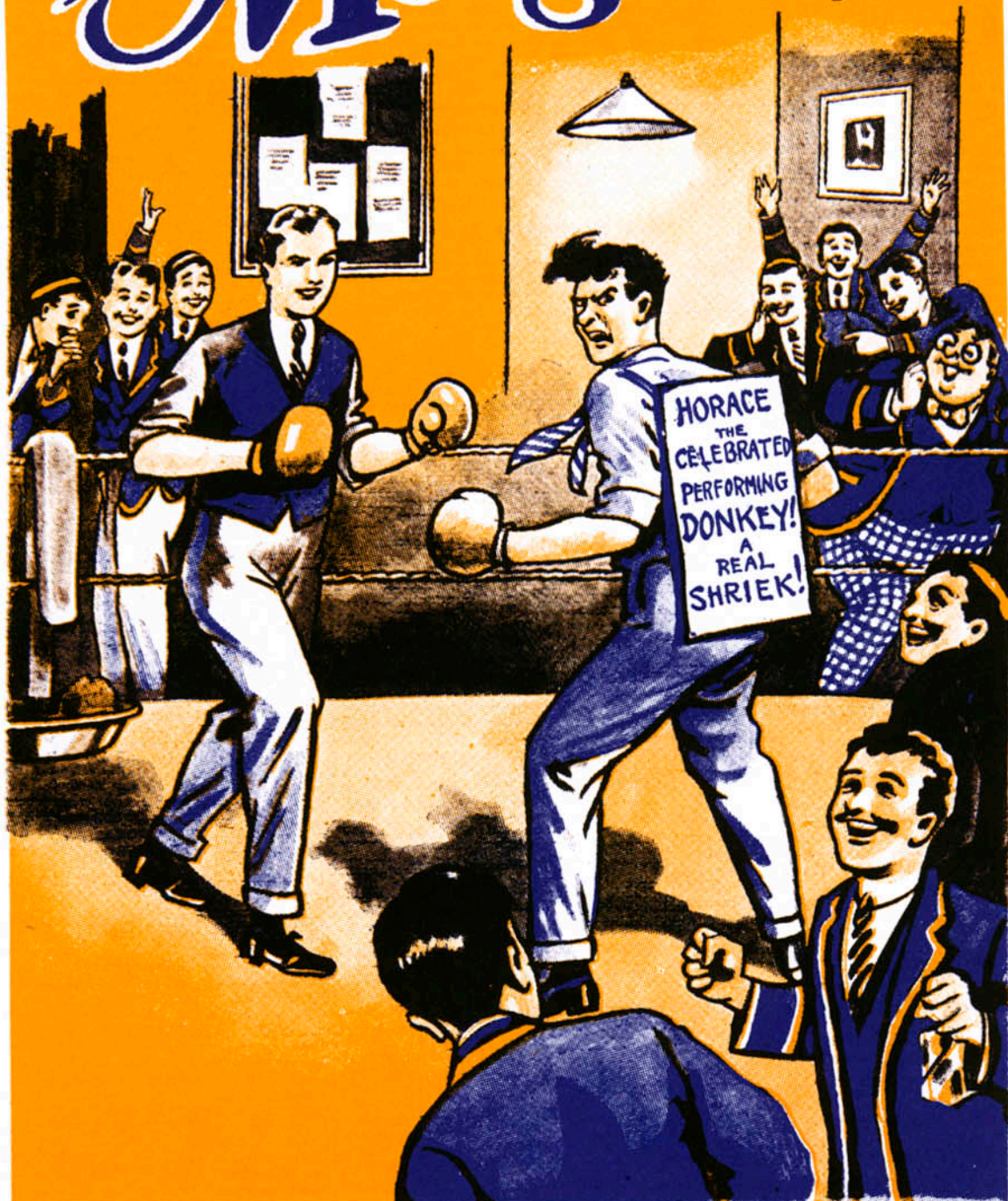


WORLD FAVOURITES—HARRY WHARTON & CO. AND THE MAGNET!

The Magnet ²





COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

PHEW, chums, the heat's fairly "getting me down," as I write this little chat. The mercury seems to be trying to sizzle out of the top of the thermometer. But such is the English climate that it might be quite cold by the time you are reading these lines. As I have mentioned before, the MAGNET goes to press some weeks before publication day. This is why I cannot accede to the requests of some of my readers, who ask me to answer their queries "on your page next week." However, I always oblige at the earliest opportunity, so if the answer to your particular query hasn't appeared yet, don't think I've forgotten it. It will be published in due course.

Any reader wanting an immediate reply should enclose a stamped, addressed envelope with their query.

I commenced this chat of mine, remarking on the hot weather. This was because Tom Harvey, of Dunstable, asks me to tell him which is

THE HOTTEST PLACE IN THE WORLD.

Well, short of living in the crater of an active volcano, which no one is ever likely to do, the record for being the hottest place in the world is claimed by California. At Greenland Ranch, in that state, on July 10th, 1913, a shade temperature of 134 degrees Fahrenheit was recorded. That's going some, what? We've had some hot days in this country, too! One day in 1881 the temperature at Salisbury was 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The same temperature was reached again at Greenwich in 1911.

Now we'll talk about something cooler, for a change! What about

THE WETTEST PLACE IN THE WORLD?

