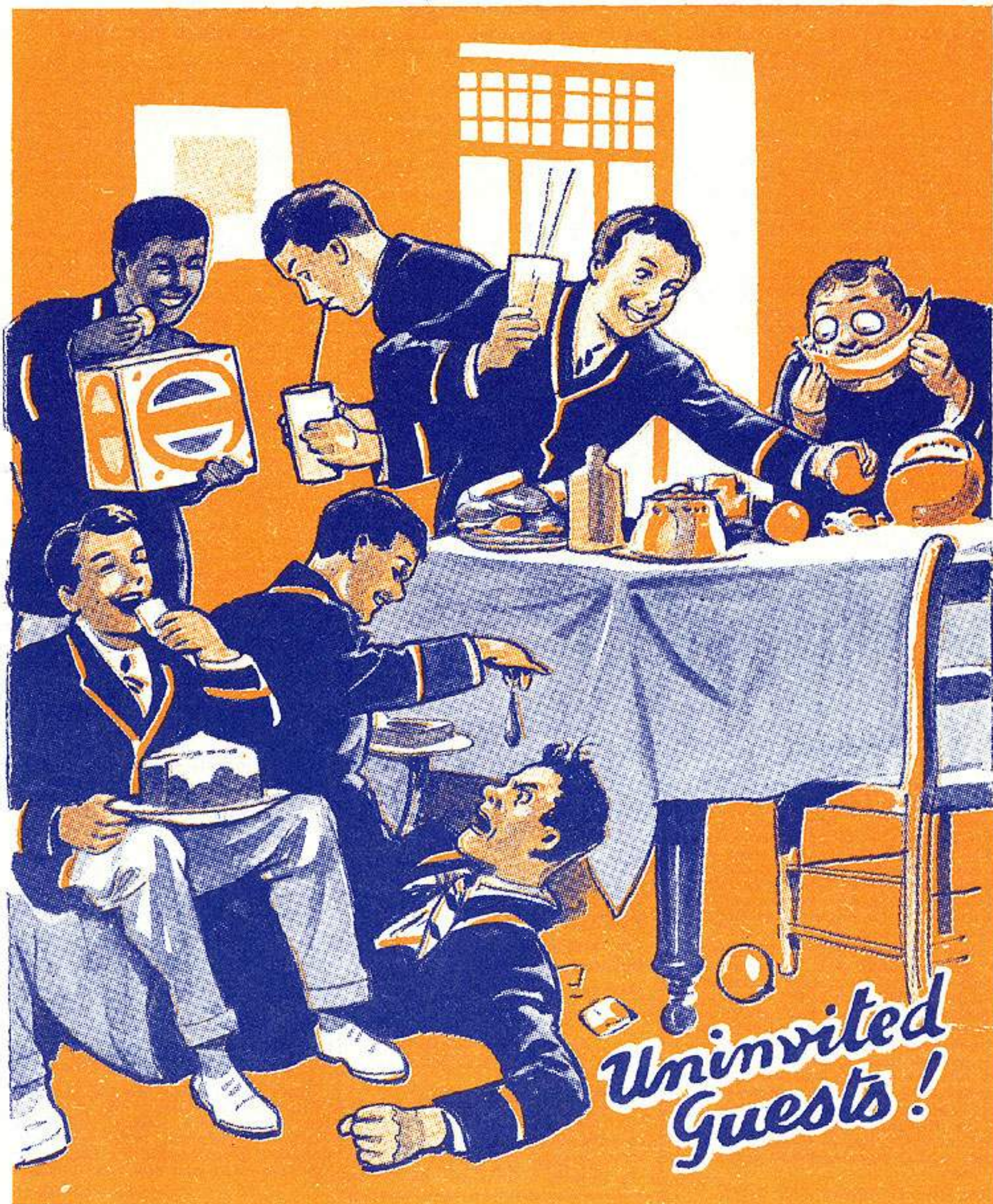


School Stories With A Punch—Every Week!

The MAGNET 2^o





Come Into the Office, Boys!

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

Since then, measures for the suppression of the slave trade all over the world have been passed, but, as you know from our serial, it has flourished in various parts of the world, despite the actions of the civilised states.

AS you know, I always like to pass on to you interesting little tricks and juzzles which you can "try out" on your friends. Here is one that I call

THE THREE DICE TRICK.

Hand three dice to a chum, and tell him to throw them without you seeing them. Then tell him to multiply the points of the first die by 2 and add 5; then multiply the result by 5 and add the points of the second die; then multiply the result by 10 and add the points of the third die. He must now give you the total—and you will be able to tell him the points thrown by the three dice!

For instance, suppose he threw a two, a one, and a three. When he had done what you told him, the total he would give you would be 463. How can you tell him what numbers were thrown?

Like all simple tricks, it's quite easy "when you know how!" All you have to do is to subtract 250 from the total he gives you. Thus, in the above case, 250 subtracted from 463 gives 213—a two, a one, and a three! No matter what numbers he throws, the result is always the same when 250 is subtracted from the total!

Try it on your chums. It will keep them guessing! And when they compliment you on your smartness, tell them they would be every bit as smart if they were to read the MAGNET!

Before delving into next week's programme here's a clever Greyfriars limerick for which C. Harrby, of 6, Crown Street, Blaenau Gwent, Abertillery, Mon, wins one of this week's topping books:

**Said Coker, with lofty disdain:
 "Prout's face always gives me a pain."
 But Prout strolled around,
 And, hearing this, frowned,
 Then lammed Coker hard with his cane!**

Don't forget, chums, if at first you don't succeed in winning one of our useful prizes—try, try, try again. Our books, pocket-knives and wallets are well worth winning.

Now let's see what the Black Book has in store for us next week.

"FOES OF THE SIXTH!" By Frank Richards,

is the title of the long, complete Greyfriars yarn. As more than one reader says, these stories seem to get better and better every week. Anyway, there's a treat in store for you next week, and if you take my advice you'll order your copy in advance—if you have not already done so!

There'll be another fine instalment of "The Island of Slaves"—full of "pep" and thrills—and a ripping "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, more yarns and Greyfriars limericks, and my usual chat. So look out for next week's issue, chums!

YOUR EDITOR

CAN you answer this question which comes from George Carter, of Winchester?

HOW FAR AWAY IS THE SUN?

Well, if there was a road from the earth to the sun, and you had a super car, capable of travelling at a speed of 300 miles per hour, it would take you over thirty-six years to travel to the sun! In other words, the sun is about 95 million miles away from the earth!

The moon, of course, is much nearer to us, and if it were possible to travel to it by plane at a similar speed, you could reach it in less than five weeks.

What do you think of the following yarn? It has been sent by Pat Cooke, of 124, Heath Road, Twickenham, Middlesex, who gets a topping book for his trouble:

Greus Manager: "Who is making that unearthly noise in the dressing-room?"
Assistant: "Oh, sir, it's only Miss Blondy, the lion-tamer. She's just seen a mouse!"

A reader who is very interested in our serial "The Island of Slaves," asks me for some information concerning

SLAVERY IN ENGLAND.

It will probably amaze my readers to know that in the time of Edward VI. anyone who lived idly for three days could be branded with a V, and made to slave for two years for whoever caught him. If he ran away, and absented himself for fourteen days, he was to be branded on the forehead with an S, and then be his master's slave for ever. Slavery was finally extinguished in England in 1660, but it was not until 1834 that it was terminated in the British Empire.

BOOKS, PENKNIVES and POCKET WALLETS offered for storyettes and Greyfriars limericks. All efforts to be sent to:

c/o **MIGNET,**
 5, Carmelite Street,
 London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY OF WINNING SOMETHING USEFUL!

DEAR EDITOR," writes a reader who hails from Alfreton. "Do you know anything about mazes? If so, will you tell me something about Hampton Court maze?"

Well, as it happens, I was down at Hampton Court a little while ago, and I paid a visit to the maze. So I am able to give my chum the information he requires, and also a plan of the maze, which will help him to find his way through if he ever goes into it.

Here is the plan:



The maze was originally designed for William III., who was, apparently, as interested in such things as my Alfreton reader is. It will not take you long to find out the course to the centre from the plan—but it is not so easy when you are in the maze itself, for the high hedges are most confusing.

At one time there were a large number of mazes in this country, most of them cut in the turf, but they have mostly been ploughed over, and few of them remain. Those that are still in existence, however, are quite interesting to visit, and of these, the Hampton Court maze is, perhaps, the best known.

THE next query comes from Harold Studwick, of Chester.

WHAT IS THE NEWGATE CALENDAR?

He asks. This is the name of a book which was published many years ago. It was written by two lawyers, and is a record of the lives of famous—or rather, infamous—highwaymen, pirates, and the like, who were all imprisoned at Newgate Prison.

Newgate Prison, which was in existence as early as 1218, was destroyed and rebuilt over and over again, until it was finally demolished in 1902, and the present Old Bailey was built on its site. If ever you are in London, you will find a lot of relics of Newgate still preserved in the London Museum, including some of the cells, one of which is that from which the notorious Jack Sheppard escaped.

It is interesting to know that a statue of Sir Richard Whittington, complete with his cat, stood in a niche in the prison until it was demolished in the fire of 1666.

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CRACKSMAN AND CRICKETER.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Loot!

"YOU fellows like cake?"

Billy Bunter put a fat face and a large pair of spectacles in at the doorway of Study No. 1 in the Greyfriars Remove as he asked that question.

Five juniors in the study looked round at Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove were rather busy. It was the first day of the summer term, and on the first day of term everybody at Greyfriars was rather busy.

Bob Cherry had brought back to school a large oleograph, a gorgeous picture in many colours. There was no room for it in Bob's study—Study No. 13—and he was generously bestowing it on his friends in Study No. 1—Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent. He was adding to his generosity by hanging it for them on the study wall.

The picture, of course, had to be hung. Wharton and Nugent, whose ideas on the subject of art were not quite so simple as Bob's, rather thought that it was the painter of that picture who ought to be hung. But they would not have told Bob so for worlds. They accepted the gift in the spirit in which it was given, only nourishing a private hope that an accident would happen to it sooner or later.

Bob was mounted on a pair of steps, with a hammer and nails. Picture-rails were not provided in junior studies at Greyfriars. A fellow who wanted to hang a picture hung it by the primitive process of driving nails through its corners into the wall. Quite a harvest of plaster was generally reaped on such occasions.

Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh held the steps for Bob. The steps were a little "wonky," and required careful handling. Mounted on the summit of

the steps, Bob hammered in nails cheerfully. Bob believed in doing a job thoroughly. He did not spare the nails. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent stood looking on, ready to admire the picture when hung, and ready to catch Bob if he fell—as he seemed likely to do at any moment.

Billy Bunter interrupted the proceedings. He rolled into the study doorway with a large parcel under his arm. He propounded a question

which hardly required an answer. There were few fellows in the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars who did not like cake.

Bunter slammed the parcel down on the study table. Five pairs of eyes watched him in surprise. It was not at all uncommon for a fellow to unpack a cake on the first day of term. But it was rather uncommon for William George Bunter to offer to whack out his tuck.

Bunter blinked round at the surprised juniors through his big spectacles.

"Like cake?" he repeated.

He ripped the wrappings off the parcel and displayed a huge cake. It was a handsome cake, a scrumptious cake, thick with marzipan.

A NEW BOY IN THE LIMELIGHT!

His detractors say:

He's a rotter, a cracksmán, and ought to be hounded out of Greyfriars.

His admirers say:

He's a real white man, straight as a die, and a wizard with the willow.

WHO IS RIGHT?

"Well, we've had tea," said Harry Wharton, laughing, "but I think we could help with a scrumptious cake like that, Bunter."

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent.

"You're whacking it out, Bunter?" asked Johnny Bull blankly.

"Yes, old chap. Don't I always whack out things with my old pals?" asked Bunter.

"Not that I know of."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"It wants a few more nails," said Bob Cherry. "But I can do with a rest for a few minutes. I'll have some of that cake."

He descended the steps. The picture flapped on the six or seven nails Bob

had already driven into it. The steps rocked as he descended. Bob had rather a heavy tread, and those steps had seen hard service.

"Look out!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Hold on!"

"My esteemed Bob—" gasped Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Here, hold those steps!" roared Bob Cherry.

Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh held on manfully. But the steps rocked wildly and crashed. Bob Cherry made a flying leap just in time to save a fall. The old proverb sagely advises that one should look before one leaps. But Bob had no time to look before he leaped. That was how he came to land on William George Bunter.

"Yaróoooh!" There was a terrific roar from Billy Bunter as he went sprawling, with Bob sprawling over him.

Hammer and nails flew from Bob's hands. The nails scattered far and wide over the study floor; but the hammer, like a bullet, found a billet. A fearful yell from Frank Nugent announced that he had received it.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.

"Yaróooooogh!"

"Ow!" yelled Nugent. He clasped his chin with both hands, in anguish.

"Ow, ow! Wow! Ooooooh! Hoooh! Ooooooh!"

"Gerroff!" shrieked Bunter. "You beast, gerroff!"

Bob Cherry sat up rather dazedly.

He did not notice for the moment that he was sitting on Billy Bunter's waistcoat.

Bunter noticed it—he could not help noticing it. Bob Cherry was not a lightweight.

"Oooooogh!" came in an agonised gasp from the fat junior. "Oooooogh! Groooogh! Woooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton seized Bob by the collar and dragged him from his resting place.

"Here, go easy!" gasped Bob.

"You ass! Do you want to burst Bunter all over the study?"

"Ooogh!" Billy Bunter sat up. His fat hands were pressed to his extensive equator. "Oooooogh! Beast! Ooooooh!"

"Why didn't you silly asses hold those steps?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Fathead!" retorted Johnny Bull.

"The fatheadedness is terrific!" gasped Hurree Singh.

"Oooooogh! I say, you fellows, help a fellow up! I say, I'm winded! I say, I'm injured! Oooooogh!"

Kind hands helped William George

Bunter to his feet. The Owl of the Remove leaned on the table and spluttered.

"Cheerio, old fat man!" said Bob. "Sorry I fell on you—"

"Beast!" gurgled Bunter.

"But it might have been worse, you know—"

"You silly idiot, how could it have been worse?" gasped Bunter.

"Well, I might have fallen on the floor."

"Why, you—you—you—" spluttered Bunter.

"Lucky you were there, what?" said Bob cheerily. "You were the right man in the right place, for once, old fat bean!"

Billy Bunter glared at the cheery Bob through his big spectacles. He, at least, did not seem to regard it as lucky that he had been there. Certainly he had broken Bob's fall. But he rather felt as if he had been broken himself.

"You—you—you silly chump!" gasped Bunter. "You—you howling ass! You dangerous maniac! Ow! If this is the way you treat a fellow who brings a splendid cake to the study to whack out—" Bunter gurgled. "I've a jolly good mind to take it to my own study now!"

"Take it—and be blowed!" said Bob.

"I jolly well would, only that beast Coker will look there first thing!" gasped Bunter. "Look here, let's get on with the cake! Lend me a knife, somebody!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "What's that about Coker?"

"Eh? Nothing! Lend me a knife, you—"

"Is that Coker's cake?" roared the captain of the Remove.

"Certainly not! I told you fellows that I had brought a cake back, didn't I? This cake was made specially for me to bring back to school. I've just unpacked it. It was made specially by our cook at Bunter Court. If you fellows think I've bagged this cake from a study in the Fifth, I can only say you're a rotten, suspicious lot!"

"You fat villain!" yelled Bob. "That cake belongs to Coker of the Fifth!"

"It doesn't!" howled Bunter. "Don't I keep on telling you that I've just unpacked it from my box? Besides, that beast Coker ragged me in the vac when we met in Surrey. You know that jolly well! Tit for tat is fair play! It jolly well serves Coker right! Besides, this isn't his cake. I haven't been anywhere near his study. I hope you can take a fellow's word!"

"You—you—" gasped Wharton.

"Look here, gimme a knife!" said Bunter hastily. "The sooner we get rid of this cake the better. Don't leave any of it, you fellows! I don't want a crumb left. If there's any left, that beast Coker may spot it and make out that it was his cake. He's untruthful!"

Bunter blinked round for a knife to cut the cake. Obviously, he had the best of reasons for desiring that cake to be disposed of as soon as possible. Probably Coker of the Fifth had already missed it from his study.

The Owl of the Remove grabbed a knife. Wharton grabbed a fat wrist, just in time to prevent the knife from plunging into the cake.

"You podgy pirate! Let it alone!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Bump him!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, if this is what you call gratitude, when I'm whacking out Coker's cake—I mean the cake I brought from home— Yaroooh! Leggo!" yelled Bunter.

The Famous Five grasped Bunter.

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He was whirled away from the cake. He sat down on the study floor with a bump and a yell. Harry Wharton & Co. had had many troubles with Coker of the Fifth, but they had no intention of bagging Coker's tuck.

"Ow! Beasts!" roared Bunter. "Leggo! I tell you it's my cake! I ordered it by telephone from the stores at Courtfield. I mean it was specially made for me by our cook at Bunter Court! Look here—"

"All kick together!" said Bob Cherry.

"The kickfulness is the proper caper!" chuckled Hurree Singh.

"Look here, gimme that cake! Gimme— Yooooop!"

Forgetting even the cake in his frantic desire to escape five lunging boots, William George Bunter rolled out of the study.

"After him!" roared Bob Cherry.

There was a patter of rapidly retreating footsteps. Billy Bunter was doing the Remove passage at about 60 m.p.h.

"The fat luglar!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Somebody had better take that cake back to Coker's study before there's a row. You take it, Bob, and I'll finish hanging the picture."

Possibly Wharton was thinking of the state of the study wall as much as of the restoration of Bunter's plunder.

"Right-ho!" said Bob. "Mind you put in enough nails." Bob picked up the cake. "Don't spare the nails, old chap. I've got lots more in my study."

Bob Cherry left the study with the cake. Wharton proceeded to complete the hanging of the picture. But he did spare the nails, in spite of the fact that Bob had lots more in his study.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Wrong Man!

"MY idea," said Coker of the Fifth, "is this!"

Potter and Greene looked as interested as they could.

Coker, in his study in the Fifth, was laying down the law, as usual. His study-mates were exercising the great gift of patience—also as usual.

There was a merry crowd downstairs in Hall. Potter and Greene would have preferred to be there. But Coker had marched them off to the study, and they raised no objections. Coker was not the fellow to listen to objections, if raised. Moreover, Coker always came back after the holidays with enormous supplies of good things, carefully packed by his affectionate Aunt Judy. Coker, on the first day of term, was a valuable acquaintance. Fellows were often very cordial to Horace Coker on the first day, though later in the term they might dodge round corners to elude him.

"My idea," repeated Coker, "is this! A study supper—"

Potter and Greene brightened. Old Coker, for once, was talking sense, instead of his usual rot.

"I've brought back a few things," went on Coker. "We can get quite a decent supper. I've got a rather special cake, to wind up with."

"Good!" said Potter and Greene heartily.

"I'd have made it a study tea," explained Coker, "only he hasn't arrived yet."

"He?" repeated Potter. "Who?"

"The new chap, you know."

"There's no new man in the Fifth," said Potter.

"I know that. There's a new man in the Sixth," said Coker. "I've heard from Wingate that he's coming to-day,

though he doesn't seem to have arrived with the rest."

"Look here, you're not palling with Sixth Form men!" said Greene. "The Fifth don't!"

"Not at all the thing!" said Potter, shaking his head. "Dash it all, Coker, old man, you don't want to look for pals in the Sixth!"

"Blow the Sixth!" said Coker. "I don't care twopence for the Sixth, as you know jolly well. I wouldn't give twopence halfpenny for the whole Form! But this new man who's coming to-day is rather special."

"What's special about him?" demanded Potter.

Potter and Greene were thinking of the loaves and fishes. Later in the term any man at Greyfriars, from the Sixth to the Second, was welcome to Horace Coker, so far as they were concerned. But on the first day of the term they preferred to keep the great Horace to themselves.

"You remember that chap we met in the hols?" said Coker.

"What chap?" yawned Greene.

"That chap Lancaster—"

"Who?" asked Potter.

"Oh, don't be an ass," said Coker. "You know that we had a cycling tour in the Easter vac, and I ran into the chap in Surrey—"

"You ran into such a lot of chaps!" said Potter. "When you're on a jigger you're liable to run into anybody."

"I don't mean I ran into him, fat-head! I mean I ran into him," said Coker lucidly. "I mean we met him, staying at an inn in Surrey, near young Wharton's place. I had rather a misunderstanding with him and we had a scrap. It was the fault of those cheeky fags! After that he pulled me out of the river, which was jolly decent of him, and we made friends. Well, that's the chap who's coming into the Greyfriars Sixth. His name's Lancaster—Richard Lancaster—and I hear that he's the son of a man who fell in the War. He's a splendid chap, and I'm going to be friendly with him here."

"Has he agreed?"

"Don't be a silly owl, Potter! I don't think he's the sort of fellow to put on Sixth Form swank. If he does, of course, I shall probably whop him again, like I did in the hols. What are you sniggering at, you dummies?"

"I thought it was you who got whopped that time, old bean," said Potter blandly.

"That's the kind of silly, idiotic thing you would think, George Potter. As a matter of fact, the scrap was never finished, and I'm glad of it now. Well, for some reason he's coming late to-day. He's not here yet. That's why we're going to have a study supper. He's bound to blow in before supper. I'm going to ask him here, see?"

"Um!" said Potter and Greene.

They did not look enthusiastic. They remembered the fellow, now that Coker mentioned him; but they had no special desire to meet again a fellow whom they had happened on for a few days at a country inn in the vacation.

"I wish he'd come into the Fifth," went on Coker thoughtfully. "Then he could have shared this study with me."

"Four in a study is rather a crowd," said Greene.

"Oh, one of you fellows could have changed out," said Coker carelessly.

"Could we?" asked Potter, in a sulphurous tone.

"Yes; that would have been all right. But he had to go into the Sixth—he's too old for the Fifth, really," said Coker, "and I believe he's a bit of a swot, too. I remember he had a blessed

Livy with him in the hols. He reads that Latin muck just as a fellow might read a newspaper. It's rather unusual for a fellow to go straight into the Sixth; but I hear that he was put up by a governor of Greyfriars—old Popper—and the Head agreed. Well, so long as he doesn't put on any Sixth Form swank we can be friends; and I want you fellows to be very civil to him."

"Um!" said Potter and Greene again.

"Remember your manners, and all that," said Coker. "I want to make rather a good impression on this man Lancaster. Behave yourselves, you know, while he's here."

Potter and Greene looked fixedly at the great Coker. If Coker desired to inspire them with friendly feelings towards his Sixth Form friend, he certainly was not going to work tactfully. But tact had never been included among Coker's many gifts.

"Now we'll get on to unpacking the things," said Coker. "I've unpacked the cake already. It's on the table. Rather a decent cake—what?" Coker glanced over the study table, and then stared. "I say, where's that cake? One of you fellows shifted it?"

"Haven't seen it!" snapped Potter. "Well, it was here," exclaimed Coker warmly. "I unpacked it and left it on the table when I went down to the gates to see if Lancaster was coming. What have you done with it?"

"We haven't been in the study!" grunted Greene.

"Well, somebody's shifted it," said Coker. "Cakes can't walk away, I suppose. Look for it!"

The three Fifth-Formers looked for the cake. It was large enough to be seen—if it was there! But it did not seem to be there! Up and down and round about the study they rooted; but the great cake that had been specially packed by Aunt Judy was conspicuous only by its absence.

Coker knitted his brows. "Look here, if you fellows have been larking with that cake—" he began, glaring accusingly at his comrades.

"We haven't seen the blessed thing!" hooted Potter. "Very likely you forgot it and left it at home. It's the sort of thing you would do!"

"Or at the station," said Greene. "You'd be more likely than not to leave it somewhere, Coker."

"Rot!" bawled Coker. "I tell you I unpacked it and left it on this table. If you fellows haven't shifted it, somebody's been in and bagged it. Bagged that cake I was keeping specially for Lancaster's supper here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Is that a thing to snigger at?"



As the steps crashed over Bob Cherry made a flying leap and landed full on top of Billy Bunter. "Yarooop!" yelled the Owl of the Remove, as he went sprawling, with Bob on top of him.

roared Coker, greatly incensed. "Look here, who's bagged that cake?"

"Ask me another!" yawned Potter. "Some fag, of course," said Coker. "Very likely one of those Remove fags we had a row with in the hols. We've got to get that cake back before the young scoundrels scoff it. Come on!"

Coker strode forth from the study. Potter and Greene followed him. They exchanged a glance as they followed. Potter and Greene had not the faintest intention of joining Coker in a fray in the Remove quarters. The inhabitants of that territory were altogether too warlike to suit Potter and Greene. Their idea was to slip away quietly and join the cheery mob in Hall, while Coker hunted for trouble on his lonely own.

But as it happened, they had not far to go. For on the landing at the end of the passage, near the games study, they almost ran into a Remove junior who had a huge cake under his arm, partly wrapped. Coker's eagle eye fairly snapped at that cake. He knew his cake again at a glance. He jumped at Bob Cherry.

"You young rascal!" roared Coker. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob.

"That's my cake!" roared Coker. "I know that, old bean! I was—Yaroooh! Oh, my hat! Hands off, you silly fathead!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Yaroooop!"

There was no time for Bob to explain that he was bringing that cake back to Coker's study; that it was loot rescued from the clutch of the looter. Coker did not give him a chance.

Coker collared him. That was his cake, and it was in the hands of a Remove man—one of the cheeky fags with whom he had "rowed" in the holidays, as Coker had suspected. That was enough for Coker. He collared the hapless Bob and smote him hip and thigh. The cake thumped on the floor and rolled there unheeded. Potter and Greene lent their great leader a hand. They had no objection to ragging a cheeky fag. Bob Cherry, struggling frantically, rolled and tumbled in the grasp of the three seniors.

"Ow! Wow!" roared Bob. "Leggo! I tell you—yaroooh! I was bringing that—whoop! I was—yarooooooch! Oh crikey! Ow! Ow! Ow!"

Smack! Smack! Smack! came Coker's hefty hands. He disdained to punch a fag; but his smacks were really terrific.

"Take that!" gasped Coker, "and that—and that! That'll teach you to raid tuck from my study! And that, and that!"

"Whooop! I never—I tell you—ow-yooop!"

Smack! Smack! Smack! "Ow! Help! Rescue! Whooooop!"

"Now kick him out!" said Coker. "That'll be a lesson for him! I fancy he won't raid my study again in a hurry."

Bob sprawled and gasped. "You silly fathead!" he shrieked. "I never raided your silly cake! I was bringing it back—ow! It was somebody else, you idiot, and I was bringing it back, you born dummy! Wow!"

"Oh!" said Coker.

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

"Well, you're a cheeky Remove fag, anyhow, and you wanted a whopping," said Coker. "Kick him out, all the same."

"Oh! Ow! Gerraway! Oh, my hat! Ow!"

Bob Cherry fled wildly for the Remove passage. Coker picked up the cake and marched it triumphantly back to his study. Potter and Greene, seizing the opportunity, scudded down the stairs and joined the crowd in Hall.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

What Did Loder Know?

GERALD LODER, of the Sixth Form, strolled into the Remove passage, his hands in his pockets, and his ashplant under his arm. He stopped at the open doorway of Study No. 1 and looked in.

Harry Wharton had just descended from the steps. The picture was hung; and only a little more of the study wall lay in ruins on the floor. Wharton was not quite so heavy-handed as Bob; neither was he so generous with the nails. He was about to lay down the hammer, when Loder looked in; and on second thoughts, he retained it in his hand. The bully of the Sixth was on far from good terms with the Famous Five of the Remove; and though even Loder was not expected to make himself specially unpleasant on the first day of term, he had his ashplant under his arm, and with Gerald Loder you never could tell. The four juniors in the study eyed him warily.

Loder condescended to give them a nod.

He walked into the study, sat on a corner of the table, stretched out his rather long legs, with his hands still thrust into his pockets, and looked quite genial. Apparently Loder of the Sixth had not come on the warpath. For which the juniors were duly thankful; for they were not anxious for trouble with a Sixth Form prefect.

"Making yourselves at home, what?" said Loder, with a glance at the oleograph, and a grin at the sea of plaster on the floor.

"Yes," said Harry. "Some picture, what?"

"Is it a picture?" asked Loder. "Yes, I see now that it is. You fags heard that there's a new man in the Sixth this term?"

"Yes, man named Lancaster," said Harry. The juniors knew now why Loder had come. He was curious about Lancaster; and doubtless knew that they were acquainted with the "new man."

Probably other men in the Sixth were rather surprised by a new fellow coming into their Form. But the juniors did not see why Loder should be specially interested.

"I've heard something from that young ass Bunter," Loder remarked. "It seems that you know this man Lancaster."

"Yes, we've met him."

"What sort of a chap is he?" asked Loder.

"Splendid chap, so far as we know," said Harry. "We saw him only for a few days; he was putting up at an inn near my home in Surrey. He whopped Coker of the Fifth when that ass was pitching into me—Coker was there on a bike tour."

"He must be a hefty man to whop Coker!" said the Sixth-Former.

"Well, he doesn't look beefy, but he's a hefty man," said Wharton. "Some swimmer, too. He fished Coker out of the river when the silly owl tumbled in. A topping chap all round."

"He doesn't seem to have blown in yet," said Loder. "You fags seen anything of him?"

"As it happens, yes," said Harry. "He's staying at Popper Court, and we took a short-cut that way coming from the station and happened to fall in with him."

"Staying with Sir Hilton Popper, a governor of Greyfriars?" exclaimed Loder.

"That's so. He said he would get here later in the day," answered Wharton. "You happen to know him, Loder?"

"I fancy I've met the man, if he's the same chap," answered Loder. "Know anything of his people?"

"My uncle does," said Wharton. "He knew Lancaster's father—Captain Lancaster, of the Leamshire Regiment. He fell on the Somme."

"That's the chap!" said Loder, with a glint in his eyes that the juniors noticed, but could not understand. "The son of 'Handsome Lancaster!'"

"Right!" said Wharton, with a smile. "My uncle says that Captain Lancaster was the handsomest man in the regiment and young Lancaster is awfully good-looking."

"His good-lookfulness is terrific," concurred Hurreo Janset Ram Singh. Loder slid from the study table.

"It's the same fellow!" he said. "I fancied it would be the same when I heard the name—it's not a common one. My hat! And he's coming to Greyfriars! My hat!"

"He's a first-class fellow and a good sportsman," said Wharton rather emphatically. There was something in Loder's manner that hinted that what he knew of Dick Lancaster was not to his advantage.

Loder gave the captain of the Remove a rather curious look. But all he said was "No doubt!" and he walked out of the study and went down the Remove staircase.

"What the dickens does that mean?" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "Loder can't know anything against Lancaster, surely?"

"Looks as if he thinks he does!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton frowned. "Loder's an ass!" he said. "If they've ever met, Loder isn't the kind of fellow Lancaster would take to. They may have had a row. That ass Coker started by rowing with him. But—Hullo, what the thump—"

"Oooooogh!"

Bob Cherry arrived in the study. He arrived gasping and spluttering, fresh from the hands of Coker & Co. His face was crimson, his collar hung by a single stud, and his hair was like a mop.

His comrades stared at him in astonishment.

As Bob Cherry had gone on a friendly and peaceful mission, to restore Billy Bunter's loot to its proper owner, his friends had not expected to see him return looking as if he had been under a traction-engine.

"Oooooogh!" gasped Bob. "Oh, crumbs! Look at me!"

They looked. "What the terrific and preposterous thump—" ejaculated Hurreo Singh.

"That idiot Coker!" gurgled Bob. "Oh, the crass ass! Oh, the chump! I've been mopped up! Oooooogh! I'm winded! Wooooh!"



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"But surely even Coker didn't pitch into you for taking his cake home!" exclaimed Nugent in astonishment.

"Oooogh! The silly ass had missed it—grooogh!—and coming on me with the beastly cake—ooogh!—he thought I had raided it—woooogh!—and they pitched into me. Grooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you fatheads, what is there to cackle at in that?" demanded Bob Cherry indignantly. "Look at me!"

"Oh, that ass, Coker!" gasped Wharton. "Next time, we'll let Bunter keep the loof. Just like Coker!"

"And they kicked me across the landing!" roared Bob. "After I'd explained, too! I'm going to scrag Coker! I'm going to lynch him! I'm going to break him up into little pieces—see?"

"Good egg!" said Johnny Bull. "We'll all help!"

"The helpfulness will be terrific."

"Ungrateful sweep!" said Wharton. "He would have lost that blessed cake but for us! Let's go to his study now. Where are those cricket stumps? Better take a stump each. Coker may object to taking what he's asked for."

"Hear, hear!"

Four members of the Co. sorted out stumps. Bob Cherry grabbed a bat. In the present state of his feelings he was more inclined to use a bat than a stump on Horaco Coker.

"Come on!" gasped Bob.

Bob was still breathless; but he was in a hurry to see Coker again now that he had a cricket bat in his hands, and his friends to back him up. The Famous Five hurried out of the study. They met Peter Todd, Vernon-Smith, Redwing and Squiff in the passage; and those youths, hearing what was on, joined up at once. Nine warlike Removites turned into the Fifth Form passage.

From the games study, at the end of that passage, there was a buzz of voices, but the door was closed. Some of the Fifth were there, others down in Hall. In the passage, for the moment, no Fifth Form man was seen. But as the Removites poured in they discerned a fat figure outside the door of Coker's study. It was the rotund form of William George Bunter of the Remove.

"Come on!" exclaimed Wharton. "We shall handle Coker before a crowd of the Fifth can get round."

The juniors ran up the passage. Billy Bunter turned from Coker's door and blinked at them through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows!"

"Gerraway!" grunted Bob, and he shoved the fat junior aside and grabbed Coker's door-handle. The door did not open.

"Locked!" ejaculated Nugent.

"I say, you fellows, that beast Coker has gone down and locked his study door after him!" said Bunter. "Suspicious beast, you know! Just as if he thought a fellow might be after his cake! Lbw, I call it!"

Bob Cherry breathed wrath and disappointment. The avengers had arrived too late; Coker had followed his friends down to Hall.

"Blow!" growled Bob angrily. "Bother! Bless!"

"The blowfulness is terrific. But we will catch the esteemed and ridiculous Coker later on fully," said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

Bob Cherry snorted. Catching Coker later on was all very well, but Bob wanted to catch him now.

"I say, you fellows!" said Bunter eagerly. "What about bursting in the

door. We can get some tools from your tool-box, Bob. A bit of a shindy won't matter on the first day of the term, you know."

"What's the good?" grunted Bob. "Coker's not there."

"Eh? Who wants Coker?" said Bunter, blinking at him. "I was thinking of the tuck. I say, you fellows, my cake—"

"Your cake?" yelled Bob.

"Yes, old chap. My cake—the one that came from Bunter Court. Coker's got it in his study. The one I was going

grinning, followed him as far as the stairs, and Bunter went down the stairs three at a time, jumping like a fat kangaroo. On the lower landing two Sixth Form men were chatting—Loder and Walker of the Sixth.

"It's the same chap!" Loder was saying. "Richard Lancaster's the name, and it's the chap I met at Danby Croft. And—whoop!" Gerald Loder ceased to speak and gave a gasping howl as something hurtled into his back.

It was Bunter, in full flight, and he did not see Loder in time. Loder did not see Bunter—but he felt him. Loder pitched forward into Walker of the Sixth, and Walker staggered and grasped at the banisters.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

"Why, what—who—what—" roared Loder. "What—who—you young idiot! You young villain! You—you—"

Loder gripped his ashplant and jumped at the Owl of the Remove.

"Yaroooh!" Bunter did the lower stairs at record speed. Loder got in about five or six licks with the ashplant before he escaped. It was a gasping and groaning Bunter that dodged away at last.

The Owl of the Remove was having a hectic time on the first day of the term. Really, Coker's cake was hardly worth it.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Spider and the Fly!

SIR HILTON POPPER grunted. The lord of Popper Court sat in his library with a frown on his brow and a card in his hand, which he had taken from a salver presented by the Popper Court butler.

On the card was inscribed: "Mr. Sylvester Sugden."

Judging by the expression on the baronet's wrinkled, frowning face, the visit of Mr. Sylvester Sugden was far from welcome.

The butler waited, with an immovable and expressionless visage. Sir Hilton turned the card over and over in his fingers, evidently hesitating whether to order Mr. Sugden to be shown in. No one would have guessed, from the Popper Court butler's emotionless visage, that he knew how his master's indecision would end; that he knew almost as much about Mr. Sylvester Sugden as Sir Hilton himself did; and that he derived a secret entertainment from the angry frowning of Sir Hilton's haughty countenance.

"Admit him!" said Sir Hilton at last, just as his butler knew that he would.

And the butler noiselessly left the library to admit Mr. Sylvester Sugden, who waited in the hall.

Sir Hilton Popper grunted again. He rose from his chair and paced to and fro with a savage frown. Sir Hilton did not know that every servant at Popper Court was aware that he was deep in the clutches of moneylenders, and that mortgages covered his estate almost as thickly as fallen leaves in autumn.

High taxation had told its tale at Popper Court, as at many another old country estate, and the high and haughty baronet was as distressed for money as many a shopkeeper in Courtfield who dreaded to hear the step of the rate-collector. Of all resources in times of distress, moneylenders were probably the most dangerous; but Sir Hilton, the "tenth possessor of a foolish face," was not a business man. How much he owed, and how he was ever going to

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to whack out with you fellows, if you hadn't been so jolly suspicious. I say, I'll whack out that cake with the lot of you if we can get hold of it!" said Bunter eagerly.

Bob Cherry gave him a glare. It was a disappointment to miss Coker. But Bunter was there; and Bunter was the cause of all the trouble.

"Stump him!" said Bob. "We'll stump Coker later—we can stump Bunter now. Where will you have it, Bunter?"

"Why, you beast—" roared Bunter. Apparently William George Bunter did not want it anywhere.

Swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe! Bunter did not want it—but he got it. There was a terrific yell in the Fifth Form passage.

Then Harry Wharton & Co. departed, their call on Coker of the Fifth being unavoidably postponed. Billy Bunter remained, roaring. He was still roaring when the door of the games study opened and Blundell and Bland of the Fifth came out. They stared at Bunter.

"What's that fag doing here?" said Blundell.

"Kick him out, anyhow!" said Bland.

"Yarooogh!"

Billy Bunter fled for his fat life, and two Fifth Form boots helped him across the landing. Blundell and Bland,

get out of the tangle of insolvency, Sir Hilton did not know. Before him loomed the dismal prospect of a forced sale of his ancestral home, but somehow or other the evil day was staved off from time to time. And it was not to be wondered at, perhaps, that Sir Hilton's temper, always irascible, grew more and more irritable.

He dared not refuse to see this Mr. Sugden, as he knew very well, and as every servant at Popper Court knew as well as he did. His hesitation to admit the unpleasant gentleman was a sort of self-deception, a sop to his outraged pride. Sir Hilton would have given whole acres from his encumbered estate to have been able to order the butler to throw Mr. Sugden from the door. Of all visitors at Popper Court, Mr. Sugden was the least welcome.

Sir Hilton grunted again as Mr. Sugden was shown into the library. A rather fat gentleman, with a greasy countenance and bright black eyes, slid rather than walked into the room. The butler, expressionless as ever, announced Mr. Sugden and drew the door shut, and not till the door was closed did the expressionless face break into a sardonic grin.

Sir Hilton jammed his eyeglass a little more firmly into a gleaming eye and surveyed Mr. Sylvester Sugden as that greasy gentleman slid towards him across the great room.

"Good-afternoon, Sir Hilton!" said Mr. Sugden, in a voice as greasy as his countenance.

Grunt!

Sir Hilton neither greeted his visitor nor asked him to be seated. The greasy gentleman, however, did not stand on ceremony. He sat down without being

invited to do so. A fierce eye gleamed at him through the eyeglass. It was intolerable to Sir Hilton that such a fellow as this should venture to sit in his presence at all. This sort of "canaille" ought to have stood in his presence humbly, hat in hand. There had been a time when Sir Hilton would have rewarded Mr. Sugden with an order to get out, in a voice of thunder, probably following up the order with a kick. But that time was before ruthless taxation had bled his estate to the bone. In these latter days Sir Hilton had to walk delicately, like Agag of old.

Mr. Sylvester Sugden gave him a shiny smile. He seemed in quite a good humour, as was natural to a gentleman who held the haughty baronet in the hollow of his greasy hand. He waited for Sir Hilton to speak, and waited with calm and smiling patience. The lord of Popper Court was driven to speak at last.

"Well?" he rapped.

"Well, Sir Hilton?" smiled Mr. Sugden.

"Why have you called? Since our last meeting there is nothing that requires discussion. Nothing!"

"A misunderstanding seems to have arisen, Sir Hilton," said the money-lender gently. "I refer to the boy Lancaster."

Sir Hilton's brow grew blacker.

"Confound the boy Lancaster, sir!" he grunted. "You made certain concessions to me, on the understanding that I received this young fellow into my house as a guest. I received him."

"I trust that he has not displeased you, Sir Hilton."

"The boy is well enough," grunted the baronet ungraciously. "I have no

particular fault to find with him. He seems a decent lad, though not so respectful as lads were in my time to their elders. I have no objection to his remaining here. He behaves himself."

"There is no question of his remaining here longer, as to-day opens the new term at Greyfriars School," said Mr. Sugden. "That is what we have to discuss, Sir Hilton. The concessions to which you allude were made on a certain understanding. It appears that you desire to depart from that understanding. Perhaps you will explain."

Sir Hilton set his lips.

"I am a governor of Greyfriars," he said. "I have a serious responsibility towards my old school. I admit that I agreed to the terms you laid down—or, rather, exacted. But I have reflected since. I am not satisfied, Mr. Sugden. It did not occur to me at the time; but—"

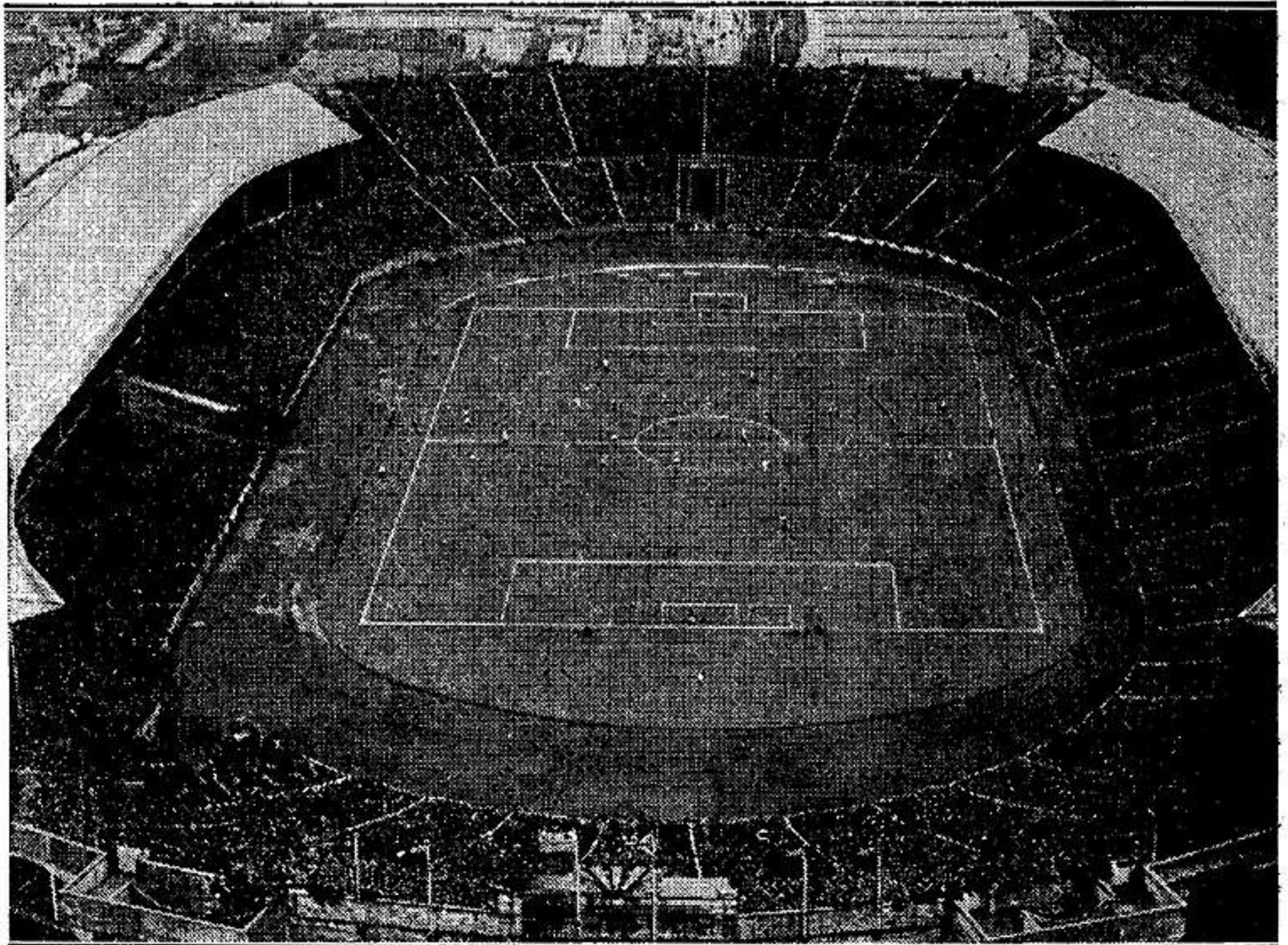
"But what, Sir Hilton?"