Know where it is, chums? It's at Cherra Poonjee, in Assam. In one year as much as 551 inches of rain fell in these parts. Nearly 23 inches of rain is an average daily downpour in the rainy season, while on one occasion no less than 40 inches of rain fell in one day! Compare this with the maximum rainfall in this country. That was in 1917 when 9½ inches fell in one day. Bruton, in Somerset, holds the record of having been the wettest place in Britain.

From a Brighton reader comes the following query:

WHAT IS THE KU KLUX KLAN?

This is the name that was given to a secret society founded in the United States after the Civil War. The negro slaves who had been freed began to get too powerful, and the whites formed the Klan to suppress the negroes. Their leader was called the Grand Wizard, and the officers were known as Grand Dragons, Grand Cyclops, and Grand Titans. Ordinary members were called Ghouls. The Klan became so powerful that it had to be suppressed in 1871. It was revived

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again, however, in 1915. About fifteen years ago, the American Congress again tried to stamp out the Klan, but they were unable to do so, and the Klan now officially advertises itself. Many endeavours have been made to probe its secrets, but none have been successful.

ONE of my readers who signs himself "Mancunian"—it's not hard to guess where he lives—asks me if I can tell him

HOW MANCHESTER GOT ITS NAME.

It is believed that Manchester was originally a stronghold of the ancient Britons, seized by the Romans and fortified by them. The old name for the town was Mancunian, which means "the place of tents." The Romans added "castra" to the name, meaning a camp. Thus the name became Mancunio-castra, and, as always happens when the name of a place is too long, it became shortened in time to Manchester.

Some time ago a wealthy American commenced to make a collection of curious carvings, especially miniature ones. He succeeded in building up

A MUSEUM OF MINIATURES,

which recently were placed on public exhibition. One of the most amazing of his miniature carvings is an ivory camel. It is so small that it will pass through the eye of a needle! Another of his amazing exhibits was the smallest written inscription in the world. It consists of 127 letters, and these have been written so small that they are only visible under a microscope! Another inscription of 294 letters was written with a one-hair brush in a space no bigger than the eye of a needle. This collector also owns a pin, upon the head of which the whole of the Lord's Prayer has been engraved. The engraver took twenty-five years to accomplish the task—and then went blind as a result.

My recent remarks about surnames have brought me a rather curious query from a Blackpool reader. He wants to know:

CAN HE CHANGE HIS NAME?

Certainly, any British subject may do so. In fact, a large number of people do, without the slightest formality. Actors, in particular, often find it useful to take another name for professional purposes, and they get so used to the new name that they drop their real name for good. The famous Sir Henry Irving, for instance, was originally named John Brodribb. Authors frequently adopt other names under which their books are published, but they generally retain their original name for ordinary purposes.

There are two official ways of changing a surname in this country. One is by

obtaining a royal licence to do so, and the other to exercise a "deed poll," legally changing the name. But even where this is not done, it is quite legal to take another name. There are, however, certain restrictions against foreigners who live in this country changing their names, but these do not apply to British-born subjects.

From Harry Wright, of Nottingham, comes a request for information.

HE WANTS TO BE A WIRELESS OPERATOR,

in the Royal Air Force, so he asks me how to set about it. Every now and again, the R.A.F. have vacancies for boys and generally advertise them in the public press. Boys who wish to join as wireless operators, armourers and photographers must be between the ages of fifteen and three-quarters and seventeen and a quarter. They must also have attended a secondary, technical, or central school up to the age of fifteen and a half. They are then given twelve to sixteen months training in the branch which they wish to join. R.A.F. headquarters are at Gwydyr House, Whitehall, London, S.W.1, but there are also recruiting depots in various parts of the country from which full particulars can be obtained.

There is also a letter from a Bournemouth reader who asks me the following query:

WHAT ARE THE "HORSE MARINES"??

This is a nickname which was given to the famous cavalry regiment, the 17th Lancers, better known as the "Death or Glory Boys." A detachment of these were sent on the frigate *Hermione*, bound for the West Indies. On the voyage, the vessel got into a sea battle, and the Lancers assisted in the battle, and distinguished themselves. It was the only time a cavalry regiment had fought afloat, so you can imagine why the sailors dubbed them "the Horse Marines."

I expect most of you have heard the expression "Tell it to the Marines." The sentence should really be "Tell it to the Horse Marines." The idea that soldiers, not knowing anything about sea life, could be told the most amazing yarns, and would swallow them. Consequently, when a sailor was told anything he didn't believe, he told his informant to "tell it to the Horse Marines."

NEXT week, chums, we are to have another first-rate programme in which all your favourite authors will be at the top of their form. First comes Frank Richards with a yarn that's going to hold your interest without flagging for a single second. The yarn is entitled:

GREYFRIARS IDIOT No. 1.

and features Horace Coker, the prize chump of the Fifth, whose weird and wonderful ways of doing things have created many a stir at Greyfriars. Judging by your letters to me, you are finding this latest series of stories something out of the ordinary. Let me tell you this—you're in for a real good treat next week! Very close to your favourite author's contribution comes Geo. E. Rochester with further exciting chapters of his brilliant flying story. Another big attraction is the "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, not to mention the Greyfriars rhymester's effort. All this, together with another cheery chat, completes one of the finest feasts of fiction obtainable. Make a point, then, chums, of securing your copy at the earliest opportunity.

YOUR EDITOR.

A COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY OF A 1 QUALITY.