"But I require to know what this means!" snapped the baronet. "This boy, unknown and unfriended, has been thrust upon me. I repeat that I find no fault with the lad. But placing him at Greyfriars School is a different matter from merely receiving him in my house as a guest. I am answerable for him, and I am a governor of the school. Indeed, I have no doubt that it is because I am a governor of Greyfriars that you have selected me for this business."

Mr. Sugden smiled faintly.

"The boy bears an honourable name, and is well connected," he said. "He is the son of Captain Lancaster, who fell

(Continued on page 10.)



An aerial view showing the vastness of the famous Wembley Stadium where, since the season 1922-23, the F.A. Cup Finals have been played.

"Half-Time" Gossip!



An interesting chat on the greatest football event of the year the fight for the English F.A. Cup. By "Old Ref."

THE proper name of that London suburb where the Cup Finals are played, is Wembley-on-the-Hill. And that wonderful Stadium represents the top of the hill to the professional footballer. Only a very few ever get there for the purpose of playing in a Final-tie, and those who do are the envy of their brother "pros."

This year, as you all know, the miracle has happened so far as the Cup-Final is concerned, the finalists being Birmingham and West Bromwich Albion—two clubs with their homes within a few miles of each other, both actually within the boundaries of the City of Birmingham.

Imagine the feelings of the players of those two teams as they step on to that wonderful piece of turf? This once-in-a-lifetime experience strings up the players to a high pitch of excitement. More than once since Final-ties were played at Wembley I have been privileged to see the players just before they have stepped on to the field. And I could tell you some stories which illustrate the excitement which takes grip of the men:

of experienced footballers who have been so nervous that they have not been able to do their bootlaces up properly.

LAST season the two teams playing in the Final adopted a new way of entering the arena. Instead of the teams coming out separately, they were marshalled in two's—a member of the Arsenal side and a member of the Huddersfield side. And in two's they marched on to the field. I like that way of coming on to the field; I thought that it gave a touch of dignity to the proceedings. And it seemed to suggest that although here were two lots of footballers prepared to do battle to the very last ounce for possession of that silver trophy, they could do it and still be friends.

Personally, I think we shall get more excitement in the Final-tie this season than we have had for some time past: more evidence of it that is.

They are not only two teams struggling for the most coveted honour in football, but as they have their homes so close together, the "Derby Day" feeling enters into it as well.

It may be expected, too, that the onlookers, thousands of them from the Birmingham district, will be even more excited than usual. How they will cheer as the players emerge from the "tunnel" which is the way from the dressing-rooms to the pitch! And what a wonderful sight it is, too! Nearly one hundred thousand spectators all in their places, their hearts beating a bit faster than usual!

Finally, after introductions to royalty, who are always present on this big occasion, the forwards will line up in the centre of the field, and then off.

Only two of the players of the whole twenty-two have played in a Cup-Final at Wembley previously, and they are both now members of the Birmingham team—Curtis, who played for Cardiff City when they won the Cup, and Edward Barkas, the full-back and captain of the side, who was a member of the Huddersfield Town team when they got to the Final in 1928.

I wonder if the fact that Birmingham have two men who have been there before will make just that little bit of difference to the result—will swing the pendulum in favour of Birmingham? It would not be surprising if it did work out like that. Experience of Wembley is a big asset.

LONG ago, however, I gave up the idea of trying to prophesy which side would win in a Final-tie. And this year's Final looks to me to be between two teams as evenly matched as it is possible to get. Indeed, asking my courage in both hands, I am going to suggest that

for the first time since Cup-Finals have been played at Wembley the spectators may get an extra half-hour for their money. In the old days it was not the rule to have an extra half-hour at the first meeting if the scores were level at the end of ninety minutes, but since the War that order has been in force. In the first Final after the War extra time was played at Stamford Bridge, and I remember Jack Howcroft, who was the referee in that game, telling me afterwards that some of the players almost wept when he reminded them that they would have to go on for an extra half-hour. They scarcely had the energy left to fight on, so hard had they played right through the match.

During the extra half-hour of that Final there happened one of those terrible tragedies: a player of the Huddersfield team put the ball past his own goalkeeper, and the match was won and lost by that one goal.

Many tales of tragic mistakes made by players in Cup-Finals could be told: tales which reveal the excitement which "gets" the players. You will probably remember how Lewis, the Arsenal goalkeeper, made a mistake in the Final against Cardiff City a few years back, after catching a not very difficult shot. That was a bit of luck for Cardiff, because that one mistake gave them the victory. Two years previously a mistake by a Cardiff City player cost them an all-important goal. A half-back named Wake seemed to have plenty of time to kick the ball away from the danger-zone,

but the power to kick appeared to go right out of his boots, and the ball was taken from him by Tunstall, who went on to score the only goal of the game.

THE first goal is very obviously the one that matters in a Cup-Final, for my memory does not recall a Final-tie which has been won by the side which conceded the first goal. And I have seen a few Finals. Just to drive home how important is that one goal: how difficult it is to recover from the blow, it may be mentioned that only once in the last sixteen Cup-Finals has the losing side scored. I don't suppose we shall get, this season, such a big thrill at the beginning of the game as we got three years ago when Blackburn Rovers beat Huddersfield Town by three goals to one. Huddersfield were the prime favourites. But Blackburn started with a rush, and in the first minute they scored a goal. That's the way to start: the policy of getting in the first blow.

The tragedy of an affair like the Cup-Final is that when the end comes the players of one side or the other must be disappointed. The losers will be down-hearted: will feel that they have been so near, and yet are still so far from victory. Many a time at Wembley, as I have listened to those tens of thousands of people cheering the winners, I have felt a lump in my throat. It has come there as I have looked at the crest-fallen faces of the losers.

So, after one for the winners, let us not forget one for the losers.

I HAVE pointed out some of the big features of this season's Final-tie. It will also be unique in one respect. The "master of ceremonies"—that is the referee—is Mr. Arthur Kingscott. He is the son of Mr. A. H. Kingscott, who refereed the Final-ties of 1900 and 1901. This is the first time in the history of the game that a son has followed his father to the honour of taking charge of a Final-tie. How will the son feel about it? And how will the father feel as he watches his boy?

"OLD REF."

CRACKSMAN AND CRICKETER!

(Continued from page 8.)

in the War. He is certainly on an equality with any Greyfriars boy."

"Then why have not his own relations seen to this matter?"

"He has no relatives since the death of his uncle, who took him in charge when he was left an orphan."

"His friends, then—"

"I am his best friend," said Mr. Sugden, "and I have taken the matter into my hands!"

"You!" There was a world of contempt in the baronet's voice. "You, sir!"

"I," said Mr. Sugden calmly. "I fear that your opinion of me is not high, Sir Hilton. But I was under certain obligations to the boy's uncle, now dead, and I have not forgotten them. For that reason I am seeing him through. In my own person I can scarcely approach the headmaster of Greyfriars: his opinion of a man in my profession would probably approximate to your own. For that reason I have begged your good offices."

"Commanded them, rather!" snapped Sir Hilton.

Mr. Sugden smiled again.

"There is something behind this!" rapped Sir Hilton. "If the boy's antecedents are respectable, he would not be on friendly terms with you, Mr. Sugden. I must speak plainly. The boy's family seems to be good enough, and his appearance and manners are irreproachable. But a boy who is under the protection of a moneylender—"

Sir Hilton broke off, fuming. The black eyes under the usurper's greasy brows watched him intently, rather with the expression of a cat watching the vain struggles of a mouse.

"The orphan needed protection, Sir Hilton. You need not fear that your name will ever be connected with mine in this matter. I shall never appear at the school. My name will never be mentioned there. The boy's fees will be paid through a firm of solicitors—a respectable firm in Lincoln's Inn. All that is requested of you is that you place the boy in the school to which he will prove a credit. I am not in a position to do so, but my regard for his late uncle makes me determined that he shall have every chance in life. If you fail me I shall seek elsewhere—"

"Seek elsewhere, then, sir!" said Sir Hilton. "I decline to take such a responsibility on my shoulders."

"As you please, Sir Hilton." Mr. Sylvester Sugden rose. "Our interview is at an end, then. As you have departed from the terms of our agreement, the concessions are, of course, withdrawn. It will unfortunately not be in my power to advance the sum you need for settlement with the Inland Revenue Department. And the postponement of interest on certain sums now due to me is, of course, cancelled. I shall be glad of your cheque for five hundred and thirty pounds fifteen shillings and sixpence before I leave Popper Court, sir. No doubt you are prepared—"

Sir Hilton drew a long, deep breath.

He realised that his discussion with Mr. Sylvester Sugden was rather like the struggles of a fish on the hook, or a fly in the spider's web. A quarrel with Mr. Sugden meant that the crash would come.

For a long minute the baronet was silent. Mr. Sugden watched him with a faint amusement in his hard, black

eyes, though his manner was respectful, almost cringing.

"I am in your hands, sir!" said Sir Hilton, at last, in a choking voice. "I am in your hands! I—I will take your word that there is nothing against this boy or his connections. I—I will take him to Greyfriars, and—and carry out the—the arrangement."

It was complete surrender.

"You are very kind, sir," said Mr. Sugden smoothly. "Your decision saves me a good deal of trouble. It is already somewhat late in the day, however, and I desire the boy to enter the school on the first day of term. At what hour can—"

"I will order the car, sir!" choked Sir Hilton Popper. "In one hour from now I will take the boy to the school."

"I can only express my gratitude, Sir Hilton."

Sir Hilton Popper did not seem impressed by Mr. Sugden's gratitude. He did not speak a word further; and his eyes followed Mr. Sugden in a glare of animosity as the greasy gentleman slid from the room.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Schoolboy and Crook!

"DICK!"

The handsome youth who was staring moodily from a window in a room at Popper Court, turned at the voice.

He had not heard Mr. Sugden enter the room. Mr. Sugden slid with the noiseless tread of a cat.

"Oh, you're here!" said Dick Lancaster.

His face, strikingly handsome, was dark and bitter in expression. On his looks Dick Lancaster was no better pleased to see Mr. Sugden than the lord of Popper Court had been.

"Naturally, I am here, Dick!" The sharp, black eyes searched the boy's face. "That stilted old fool has kicked; but I have brought him to reason. He would have backed out of the agreement—after you had seen the headmaster, and all arrangements had been made for your entrance at Greyfriars School. But it needed only the turn of a screw."

Lancaster's face did not clear. If this was good news to him, his looks belied him.

"What is the matter with you, Dick?" asked Sugden. "It is all clear now. Sir Hilton takes you to the school this afternoon. Surely you had no doubt that I should bring him to heel."

"No!" growled Lancaster.

He moved away from the window. The red light of the sinking sun streamed in, showing up his handsome face, dark and moody.

"You've not changed your mind?" asked Sugden. "You still want to go to Greyfriars?"

"I'd like it, no end. But"—Lancaster gave an angry shrug of the shoulders—"I wish Popper had stood out! I hate this—I hate it all. The man's a stilted old fool; but—but I hate it all."

Sugden was watching him stealthily. There was a glint in his hard black eyes.

"You'll have a good time at the school, Dick. You're the fellow to make your way anywhere—and you'll have plenty of money in your pockets. The Wizard will never be short of money."

Lancaster flushed crimson.

"Don't mention that name here!" he muttered.

"Why not?" said Sugden coolly. "You don't want to forget who and what you

are, Dick. I can't understand you of late. The Weasel said there was a change in you, when you were down in Surrey. What is the matter?"

"Nothing! If I could chuck up the whole thing," muttered Lancaster, "I'd rather break stones for my daily bread, I think sometimes—"

"You would change your mind, Dick, when you began to break the stones," smiled Sugden. "And if you want to chuck up the whole thing, it's in your hands to do so. Go to that old fool in the library, and tell him that you, the son of 'Handsome Lancaster,' of the Loamshire Regiment, are also the Wizard, the crook whose skill with a safe is a proverb at Scotland Yard. Tell him that your friend and protector, Sylvester Sugden, is not only a moneylender, but the 'fence' who has stood behind you ever since your nimble fingers began to crack cribs—"

Lancaster gave him a fierce look. "Hold your tongue, Slimy! Any of the servants—"

"No one can hear us here," answered Slimy Sugden composedly. "But your alarm seems to show that you do not wholly desire to chuck up the whole thing, Dick."

"If I could—" muttered Lancaster.

"But you cannot!" said Sugden. "Once a crook always a crook. You will keep up a good appearance to the world. You will have a fine career. The fact that a governor of Greyfriars School is under my thumb, gives you the start you have always needed. You enter one of the best public schools in the kingdom—and no questions asked. You ought to be glad of such a chance."

"Yes—if—"

"If what?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Lancaster wearily. "They say it's never too late to mend; but it's too late for the Wizard to be anything but the Wizard. I'm not backing out. I'm going through with it. I suppose I can dope my conscience again, as I've doped it before."

"Better cut it out entirely, Dick," said Slimy Sugden coolly. "It's too troublesome a luxury for a man in your line of business."

Lancaster gave him a dark look.

The man was his friend—such a friend as his strange way of life allowed him to have. The greasy face of Slimy Sugden, with its jetty black eyes, was one of his earliest recollections. That, and the face of the uncle who had trained him—the uncle who had gone to the dogs, and become the associate and confederate of crooks, and yet who had had a soft corner in his heart for his orphan nephew. Bad as the man had been, Lancaster remembered his uncle with affection. But for Slimy, his feeling had never been of anything but aversion, mingled with fear in his younger days, mingled with scorn now that he was older.

Aversion was stronger than ever now, and yet he felt that the man meant to be his friend. It suited Slimy Sugden's game to place the handsome crook in the Sixth Form at Greyfriars School. He had his own ends to serve by placing him there. But Lancaster knew that Sugden was not thinking wholly of himself in this matter. He had a kindness for the handsome lad whom he had trained in the ways of crime, and kept in enmity to the law of the land.

The boy's mind was wavering now.

Other prospects, if he gave up the strange career of the light-fingered Wizard, he had none. Yet he was tempted to throw it up, to throw over Slimy Sugden, and the Weasel, and the

rest of the gang, and strike out a new path for himself. Poverty he had never known; though the money that passed so freely through his hands was not his own. He felt that he would not fear to face poverty. Slimy Sugden, reading in his moody face the thoughts that tormented him, watched him quietly and stealthily.

Had the man threatened him then, possibly Dick Lancaster might have made the break, of which he had thought often of late. But there was nothing like a threat in Sugden's looks. There was a wistful expression on his face—a look of half-appeal in his eyes. It was not wholly because the light fingers of the Wizard brought him profit that Slimy Sugden wanted to keep him, and that knowledge disarmed the boy crook.

He made an impatient gesture. "It's no good talking," he said. "I'm for it, anyhow. I'm not backing out, Slimy—and I know you believe you're doing a big thing for me. So you are, if you come to that."

"You'll make friends at Greyfriars. Dick," said Sugden. "Friends who will be useful to you. It's a big chance."

"I know that. It's a go—I'm not backing out, Slimy; and you need never fancy that I'm going to throw you over. I'm ready to go."

Sugden drew a breath of relief. "It's settled, then, Dick. I'll clear now—you'll be ready to start when that old fool sends for you."

"Quite." Slimy Sugden gave him a last look, and left the apartment. A few minutes later, Lancaster, from the window, saw the taxicab bearing him away.

An hour later a footman came to inform him that the car was ready. His baggage was carried down.

Lancaster found Sir Hilton Popper in the hall.

The baronet gave him a glance, but did not speak. But his frowning face relaxed a little as he looked at Lancaster. In looks, at least, and in manners, the boy was a credit to him. It was only on Sugden's account that Sir Hilton disliked being concerned in his affairs. Sir Hilton was not a keen man, by any means; but he felt that there was something unusual, something suspicious, behind the matter; though he was far from dreaming anything like the truth. And it irked the proud old gentleman to be brought to heel, as Sugden had ruthlessly brought him. But angry and resentful as he was, he could not dislike the handsome lad who stepped into the car with him.

Not a word was spoken, however, as the car rolled away to Greyfriars School. Sir Hilton sat upright staring straight before him. Dick Lancaster was not in the least disposed to talk; and he did not break the silence till the car was within sight of the gates of Greyfriars. Then he spoke abruptly.

"Sir Hilton!" The baronet glanced at him. "Well?"

"If you're not willing to take me to Greyfriars, order your chauffeur to drive back to Popper Court. I'll fix it with Mr. Sugden."

Sir Hilton's glance became a stony stare.

"What the deuce do you mean?" he snapped. "The matter's settled now, I shall take you to the school."

Lancaster coloured. "You've been coerced in this matter, sir. I've enough influence over Mr. Sugden to keep him to whatever arrangement he may have made with you—even if you do not carry out your part

of it. I mean this, sir! You can rely on me."

Dick Lancaster hardly knew what moved him to speak, but he was in earnest. Sir Hilton stared at him harder; his features relaxed still more.

"You're a decent lad, Lancaster," he said, "but I could not accept concessions from your—your guardian without keeping my side of the bargain. You're a decent lad and, by Jove, I'm sorry that you were left in such hands. It's no

fault of yours, and I shall see you through at Greyfriars; as I have promised Mr. Sugden. Say no more!"

Lancaster's lips opened, but he closed them again. The drive was finished in silence.

When Sir Hilton Popper alighted and entered the House with the tall, handsome lad by his side, a good many glances were cast towards them. A burly Fifth-Former, on the steps of the House, waved a welcoming hand to Lancaster. He nodded, with a smile to Horace Coker.

Sir Hilton glanced at the burly Horace.

"You know that Greyfriars boy?" he asked.

"I've met him," answered Lancaster. "Oh! All your acquaintances are not in Mr. Sugden's circle, then?" grunted Sir Hilton.

Lancaster made no reply to that. He was shown into the Head's study with Sir Hilton Popper. And if there were dark thoughts in his mind, and bitter feelings in his heart, no one could have read them under the smile on his handsome face.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A New Fellow, and an Old Acquaintance!

WINGATE of the Sixth jumped to his feet. The other seniors in the prefects' room followed his example.

The majestic figure of Dr. Locke, headmaster of Greyfriars, appeared in the doorway. By his side was the tall, handsome fellow whom some of the seniors had seen arrive in Sir Hilton Popper's car half an hour ago.

Evidently the Head had come along to present the new member of the Form to his Form fellows.

Most of them were rather interested in Lancaster. On his looks, most of them liked him. Gerald Loder eyed him rather curiously from a corner, and whispered to Walker, who stared at the new senior.

"Wingate," said the Head, "this is Lancaster, the new boy who has entered the Sixth Form. Lancaster, this is Wingate, my head prefect, and captain of the school."

George Wingate held out his hand frankly to the new Sixth-Former. The new fellow smiled and shook hands with him.

"Glad to see you here, Lancaster," said the Greyfriars captain. "We'll try to make you feel at home."

"You're very kind," said Lancaster. "I hope I shall make friends here."

"I understand that Lancaster is very keen on cricket, Wingate," said the Head. "No doubt you will find many subjects in common. I am sure you will do everything you can to help him fall into our ways."

"Certainly, sir!" answered Wingate.

The Head faded out of the picture. "Take a pew, old bean," said Gwynno of the Sixth, pushing an armchair towards the new senior. "That was old Popper you came with, wasn't it?"

"Yes," said Lancaster, with a smile, as he sat down.

"Uncle or something?"

"Oh, no! It's rather jolly here," remarked Lancaster, with a glance towards the windows and the green old quadrangle beyond, and the playing-fields in the distance.

"No end jolly," agreed Gwynno. "From what I've heard, this is your first term at school. Rather new for a man to come straight into the Sixth."

HATS OFF TO HALIFAX:

For the following snappy Greyfriars limerick illustrated below, Gilbert Payne, of 9, The Grove, Hipperholme, near Halifax, Yorks, has been awarded one of this week's USEFUL POCKET WALLETTS:



While cycling along Lantham Chase,



Bob Cherry once started to race.



Bunter strolled in the way,



The rest I won't say,



For now he's a hospital case!

Have YOU sent in a limerick yet? If not, get busy and write one now.

"Yes, rather; but they couldn't very well start me in the Third!" said Lancaster, with a laugh.

"Know anybody here?" asked Sykes of the Sixth.

"Not in my own Form, but I've met some Fifth Form men, and some kids in the Remove."

"There's a man here thinks he's met you," said Sykes. "Where's Loder? Loder, weren't you saying that you'd met a man named Lancaster?"

Gerald Loder strolled forward. His eyes were very curiously on the face of the new Sixth-Former.

From under his dark eyelashes, Lancaster shot him a swift glance. But there was no recognition in his look.

"Yes, I fancy I've met Lancaster before," drawled Loder. He did not offer to shake hands with the fellow he had met before, however. He stood with his hands in his pockets, looking down at the slim, athletic figure in the arm-chair, with a peculiar gleam in his eyes.

"Remember me, what?"

Lancaster shook his head.

"I don't seem to—quite," he answered. "I must have met you in a crowd somewhere."

"Yes, it was in a crowd," assented Loder. "I fancy there were forty or fifty guests that week-end at Danby Croft."