The SPY of the FIFTH!



—featuring the ever-popular chums of Greyfriars, HARRY WHARTON & CO.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

An Accident Which Did Not Happen!

ACCIDENTS will happen!" said Coker. "Look here——" said Potter.

"Look here——" said Greene. They spoke simultaneously with great earnestness.

But they spoke in vain. Coker of the Fifth did not "look there." Coker was standing in the Greyfriars quadrangle with his eyes fixed on the House doorway. Coker was watching that doorway, like a terrier watching a rabbit-hole. He did not turn his head, nor did he give any other sign of heeding the earnest remonstrance of his two pals.

"You're mad!" urged Potter. "Mad as a hatter!" said Greene. Still Coker did not heed.

He made a slight movement as a figure appeared in the doorway, about ten yards from where Coker of the Fifth stood with his friends.

Coker had his right foot resting on a football—a rather old footer, used for punting about. It lay in a little puddle left by recent rain. It was wet and it was muddy.

Coker made a motion, as if to kick the footer at the figure that appeared in the doorway.

But he dropped his foot again with a grunt of disappointment.

It was a Fifth Form fellow who came out—Jim Warren, the new fellow in

the Greyfriars Fifth! Warren, apparently, was not Coker's game.

Clearly, Horace Coker was standing there intending to kick that footer at somebody coming out of the House. But Warren of the Fifth was not the happy man.

"That ass!" grunted Coker. Potter and Greene breathed again. They had feared for a moment that it was the plump figure of their Form-

TO GREYFRIARS—

Jim Warren was a decent new-boy— heir to an old English knighthood.

TO HARRY WHARTON—

This Jim Warren was an impostor, with no claim to the name or title.

WHAT WAS THE TRUTH?

master, Mr. Prout, that was about to emerge.

"Look here, Coker——" began Potter again.

"Shut up, Potter!" said Coker. "But look here——" implored Greene almost tearfully.

"Shut up, Greene!"

Coker's attitude, standing over the footer, and watching the doorway with a terrier-like intentness, naturally drew attention. Five Remove fellows, who

were strolling in the quad, spotted Coker and strolled up to see what was on. They could guess from Coker's attitude what it was that Horace Coker contemplated doing. But it was not easy to believe that even Horace Coker was ass enough to do it.

Coker frowned at the Famous Five. He had no use whatever for those cheery juniors.

"Cut, you fags!" yapped Coker. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Have you bought the quad, Coker?"

"What did you give for it?" inquired Frank Nugent.

Harry Wharton laughed, and Johnny Bull chuckled, and Hurree Jamses Ram Singh grinned a dusky grin.

The great Horace had a way of rapping out orders, which mere fags, of course, ought to have jumped to obey. But they seldom did! Least of all did Harry Wharton & Co. The mere fact that Coker ordered them to "cut," was sufficient to glue them to the spot.

Coker of the Fifth breathed hard through his prominent nose. His natural impulse was to fall on the heroes of the Remove and smite them hip and thigh. But he could not slaughter the cheeky juniors and watch the doorway for his intended victim at the same time! Even the great Horace could not do two things at once! So he ignored them.

"What's the name of this game, Coker?" inquired Harry Wharton.

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Coker disdained to reply. The Famous Five stood and watched. Warren, the new fellow, evidently curious to know what Coker was up to, stopped to look on. Several other fellows approached the spot.

"Coker, old man—" murmured Potter. "Do chuck it!"

"Don't be an ass, Potter!"

"You'll have half Greyfriars watching you soon!" said Greene.

"Let 'em watch!" said Coker.

"Prout will be as mad as a batter if you get him with that footer, you awful fathead!" groaned Potter. "He may take you to the Head to be sacked!"

Harry Wharton & Co. fairly jumped. They could see that Coker was waiting to buzz that footer at somebody. But that he was waiting to buzz it at his Form-master was startling news.

Warren, equally startled, uttered a sharp exclamation.

"Coker! You're not fool enough—" he exclaimed aghast.

Coker glanced round at him calmly. "Anybody asked you to barge in?" he inquired.

"For goodness' sake don't be such a mad ass!" exclaimed Warren. "Your friends ought to stop you!"

"Shut up, will you?" said Coker. "I haven't time now to give you the thick ear you're asking for!"

Again a figure appeared in the doorway. Again Coker's foot got a move on. But again he refrained. It was Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, who came out.

Quelch glanced at the group and walked on. He disappeared under the old elms, taking his usual trot before lunch.

"Is that old ass, Prout, never coming?" grunted Coker. "He always rolls out before feeding!"

Potter and Greene exchanged an almost hopeless glance.

Almost did they make up their minds to restrain Coker by main force, as Warren suggested. But a lot of main force was required to restrain Coker. Nature had been rather stingy with him in the matter of brains—but she had made up for it with brawn and muscle. Coker was the heaviest man in the Fifth! Even Sixth Form men dealt tactfully with Coker.

"It's the sack!" said Greene gloomily.

"Don't be an idiot, Greene!" said Coker. "I've said that accidents will happen! We punt a footer about in the quad, don't we? Well, I happen to be punting the ball when old Prout shoves his fat face out! I get him on the chivvy with it! Pure accident, what?"

Coker, evidently, had been thinking this out—if Coker's mental processes could be described as thinking!

Even Coker, though the biggest ass ever, was not quite as much to commit assault and battery on a Form-master—openly!

It was going to pass off as an "accident." Prout was going to believe that that wet and muddy footer had smitten him on his plump features accidentally. At least, Coker hoped that he was. Coker had a hopeful nature.

Potter and Greene did not hope anything of the kind. All they hoped was that Coker's kick would miss when Prout came. Likely enough that hope would prove well-founded. Coker's method of propelling a footer was entirely his own. Seldom did it reach the destination Coker intended it for. Still, there was an awful possibility

that it might this time. And if it did—

"The old ass has ragged me in class this morning—on and on and on, jaw—jaw—jaw!" said Coker. "Making out a fellow can't even spell! Making out that a fellow's dense and ignorant! I fancy you know which is the ignorant of the two—Prout or me!"

Potter and Greene did! But it was no use telling Coker.

"He will have something else to think about when he gets this footer right in his dial!" said Coker. "Perhaps he won't rag a fellow so much this afternoon—in case another accident happens! Ha, ha!"

Coker laughed.

But Potter and Greene were looking fearfully serious. So were Harry Wharton & Co. Coker, no doubt, was comic, but there was nothing comic about what would happen to him if he got Prout with that wet and muddy footer.

Jim Warren moved a little nearer and tapped Coker on the shoulder. He was looking really anxious.

"Coker, old bean—" he urged.

"Mind your own business!" snapped Coker. "And don't tap me! I don't like it!"

"You born idiot—"

"Shut up!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" breathed Bob Cherry. "Here comes Prout!"

The portly, plump, majestic figure of Mr. Prout, master of the Fifth Form, appeared at last in the doorway. He came out, evidently without the slightest suspicion of what awaited him, and slowly and ponderously descended the House steps.

Coker's eyes gleamed.

It was his quarry at last. Heedless of the fact that about twenty fellows were staring at him, with bated breath, Horace prepared for action. Prout, majestic on the steps, was a splendid target—it seemed doubtful whether even Coker could miss. He did not mean to miss. The "accident" was going to happen now.

Coker drew back his foot to kick.

Whether that ball, kicked by Coker, would have crashed, wet and muddy, into the majestic countenance of Prout, was never known. For that footer never was kicked by Coker. Even as he was about to deliver the kick, Jim Warren grabbed him by the back of the collar and dragged him over backwards.

Coker's kick missed the footer by about a yard. His long leg swept the empty air. And the next instant, with a fearful yell, Horace Coker hit the Greyfriars quad with his back, and sprawled, roaring.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Being Kind to Coker!

"H A, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from twenty fellows.

Coker's downfall was sudden and surprising. It was rather comic also, from the point of view of the spectators.

To Coker it was not comic. Hardly aware of what had happened, Horace sprawled on his back, kicked up his legs and roared.

Potter and Greene gasped with relief. As Coker's pals, really they ought to have done this. But they hadn't. Jim Warren had done it. They were glad, anyhow, that somebody had done it. Prout had been saved from Coker—Coker had been saved from himself.

Mr. Prout, about to march away majestically, of course had his attention drawn to the spot by the sudden uproar. He gazed at Coker, sprawling—at Warren, holding the great Horace by the back of the neck—at the crowd of fellows howling with merriment. Then with stately stride he approached the spot. A frown knit his portly brow.

"What—what is this?" exclaimed Prout. "What does this mean?"

Nobody was likely to tell Prout what it meant. The fact that his plump countenance had narrowly escaped establishing contact with a muddy footer was not a matter to be explained to Prout.

"Oh! Ow! Oooh!" roared Coker. "What the thump— Who the dickens— What the dooce— Oogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Warren!" rapped Prout.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Warren.

"Release Coker's collar at once!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Jim Warren let go Coker's collar and stepped back.

Horace Coker sat up. He was quite dizzy, even yet not quite realising what had occurred.

"Oooogh!" spluttered Coker.

He blinked at his Form-master.

"Get up, Coker!" roared Mr. Prout.

"Do not sprawl about the earth in that way! Get up at once!"

"Oh! Ah! Yes, sir!" stammered Coker.

He got on his feet. Prout fixed his eyes on Warren. He fixed them on him with a severe stare.

Warren of the Fifth had been hardly a wreck at Greyfriars, having joined up at the new term. But he had already become rather popular in his Form, and had earned the esteem of his Form-master. He was good at games, which was a passport to the favour of the Fifth Formers. He was good in class, which was a passport to Prout's favour. But Prout was angry now.

"Warren!" he snapped.

"Yes, sir!"

"What do you mean by this? What do you mean by such an extraordinary prank?" boomed Prout. "I saw you grasp Coker by his collar and drag him over. Such an absurd practical joke—worthy only of some foolish and unthinking boy in the Second Form—"

"I—I—" stammered Warren.

"I have hitherto," boomed Prout, "had a good opinion of you, Warren! I have regarded you as a sensible and thoughtful boy. But such a foolish, thoughtless, absurd action—"

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Warren.

"Oh crickey!" gasped Bob Cherry. It was not respectful to laugh in Prout's majestic presence, but the Greyfriars fellows had hard work to restrain their merriment. It was really excruciating to hear old Prout slanging the new fellow—for having saved him from a muddy footer on the nose!

Coker, realising at long last how matters stood, looked at Warren as if he could have eaten him. But for Prout's presence there would have been assault and battery on the spot.