"One meets such a lot of people," said Lancaster apologetically. "If it was a house-party of forty or fifty, one would hardly remember the lot."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Loder easily. "I happen to remember you, that's all. You're not cast in a common mould, you know."

Lancaster laughed.

"Is that a compliment?" he asked.

"And there were some circumstances, too," remarked Loder. "You don't remember me, but I bet you haven't forgotten that week-end party at Danby Croft last year!"

"No, I haven't forgotten that," agreed Lancaster. "Sir George Danby asked me there, as he had known my father, whom I hardly remember."

"Handsome Lancaster, of the Loamshire Regiment, wasn't it?" asked Loder.

"Yes, I believe he was called so."

"Old Danby happens to be a relation of mine," drawled Loder. "I dare say that's why I remember particularly that house-party—and what happened there."

"Did anything special happen?" Lancaster was still smiling.

"You don't recall it?"

"I don't quite seem—"

"My hat! I should have thought you remembered," said Loder. "It caused a lot of excitement."

"And what was it, then?" asked Wingate rather abruptly.

He did not understand Loder's manner, but there was a sort of current of hostility in the air. If Loder, the bully of the Sixth, was going out of his way to make himself unpleasant to this agreeable-looking new fellow, Wingate was the man to put a stop to it a once.

"It was a robbery," explained Loder. "The safe was cracked. It caused no end of a flutter."

"I remember," assented Lancaster.

"I thought you would when I mentioned it," said Loder.

"Did they get the man?" asked Gwynne, chiefly for the sake of saying something.

A silence had fallen in the prefects' room.

"No! That was the curious part of it," said Loder. "The police were called in, and they had a special private

detective on the job—you've heard of Ferrers Locke. But all Locke was able to say was that he believed it was what they call an inside job."

"What the thump's an inside job?" asked Sykes.

"A robbery by someone inside the house."

"Nice for the guests!" said Gwynne.

"It was rotten, as a matter of fact," said Loder. "It was a large party, and all sorts of people were there; some of them racing men."

"Everybody felt rotten about it. Sort of cloud of suspicion hanging over everybody, you know. Old Danby's rather careless in the way he asks people to his place, and it was rather a shock to him to think that he had asked a crook among the rest. But the fellow, whoever he was, kept up appearances all right—there was nothing in his looks to give him away."

"I fancy that Ferrers Locke knew more than was made known at the time; old Danby wasn't the man to have a big scandal for the sake of a few hundred pounds. I fancied at the time they were hushing something up."

ANOTHER READER WINS A TOPPING BOOK

for supplying the following laugh!

Teacher: "Now, Tommy, give me a moral."

Tommy: "It's no use crying over spilt milk, sir."

Teacher: "Yes. Now give me a reason for not doing so."

Tommy: "Please, sir, there's water in the milk already!"

Sent in by Frank G. Leslie, 181, Park Avenue, Barrow-in-Furness, Lancs.

But, of course, you wouldn't know all that, Lancaster; I remember you left rather suddenly."

"I don't seem to remember much about it," said Lancaster, smiling. "But I remember seeing Mr. Locke. He struck me as a pretty efficient sort of detective, and I rather wonder he never got the man."

"I fancy he could have got him if old Danby had let him," said Loder. "But Danby wasn't going to have a guest of his marched off, like Eugene Aram, with giddy gyves upon his wrists. He preferred to let the rotter clear out, I fancy."

"So that's where you met Lancaster?" said Wingate, with a sharp look at Gerald Loder.

"That's where," assented Loder. "I might have improved the acquaintance, only, as I said, Lancaster left rather suddenly. Quite a surprise to meet you again here, Lancaster."

"A pleasant surprise, I hope!" said Lancaster.

"Oh, quite!" drawled Loder; and, with a curt nod to the new senior, he turned away and left the prefects' room with Walker.

A brief silence followed Loder's departure.

He had left a feeling of general discomfort behind him, the fellows hardly knew why. He had been civil enough to the new man, though there was a latent hostility in his tone and manner. It was at least tactless on Loder's part to have related that story of the robbery

at Danby Croft, when, according to his statement, it left a lingering suspicion on all the guests there, and Lancaster had been one of the guests.

But Lancaster seemed quite unconscious of any feeling of discomfort. If Loder had been giving the new fellow a surreptitious "dig," his shaft seemed to have fallen harmlessly. Wingate, in the innocence of his heart, was glad to see that the new man's face was quite unclouded and good-humoured. The Greyfriars captain broke the silence with a remark on the subject of cricket. On that subject he found Lancaster keenly interested; and a "cricket jaw" was soon going strong in the prefects' room; and Loder and his remarks were forgotten.

Later on, however, when Wingate and Gwynne went to their studies, the Greyfriars captain paused at his door, looking at Gwynne.

"That new man seems a decent sort of chap!" he remarked.

"Quite!" agreed Gwynne.

"He knows a lot about cricket. If he plays the game as well as he talks we shall want him in the eleven."

Gwynne nodded.

"But—" said Wingate slowly. "What the dickens was Loder driving at, Gwynne?"

"Can't make him out. He never liked Lancaster, I fancy, when they met at Danby Croft."

"I don't see why he shouldn't have."

"Might have tried to rook him at billiards, and fallen down on it!" suggested Gwynne, with a grin.

Wingate gave a grunt.

"I shouldn't wonder; that's Loder's style. It's jolly plain that he wanted to be disagreeable to the new man."

"Plain as his face—and that's saying a lot!" assented Gwynne. "Loder had better be careful how he tells his funny stories in the prefects' room, or somebody may kick him."

"I rather think I'll tell him so!" grunted Wingate, and he went into his study, frowning.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Fed-Up!

"H E'S come!" Horace Coker made that remark in his study in the Fifth. He spoke with great heartiness, as if he were pleased—as no doubt Coker was.

He did not observe that there was a plentiful lack of enthusiasm on the part of Potter and Greene. Coker was not an observant fellow.

Had he observed it no doubt Coker would have been annoyed. When Coker was pleased, it was up to his comrades to feel pleased. Coker's word was law in that study; or at least, he fancied that it was.

"I haven't had a chance of speaking to him yet," went on Coker.

"Lucky chap!" murmured Potter.

"Eh! What did you say, Potter?"

"Nothing, old man! Go on!"

"He was with the Head, and then he was jawing to a lot of asses in the prefects' room," said Coker. "I rather expected him to look me out; but he hasn't turned up so far."

"Of course he would be rather keen to look you out, Coker," said Greene solemnly. "He can't have forgotten what a nice chap you are."

"Well, that's rather a flattering way of putting it, Greeney, old chap," said Coker, who was blind and deaf to sarcasm. "But I've no doubt you're right. It's rather odd that he hasn't looked me out so far. Still, if the mountain won't come to Pontius Pilate,

Pontius Pilate must go to the mountain, you know."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Potter. "Wasn't it jolly old Mahomet who had to go to the mountain?"

"Not at all," answered Coker calmly. "It was Pontius Pilate, old chap. You're not up in these things, Potter. Fact is, I forgot whether it was Pontius Pilate or Christopher Columbus; but it was one of the two. There's nothing to snigger at, Potter; you needn't mind a fellow telling you things when you're ignorant. Don't let's have any of your silly sniggering when Lancaster is here."



Bunter went bounding down the stairs like a fat kangaroo, and bumped into Gerald Loder who was chatting with Walker on the lower landing. Loder pitched forward into Walker and sent him staggering!

I mentioned to you fellows that I want you to behave yourselves rather more decently than usual while my pal is here."

Potter and Greene looked at Coker. They remembered Lancaster with some kindness, because he had thrashed Coker in the vacation. But really Coker was not going the right way to work to make them feel friendly towards the new man. They were fed-up to the chin with Lancaster already, although they had not even seen him since his arrival at Greyfriars.

"Not too much of your sniggering and cackling and all that!" said Coker. "Do as I do, you know! Keep an eye on me, see? After all, good manners are never wasted."

The idea of taking Coker as a model in good manners almost overcame Potter and Greene. They continued to gaze at him.

"We want the study set to rights a bit," continued Coker briskly. "Don't leave your things all over the place. That shelf isn't the place for your slippers, Greene."

"They're your slippers!" breathed Greene.

"Oh!" Coker was taken aback for a

moment, but only for a moment. "Well, I must say that one of you fellows might have put them away when a fellow's busy on the first day of term. Slacking all round! Are you going to leave that belt sprawling over the back of the armchair, Potter?"

"Yes," said Potter.

"Well, there's such a thing as order in a study," said Coker warmly, "and I can jolly well tell you that if that cricket belt is left on that armchair I shall jolly well chuck it out of the window!"

"Please yourself."

Coker grabbed up the cricket belt. He strode to the open window. But he paused as he detected a simultaneous grin on the faces of his study-mates.

"Whose is this belt?" he asked.

"Yours," said Potter. "Chuck it out."

"I think a fellow who has nothing to do might put a belt away when a fellow unpacks it in a hurry. You know a fellow hardly has time to breathe on the first day of the term."

"Isn't it first day of term for us, too?" asked Potter.

"Don't argue, Potter! For goodness' sake, don't jaw to excuse your dashed

laziness. If anything's going to be done in this study I've got to do it, as usual. Look here, I'll tell you men plainly that this room has got to be tidy when Lancaster comes. I'm not having you fellows let me down before a Sixth Form man. Lancaster—"

"Blow Lancaster!" roared Potter.

"Bless Lancaster!" howled Greene. Coker stared at them. He seemed surprised.

"Don't you fellows like Lancaster?" he asked. "I thought you rather took to him when we met him in Surrey in the vac."

"Well, if he was the nicest chap in creation, I think you'd make a man want to punch his head!" growled Potter.

"Don't be an ass, Potter! That is, if you can help it. I don't expect much from you in the way of sense; but don't be a bigger fool than you can help! Look here, who's been spilling all these crumbs over the floor? Pigs!"

"You did, unpacking your blessed cake!"

"Well, I think you might have swept them up. There's a brush somewhere. What idiot's lost that brush?"

"You have! You chucked it on the bookcase."

"I remember now I put it out of the way; but I think one of you fellows might have got it down and brushed up those crumbs. Everything left to me as usual."

"Look here, Coker—"

"For goodness' sake, Potter, don't keep on talking! Set to, and help me get the study a bit presentable! Blessed if I ever saw such fellows for talking!"

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from
page 13.)

Talk, talk, talk all the time! The way you fellows wag your chins beats a chin-wag merchant in the House of Commons! Take my tip and go into Parliament when you leave Greyfriars! It's the place for you! Jaw, jaw, jaw!" said Coker indignantly. "Why can't you follow my example, and never talk except when you can talk sense, and even then cut it short? I've told you often enough that a fellow who keeps on talking will never get anything done. Do things, and don't jaw—like me."

"Like you!" gasped Potter. "Oh, my hat!"

"Yes, like me!" roared Coker. "Do you ever hear me jawing and jawing and jawing? Not much chance if I wanted to—you never give a fellow a chance to get in a word edgewise! Look here, just stop talking——"

"Who's talking?" shrieked Greene.

"Now you're beginning!" exclaimed Coker. "The minute Potter stops, you begin! I wonder you fellows don't fracture your jaws, keeping them going at this rate! Shut up and get on with it!"

Coker proceeded to prepare the study for the distinguished visitor. Potter and Greene, in a state approaching frenzy, helped. The sight of the stack of good things, when the supper was laid, soiced them a little. Coker's Aunt Judy had played up nobly, and the table groaned, as a novelist would say, under the goodly viands. Horace Coker was pleased to express approval when all was ready.

"Well, that's all right," he said. "I'll go and fetch Lancaster. You'd better go and change your collar, Potter."

"What's the matter with my collar?" hissed Potter.

"It's a bit grubby. You want a wash, Greene."

"Do I?" snarled Greene.

"You do! I've told you you're not to let me down before a Sixth Form man. I can't have friends in the study looking like grubby fags. Lancaster's used to decent things."

"Hang Lancaster!" shrieked Potter.

"Blow Lancaster!" roared Greene.

"That's enough!" snapped Coker.

Go and make yourselves a little more presentable. Keep up appearances. I don't expect you to do me credit; but there's a limit. My hat! Not only I have to do everything that's done in the study, but I have to tell you fellows to wash yourselves and change your dirty collars, as if you were inky little beasts in the Second Form. I can tell you I——"

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance. The study supper was a gorgeous supper—a topping supper. But it was borne in simultaneously on the minds of Potter and Greene that too high a price might be paid even for so scrumptious a study supper. After all, there were study suppers elsewhere, on the first day of term. Having exchanged that glance, Potter and Greene made a sudden and simultaneous jump at Horace Coker.

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Coker, taken by surprise, was suddenly up-ended, and came down with a crash on the study floor.

"Whoop!" roared Coker, in surprise and rage.

"There, you silly idiot!" gasped Potter. "Now you can have your supper and your blinking Lancaster all to yourself!"

"There, you dummy!" hooted Greene. "Now you can go and eat coke, and be blown to you!"

Potter and Greene walked out of the study.

Coker sat up.

"Why, I—I—I—I'll——" Coker struggled to his feet, gasping: "The—the cheeky rotters! What on earth's the matter with them? I jolly well won't have them to supper now, I know that! Ooooooh!"

And Coker, having got his second wind, left the study, carefully locking the door after him. He went to look for the distinguished guest, who was to have the distinguished honour of supping with Coker in his study, while the ungrateful and rebellious Potter and Greene were left out in the cold.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Coker!

"NINE o'clock!" said Wingate.

Lancaster nodded.

"Thanks. I'll be glad to come."

The door of the new senior's study closed on Wingate.

Lancaster stood, with his hands in his pockets, glancing about his new quarters.

It was a pleasant study, with a bed in an alcove, and a window on the quad. Wingate had helped Lancaster unpack, which was rather an honour for a new fellow. He had asked Lancaster to supper in his study, with a few choice spirits of the Sixth, which was another honour. The Greyfriars captain had taken rather a liking to the new man, and he was rather anxious, too, to remove any disagreeable impression that Loder might have made. Lancaster was the fellow to make friends quickly, and he was already making them in the Greyfriars Sixth.

He was in a pleased and contented mood. He was a Greyfriars man now, and he found Greyfriars a pleasant place. Most of the seniors whom he had met seemed pleasant fellows enough. There was a fly in the ointment, as it were—Gerald Loder, who had been at Danby Croft when Lancaster was there, and when the light fingers of the Wizard had been at their accustomed work. But he was not thinking of Loder now.

Greyfriars seemed like a haven of rest to the boy whose life had been so strange and chequered. Slimy Sugden, and the Weasel, and the rest of the gang, seemed far away now, almost unreal. Outside Greyfriars, there was still the dark underworld to which he belonged. But inside Greyfriars he was a schoolboy like the rest, and he resolutely shut other thoughts out of his mind.

He glanced round his study with satisfaction. Two or three good sporting prints and a couple of valuable etchings adorned the walls. The Wizard had plenty of money at his disposal. He had good taste, and he liked good things about him. He had an unusual number of books, and many of them were in expensive bindings. A Persian rug was on the floor—the only one in

the Sixth Form passage. The bronze clock on his mantelpiece had cost somebody a large sum.

His face shadowed for a second as his glance fell on a suitcase that was kept carefully locked and that had not been opened while Wingate was in the room. There were things in that suitcase that would have surprised any Greyfriars man who had seen them—strange tools to which the slim fingers of the Wizard were used. He shrugged his shoulders, and shifted his position a little, to place that suitcase out of his range of vision.

Tap!

"Come in!" called out Lancaster.

The door of the study opened, and Paget of the Third appeared. Spencer Percival Paget eyed the new senior rather uneasily and a little sulkily.

"Well?" said Lancaster, with a smile.

The uneasy, sulky look vanished from the fag's face at once. Dick Lancaster's smile was reassuring.

"I'm Paget!" he remarked.

"Oh, you're Paget, are you?" said the new senior. "I'm Lancaster! What can I do for you, Mr. Paget?"

Paget of the Third grinned.

"I'm your fag!" he explained.

"That's very kind of you!" said Lancaster gravely.

"Wingate says I'm to be your fag!" Paget further explained. "I fagged for Carne last term. I thought I was going to get off fagging this term, and then you came."

"You make me regret that I came to Greyfriars," said Lancaster. "In every other respect, I'm glad I came. But if it puts you to inconvenience, Paget, I'm sorry I didn't go elsewhere."

Paget chuckled.

"I say, you're better tempered than Carne," he said. "Carne's a beast!"

"I am afraid," remarked Lancaster, "that being in the Sixth Form, I cannot listen to your opinions, valuable as they are, on the subject of other Sixth Form men. I am sure you will excuse me."

Spencer Percival chuckled again.

"I say, I don't mind fagging for you," he said. "Tubb fags for Loder, and Loder's no catch, I can tell you."

"If you don't mind fagging for me, Paget, the case is altered, and I am glad, after all, that I came," said Lancaster. "At the present moment, I am not in need of the services of a fag, and now that I have had the pleasure of making your acquaintance, you can cut."

"Good!" said Paget, and he cut promptly. He confided to the other fags, in the Third Form-room, that the new man in the Sixth wasn't a bad sort of a tick, and that he had sense enough to know that a man didn't want to be bothered on the first night of term.

Lancaster smiled as the door closed on Paget of the Third. He glanced at the bronze clock. It was ten minutes to nine. At nine he was due in Wingate's study for supper with the choice spirits of the Sixth. He moved about the study, with his hands in his pockets, humming an opera melody.

Knock!

"Come in!"

This time it was a burly Fifth Form man who presented himself.

"Oh, you're here!" said Coker. "I was told that this was your study! Jolly glad to see you at Greyfriars, Lancaster!"

Coker held out a large hand to the new man. Lancaster, with a cheery smile, shook hands with Coker of the Fifth.

Coker was full of friendliness. He liked Lancaster, and had a high opinion of him. At the same time there was a

touch of patronage in his manner. Coker was going to be kind to the new man, and make him feel at home at Greyfriars. Any attention from Coker was a distinction for any fellow, as Coker realised very clearly.

Coker trusted to Lancaster's good sense not to put on any "Sixth Form swank," as Coker called it. Coker was quite ready to put the new man in his place if he tried on any Sixth Form swank. Failing to regard Coker with respectful admiration was a sign of swank. "Side" from a Sixth Form man was a thing Coker never would stand.

"Making yourself at home, what?" asked Coker, glancing round the study.

"Yes, settling down already," said Lancaster. "Quite a pleasure to meet you here, Coker!"

"Yes, I thought it would be," agreed Coker. "I haven't forgotten how you fished me out of that river in Surrey."

"Oh, that's nothing!"

"Not at all," said Coker; "it was plucky, and jolly good-natured of you, after I'd licked you, too."

Lancaster started a little. Then he laughed.

"I was jolly sorry about that licking afterwards!" said Coker. "I hope you weren't badly hurt."

At the time Coker had been left a gasping wreck. But during the days that had elapsed since Coker had fully persuaded himself that he had had the best of that scrap.

"Not frightfully!" said Lancaster. "In fact, I don't remember being damaged at all."

Coker gave him a quick look. This looked like "side," and Coker was always on the watch for side in a fellow in the Form above him.

"Well, I mauled you pretty thoroughly," he said.

"Did you?"

"It was all that kid Wharton's fault," said Coker. "I was thrashing him when you butted in. In the circumstances I had to lick you, you see."

"Well, never mind about that," said Lancaster. "I hope we're going to be good friends at Greyfriars."

"We jolly well are," said Coker. "I want you to come down to the nets with me to-morrow, and I'm going to give you some tips about cricket."

"That's kind of you."

"Not at all! A fellow who plays the game as I do ought to be ready to help a man on. That's how I look at it," said Coker. "I'm a pretty good all-round man at games, though the men here don't seem to see it. I suppose you've met Wingate?"

"Oh, yes!"

"He struck you as being rather a fool, I suppose?"

"Not in the least."

"He leaves me out of games," said Coker. "A born fool, if you ask me. He doesn't play a bad game himself, though not my style, but he has no eye whatever for a fellow's form. You'd hardly believe that I've never been given a chance to play for the school, either at football or cricket. They've never even put me up for swimming."

"Not really?" gasped Lancaster.

"I had a touch of the cramp, that time in Surrey," added Coker hastily. "Not that I was really in any danger, you know. It was plucky of you to come in for me, but I should have got out all right."

"Oh!"

Lancaster glanced at the clock again. It was close on nine.

"But to come down to brass tacks," continued Coker. "I've dropped in to ask you to supper in my study. Come along."

"I'm sorry—"

"Eh? Nothing to be sorry about," said Coker, staring. "It's all ready, and rather a decent supper, though I say it. Come on, old bean!"

"The fact is—you're awfully kind—but—"

"My dear chap, don't be shy," said Coker, with a wave of a large hand. "I mean it. I don't usually go out of my way to be civil to the Sixth. I don't think much of the Sixth, as a matter of fact, and I've no use for Sixth Form swank. I'm rather sorry you're in the Sixth, but that can't be helped, of course. I'm going to see you through here—whenever you want a tip about anything just ask me. Now, come along."

"I'm really sorry," said Lancaster, "but Wingate has asked me to supper in his study—"

"Oh, never mind Wingate! He doesn't matter."

"Only I've accepted."

Coker frowned for a moment. But Coker could make allowances for the mistakes of a new man. After all, Lancaster had not known that Coker was going to ask him to supper. So Coker's brow cleared again.

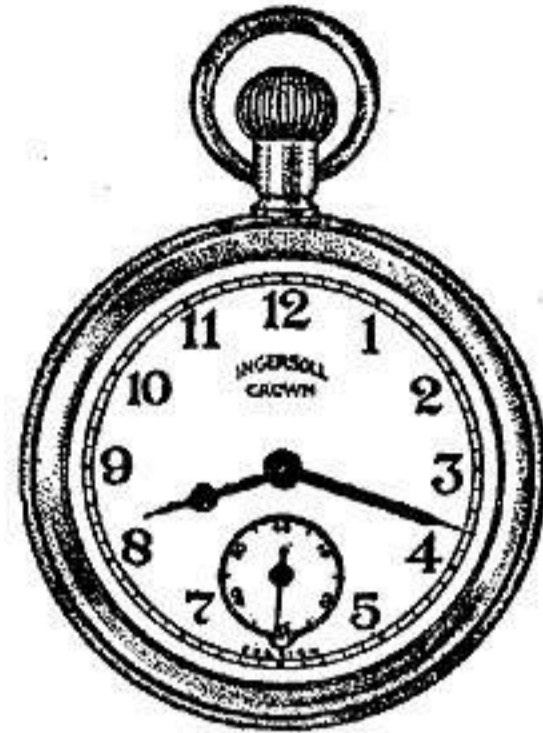
"Well, that's all right," he said. "We'll look in at Wingate's study, and you can tell him that you can't come."