"You cheeky rotter!" breathed Coker.

"Had such an absurd action," resumed Prout, "been committed by this boy, Coker, I should not have been surprised. But in you, Warren, I am very much surprised indeed. Very much indeed! An insensate action—"

"Oh, sir!"

"Practical jokes," said Prout sternly, "are the lowest and most objectionable form of mistaken humour, Warren."

"Oh! Yes, sir! Quite!"

Jim Warren by that time was almost wishing that he had let Coker go ahead with his goal-kick!

"You will take two hundred lines, Warren, for this foolish, insensate, utterly absurd action, unworthy of a boy in a senior Form!" boomed Prout.

"Very well, sir!"

Prout turned away.

With the tail of his eye, as he turned, however, he noted that Horace Coker was clenching his big fists, with a gleam in his eyes. He turned back at once.

"Coker!" he boomed.

"Yes, sir!" growled Coker.

"I forbid you to pursue this matter with Warren. I can quite understand your annoyance, Coker, at such a foolish and uncalled-for action on his part. But I have punished him for his conduct, and I will not allow you to take

Prout having disappeared, Coker strode after Warren.

Potter and Greene rushed after Coker. They grabbed him.

"You're not going to row with Warren, you fathead!" gasped Potter.

"You heard what Prout said—"

"I'm going to thrash the cheeky rotter for laying his cheeky hands on me!" roared Coker.

"But Prout—" gasped Greene.

"Blow Prout!"

Horace jerked himself from the restraining hands of his friends, and barged after Warren.

The new fellow was already at rather a distance, apparently looking on the episode as done with.

But it was far from done with. Prout's warning to Coker had fallen on unheeding ears. Coker had been

be that Horace Coker would get into trouble with Prout if he pitched into Warren after Prout's warning. It was only kind to save him from that trouble. Also, there was a certain amount of entertainment to be derived from ragging Coker of the Fifth.

Horace, striding after Warren, was still a few yards behind him when the chums of the Remove, scudding fast, overtook Coker.

Once already Horace had been grabbed by the collar, and landed on his back in the quad. Now history repeated itself.

Bob Cherry got the back of his collar, Wharton and Johnny Bull got a shoulder each, and Coker, taken by surprise, went over backwards. The next moment Frank Nugent was sitting on



"Hand over that butter, you Chinese image!" growled Bunter. Wun Lung picked up the butter and whizzed it across the table. It was Bunter's fat little nose that received it—plop! Squash! "Ooooooooooooooh!" gasped the fat junior. "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the merry feasters.

the matter into your own hands. Bear that in mind, Coker."

Having uttered that warning, Mr. Prout rolled on, sailing off the scene like a Spanish galleon under full sail.

"Well, my hat!" said Harry Wharton, gasping.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If Prout knew!" gasped Nugent.

"Fortunately for the esteemed and idiotic Coker, the knowfulness is not terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker stared after Prout's portly back. Prout disappeared under the elms, joining Quelch there in a walk before lunch. Jim Warren was moving away—not looking happy. He had acted impulsively in preventing Coker from making an egregious ass of himself, and two hundred lines rewarded him for that kindly impulse. Which was neither grateful nor comforting.

"The cheeky tick!" breathed Coker.

balked of his prey. He had been bumped over on his back. Coker wanted vengeance. He wanted it at once, and he wanted it hot and strong. He chased after Warren.

Potter and Greene gave it up. If Coker chose to hunt for more trouble, they decided to leave him to it. They had done all they could—short of flattening Horace on the ground and sitting on him there. Nothing else would have stopped Coker.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"That howling ass is going after Warren," he said. "He can't get it into his thick head that Warren's saved him from a fearful row. What about following that new man's example? He's done Coker a good turn—let us do him another."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Let's!" he agreed.

And the Famous Five scudded after Coker.

It was as certain as anything could

his waistcoat, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh standing on his sprawling legs.

"Got him!" grinned Bob.

"The gotfulness is terrific!"

Coker roared and wriggled. He seemed quite unconscious of the fact that the cheeky juniors were doing him a good turn. Certainly their methods were rather drastic. Like Hamlet, they had to be cruel to be kind.

"You cheeky fags!" bellowed Coker.

"Why, I—I'll smash you! I'll spifficate you! I'll—Yarooop!"

"Sit on him!" said Bob.

"Gerroff!" shrieked Coker, as the Famous Five sat on him.

Coker was both long and broad; but there was hardly enough of him to go round as a sofa. He quite disappeared under five juniors sitting on him. He wriggled and struggled and yelped.

Had Coker been asked whether a gang of fags could handle him, he would have laughed at the idea. Coker would

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have undertaken to whop any number of fags.

But, in point of fact, the great Horace was absolutely helpless under the cheery five. He wriggled and wriggled and writhed and writhed, but he writhed and wriggled in vain.

"Gerroff!" spluttered Coker. "You young scoundrels, gerroff! I'll smash you! Gerroff! I'm going after that tick, Warren—"

"That's why," explained Bob. "Urrrgh! Will you gerroff?" gurgled Coker. "Take your knee out of my eye, you little beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Keep quiet!" said Bob Cherry soothingly. "The bell goes for tiffin in ten minutes. We're using you for a sofa till then, if you don't mind. We're being kind to you, old bean, if you could only catch on."