"I'm rather afraid I couldn't do that," said Lancaster regretfully. "Thanks all the same, Coker."

(Continued on page 18.)

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Horace Coker stiffened.

If this was not "side," Coker did not know side when he saw it. This new man, for whom Coker had made such preparations, including a row with Potter and Greene, was apparently turning him down for Wingate, a Sixth Form tick! Coker breathed rather hard.

"You couldn't do that?" he repeated. Lancaster shook his head.

"Now look here——" said Coker. His wrath was rising, but he restrained it. Coker could be a reasonable fellow, and patient with a new man who did not know his way about.

"Another time——" suggested Lancaster.

"Another time be blowed!" said Coker. "I'm asking you to supper in my study the first night of term. I can jolly well tell you that you're the only Sixth Form man I would ask. I've told you that I'm going to take you up, and see you through, and all that. But I'd better tell you plainly at the start that I never stand side, especially from the Sixth. If you're going to be sidey——" "My dear chap——" murmured Lancaster.

"I've asked you to supper in the study," said Coker. "Are you coming, or ain't you coming? That's a plain question."

"In the circumstances, no," said Lancaster. "Wingate——"

"Blow Wingate!" roared Coker.

"You see——"

"I don't see!" contradicted Coker.

Lancaster looked at the clock again. It indicated the hour of nine.

"I'm afraid I shall have to be getting along," he said. "I hope I shall see you another time, Coker."

"You jolly well won't if you turn me down for Wingate!" snapped Coker. "My hat! Look here—are you coming?"

"You see——"

"Oh don't jaw," said Coker. "I can see how it is; you're going to be thick with the Sixth, and I'm wasting my time on you. I might have known that a Sixth Form fathead would put on side. Wingate, indeed! Who's Wingate?"

"Well, he's captain of the school——"

"That's because the fellows are a lot of chumps, and don't know a good man when they see one in the Fifth! Well, if you want your dashed Wingate, you can have your dashed Wingate, and be blowed to you!" exclaimed Coker, indignantly. "My hat! I jolly well think——"

"My dear fellow——"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Coker gruffly. "Turning me down for a Sixth Form fathead, by jove! Br-r-r-r-r!"

With that, Coker of the Fifth marched out of the study. Lancaster stared after him, and then laughed. It was, apparently, the end of a friendship; a fellow had to walk very delicately to keep on friendly terms with the great Coker. Lancaster, however, did not seem deeply disturbed; his face was quite cheery as he strolled along to Wingate's quarters.

Horace Coker returned to his study, deeply indignant and wrathful. Sixth Form swank, after all, had developed in Lancaster, and Coker of the Fifth was done with him. He stared gloomily at the well-spread study table. He did not want to sup alone, and Potter and Greene had cleared off in a huff. Coker grunted with dissatisfaction. But, as it happened, Coker was not to be left without guests at his study supper, though the guests were to be both unexpected and unwelcome.

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THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Study Supper!

"QUIET!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"Nobody about!" said Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"Come on!" said Wharton.

And he led the way, on tiptoe, into the Fifth Form passage.

The Famous Five were on the war-path. A ragging was due to Coker of the Fifth, and the ragging had not yet been administered. Debts of that kind had to be paid, and the crews of the Remove had been watching for some time for an opportunity. Now the opportunity had come, and it was distinctly favourable.

Coker had gone to his study alone. Potter and Greene were down in Hall, where supper was going on. There was a crowd in Hall, and not a man was to be seen in the Fifth Form passage.

Even the games study was deserted. On the first night of the term, a shindy was likely to pass unheeded. This was the most favourable opportunity that could have been desired for handing out to Horace Coker that for which he had asked.

Five juniors trailed softly along towards Coker's study. After them trailed Billy Bunter.

Bunter was not bent on a ragging. Bunter hoped that there might be another chance at Coker's cake while the Famous Five were ragging Coker. The Owl of the Remove, as usual, was thinking of the loaves and fishes.

Coker's study door was half-open when the juniors reached it. Coker, in the study, was standing staring at a well-spread table.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Go it!" he murmured.

Harry Wharton hurled the door wide open. Coker started and stared round as the five juniors rushed in.

He glared at them. Coker was cross already, and he was in no mood to stand cheek from Lower Fourth fags.

"What the thump——" he began angrily.

"Collar him!"

"Mop him up!"

"Mop him terrifically!"

"Why, you cheeky young sweeps!" roared Coker. "I—I—I'll—— Yaroooooop!"

The rush swept Coker fairly off his feet. He descended on the floor with a bump that shook the study.

"Sit on him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lock the door, Bunter!" gasped Bob Cherry. "We don't want any of the Fifth butting in."

Billy Bunter did not heed. His eyes were gleaming ecstatically through his big spectacles at the spread on Coker's table. As Coker roared and struggled in the grasp of the Famous Five, the fat junior's plump hands grabbed at the good things. There was a sound of rapid munching.

Frank Nugent ran to the door, closed it, and turned the key. Coker, spluttering, heaved and rocked under the Removes. But Coker was flattened down, and with two or three juniors sitting on him Coker heaved and rocked in vain.

"You—you—you——" gurgled Coker. "Gerroff! You cheeky young rotters, I'll spifficate you! Gerroff!"

"I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter. "Hold him! Sit on him! Don't let him get up! I say, this pie is prime!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gerroff!" shrieked Coker. "I'll smash you! I'll—— Yaroop! If you bang my head on the floor again, I'll—— Whoooooop!"

"That looks a decent supper," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Shall we stop to supper with Coker, you men?"

"Let's!" chuckled Nugent.

"The supperfulness is the proper caper!" chortled Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. "If the esteemed Coker will politely ask us——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!" said Harry Wharton. "I've no doubt Coker will ask us, and ask us nicely! We can't have supper with Coker unless he asks us, of course. Are you asking us to supper, Coker?"

"No!" roared Coker.

Bang!

Coker's bullet head smote the floor of Coker's study. The head was hard, but the floor was harder. A fiendish yell rang along the Fifth Form passage.

"Are you asking us to supper, old bean?"

"No!" shrieked Coker.

Bang!

"Yaroooooooooop!"

Coker struggled wildly. But he struggled in vain. Five pairs of hands were too many for Coker. Four juniors sat on him and held him, and the captain of the Remove, with a grip on Coker's large ears, banged his head on the floor. Coker had not handled Bob Cherry gently, and what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander. Coker was in the hands of the Philistines now, and there was no help for Coker.

"Now, what about it, Coker?" asked Wharton cheerily. "We're willing to stay to supper if you ask us nicely."

"The willingness is terrific, my esteemed Coker."

"I—I—I—I'll——" stuttered Coker.

Bang!

"Do you want us to stay to supper, old chap?"

"Yow! Ow! Wow! Yes!" howled Coker. He realised that his head was to be banged until he issued that invitation. "Oh, yes! Ow!"

"Sure you want us?"

"You young villain—— I—I mean, yes! Oh, yes!"

"Thank you for your kind invitation, which we accept with pleasure!" said Wharton gravely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you little scoundrel——"

"If that's Coker's way of talking to a guest, I can't say much for his manners," remarked Johnny Bull. "But they're rather pigs in the Fifth."

"I—I'll smash you! I'll——"

"Not this evening!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Coker seems rather excited, you men, and I don't fancy he would behave himself at table. Better let him take a rest and cool down."

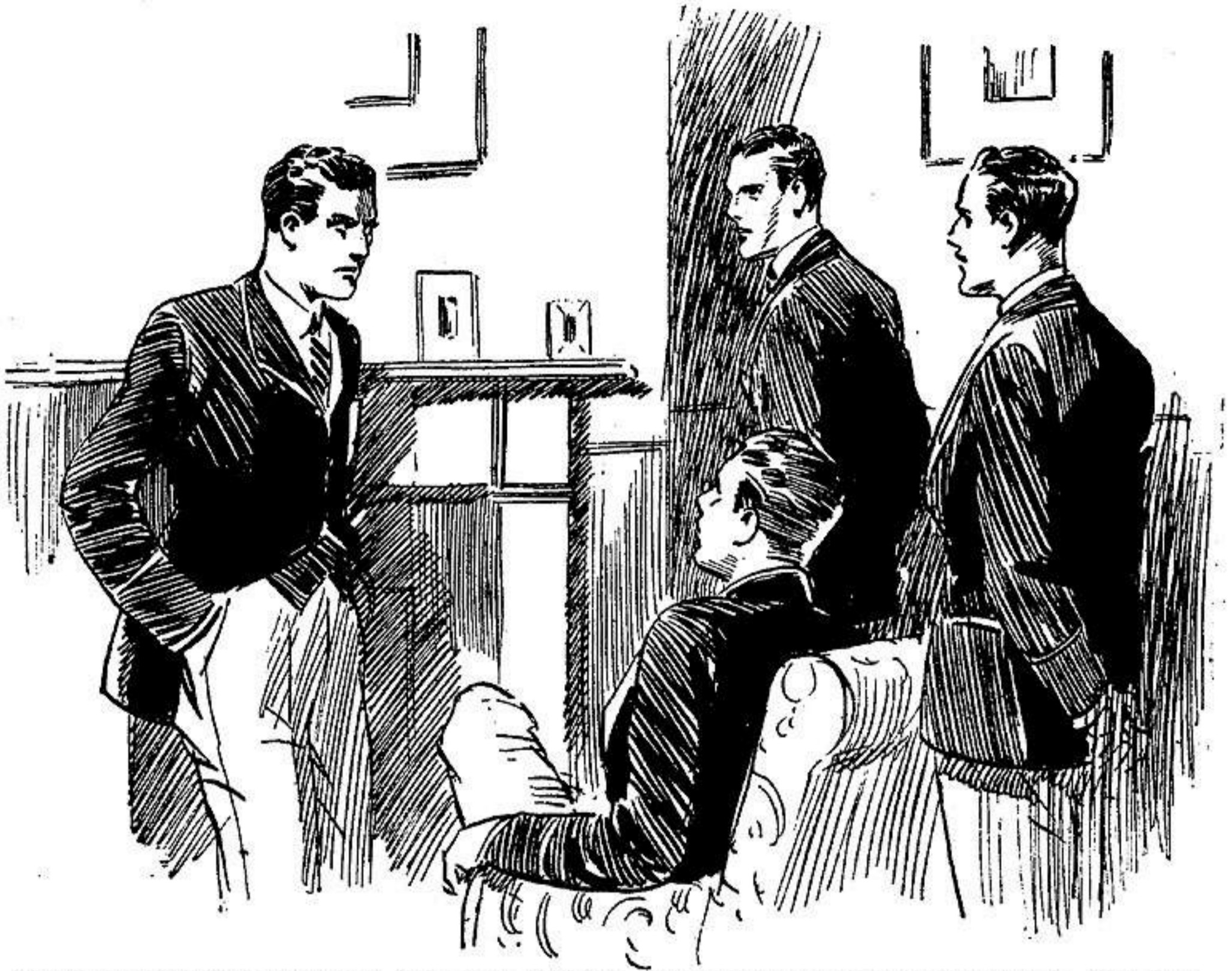
Coker showed no signs whatever of cooling down. But he had to take a rest. His two wrists were tied to two of the legs of the armchair with Coker's necktie and a duster. Then the Removes left him to rest, though he certainly did not look very restful. They drew chairs to the table, and sat down to supper. Bunter did not trouble to sit down. He had no time to waste. He stood up to it, packing away the foodstuffs at an alarming rate.

"Rescue, the Fifth!" bawled Coker.

Bob Cherry rose from his chair.

"Can't have that row going on while we're at supper," he said. "Would you mind shutting up, Coker?"

"You young villain! Rescue! Help!" roared Coker. "Potter!



"I saw you at Danby's house-party, Lancaster," said Loder, "and I remember what happened there." "Anything special?" asked Lancaster, smiling. "Yes," answered Loder, "there was a robbery and a safe was cracked." A silence fell in the prefects' room.

Greene! Help! Ooooooooooch!" Coker broke off with a suffocated gurgle as Bob crammed a handful of pie-crust into his wide-open mouth. "Grrrrrh! Gug-gug-gug!"

"Now keep quiet, old bean," said Bob. "If you open your mouth again I'll pour the vinegar in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker struggled with the pie-crust. When he had got rid of it he opened his extensive mouth to roar. Bob picked up the vinegar bottle, and Coker closed his mouth again quite suddenly without roaring.

"That's better," said Bob approvingly. "You're too noisy, Coker! But we'll teach you manners in the long run. Pass the pickles, you men."

Coker, on the floor, regarded the supper-party with basilisk eyes. He dared not shout for help; vinegar trickling into his open mouth would have been too unpleasant. If looks could have slain, the Famous Five of the Remove would have been in danger of sudden extinction. Fortunately, looks couldn't! Coker's infuriated glares, in fact, seemed rather to amuse the supper-party than otherwise.

There were piles of good things on Coker's table. But six juniors made rapid progress with them. Aunt Judy had supplied her darling Horace well and generously, little dreaming what was destined to become of those excellent viands. The Famous Five had healthy appetites, and Billy Bunter was as

good as five more. Well spread as the table was, it cleared quite rapidly.

"A jolly good supper!" said Bob Cherry, as he wound up with candied fruits. "Much obliged, Coker!"

"Kind of you to ask us!" grinned Johnny Bull. "We'll stand you a spread some time, Coker, if you're good."

"Jolly near dorm," said Harry Wharton, rising. "Well, it was a first-rate supper. Thank you for having us, Coker."

"The thankfulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, don't go yet! There's another pie!" gasped Bunter. "And there's some fruits left, and some bananas! Don't go yet."

"Enough's as good as a feast!" said Bob. "We can't have you bursting all over the Remove dormitory."

"And there's the cake," gasped Bunter. "I haven't eaten half the cake yet! I say, you fellows, we can be late for dorm on first night! Don't leave anything! Waste not, want not, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Time!" said Harry Wharton. "Let's clear!" He unlocked the door of the study. "Good-night, Coker, and thanks again."

"You—you—you—" gurgled Coker. "If you'll behave yourself we'll untie you before we go—"

"I'll smash you!" shrieked Coker.

"Then you can wriggle loose. You'll get loose by bed-time. Ta-ta!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Come on, Fatty! If you're here when Coker gets loose something may happen to you."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He grabbed the remains of the cake, and followed the Famous Five from the study. Horace Coker was left on his own, wriggling and struggling to get his hands loose. The Famous Five were not bothering about that. They joined the crowd of fellows heading for the Remove dormitory, quite pleased and satisfied with their supper with Coker. If Coker was not satisfied, that could not be helped; it was impossible to satisfy everybody.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Friends, and a Foe!

"THIS is the Remove dormitory," said Wingate.

"The Remove?" said Lancaster.

"The Lower Fourth is called the Remove here. And these young sweeps are the Remove!" added the Greyfriars captain.

It was Wingate's duty to see lights-out for the Remove, and, after the supper in his study, he was combining that duty with the pleasure of showing Richard Lancaster about the House.

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The choice spirits of the Sixth, in Wingate's study, had all liked the new man; he seemed to be winning golden opinions all round. Wingate had quite taken to him, and there was no doubt that the new man made himself very agreeable to the captain of the school. He was interested in all that Wingate showed him and told him—even in the Lower Fourth dormitory and the Lower Fourth Form.

The Removites looked rather curiously at Lancaster. Skinner remarked that he looked a tremendous swell. Harry Wharton & Co. glanced at him when he came in with Wingate. They had met Lancaster, and liked him, in the Easter holidays; but now that he was a Sixth Form man at Greyfriars they tactfully kept a respectful distance.

If Lancaster chose to recognise them, well and good; if he did not, the cheery chums of the Remove could survive it. Lancaster, chatting with the Greyfriars captain, did not seem to observe them at first. Skinner gave them a grin.

"Didn't I hear you fellows saying you knew the new man in the Sixth?" he asked.

"Very likely," answered Wharton. "You hear a lot of things that don't specially concern you, Skinner."

"Well, he doesn't seem to know you!" jeered Skinner.

"I say, you fellows, I'm going to speak to Lancaster," said Billy Bunter. "We were quite pally in the hols, you know."

"Cheese it, fathead!" said Bob Cherry. "He's a Sixth Form man now."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The cheesefulness is the proper caper, my esteemed fat Bunter!"

"Yah!" answered Bunter elegantly. And he rolled across the dormitory to where the two seniors stood near the doorway. He gave the new senior a friendly blink through his big spectacles.

"I say, Lancaster, old chap—"

began Bunter.

Wingate interrupted. "What the thump do you mean by showing up for dorm as sticky as glue, Bunter? Go and wash!"

"Oh, I say!" gasped Bunter. As a matter of fact, there were many traces of Coker's supper visible on Bunter.

"Go and get clean before you turn in, you frowsy young frump!"

"I say, I know Lancaster—"

Wingate slipped down his official ash-plant into his hand. Billy Bunter retreated to a washstand, where he sulkily proceeded to remove the outward and visible signs of the inward invisible supper.

"Seen that fat frump before, Lancaster?" asked Wingate.

"I think he's a fellow I came across at Easter," said Lancaster. "I met some fellows in this Form; I'd like to see them again. Oh, here they are!" He gave the Famous Five a pleasant smile. "Glad to see you again, you fellows."

"The gladfulness of our esteemed selves is preposterous, my worthy and ridiculous Lancaster!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"I hope you left your uncle well, Wharton."

"Quite, thanks!" said Harry. "He asked to be remembered to you, if we saw you again."

"That was kind of him!" said Lancaster, "and I should like you to tell him that I haven't forgotten his kindness to me at Wharton Lodge, when you write home."

And Lancaster strolled out of the dormitory with Wingate, while the Removites turned in. The two great men of the Sixth paced the passage in state.

"You know Wharton's people?" remarked Wingate.

"Oh, yes; his uncle, Colonel Wharton, was an old friend of my father's," said Lancaster. "They were on the Somme together."

The two seniors chatted, till Wingate turned out the lights in the Remove dormitory. Then they walked away together. Wingate turned into the Fifth Form passage on the next floor down.

Some of the Fifth were in the games study, and Blundell was lounging in the doorway, and Wingate paused to introduce Lancaster to the captain of

the Fifth. Then they walked down the Fifth Form passage.

"This is the Fifth Form quarters," explained Wingate. "I believe you know a man in the Fifth. Coker was speaking about you—"

"Yes, I've met Coker," said Lancaster.

"This is his study. Sounds as if he's at home," said Wingate, and he tapped and threw open the door. "Why, what—Hallo!"

The two seniors stared blankly into the study. A fellow was sprawling on the hearthrug, apparently clutching the legs of the armchair. On the table was the remnants of a spread.

"Coker!" ejaculated Wingate.

"What on earth's that game?" Coker ceased his wriggling, and turned a crimson and infuriated face towards the Sixth-Formers.

"You silly ass!" he hooted.

"Why, he's tied up!" exclaimed Wingate, in astonishment. "What sort of a game is this? I say, Coker, here's a man who knows you—"

"Can't you let me loose?" hissed Coker.

"Well, I suppose you can let yourself loose, if you've tied yourself up?" said Wingate. "What did you do it for?"

"You howling idiot, do you think I did it?" shrieked Coker.

"Well, I suppose you did."

"You silly fathead—"

"Coker doesn't seem to be in a good temper," remarked Wingate. "We've called at an inopportune moment."

"You crass idiot!"

"Perhaps we'd better help him out," said Lancaster, laughing, and he stooped over Coker, and released his wrists from the legs of the armchair.

Horace Coker scrambled to his feet, red and untidy and dusty and furious. He glared at the two seniors.

"You dummies! I've been yelling ever since those cheeky fags cleared off! I believe fellows must have heard me, but they never came!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Wingate. "Is it a rag? You surely never let fags tie you up like that, Coker?"

"You silly chump!" roared Coker.

"You're talking to the captain of the school, Coker!" Wingate reminded him gently. "We'd better get on, Lancaster, and leave Coker to cool down."

"You can jolly well get out of my study, the pair of you!" snarled Coker. "I've no use for Sixth Form fat-heads!"

"My dear chap—"

said Lancaster.

"Oh, cheese it!"

"But really—"

"I asked you to this study once," said Coker. "I haven't asked you since. I suppose you can see the door?"

The two Sixth-Formers left the study, laughing. Coker glared after them as they went. It was the final blow to his friendship with the new man. Coker could not forgive a fellow for having discovered him in such a ridiculous position.

Two grinning faces looked in at the door a few minutes later. Coker glared at Potter and Greene.

"Getting on all right with your Sixth Form pal?" asked Potter.

"He seemed jolly amused about something when we passed him a minute ago," remarked Greene.

"If you mean that cheeky rotter Lancaster—"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Potter. "Is he a cheeky rotter?"

"Yes, he is!" roared Coker. "And I can tell you I'm fed-up with him. I've no use for sidey Sixth-Formers! Why didn't you come when you heard me

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shouting? I jolly well know you heard me! What are you grinning at, you pair of footling dummies? My hat! I'll jolly well—"

Coker made a stride towards the doorway; and Potter and Greene walked away rather hastily, still grinning.

Meanwhile, Wingate and Lancaster had strolled back to the Sixth Form quarters. Near the prefects' room Loder of the Sixth was standing, in talk with his friends Walker and Carne.

All three looked very curiously at Lancaster, and a derisive smile flitted over Loder's face. Walker and Carne strolled away, but Gerald Loder remained, staring at the new man as he passed with the captain of Greyfriars. Lancaster did not seem to observe it, but Wingate observed it, and his brow darkened.

He left Lancaster at the door of his study. Lancaster went in, and Wingate turned back and joined Loder.

"What have you got against the new man, Loder?" he asked quietly.

Loder raised his eyebrows.

"Nothin'!" he answered.

"You've made yourself rather unpleasant."

"Are you teaching me manners?" yawned Loder.

"It's time somebody did, I think," said the Greyfriars captain sharply. "This man Lancaster seems to me a very decent sort."

"I don't say he isn't."

"You act as if you think he isn't. If you've got anything against the man, give it a name, and don't stick to shrugging and sneering!" snapped Wingate.

"I haven't anything against him exactly," said Loder. But he—"

"But what?" Wingate's tone was sharp.

"Well, who the dooce is he, and where does he come from?" said Loder.

"I met him at Danby Croft, and he pretended to have forgotten—"

"Why should he pretend, you ass?"

"Better ask him, not me. Some queer things happened at old Danby's place while he was there," sneered Loder. "I know that Lancaster left very suddenly. Old Danby asked him there out of good nature— orphan son of a man killed in the War, and all that. His father left him without a bean."

"He doesn't look as if he was left without a bean, you ass!" said Wingate, staring. "I should say he was jolly well off!"

"Quite!" said Loder coolly. "But I happen to know that he was left without a bean—old Danby told me so. As you say, he seems jolly well off, all the same. Nobody knows anything about him."

"A governor of the school put him up for Greyfriars. Sir Hilton Popper must know all about the man he put up for his old school."

"Well, yes. But—"

"He knows some Remove men here."

"I've heard about that. He hooked on to them in the vac."

"He knows Wharton's people. Wharton's uncle is a governor of the school, and Lancaster knows him. The colonel was his father's friend. He was at Wharton Lodge at Easter."

Loder paused.

"Old Popper's a dashed old fool!" he said. "But Colonel Wharton is no fool. If he knows about this man Lancaster—"

"He knows him well enough to have him at Wharton Lodge, and to send a message to him by young Wharton!"

snapped Wingate. "I can tell you that from my own knowledge."

Loder whistled.

"Well, I'm not sayin' anythin' against the man," he said, at last. "I'm not bound to give him the glad hand, I suppose. Some sort of an adventurer—"

"That's rot, and you know it!"

"It may be rot, but I don't know it," answered Loder coolly. "I'm not sayin' anythin' against him. But—" He shrugged his shoulders.

"If you've got nothing to say against the man, it's up to you not to hint anything. That's only cricket."

"Thanks for the tip!" yawned Loder, and he walked away, leaving the Greyfriars captain staring after him with knitted brows.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Games Fagging!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Bow-wow!"

"I'm going out!" said Bunter.

"Good!"

"If you take my tip, you'll come, too," said the Owl of the Remove. "And before Loder gets his eye on you."

It was the first half-holiday of the term. Harry Wharton & Co. were discussing what was to be done with that half-holiday, when William George Bunter rolled up to them in the quad, with a very serious expression on his fat face. Bunter, apparently, had something to communicate.

"What's up with Loder?" yawned Bob Cherry. "Bother Loder!"

"I hear that he wants a fag this afternoon," explained Bunter.

Johnny Bull gave a sniff.

"You fat ass, the Remove don't fag! Blow Loder!"

"Games!" said Bunter.

"Oh!"

"You know how jolly keen Loder is to play when Rookwood come over for the cricket," said Bunter. "And I hear that Wingate has been slanging him. You know what a slacker Loder is."

"Is there anything you don't hear?" asked Nugent sarcastically.

"Precious little!" agreed Bunter. "Well, from what I hear, Loder wants fags at bowling this afternoon, and I'm giving you men the tip."

The Famous Five looked duly serious. The Remove did not fag like the Third and the Second. But any junior could be called on to fag at bowling when senior cricketers were at the nets. If Loder was looking for games fags, no member of the famous Co. wanted to meet his eye.

"I'm jolly well clearing off, I can tell you!" said Billy Bunter emphatically. "Loder's not getting me bowling to him."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

The idea of anybody wanting Bunter to bowl to him rather overcame their gravity.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snapped Bunter. "I'm the best bowler in the Remove, and chance it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'm going out! You fellows come!" said Bunter. "I say, what about tea at the bunshop in Courtfield? My treat, you know."

"Good egg!" said Bob. "Only your treats come so jolly expensive, old fat bean!"

"The fact is, I'm expecting a postal order."

"And you're going to settle at the bunshop with the postal order you're expecting?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Well, I suppose my friends can lend me ten bob, and take the postal order when it comes," said Bunter warmly.

"Better go and ask your friends, old fat man. I don't know who they are. But go and ask them."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Well, we may as well get out of gates," said Bob. "Loder's a rotter, and he would like to muck up our half-holiday. And games fagging gives him an excuse. Let's cut!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Better cut, Bunter. A wonderful bowler like you will be bagged first shot. Besides, you're so jolly useful in the field. There's no room for a ball to pass you."

"Beast! I say, you fellows, there come Lancaster and Wingate! You fellows remember how pally I was with Lancaster in the hols—"

"Not quite."

"He's been rather standoffish since he came here," said Bunter. "It gets into a fellow's head, being in the Sixth. I wonder whether he would cash my postal order for me. I've been going to speak to him several times; but I must say he's standoffish, and seems to have forgotten how I took him up in the hols. You fellows think he would cash my postal order if I asked him? He's got lots of money."

"More likely to kick you for your cheek, you fat duffer!"

The two seniors in flannels were passing at a little distance, on their way to Big Side. Billy Bunter blinked dubiously at Lancaster. On second thoughts, he decided not to ask the new senior to cash his celebrated postal order. There was no doubt that Lancaster had been "standoffish" towards the fatuous Owl, since he had come into the Greyfriars Sixth. If he wanted friends in the Lower Fourth, Billy Bunter did not seem to be numbered among them.

Lancaster glanced at the group of juniors, and gave them a nod and a pleasant smile in passing. Harry Wharton & Co. liked him as well as ever; but the lower Fourth had nothing to do with the Sixth. And they were not likely to come much in contact. On the occasions when he happened on the juniors, Lancaster was always kind and pleasant, and that was enough. Between the Lower School and the Sixth there was a great gulf fixed, and the fatuous Owl was the only fellow who thought of presuming on the chance acquaintance of holiday-time. And the fat Owl had been put in his place.

"Come on!" said Wharton. "If Loder's looking for fags, the sooner we get out of gates the better. We want to call on the Highcliffe chaps. Loder can give the Fourth or the Shell a turn."

"Hear, hear!"

"Fag!" It was Loder's sharp voice, as the bully of the Sixth came out of the House in flannels, with a bat under his arm. "Here, Wharton, Cherry, Hurree Singh—"

"Caught!" groaned Bob.

"All your own fault!" grunted Bunter. "If you'd come along to the bunshop when I asked you—"

The juniors halted. Loder came towards them, with a rather unpleasant grin on his face. Loder was a first-class slacker, but he was keen to play for school, all the same. And that afternoon he had made up his mind to slog at practice. Loder hated

games practice, and it was a solace to him to make somebody else uncomfortable as well as himself. He was quite pleased to spot the Famous Five, having no liking whatever for those cheery youths. Moreover, Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was the champion bowler of the Lower School, and could give even the best senior bats something to think about, and he was very useful for Loder's purpose.

"Now we're copped!" groaned Bunter.

"Fathead!"

"I shall want you!" smiled Loder as he came up.

"I—I say, Loder, I—I—" mumbled Bunter. "I say, I've got an engagement this afternoon. I say, I've sprained my wrist and I can't bowl!"

Loder stared at him.

"You fat idiot!" was his reply.

"Oh, really, Loder—"

"Clear off, you ass!"

Loder gave Bunter a hefty prod with his bat, and the fat junior yelped as he cleared off. He was glad enough to clear off; but he did not like Loder's bat at close quarters.

"None of you sprained your wrists, I hope?" said Loder genially.

"No-no; but we were going over to Highcliffe," said Harry.

"So sorry!" smiled Loder. "I'm afraid you will have to put it off till another time. I want fags for bowling—"

"My esteemed and ludicrous Loder—"

"I shall expect you on Big Side in five minutes," said the prefect. "If you're not on time I'm sorry for you."

And Gerald Loder walked off, smiling.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another and went in to change. They were on the cricket ground within the five minutes. A good many of the seniors were there, and a good many fags for bowling and fielding.

Lancaster, with a handsome bat under his arm, was sauntering round with Wingate and Gwynne. He made a fine figure in flannels, and looked every inch a cricketer, and he had already shown that he knew something about the game.

It was known in the senior cricketing fraternity that Wingate hoped that he had found a valuable new recruit in the new Sixth-Former. If Lancaster turned out "hot stuff," it was a find for Wingate and his friends; though it was likely to be less welcome to men like Loder and Carne and Walker, who hung on to the school game, as it were, by the skin of their teeth.

Wingate glanced at the Famous Five.

"I'd like to see Hurree Singh send you down a few, Lancaster," he said.

"That kid is remarkably hot stuff at bowling. Here, Hurree Singh—"

"I want that fag, Wingate!" called out Loder.

"I'd like to see him bowl to the new man, Loder."

"Well, I called him in, and I'm not keen on hanging about while you see a new man go through his tricks."

"My dear chap, I can wait," said Lancaster.

"Oh, all right!" said Wingate, with a not very pleasant look at Loder. "As a matter of fact, I want to see how you shape, Loder. Get on and bowl to Loder, young 'un."

"The hearfulness is the obeyfulness, my esteemed and absurd Wingate," answered the Nabob of Bhanipur meekly.

And he took the ball and went on to bowl to Loder. He closed one eye at his friends as he did so. If Loder

wanted hard practice at batting he could not have done better than choose Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. But if he wanted to show off what he could do he had made a rather unfortunate choice.

Lower boy as he was, the nabob could make rings all round Gerald Loder. And his comrades grinned as the nabob winked at them. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was in great form; and they did not think that Loder of the Sixth would do a lot of showing off at the wickets.

Lancaster looked on with keen interest. Whatever else he was, there was no doubt that he was a keen cricketer.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh took his usual rapid run, and his hand flew up.

"That kid can bowl!" said Lancaster before the ball had left the dusky hand of the Indian junior.

The clatter of a falling wicket confirmed the new senior's remark a moment later.

"How's that?" yelled Bob Cherry.

Gerald Loder gripped his bat as if he would have liked to walk along the pitch and lay it about the bowler.

"Send in that ball!" he snarled.

Nugent recaptured the ball and whizzed it back to the bowler. Hurree Singh caught it, with a dusky grin.

Loder took his stand at his renovated wicket, with a glitter in his eyes. Loder could bat, though he was too slack to be a good batsman. But angry irritation was not the mood in which to face the demon bowler of the Lower School.

With Wingate looking on, in company with the new man who was a possible recruit for the First Eleven, Loder rather repented him that he had picked out Hurree Singh to fag at bowling. He savagely resolved now to knock that bowling all over the field, and demonstrate to all and sundry that he could keep his sticks up.

But it booted not, as a poet would say. The ball came down hot and fast, and Loder did not even know where it was till his bails were off.

"How's that?" shrieked Bob.

"Dash it all!" grunted Wingate.

"That won't do for the Rookwood match!"

He did not speak to Loder, but the bully of the Sixth either heard the remark or guessed at it, and he scowled blackly.

"Don't keep me waiting!" said Loder, with a ferocious glare at the smiling, dusky face of his games fag.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh did not keep him waiting. The ball came down again, Loder on the watch for that fast ball that had beaten him so easily. But it was a slow this time, with a mysterious break on it that was quite beyond Loder's ken. Clatter!

"How's that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder stood and glared at his wrecked wicket. He had started in to show Wingate what he could do. And he had shown him, there was no doubt about that. Loder breathed hard and deep.

"That will do, Loder!" said Wingate curtly. "I think I'll borrow your games fag for a bit. Hurree Singh, send up a few to Lancaster."

"The pleasurefulness will be terrific."

Gerald Loder gave Wingate a dark look, put his bat under his arm, and left the pitch. He was about to walk off the ground, but curiosity to see what the new man could do made him stop and look on.

Loder already sensed a rival in Richard Lancaster, and his vague doubt, distrust, and dislike of the new senior hardened into something like hatred as

he watched the handsome athletic figure at the wicket. And what he saw in the next few minutes did not gratify Loder of the Sixth.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Dropped!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were looking quite merry and bright now. They did not like games fagging for Loder; but they were more than willing to fag on Big Side for Lancaster of the Sixth. They were interested, too, to see what he could do with the willow. And the "bat trick" performed by Hurree Singh, at the expense of their old enemy, quite bucked them. The expression on Loder's face was, as Bob remarked, worth a guinea a box.

Hurree Singh prepared to bowl very warily. At a glance the nabob could see that Lancaster was a bat of a very different calibre from Loder. Inky of the Remove liked Lancaster, and did not like Loder; but when it came to bowling he had equal measure for both. He was going to take Lancaster's wicket if he could. But he knew that the new man's wicket would not be "pie" to him like Gerald Loder's.

Lancaster stopped the ball dead when it came down. He stopped the second ball dead. Hurree Singh made a dusky grimace. The batsman was taking his measure. The third ball Lancaster hit, and it whizzed away to the nets. After that a faint smile glimmered on the new man's handsome face, and he hit every ball.

Wingate looked on with all his eyes. He knew the quality of Inky's bowling, junior as the nabob was; the demon bowler of the Remove had given Wingate himself plenty of trouble on some occasions. Gwynne nudged the captain of Greyfriars.

"That man can bat," he said.

"What-ho!" said Wingate, without taking his eyes off Lancaster.

"Play up, Inky, old black bean!" said Bob Cherry, as he tossed back the ball.

"Put some mustard into it!"

"My esteemed Bob, that ridiculous sportsman can bat my absurd head off!" answered the nabob ruefully.

"You've got to get him!" said Bob.

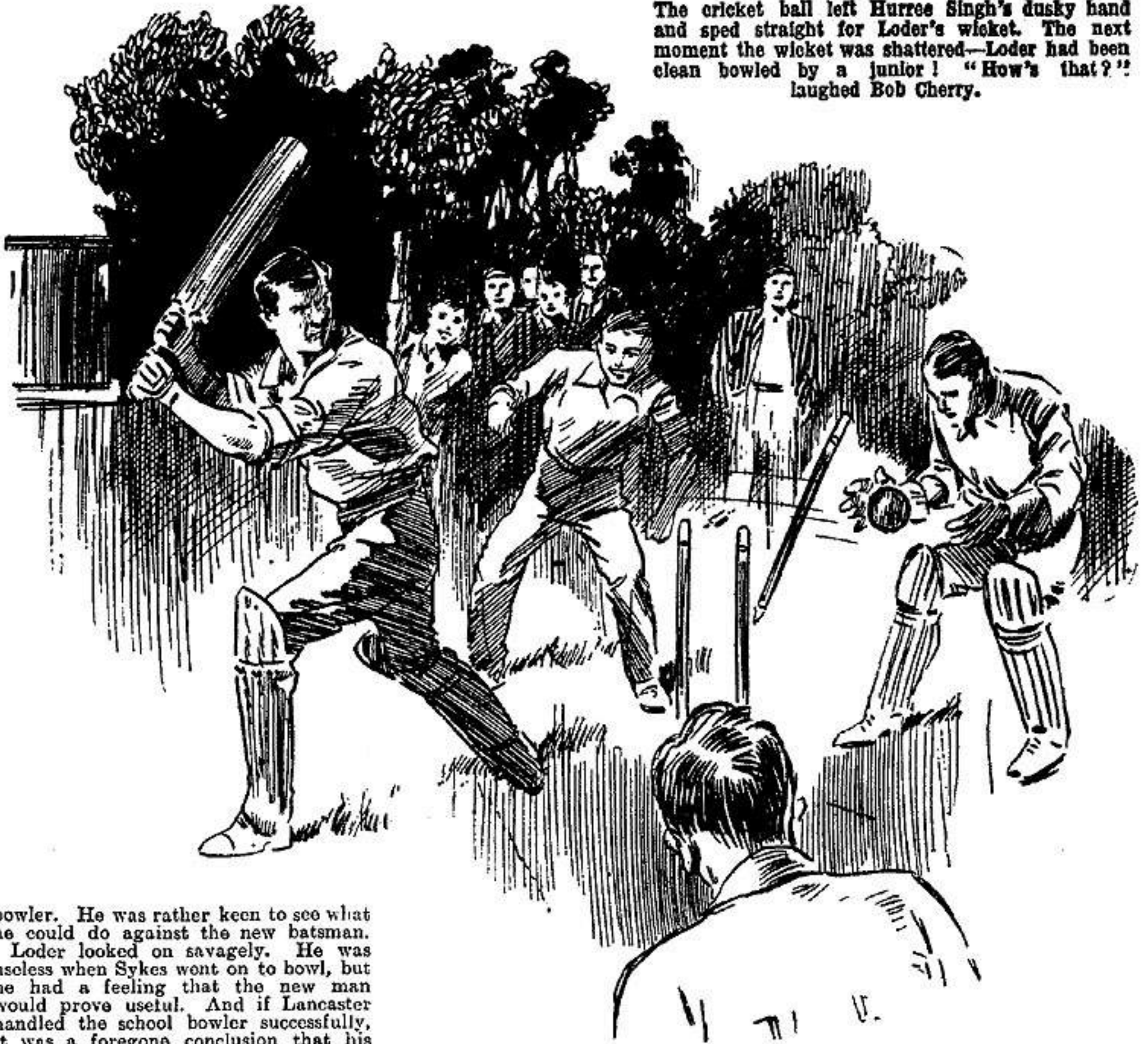
Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh made a grimace. He put all he knew into the bowling; and he had never handled the round red ball in a more masterly way. The nabob was on his mettle now, and just a little incensed by the gentle smile on the batsman's face. He yearned to take Lancaster's wicket, even more keenly than he had wanted to take Loder's. It was up to him to capture it if he could; but it was borne in upon his mind that he couldn't.

Fellows gathered from all sides to watch the contest. Loder stared on, with knitted brows. It was only too clear, even to Loder, that he was not in the same street with Lancaster when it came to handling the willow. His place in the Eleven on Rookwood day seemed to be fading into the far distance. Wingate had forgotten that he was there; he had no eyes for Loder. He was watching the new man's batting with growing delight. His happy thought was that Lancaster was a rod in pickle for Rookwood; and Gerald Loder was nobody and nowhere.

"Here, Sykes!" called out the Greyfriars captain. "Chuck Sykes that ball, young one!"

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh relinquished the ball. He had done his best, but he could not touch Lancaster.

Sykes of the Sixth was the school



The cricket ball left Hurree Singh's dusky hand and sped straight for Loder's wicket. The next moment the wicket was shattered—Loder had been clean bowled by a junior! "How's that?" laughed Bob Cherry.

bowler. He was rather keen to see what he could do against the new batsman. Loder looked on savagely. He was useless when Sykes went on to bowl, but he had a feeling that the new man would prove useful. And if Lancaster handled the school bowler successfully, it was a foregone conclusion that his name would go up in the list for the Rookwood game. And the name that was likely to be left out to make room for it was Gerald Loder.

Hurree Singh, wonderful bowler as he was, was only a junior. Sykes was a senior, a tried man, and a full-blown Blood. But a very few balls demonstrated that Lancaster could deal with him almost as easily as with the dusky nabob. There was nothing like swank or "fluff" in the batsman's manner, no sign of playing to the gallery. He was enjoying the practice, that was clear. The grasp of the bat was a pleasure to him. If Loder had been able to stand up to Sykes' bowling, he would have been like unto the ancient classic gentleman who struck the stars with his sublime head. But Lancaster showed no trace whatever of "side" or "roll."

Wingate clapped his hands with sheer glee.

"That man will do," he said.

"Well, rather!" agreed Gwyne.

"You can chuck it, Sykes," grinned Wingate. "We've got a man here who can beat Greyfriars' bowling. I fancy he will be able to do the same for the stuff Rookwood give us."

Loder, with teeth set, tramped off the field. Lancaster's display being over, and their fag master gone, Harry Wharton & Co. cleared off, to spend the remainder of the half-holiday in their own way.

"I fancied that man Lancaster was a

cricketer," Harry Wharton remarked, "but he turns out to be a jolly old prize-packet!"

"Did you see Loder's face?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's get the bikes out before some other tick wants Inky to bowl to him," said Nugent. And the Famous Five wheeled out their machines to ride over to Highcliffe and call on their old friends, Courtenay and the Caterpillar.

After the practice on Big Side, Wingate was grinning as he walked back to the House with Lancaster and Gwyne. He was quite unconscious of a scowling face watching him from the window of a Sixth Form study. He had forgotten Loder's existence.

He was reminded of it a little later, when he was in his study, and Loder threw open the door without knocking and tramped in.

Wingate was at the table, with a paper before him and a pencil in his hand. He looked up at Loder.

His face clouded a little. Loder's look showed that there was unpleasantness coming. Wingate disliked hurting any man's feelings, but nobody's personal feelings counted in cricket matters. A fellow who was dropped to make room for a better man was expected to take it like a sportsman, even if he could not see it. Loder evidently foresaw

what was coming, and was not going to take it anything like a sportsman.

"You seem rather taken with that new man," was Loder's first remark.

"As a cricketer, yes, rather!" assented Wingate.

"He can bat," said Loder grudgingly. "Rather flashy to my mind."

"Not to mine!" said Wingate.

"Well, I'd like to know where I stand," said Loder abruptly. "I'm down to play in the Rookwood game."

"I'm afraid that's washed out, Loder. I've been going over the list," said the Greyfriars captain. "Somebody will have to go."

"You mean that you're playing a man who hasn't been a week at Greyfriars?"

"I don't care whether he's been only five minutes at Greyfriars. I know I'm not idiot enough to pass over a man who's good enough to play for his county," said Wingate sharply.

"Of course I'm playing him!"

"If you want to make room for a pushing outsider," said Loder bitterly, "I don't see why you should jump on me. There's Fifth Form men in the team—"

"I left Greene out for you, though he didn't come to my study and call you a pushing outsider," said Wingate sarcastically. "The other Fifth Form men are too good to drop."

"That ass Potter—"

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"Potter plays a good game."

"Better than mine?" snarled Loder.

"I think so, or his name would go instead of yours."

"Of course, what you think is the last word in wisdom!" sneered Loder.

"Probably not," said Wingate good-humouredly. "But so long as I captain the games I shall follow my own judgment."

"To cut it short, you're giving Lancaster my place in the eleven?"