Coker, apparently, did mind. He heaved under the Famous Five like the tempestuous ocean.

But the Famous Five sat tight. Having started being kind to Coker, they were not going to leave the job half-done.

"He, he, he!" Billy Bunter rolled up, and blinked at the remarkable scene through his big spectacles. "He, he, he! I say, you fellows, what's that you're sitting on?"

"Coker!" said Bob. "He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "Will you gerroff?" raved Coker.

"If you promise to be a good little boy and behave yourself," said Bob. "What about it?"

Coker was not likely to make such a promise. The mere suggestion seemed to infuriate him. He heaved and rocked.

"He, he, he!" chortled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, bang his head now you've got him! The beast kicked me yesterday. Making out that a fellow was after a cake in his study, you know. I say, give his napper a jolly good bang!"

"Gerroff!" "Sit tight!" chuckled Bob. More and more fellows gathered round to look on and chortle. Kindness to Coker, taking this form, seemed to be regarded in the light of an entertainment. There was quite a large audience by the time the dinner-bell rang.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's tiffin!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Come on! Good-bye, Coker! Thanks for giving us a rest!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The Famous Five jumped off Coker, and cut off to the House. Coker rose more slowly from the quad. He was breathless and winded; he was dusty and ruffled and rumpled, and he gasped and gasped and gasped.

He was still gasping when the Greyfriars fellows went in to dinner. It was a dusty and breathless Coker that limped in—late!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

James and Jim.

HARRY WHARTON came up the Fifth Form passage, stopped at the door of Study No. 4, and raised his hand to tap.

He dropped it again. Again he raised it, and again he dropped it, and stood hesitating.

Every day since the new term had started Harry Wharton had resolved to speak to Warren, the new fellow in the Fifth, but six or seven days had passed, and he had not done so yet.

There was plenty to fill up a fellow's

time at the beginning of the term. And there had been a Form election in the Remove, too. Tom Brown, who had been captain of the Form last term, had resigned, and Harry Wharton had been re-elected to his old place. So he had had plenty on his hands without bothering about a new fellow in the Fifth. But that was not his only reason for putting off the interview.

It was going to be unpleasant—that was the chief reason. He liked Warren, from what he had seen of him—most fellows did. And what he had to say was not agreeable.

But it had to be said; and Wharton had made up his mind at last. Now, however, that he had arrived at Warren's door he hesitated once more.

He knew that Warren was in the study, and that Hilton and Price were out. It was the opportunity he wanted—or, rather, that he did not want.

Instead of tapping at the door and opening it, he stood hesitating, wondering what he had better do, and wishing from the bottom of his heart that he could dismiss the matter from his mind as no business of his.

The door suddenly opened from within, and the handsome Fifth Former came out, almost colliding with the junior.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Warren, staring at him. "What the dickens—"

Wharton coloured. "I—I came to speak to you," he stammered.

"Well, you needn't have been afraid to come in. I don't bite," said Jim Warren. "Get on with it! I've got to get down to footer."

He waited for Harry to speak.

There were two or three fellows in the passage, and Coker was looking out of his doorway, frowning at the sight of Warren. Coker was almost the only fellow in the Fifth with whom Warren was not popular. Coker regarded the new man as a cheeky tick, and made no secret of his opinion. If regarding Coker as an egregious fathead was cheek, there was no doubt that Warren was cheeky.

"I'll come into the study, if you don't mind," said Harry. "But another time will do if you're in a hurry."

"I'm not; trot in! Something fearfully important?" asked Warren, with a smile. "Let's see! Your name's Wharton, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Harry quietly. Warren stepped back into Study No. 4, and Harry followed him in.

"I think I saw you first day of term, and you told me that you lived in Surrey, near Warren Croft," said the Fifth Former.

"Yes; at Wharton Lodge." Warren laughed.

"And did I mention that I'm not frightfully keen on cultivating the acquaintance of a fag in the Lower Fourth, even if our people happen to be neighbours at home?" he asked.

"You did," answered Harry quietly. "Well, I haven't changed my mind."

Wharton made no rejoinder to that. He closed the study door carefully. He did not want other ears to hear what he had to say to Warren.

The Fifth Form man watched his action, curiously and rather impatiently.

"Look here! What's all this about?" he demanded. "If you've got anything to say, kid, you can get it off your chest; but you can't waste a Fifth Form man's time. Cut it short!"

"I'll cut it as short as I can." Harry stood facing him. "Goodness knows I hate to have to mention the matter at all—but I must! Everybody thinks you're a pretty decent chap."

"Except you," grinned Warren. "Well, I think so, too," said Wharton honestly. "That's why I can't make it all out. But I'm bound to speak. Look here! You've come to Greyfriars as James Warren—"

"Jim Warren."

"That's the same thing, isn't it?" "More or less. But what about it? What do you mean, if you mean anything?" asked Warren impatiently.

"Is it your name?" asked Harry. Warren stared at him blankly. "Is it my name?" he repeated.

"Mad?" "No! Is it your name?" repeated Harry. "That's what I want to know—and what I must know!"

"I don't see how you're concerned in my affairs at all," said Warren. "But, naturally, my name is my name! What are you driving at?"

"This," said Harry. "I've seen James Warren, the son of Sir Arthur Warren, of Warren Croft, in Surrey, and you're not the chap!"

"Oh!" Jim Warren stood quite still.