"I'm putting up Lancaster to play, and leaving you out to make room. The fact is, Loder, I've been very doubtful about you. You slack a lot, as I've told you, and a man can't play for Greyfriars if he's not willing to put his beef into it. You've had your chance and thrown it away. Lancaster's bound to play. I'd rather stand out myself than leave him out. But you'd have Potter's place if you tried hard enough. You can't play for school with your hands in your pockets and a cigarette in your mouth."

Loder gritted his teeth.

"No need to beat about the bush," he snapped. "You're chucking me for that new man who comes from goodness knows where—an adventurer who may be a rotten thief for anything you know to the contrary!"

Wingate rose to his feet. His eyes glinted at Loder.

"There are two ways of leaving a study, Loder," he said. "You can go on your feet or on your neck. Take your choice, but be quick about it."

"I can tell you that that fellow—"

"Not another word! Clear!"

"I tell you—"

Loder had no time to say more. Wingate's hands dropped on his shoulders, and he was twirled out of the study. He clenched his fists, his eyes blazing at the captain of Greyfriars.

"Better not!" said Wingate quietly but grimly.

And Loder, enraged as he was, realised that he had better not. He dropped his hands and tramped away up the passage. The door of the captain's study slammed.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Eggs for Coker!

"BUT—" said Potter.

"Don't jaw, Potter!"

"But—" objected Greene.

"Don't jaw, Greene!"

Potter and Greene, reduced to silence, looked at the great Horace rather as if they would have liked to eat him.

Having reduced them to a proper state of submission, Coker proceeded. Coker was standing under the tree outside the school shop at Greyfriars. His eyes were on the doorway.

"That cheeky young rascal Wharton has just gone into the tuckshop," said Coker. "I'm catching him as he comes out."

"You'll have the whole mob of them on your neck," said Potter wearily. "For goodness' sake, Coker, do chuck up ragging with fags!"

"Don't be a silly ass, Potter! You know what those young sweeps did the first night of term."

Potter and Greene grinned involuntarily. They remembered the wild howls that had emanated from the study while Coker was striving to get loose after the merry Removites had left him. That outrage on the dignity of the Fifth had never been avenged. But Coker evidently had not forgotten.

"I was thinking," said Coker, "of going up to the Remove passage and

thrashing the lot of them. On the whole, however, I've decided to whop young Wharton, as the ringleader."

Perhaps Coker did not realise why he had decided not to deal with the Famous Five in bulk, as it were. There were good reasons for that decision, as Potter and Greene knew, if Coker did not.

"Scrapping with a lot of fags," continued Coker, "is undignified. But I can hardly let a Remove fag cheek me and get away with it. Don't jaw! Keep your eyes open, and bag that young tick as he comes out. Put him over that bench, and hold him while I give him six. That's what I've got this stick for."

"What about tea?" asked Greene.

"We'll have tea afterwards."

Probably it was only the question of tea that prevented Potter and Greene from deserting their great leader on the spot. Coker was going to stand the tea.

"But—" murmured Potter.

"I said don't jaw!" remarked Coker.

Potter resisted his intense yearning to bang Coker's head on the trunk of the elm.

The three Fifth Form men waited. If Coker of the Fifth was bent on playing the giddy ox, his comrades had to give him his head, like an unruly horse, as usual.

Harry Wharton, in the tuckshop, was quite unconscious of danger. Amazing as it would have seemed to Horace Coker, the captain of the Remove had quite forgotten his existence. Coker did not loom so large in the eyes of others as in his own. Wharton had other matters to think of. After considerable cogitation and debate, the chums of the Remove had decided to ask Lancaster, of the Sixth, to tea in Study No. 1. Now that the new man had been a week at Greyfriars they felt that they could take that friendly step without an appearance of "butting in." The invitation had been duly conveyed to Lancaster, and graciously accepted.

Hence Wharton's presence in the school shop at this moment. Supplies on a rather unusual scale were required for so distinguished a visitor—a man who had been picked out for the First Eleven in his first week at the school. Wharton was doing the shopping, supplies of cash having been pooled for the purpose; while the other members of the Co. were putting Study No. 1 into a newly-swept and garnished state.

Wharton came out of the school shop with a large parcel under either arm. He started for the House, without even noticing Coker & Co. till they bore down on him.

"Bag him!" snapped Coker.

"Here, I say, hands off, you dummies!" exclaimed Wharton. "Don't make me drop these things, you fat-heads!"

"Put him over the bench!" said Coker, unheeding.

Potter and Greene had collared Wharton. With a parcel under each arm the captain of the Remove was not in a condition to put up an effectual resistance. There were things in the parcels that would have been seriously damaged by dropping—such as eggs and pots of jam. Wharton held on to his parcels, and roared as he was jerked towards the bench.

Coker swished his stick and grinned. Coker rather fancied himself in the role of a prefect handing out "six."

"You silly chumps!" yelled Wharton.

"Let go! My hat! Rescue, Remove!"

But as it happened there were no Remove men at hand. Wharton was alone in the hands of the Amalekites.

He struggled as he was bent over the bench. There was an ominous crack from one of the parcels. The eggs were going.

"You rotters!" yelled Wharton.

"That's enough from you!" said Coker, swishing the stick. "I suppose you know why I'm going to give you six, Wharton."

"Yes, you silly ass—because you're a born fool and a howling dummy!"

"Still! cheeky!" said Coker grimly. "Well, I'll give you something to cure all that!"

Swish! Whack! There was a yell from the captain of the Remove as the first of the six was administered.

"Hallo! What's this game?"

Lancaster of the Sixth came strolling on the scene. Wharton twisted round at the sound of his voice.

"Lancaster! Lend me a hand!" he gasped.

"Don't butt in here, Lancaster!" said Coker warningly. "I whopped you in the hols for butting in when I was thrashing this cheeky cub. Better bear that in mind."

Lancaster laughed.

"But what's the trouble?" he asked pacifically.

"Mind your own bizney."

"Don't use that stick again, Coker," said the Sixth Form man quietly, as the Fifth-Former swung up his arm.

"Oh, shut it!" said Coker.

He put extra beef into the swipe, just to show Lancaster of the Sixth that he, Horace Coker, the ornament of the Fifth Form, had no use for Sixth Form swank, and was going to pass the Sixth by like the idle wind which he regarded not.

But that beefy swipe did not land. Lancaster made a quick stride forward and grasped Coker's descending arm. The next moment the stick was torn away and sent whirling to a distance.

"Why, my—my—my hat!" gasped Coker.

"Now, let that kid go, please!" said Lancaster, to Potter and Greene.

"Pleased!" yawned Potter; and Wharton was released at once.

Potter and Greene strolled away, leaving Coker to deal with the Sixth Form man. They had no intention whatever of rowing with the Sixth, because Horace Coker chose to play the giddy ox.

"Thanks!" gasped Wharton.

"Not at all," said Lancaster, smiling. "Cut!"

Harry Wharton's parcels had suffered a little. One of them had burst, and from the gap the yolks of several eggs dripped out. He jammed the parcel together rather ruefully and cut.

Coker made a jump after him. Lancaster stepped in the way. He was smiling and good-humoured; but evidently he intended to intervene between the junior and Coker's heavy hand, as he had done once before. Coker gave him a concentrated glare.

"I've licked you once, Lancaster! You remember that?"

"I've got a fearfully bad memory if you did!" smiled Lancaster. "But don't let's row, Coker! Let the kid off, old bean!"

"Do you want me to lick you again, like I did before!" bawled Coker.

"Come into the tuckshop, and have a ginger-pop instead!" suggested Lancaster.

The soft answer is said to turn away wrath. But Horace Coker's wrath was not to be turned away.

"I was sorry I licked you that time!" bawled Coker. "You did me a good turn afterwards—at least, you thought you did! You've put on roll since you came here—Sixth Form side—and have I walloped you? I haven't! Well, I warn you that if you butt in now I shall whop you—hard. Now get out!"

"I think I'll risk it," said Lancaster negligently.

Coker rushed to the attack. Looking

at Coker now, no one would have guessed that he was the fellow who had been anticipating Lancaster's arrival at Greyfriars, and had made great preparations for that arrival. Horace Coker's friendship was a rather uncertain quantity. Certainly it could not stand the strain of Sixth Form "roll."

He rushed at Lancaster with the intention of mopping up the earth with him. Probably—very probably—the mopping-up would have turned out in reverse order. But, as it happened, Coker did not reach Lancaster with his rush. Wharton weighed in at that moment.

The burst parcel had proved unmanageable, and Wharton had stopped to repack the eggs. There was an egg in his hand as Coker leaped at the new senior. It whizzed from his hand with an aim as deadly as Hurree Singh's with a cricket ball. There was a smash as it broke on Coker's prominent nose, and spread all over his rugged features.

"Ooooooch!" spluttered Coker.

He staggered back.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lancaster, as Coker clutched wildly at streaming eggs.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came like an echo from Potter and Greene, at a distance.

Crash! Smash!

Having started with the eggs, Wharton kept on with the eggs. The range was short and the aim was good. An egg smashed on Coker's chin and bedewed his manly chest with streaming yolk. Another broke in his eye, and another in his ear. Another and another and another smashed and crashed on various parts of Coker. Coker streamed eggs—ha breathed eggs—he lived and moved and had his being in eggs. He was of eggs, egg!

Lancaster, chuckling, walked away. Potter and Greene, keeping their distance, almost wept. Coker spluttered and roared. He gouged yolk from his eyes and glared round for his enemy. He rushed at Wharton, and was met by more eggs. Eggs smothered him and plastered him.

Having exhausted the eggs, Wharton grabbed up his parcels and bolted for the House. He left Coker almost swimming in eggs. Fellows gathered round Coker, yelling with laughter. But they did not come too near—Coker was too eggy to touch. When it dawned upon Coker, at last, that what he needed most was a wash, and he started for the House, he left an eggy trail behind him as he went, and a crowd of fellows bubbling with merriment. Coker, for his part, couldn't see anything whatever to laugh at. But Coker was the only fellow who couldn't.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Scene in Study No. 1.

"SIT down!"

"Here's the best chair!"

"All ready!"

"The readyfulness is terrific, my esteemed Lancaster."

Lancaster, of the Sixth, smiled as he came into Study No. 1 in the Remove. The Famous Five were all there, with their best manners on, beaming with hospitality. There was a handsome spread on the study table. One intended item was missing—poached eggs. Coker had had the eggs. But there were plenty of other good things—the chums of the Remove were doing this thing well.

"Awfully good of you to ask me," said the Sixth Form man, as he accepted the best chair and sat down at the table.

There was a rather whimsical good-humour in Lancaster's smile. Possibly it was his game to make and keep friends but at the same time there was

no doubt that he liked the cheery chums of the Remove. And certainly they liked him and admired him immensely.

"It's jolly good of you to come!" said Wharton. "You didn't think it a cheek asking you?"

"Not at all!"

"It is a terrific and honorific pleasure to behold your absurd countenance in the Remove passage," declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"These sandwiches are rather good, Lancaster."

"Thanks; I'll try them."

"We were jolly glad to see your name up for the Rookwood match," said Bob Cherry.

"So was I," said Lancaster, smiling. "Wingate has been very kind."

"Oh, old Wingate knows a cricketer when he sees one," said Bob. "I hear that he's been jumping for joy over his find. I can tell you that there aren't a lot of men here, even in the Sixth, who can play with Inky's bowling as you did."

"The playfulness was terrific," agreed Hurree Singh. "It was necessary for me to sing small with my diminished head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Inky learned his English in Bhanipur, you know," chuckled Bob, "and he's never got over it."

"My worthy and idiotic Bob—"

"We've got three kinds of jam," said Johnny Bull, in a careless sort of way, as if three kinds of jam were as common as blackberries in junior studies. "Which kind do you prefer, Lancaster? Try raspberry?"

"I say, you fellows!"

A fat face looked in at the doorway.

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, you fellows! I didn't know you had Lancaster to tea. I never heard you talking about it, you know. But as he's here, I don't mind if I join you. You can put that cushion down, Bob Cherry! I hope you're going to remember your manners when you've got a Sixth Form man to tea."

"Do you mind if that fat snail crawls in, Lancaster?" asked Harry.

"Not in the least," said Lancaster, laughing. "In fact, I'm rather pleased to meet all the party that I tea'd with at Wharton Lodge that time."

Billy Bunter beamed.

"I told you fellows that Lancaster was a splendid chap, didn't I?" he said. "Not the man to forget an old friend. I say, you fellows, somebody's been egging Coker! I saw him come in smothered with eggs. He, he he! I say, Lancaster, old chap—"

"Don't talk, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry.

"I suppose I can call an old friend old chap if I like, Cherry! I say, Lancaster, old chap—"

"Shall we kick him out, Lancaster?"

"Not on my account," said the Sixth Form man.

Bunter stuffed his capacious mouth to capacity and proceeded.

"I say, Lancaster, Loder is awfully wild. They've been chipping him about being chucked out of the team."

Lancaster did not seem to hear. Harry Wharton & Co. glared at Bunter. But Bunter did not mind glares.

"If you'll take my advice, Lancaster—" he went on. "Yaroooh! Ooooh! What beast kicked me? Yooooop!"

"Try the cake, Lancaster!"

Billy Bunter rubbed a fat leg, where a rather hefty kick had landed under the table. Then he devoted his powerful jaws to the rapid disposal of the foodstuffs, and there was a lull in his

conversation. He realised that another kick might be coming.

Bunter being silent—save for the sound of guzzling that was always heard when Bunter was packing away the foodstuffs—tea proceeded cheerily in Study No. 1. The Famous Five treated their distinguished guest with the respect due to a Sixth-Former and a First Eleven man; and Lancaster chatted with them pleasantly. There was a step at the door and Vernon-Smith looked in, with a grin on his face.

"You men expecting a visitor?" he asked.

"We've got one!" answered Wharton.

"I fancy you've got another coming."

"Who, then?"

"Loder of the Sixth! He's got his ashplant under his arm!" added the Bouncer casually; and he walked on up the passage.

The Famous Five exchanged glances. It was distinctly disagreeable if the bully of the Sixth was coming to the study to make himself unpleasant while their distinguished visitor was there.

As a matter of fact, the chums of the Remove had rather expected trouble with Loder, ever since that games practice on Big Side. Loder was not the man to forgive Hurree Singh for having knocked his wicket to the wide with all the Sixth looking on; or the other fellows for their unconcealed enjoyment of the spectacle. Loder, of course, could not "whop" fellows for such reasons as that; but he was the kind of prefect to find a reason for whopping when he wanted to whop. And it was like Loder to butt in at a special time when he was not wanted.

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath. He had little doubt that Loder was coming simply because Lancaster was there. His feud with Lancaster was pretty well-known, since his place in the First Eleven had been given to the new man. It was just like Loder to seize the chance of "throwing his weight about," with his rival present and unable to intervene.

"The rotter!" breathed Bob Cherry.

Loder of the Sixth appeared in the doorway. He had his ashplant with him, as the Bouncer had stated. And he had a grim expression on his face and a glitter in his eyes.

He did not look at Lancaster. His eye singled out Wharton as he strode into the study.

The juniors rose to their feet, eyeing the bully of the Sixth. Their faces were grim, too.

"Want anything, Loder?" asked Wharton quietly.

"I want you!" said Loder. "I hear that you've been chucking eggs about in the quad and plastering a senior with them!"

"Coker hasn't complained about that," said Harry. "Coker's an ass, but he's not the man to go squealing to a prefect."

"Do you deny it?"

"Not in the least! Coker asked for it, and he got it," answered the captain of the Remove, "and unless Coker lays a complaint, I don't see what you want to butt in for, Loder!"

Loder slid the cane down into his hand.

"I haven't come here to listen to your back-chat, Wharton! Come here, and bend over that chair!"

Up to this moment Lancaster had not stirred or spoken. Now he rose to his feet, with a glint in his eyes. Lancaster was a Sixth Form man; but Loder was

(Continued on page 28.)

THE ISLAND OF SLAVES!

BY STANTON HOPE.



Skulls and bones decorated the great catacombs, and negro slaves huddled together were crammed between the roughly stowed stacks of ammunition-boxes.

Guy waited, his heart beating fast. Somewhere, not far below him, was the armed Arab, and it might be that the Arab had taken alarm. He crouched low, half-expecting that the darkness would be cut with the flash and stunning report of a rifle. His relief was tremendous when he heard the splash of water, which told him that the Arab had started to enter the pool. The naval officer's eager eyes dimly discerned the figure of his quarry silhouetted against some grey spume bubbling on the surface of the pool.

His great chance had come! From that crouching position on the steps he launched himself downward like a

Guy's Great Chance!

SLOWLY the heavy stone door opened outward. A pale beam of light extended into the crevice, a light that grew and became broken by moving shadows. The huge side of rock widened slightly and Guy was enabled to see beyond.

The mystery of the slaves' disappearance was explained. Beyond that door were great catacombs—underground cemeteries—where skulls and bones of hundreds of bygone generations of islanders were stowed after removal from the ordinary cemeteries of Islam. These grim relics decorated the walls, and the floor was crammed with huddled negro slaves, between roughly stowed stacks of ammunition-boxes. Here and there, by the light of horn lanterns, were armed Arabs, with whips. Two or three were perched on ammunition-boxes, guarding that valuable "black ivory" which had been shipped from Africa and had been transported to the Persian Gulf.

Slowly the door opened. The young officer stood back against the rock behind it, for he dared not stand anywhere in that narrow passage of rock where the light might fall on him. There was something curiously silent and sinister in the way it moved. It was as though worked by compressed air, and for one nerve-racking moment Guy thought he was going to be crushed between it and the rocky wall. The

thing actually pressed against his body, and then stopped. Its only momentum had been the pressure of bodies behind it.

A burly Arab in brown robe and a head-dress festooned with twisted camel-hair, stepped out from the catacombs of Khoof into the passageway. Grasped in his right hand was a native rifle, with a long butt of silver filigree-work.

Gruff voices, speaking very quietly, sounded from the other side of the door and the massive stone portal slowly swung back into its place and shut with eerie quietness. Standing there in the darkness by the wall, Guy felt that death had passed perilously near.

The shuffling footsteps of the Arab were receding through the rocky tunnel.

Probably, Guy reckoned, the man was a sentry, going to relieve the other Arab, whose accident had been unknown to those in the fetid underground place. The fellow was finding his way through the pitch darkness with the ease of a cat.

Guy quickly took off his sodden boots, knotted the laces together, and hung them round his neck. Then he groped his way swiftly and noiselessly after the man ahead.

The dull boom of the invisible seawater pool struck in his ears. He descended the steps leading to it cautiously, without hearing any splashing which would indicate that the Arab had begun to wade across.

panther, and before the astounded Arab could do more than gasp, struck him with the full weight of his body in the back, shooting the man face foremost into the deepening tidal pool.

Stumbling to one side, Guy was submerged completely in the sea and scrambled hastily to his feet. The Arab's rifle had fallen from his hand into the water, but he staggered up, and, spluttering like a wild cat, wrenched the curved knife from his belt. Guy's left hand fastened on the front of his burnous, or robe, and his right came round in a sizzling hook.

Crack!

The blow was like the kick of a mule's hind leg, and the Arab, his jaw broken, sprawled sideways in the pool.

Stumbling and slipping about in the water, Guy managed to grasp the fellow, and by a great struggle hauled him out of the pool on to the far side. By another great struggle he got the unconscious man on to a higher plane of the rocky slope and staggered on. He found that the rising tide was beginning to reach the other Arab who had been injured by a fall, and he dragged him also to a higher part of the tunnel that led through the cliffs. Then he splashed his way through the surf on the ledge, crossed the rocks, and returned to the right flank of his waiting bluejackets.

A lemon haze was on the eastern horizon, the first sign of the breaking

dawn. Ordering three bluejackets to accompany him, Guy hurriedly returned to where he had left the two Arabs, and between them they got the men out of the cranny and gave them first aid among the rocks.

Having done this, Guy ordered them to be gagged and bound. He had not much fear that any search would be made for the sentries. The tide was running in fast, and it would be as much as a man's life was worth to attempt to pass that swirling pool when it was much deeper.

He told the chief petty officer and Chotajee of his discovery.

"Ay, this should put 'paid' to the account of Ras Dhin and Sheikh Haji," he said. "Slaves and ammunition are still here on the island. I wondered what had become of 'em, and the secret lies deep in the island itself."

"It would be suitable stratagems," Chotajee remarked, "if gallant boys in blue, armed to the teeth, waitfully rested near reported apertures in cliffs. With permission, sahib, I will relinquish happy chance of death or glory in attack and help with such purposeful stratagem."

"Thanks," Guy smiled. "I'll see that a group of bluejackets are posted there. I shall want you close by my side. After the scrap—if we survive—there may be a batch of prisoners to be questioned. By Jove, no wonder I was puzzled about the vanishing of those slaves! That pool where I slammed one of those Arabs is impassable, except when the water is pretty low. No doubt when I first saw the slaves on the ledge of rock those Arab swabs with them were waiting for the pool to be easily passable. From seaward no one could possibly guess that there was any sort of tunnel leading to great catacombs deep within those cliffs."

No Arab appeared near the coast, and whatever alarm might have been felt in the village during the night on account of the gunfire at sea, had evidently died down. Guy figured it that Sheikh Haji and Ras Dhin considered that even if any naval patrol vessel came to Khoof there was no likelihood of any slaves or ammunition being discovered. Certainly, they had not the least suspicion that already a landing-party of bluejackets was spread in open order along the cliffs to the north, and that a small object, like a floating spar, was really a submarine's periscope.

The sun swung up above the eastern sea like a burnished tray of new brass. Soon the tropic heat began to shimmer over the rocks, and Guy and his men chafed at the waiting. One of the men who had been posted among the scrub at the top of the cliffs made a signal, and a rumble of satisfaction passed among the bluejackets of the landing-party. The Falcon had been sighted and was coming up fast to the island!

Haji's Last Stand!

"NOW for it!" said Guy with relish. "The good old Falcon is putting her party ashore!"

Another hour had passed and he had advanced his men to the scrub at the top of the cliffs, where they were waiting the result of the landing on the other side of the island.

"Perchance," Chotajee mumbled hopefully, "debased Arabs will prove chicken-hearts. Such battlings are before-times anticipated, may be unneeded. Let us take motto from esteemed British poet, 'As we are strong, let us have mercifulness.'"

Peering through the scrub by the aid of his powerful glasses, Guy was able

to watch the excitement of the Arabs in the village in the middle of the island. Especially was there commotion round that large mud-walled dwelling which was called the palace of the sheikh. Furthermore, he could see the blue-jackets and marines stumble ashore from the Falcon's boats, and the first party march inland, until they were swallowed up among the clump of date-palms near to where he and Tony had set fire to the stack of ammunition many days before.

What happened after that he learned later. Commander Saunders, an officer of the Falcon, met a party of Arabs and demanded the surrender of Sheikh Haji, Ras Dhin, and the whole village. Then suddenly a rifle-shot—probably from a roof in the village—rang out. The officer dropped, with a bullet through the heart—and then the battle flamed out!

Whoever had fired that rifle-shot had put the spark to the gunpowder. The British bluejackets and marines, already inflamed against the slavers, charged furiously after the Arab party, who rushed for the nearest cover.

Armed Arabs in the village itself began to blaze away from all sorts of vantage points. Bluejackets dropped in their tracks, but their cheering comrades rushed on, the tropic sun flashing from their bayonets.

Guy and his men, waiting like hounds straining on the leash, could hear the rumbling cheers of the British tars sweeping toward the village. The Falcon had all her guns trained on the island, but was holding her fire on account of the Arab women and children in the village.

The island echoed and re-echoed with rifle and machine-gun fire, and thousands of sea-birds went wheeling and screaming away from the coasts.

Even Chotajee, who was capable of plenty of courage in an emergency, began to get excited and impatient.

"Wah! Come on, cowardly bad-mashes!" he breathed, addressing the Arabs. "In words of illustrious Washington Sahib, 'Now shall misfortune slaves in chains receive abolishment!' Now, indeed, shall debased traders in such receive justful dues! Hip, hip-poo—Yarooogh!"

A rifle-bullet—an "over"—had spurted the dust not six inches from his head, and he dived headlong behind the biggest boulder.

"Stand by!" Guy ordered. "Safety-catches down! Hero they come!"

Heavy fighting was going on in the village, but a large party of Arabs broke cover through to the date-palms which surrounded one of the wells and headed toward the coast. They were quickly followed by many others.

Their intention was plain enough.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS RETOLD.

LIEUTENANT GUY EASTON, SUB-LIEUTENANT DUNN, and CHOTAJEE, a Bengali interpreter, of H.M.S. Falcon, are cut adrift during a storm in the Red Sea, and cast ashore on the Island of Khoof. Gathering information that slave-trading is being carried on between Sheikh Haji of Khoof and Ras Dhin, a giant Abyssinian, the trio, disguised as Arabs, board a mahalla bound for Aden. The mahalla is attacked by a villainous crew of cut-throats in the pay of the slave-traders, but Guy proves equal to the occasion and the enemy are made prisoners and handed over to Captain Knox of the Falcon. Subsequently Guy is put in charge of the Vixen, the fastest submarine in commission. Anxious to bag Ras Dhin and Sheikh Haji and to break up the organization of slave-traders, Guy and a party of armed seamen land on Khoof shortly before dawn. Guy is cautiously advancing towards a narrow crack in the cliff-side when, to his amazement, a stone on his right suddenly opens outwards. Switching off his torch the young lieutenant crouches back against the rocks.

(Now read on.)

There was much high ground affording good cover, and if they occupied it they could make a deadly stand against the whole naval landing-party from the Falcon.

"Hold your fire, my men!" Guy commanded. "We are going to give those swabs the biggest surprise-packet of their lives!"

Breathlessly the party from the Vixen waited.

The cunning Arabs frantically sought positions among the rocks and scrub with a commanding view of the ground between themselves and the village. A frontal attack would prove a very costly affair to the British, even if they were able to advance in the face of the Arab fire. Some of the cut-throats were placing modern machine-guns—the first Guy had seen in their possession.

Eagerly Guy watched the Arabs settling themselves. Then his voice rang out, sharp as the crack of a whip:

"Fire!"

Crash!

The first volley of the Vixen's party came as a thunderbolt to the Arabs. Several dropped motionless into the grass; others leaped up and turned about in amazement. With cover from the Falcon's party it had never occurred to them that another landing-party might be in their rear, and they were now caught between two fires!

Crackety-crack! Crack! Crack!

As fast as Guy and his bluejackets could load and fire they sent the leaden stream of death among the slavers!

Signals were flashing from the roof of the sheikh's palace. A heliograph which had been brought ashore from the gunboat had been installed there, and was flashing a message that the main body of Arabs had left the village and had been settling half a mile between it and the northern coast.

The Falcon picked up the message, and so did the Vixen, which had risen to the surface.

Crash, crash, crash!

In their turn the guns carried on the deadly work. Shrapnel burst over the Arab lines in great white puffs of smoke, while a leaden hail of pellets mowed down the slavers, who vainly sought for shelter against this storm of destruction.

That four-inch gun aboard the Vixen was putting in its full share of work, and Guy could well imagine how Tony was enjoying himself.

The green flag of Islam carried by one group of Arabs went trailing into the dust. The black-bearded leader ripped a large strip from his white robe, hastily knotted it on the end of a modern Mauser rifle, and waved it frantically.

"Cease fire!" Guy roared.

In past dealings with the raiders the British had had cause to beware even when the white flag of truce was shown. Directly it appeared, though, the rifle and machine-gun fire ceased. The naval heliograph on the palace roof flashed the news, which, in turn, was read by the Falcon and the Vixen off opposite coasts of the island.

Cautiously Guy went forward, accompanied by Chotajee and several of his men. Was this surrender genuine, or was the flag a screen for some fresh treachery?

Guy looked on all sides for Haji and the yellow-eyed Abyssinian. Until they were in handcuffs and under an armed guard he was keeping his weather-eye wide open!

(Matters are coming to a head now, and sensational events happen in next Saturday's thrill-packed instalment. Don't miss it—order your MAGNET early!)

CRACKSMAN AND CRICKETER!

(Continued from page 25.)

a prefect; answerable only to the head-prefect and to the headmaster.

"Excuse me, Loder," drawled Lancaster. "It happens that I was on the scene, and I'm able to explain that Coker started the trouble with this kid."

Loder seemed deaf.

He pointed to the chair with the cane.

"Bend over, Wharton!" he rapped.

Lancaster lounged forward.

"I spoke to you, Loder," he said.

"Did you?" said Loder, forced to take cognizance of his rival's presence at last. "Well, don't! The less I hear from you, the better. Wharton—"

"I'm explaining that this junior was not to blame in the row with the Fifth Form man, Loder. I think it's usual here for a Sixth Form man's word to be taken by a prefect."

"Not unless the prefect chooses," said Loder venomously, "and I don't know that your word's worth a great deal, either. Keep out of this."

"You don't care to accept my word?"

"I don't choose to hear a word from you. Mind your own business," said Loder savagely. "Wharton—"

The juniors stood breathless.

"In that case," Lancaster went on, in the same drawling tone, "the matter will go before the head prefect. I'm ready to come with you and Wharton to Wingate's study."

Loder set his lips.

"I've told you to mind your own business!" he snarled.

"You mean that you've come here to whop this junior, with or without reason," said Lancaster scornfully. "Well, I shall take it upon me to report the matter to the head-prefect; and in the meantime, you will let Wharton alone."

"You—you dare to interfere with a prefect?" panted Loder. His eyes burned at the handsome, contemptuous face before him.

"In the circumstances, yes."

"Stand aside!" roared Loder.

Lancaster did not move.

"I've come here to whop Wharton! I'm going to thrash him!" roared Loder.

"You're not!"

"Who'll stop me?" almost shrieked Loder.

"Little me!"

"If you dare lay a finger on a prefect—"

"Oh, cut it out! I'm not a Second Form kid to be scared," said Lancaster.

"Prefect or not, you're not touching that fag. You'd better leave this study."

Loder grasped his ashplant almost convulsively. He made a stride forward to pass round Lancaster and reach Wharton. Lancaster stepped swiftly into his way. Loder, with a gasp of rage, struck at him.

What happened next was almost too swift for the eye to follow. Lancaster stopped the fierce blow in time, his grasp closed on Loder; for an instant there was a struggle, and then there was a crash in the Remove passage.

It was Loder of the Sixth who sprawled there, spluttering and gasping.

There was a yell in the Remove passage as fellows crowded out of their studies.

Loder sat up dizzily.

He seemed hardly able to realise for some moments what had happened to him. His dizzy glance went to the crowd of staring faces in the passage. Then he staggered up.

"You—you"—Loder's voice came thickly—"you cur! You're banking on Wingate standing by you—you hound!"

"Better language, please," said Lancaster quietly.

"Better language—to you!" hissed Loder. "To you! Outsider, pushing rotter, thrusting scoundrel—crook!"

Lancaster started. For a second the calmness of his face vanished like a veil withdrawn. Loder, reading the effect of his words, flung out the taunt again with a ring of conviction in his voice now.

"Crook! That's what you are—crook! I knew it before, though I wasn't sure. Now I'm sure—crook!"

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at Lancaster. Only for a second was his face a betrayal. The next, it was cool,

calm, contemptuous again. He laughed, and his laugh rang clearly.

"Crook!" he repeated. "That's rather good, Loder! But I don't like fancy names like that!" He made a stride forward and grasped Loder of the Sixth by the arm. "Come with me to the Head and repeat what you've called me."

"Let go!" panted Loder.

Lancaster's grip tightened.

"You can't call a man names like that," he said lightly. "You'll come with me to the Head here and now, or you'll apologise."

There was a long, long pause, long enough for Loder to realise that he dared not go to the Head.

"I apologise!"

Loder's voice was a husky whisper. But all the Remove fellows heard it. Lancaster's hand dropped from his arm.

Gerald Loder went unsteadily down the passage to the stairs. Lancaster dropped into his seat at the study table in No. 1 again.

"I think I'll try the cake!" he remarked pleasantly.

The tension was relieved. Tea went on cheerily in Study No. 1 in the Remove, and Lancaster of the Sixth, to judge by looks at least, was as cheery and light-hearted as any of the juniors.

Loder, in his study in the Sixth, was moving about, unresting, a good deal like a caged tiger.

"Crook!" he muttered again and again. "Old Danby knew it, Ferrers Locke knew it, I half-knew it and I'm certain now! Crook—that's what he is, a crook—and I'll prove it somehow! I'll prove to all Greyfriars that he's the crook, I know him to be!"

He gritted his teeth over the words. If Loder could contrive it, there were breakers ahead for the Sixth-Former who had so strange a secret.

THE END.

(Now look out for the next story in this topping series: "FOES OF THE SIXTH!" Chums, you'll vote it one of the finest yarns Frank Richards has ever written. A word of advice—order your copy EARLY!)

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The Magnificent Saturday

No. 43.

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

May 2nd, 1931.

Edited by HARRY WHEATON, F.G.S.

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WHAT ABOUT THESE?

Claude Hoskins, the champion musical genius of the Shell and the world's record-holder in piano-walloping, has been composing music lately, as a change from merely playing it.

The only drawback, he tells us, is a shortage of lyrics for sentimental ballads and songs of the more serious type. Hoskins can do the music all right, but he can't get anyone to supply the words! Since interviewing Hoskins, we have gone to some trouble to find out if there are any spare lyrics knocking about in the Remové. Our search has been remarkably successful and several promising sets of lines have been unearthed. We have therefore much pleasure in presenting Hoskins with the following: free, gratis and for nothing, except that the respective authors want a three-fourths' share in the profits!



THE SCHOOLBOY'S LAMENT.
By H. VENKON-SMITH.

A schoolboy sat still in his study,
O'er Latin he racked his poor brain;
His fingers were ink-stained and muddy,
As softly he sang this refrain:
Chorus: Oh, why did they make me a schoolboy,
At Latin and Greek for to grind?
I'd much rather be
A sailor at sea.

Or a soldier's job I wouldn't mind;
"Don't fail," said my pa when we parted,
"To turn out like your scholarly dad."
His poor, little, sorrowing lad!

What could be more touching and sentimental than that, Claude? If you want anything better, then you're jolly hard to please! Now for the next one, in a slightly different metre.



GREYFRIARS FROM THE AIR

The Old School from a New Angle.

"Here you are, sir. You are now looking down on Greyfriars."
"Dear me; how interesting! Can't you stop the plane for a moment while I take a snap? Thanks! Now, if you'll fly down a bit lower."
"That do, sir?"
"Splendid! I can see everything quite clearly now—the quad, the Tower, the Head's house, the Form-rooms—by the way, what's that pigsty I see through those windows?"
"Oh, that's not a pigsty, sir—it's the Second Form-room!"
"Why, of course! How strange it looks

rolling along on the ground near the tuckshop?"
"That's Bunter, sir!"
"Ah, here are the playing-fields! Look at the cricketer who has just been bowled out!"
"It's not a cricketer, sir—it's only Coker!"
"How stupid I am! Hark! Is there a slaughter house about? I feel sure I can hear the squeal of a dying sheep!"
"Take no notice, sir; if you'll look down there, you'll see it's only Tempy, practising singing!"
"So it is! Everything looks so different

SOMEWHERE A VOICE IS BAWLING.

By DICK PENFOLD.



Dual and the shadows falling,
Somewhere a voice is bawling:
"Who's pinched our tea?"
"Thick-renders softly creeping,
Upstairs again,
Follows they robbed are weeping,
Weeping in vain!"

Great stuff, eh, what? And don't forget, Claude dear, there are plenty more where that came from! Our third and last example we feel a little dubious about publishing, on moral grounds. It's by that shady bouncer, Skinner, and you all know what Skinner's like! Here goes, anyway!

THE PERFECT SAILOR.

By H. SKINNER.

I never haunt a pub, boys,
I never smoke a lag,
I never have a sub, boys,
To wager on a nag;
I don't play dominoes,
I'm a dud at ha'penny nsp,
I'm just, as everybody knows,
A PERFECT SAILOR!

And there, perhaps, for the moment, we had better leave the engrossing subject of lyrics for Hoskins!

YOU CAN'T BE A SAILOR—

But you can have all the thrills and dangers of a sailor's life by hiring one of our leaky rowing-boats! Free insurance policy against drowning presented to all customers! For a real jolly afternoon, roll up to Higgins' Boat House!

WHAT IS AN APIARIST?

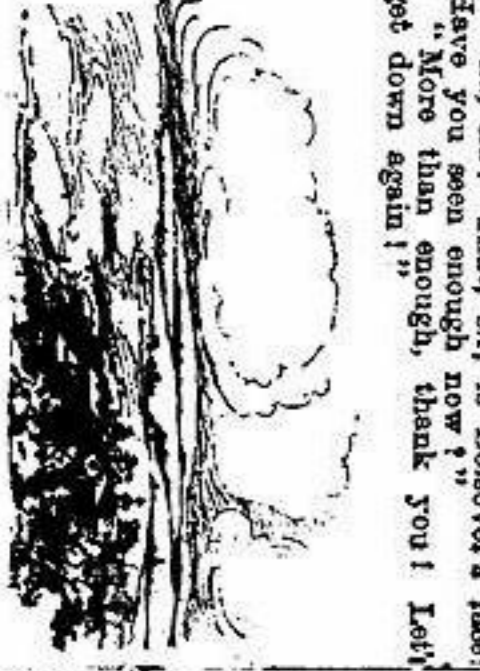
"STINGING" REMARKS AT A BEE-KEEPERS' MEETING

"ATTENTION, APIARISTS!
Aparists and Others Interested are invited to roll up to their thousands to Dick Rake's Great Aparist Meeting in the Rag tonight at 8. Special engagement of P. Bolsover, Esq., to speak on "Why Not Become An Aparist?" **"DON'T MISS THIS TREAT!"**

The above notice drew a somewhat mystified crowd to the Rag on Monday last. Most of the fellows had only the vaguest idea as to what an aparist might be and the fact that Bolsover was speaking didn't throw much light on the problem. Bolsover being the kind of chap who rather likes addressing public meetings on any subject!

Dick Rake took the chair, and was immediately bombarded with questions from all parts of the room.
"What's an aparist?"
"What does it mean, Rake? Rake looked surprised and a little peeved.
"Mean to say you don't know?"
"Just depends," grinned Dick Cherty. "I always thought it was something they take away from you when you're operated on but—"
"Then you don't know the difference between an aparist and an appendix!" said Rake, derisively. "Well, my hat!"
And he seemed so overwhelmed by our ignorance that he forgot to tell us what an aparist really was.

noticed that pink plate lying in the quad before."
"The reason is that it's not a pink plate, sir; it's a matter of fact, it's the top of Mr. Prouth's head!"
"Then what's that hideous mask looking up at us?"
"He, ha! That, sir, is Bolsover's face! Have you seen enough now?"
"More than enough, thank you! Let's get down again!"



"Well, I'm dashed!" said Bolsover, indignantly. "Then, if an aparist isn't a blessed appendix, what the blump is he?"
"An aparist, you fathead!" snorted Rake. "Is a bee-keeper!"
"Oh!"
"It's a little hobby of mine and I wanted to boast it in the Remové."

GET YOUR HAIR CUT

But Mind You Have It Done At SQUIFF'S HAIRDRESSING SALOON

explained the chairman of the meeting. "Naturally it didn't occur to me that there'd be so many ignorant ladsheads about!"
"H'm!"
"As there are, I propose to cancel the meeting and wait till you've learned the difference between bees and blessed apes!"
said Rake, with crushing sarcasm. "Good-bye and blow the lot of you!"
And with that stinging remark, the aparist of the Remové departed, leaving the Rag fairly buzzing!

Unfortunately he made the same omission from his opening speech. He said quite a lot about aparists—that a demeriting lot they were and how they ought to be supported by the Government and why they hoped to do better this season than last, and so on. But when he set down again, we were no wiser than before.

Then Bolsover got up. "Gentlemen, chaps," and fellows!" he said. "It is my pleasure to-night to speak in support of my friend, Dick Rake. The subject of my speech, as you are aware, is Aparists."
"Hear, hear!"
"What are they? That question, gentlemen, is easily answered," said Bolsover. "An aparist, gentle- men, is a chap who makes a hobby of keeping apes—"

"What!" came a sudden yell from Rake.
"Just as a herbalist is a chap who keeps herbs," explained Bolsover. "Quite simple, you see, and I'm surprised at anybody being so ignorant as not to know it! Now, gentlemen, let's consider for a few moments the advantages of becoming what we might term an ape fancier. Look at—"

"Look at yourself!" suggested somebody, and there was a bit of an uproar for a few moments in which Dick Rake's voice could be heard yelling:
"Shooie!"
"Gentlemen!" roared Bolsover, when he had out-shouted everyone else into silence. "Once again, I put to you the question: 'Why not become an aparist?' I've already told you what an aparist is—"

"That's just what you haven't done!" howled Rake, getting his word in at last. "An aparist—"
"An aparist," said Bolsover, "is an ape-keeper. Quite!"
"But he isn't!"
"Eh?"
"That's just what he isn't! I'm hooded Rake. 'Why didn't you tell me when you offered to speak that you didn't know anything about it?"
"Well, I'm dashed!" said Bolsover, indignantly. "Then, if an aparist isn't a blessed appendix, what the blump is he?"
"An aparist, you fathead!" snorted Rake. "Is a bee-keeper!"
"Oh!"
"It's a little hobby of mine and I wanted to boast it in the Remové."

GREYFRIARS SCORES AGAIN

Eating Contest with St. Jim's DOUGHNUT CHAMP'S FINE PERFORMANCE



Greyfriars and St. Jim's have met many a time on the football field, in the cricket pitch, in the boxing ring, and over the under track. But until last week, they have never been known to fight for honours in the tuckshop!

Lord Manderover was responsible for the innovation. This popular young sporting peer put up a prize for a doughnut-and-ginger-pop-eating contest between the champion gormandisers of Greyfriars and St. Jim's, respectively. Needless to say the unusual event attracted a large crowd of St. Jim's visitors, as well as home supporters and the tuckshop was packed to suffocation half an hour before the time fixed for the opening bite.

Greyfriars was represented by W. G. Bunter, Esq., who looked in fine trim as he weighed in at 15 stone. Bagley Trimble, Esq., the St. Jim's chosen man, was a little lighter, but his gabby appearance and the nervous expression on his face gave a great deal of encouragement to his supporters.
At 3 o'clock prompt, Bolsover Major, the ref., gave the signal to commence, and Messrs. Bunter and Trimble got going. The two huge mounds which had been piled up ready for them on the counter immediately disappeared, and after that the Official Feeders were kept busy emptying out sacks of doughnuts in front of the voracious contestants, who demolished them by the score without any apparent discomfort.
There was a roar from the St. Jim's crowd as Baggy Trimble forged ahead. But the triumph of the St. Jim's man was short-lived. Through Bunter took longer to settle down, he was soon seen to possess marvellous staying-power. After the first hour, Trimble was overpowered in need of a rest, but egged on by the yells of his supporters he continued in waste in at a great

rate. Bunter had settled down to a steady pace and looked ready to go on all night if necessary. At the end of the second hour the St. Jim's man tried to shift some of his stuff on to his opponent's end of the counter. Fortunately the move was spotted in time, and the ref. sternly shifted them back again, to the accompaniment of howls from the Frats of "Foul!" "Dirty!" and "Play the game, Trimble!"

At 5.15 Bolsover announced the score as follows: BUNTER—287 Doughnuts and 15 bottles of Ginger-pop. TRIMBLE—255 Doughnuts and 11 bottles of Ginger-pop.

During the announcement Trimble's face was seen to change colour slightly, and in the next few minutes it rapidly altered from its natural pink to an erst shade of green. Without further warning the St. Jim's champion suddenly collapsed on the floor.
"Mmmmmmmmm!" was all he seemed able to say.
The ref. pulled out his watch and at once started to count out the fallen doughnut-eater.
"One—two—three—four—five—"
"Buck up, Trimble!" and "Play up, St. Jim's!" roared the visitors, encouragingly, but Trimble didn't stir, and the ref. went on, uninterrupted:
"Six—seven—eight—nine—TEN!"
Trimble had been counted out and Bunter was undisputed champion of the Doughnut Eating! Amid scenes of unparalleled enthusiasm, Lord Manderover awarded Bunter the prize, which consisted of one hundred choice doughnuts.
After soothing these, Bunter hurried off to have tea in Hall and was then entertained to high tea in