"On the last day of the holidays," went on Harry quietly, "I was at my uncle's house, Wharton Lodge, with Inky—Hurree Singh of my Form. We had a row with a hulking brute of a fellow we'd never seen before—but it turned out afterwards that he was James Warren."

Jim Warren did not speak. He stood still, gazing at Wharton. But he was quite calm, and there was a faint flicker of amusement in his eyes.

He had been startled, Wharton had noted that. But he did not seem alarmed or uneasy.

"Sir Arthur Warren was leaving the same day for China," went on Harry in the same quiet tone. "My uncle drove him to London in the car. He'd taken me over to Warren Croft to make James' acquaintance, as the chap was coming to Greyfriars—"

Warren seemed about to speak. But he checked himself.

"I did not see him at the house," went on Harry. "He is an ill-mannered brute, and he went out, because he did not choose to meet me or my uncle. But—I met him in the grounds, and he ducked me in the lake—like the hooligan he is!"

"You must have enjoyed your visit!" remarked Warren. "Was that enough for you, or did you stay for more?"

Wharton set his lips a little. "That was quite enough for me," he answered. "I cleared off as soon as my clothes were dried, without telling them in the house what had happened. I left a message for my uncle, who was calling back for me—with Captain Warren, Sir Arthur's younger brother, who was staying there—and cleared."

"Oh!" "On the first day of term I expected to see James here," said Harry. "I meant to keep out of his way and avoid rows with the brute, as my uncle is a friend of his father's. When I heard that a new man named Warren had come, I supposed that it was the fellow who ducked me at Warren Croft. I saw you, but never guessed that—that—"

He faltered.

"That I was Warren?"

"Yes," said Harry. "When I heard that, I was quite knocked over. I fancied at first that there might be two fellows of the same name, but—"

"But you found there weren't."

"That's it! And I found that you came here as the son of Sir Arthur Warren—who has only one son."

"I see. Whereupon you made up your mind that you were face to face with some fearful impostor—"

"It's not a joke," said Harry. "Neither is it any business of yours, that I can see."

"None at all—if it's all fair and square! But—you've come here in the name and place of that fellow James. Where is he?"

Warren looked at him, and then, to Harry's surprise, burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Now, what's become of the genuine James?" chuckled Warren. "Here's a dashed impostor taking his place—and where's George—I mean, where's James? Knocked on the head or kidnapped on a desert island? What?"

Wharton compressed his lips. "James Warren is a bully and a brute," he said. "But nobody can have a right to use his name. You're doing it. If you were a cad and an outsider like him, I could understand it. But you're not—"

"Thanks!"

"A fellow can only judge by appearances," said Harry. "But, so far as I can see, you're as decent as any other fellow here. It beats me hollow to understand it all. But it can't rest where it is. I've been going to speak to you every day—now I've got it out. James Warren was to come to Greyfriars this term—you've come, calling yourself by his name. His father's gone to China, and can't know anything about it. The real James Warren must be somewhere. Well, what's happened to him?"

Jim Warren sat on a corner of the study table, swinging a leg. His face was serious now, but there was a glimmer in his eyes which told that he was more amused than alarmed by the implied accusation.

"Have you spun this yarn among the other fags?" he asked.

"No!"

"Better not!" said Warren. "It sounds rather steep, doesn't it?"

"It's true," said Harry. "You're not a bit like James Warren to look at. He's bigger, heavier, and a good deal uglier. I've hardly ever come across such an offensive brute—and you're not like that."

"Thanks again!" Warren yawned a little. "Now you've said your piece, Wharton—I think you said your name was Wharton. That's the lot."

"Unless you've something to say—"

"Nothing!" smiled Warren. "I'm new to Greyfriars, but I've been to school before you know; and I'm not in the habit of discussing my personal affairs with fags in lower Forms. If you've done, hook it, and be thankful that I don't whop you for your cheek."

Harry Wharton breathed hard.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"That's all."

"Then—that leaves the matter where it is," said Harry.

"Where else could it be left?" smiled Warren. "I'll say this much—as I dare say you mean well. There's nothing for you to worry about. Shove it out of your mind, and mind your own business!"

"That won't do!" said Wharton slowly.

"Fraid it will have to do!" said Jim Warren. "You can go to the Head, if you like, and tell him that he's entertaining an angel unawares—or that he's got the wrong pig by the ear, whichever way you like to put it."

"That would be rather serious for you."

"Oh, don't mind me! Please yourself!" said Warren. "You take the risk of getting whopped for making a fool of yourself, of course. That's your affair." He laughed and slipped from the table. "You say you never saw this nice fellow at the house—you dropped on him in the grounds, and he ducked you—"

"Yes."

"Well, how do you know that the fellow was James Warren?"

Wharton started.

"He said so!"

"Well, so do I!"

Wharton stared at him. He caught his breath.

"Oh!" he gasped. "You—you mean—that fellow at Warren Croft was pulling my leg—saying he was James Warren when he wasn't—"

"I'm not saying so!" grinned Warren. "I'm not explaining anything. But doesn't it strike you as possible?"

Wharton fairly gasped. It had not occurred to him for a moment.

But surely it was possible—the fellow, who was a hulking brute and a bully, might very probably be a liar, too. Choosing which to believe between the two, certainly, he would have chosen this fellow, now standing looking at him with an amused grin.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. "I—I never thought—I—I supposed—"

He stammered. "I—I say, Warren, I'm sorry—I never imagined—"

Jim Warren chuckled.

"Well, suppose you chuck supposing and imagining about things that don't concern you?" he suggested. "Give the whole thing a miss, and bestow your attention wholly on your own affairs—I suppose you've got some that need looking after quite as much as mine! And now cut!"

Wharton, crimson with confusion, but at the same time relieved in his mind, left the study.

Jim Warren's laugh followed him as he went. Then the door was shut.

But when he was left alone, Jim Warren, of the Greyfriars Fifth, was not laughing. His handsome face was exceedingly grave.

He stood still and silent for a good many minutes, his brow dark with thought. Then he gave a long, low whistle.

"What rotten luck!" he murmured aloud.

Then he shrugged his shoulders, as if dismissing a troublesome matter from his mind. But his face was still very grave and thoughtful when he went down to B.G. Side for the footer.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Butter for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows— Oh!" ejaculated Billy Bunter.

The fat Owl of the Remove blinked into the doorway of Study No. 1, through his big spectacles. Neither Wharton nor Nugent, to whom the study belonged, was there. But a burly figure was sprawling in the arm-chair—the figure of Horace Coker of the Fifth Form.

Coker, with his hands in his pockets, his long legs stretched out, and a deep frown corrugating his manly brow, seemed to be waiting for the owners of the study to come in—not patiently. He turned his head and glared at Billy Bunter in the doorway.

"Where's that young ass Wharton?" he snapped.

"Dunno!" replied Bunter.

"Well, go and find him, and tell him to come here. Tell him I want to speak to him!" snapped Coker. "And tell him that if he doesn't look sharp I'll jolly well whop him!"

Billy Bunter blinked at Coker. That great man was not usually on visiting terms with the Remove. Generally, if he came up to Lower Fourth studies at all, he came on the warpath. Now, however, it seemed that Horace was paying a friendly call, though obviously not in the best of tempers.

"Cut!" rapped Coker. "Don't stand goggling there, you young owl. Cut!"

Billy Bunter cut.

He was not interested in Coker. He was interested in tea. At tea-time he expected to find the chums of the Remove in their quarters. As they were not there he rolled up the Remove passage in further search.

Cherry voices from Study No. 13 announced where the Famous Five were. The Co. were teazing in Bob Cherry's study.

"I say, you fellows—"

Bunter blinked in at the door of Study No. 13. The study was rather full, with

(Continued on next page.)

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the Famous Five, and Mark Linley, and little Wun Lung. But the fat Owl of the Remove insinuated himself inside.

"Roll away, barrel!" said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—" Bunter blinked round the study. "I say, will one of you fellows let me have a chair?"

"Anybody want to feed standing up, like a horse, so that Bunter can sit down?" asked Johnny Bull.

"The wantfulness is not terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, I think you might let a fellow have a chair," said Bunter. "I say, Wharton, Coker's waiting for you in your study."

"Is he?" said Harry. "Well, let him wait. I don't mind."

"It's rather important, I think," said Bunter. "If you're going, I'll have your chair, old chap."

"But I'm not going."

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, you'd better go," urged Bunter. "Coker says he'll whop you if you don't look sharp."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Go and tell Coker to come along here and we'll give him all the whopping he wants!" he answered.

"And a little over!" said Frank Nugent.

"See that door, Bunter?" asked Bob. Bunter blinked round at the door.

"Eh? Yes. What about it?"

"The other side's your side. Shut it after you!"

"He, he, he!" Bunter decided to take that remark as a joke. "I say, you fellows, I don't mind sitting on a box! This box will do for me. A fellow can rough it. Dash it all, I'm not at Bunter Court now!"

"Wouldn't it be nice if you were?" sighed Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, that ham looks all right!"

Bunter sat on the box and helped himself to ham. It was a generous helping, leaving rather less on the dish than the fat junior put on his plate. "Hard-boiled eggs! You fellows jolly well know that I like my eggs boiled soft."

Bunter sniffed. However, he helped himself to hard-boiled eggs, though he liked them boiled soft. There were four on the table. Bunter took four!

He gobbled.

"Pass the bread-and-butter, you fellows! Dash it all, Bob, you might put some butter on when you ask a fellow to tea—"

Nobody asked you, sir, she said!" sang Bob Cherry.

"If you're going to be mean about the butter, Cherry, I can only say—yaroooh!"

An unseen foot kicked away the box the fat Owl was sitting on. The Owl of the Remove, previously seated on the box, suddenly sat on the floor.

There was a bump, and a yell! It was followed by a wild splutter. Bunter's mouth was full of ham and egg. Some of it seemed to go down the wrong way as he bumped on the study carpet.

"Wurrgh! Wurrgh! Wurrgh!" spluttered the Owl of the Remove. "I say—urrgh! What beast kicked that box? Urrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gurrgh!"

Billy Bunter scrambled to his feet. He spluttered and gurgled, and gave the grinning tea-party a glare through his spectacles that ought to have withered them on the spot. Instead of which, they only chuckled, quite unwithered.

"Look here, you beasts!" roared Bunter. "If that's how you're going to behave I'm jolly well not stopping here to tea. See?"

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"Then that's how we're going to behave!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"I—I mean, I—I can take a joke!" said Bunter. "Still, I don't like these rotten practical jokes. Rotten bad form, if you ask me! Still, I suppose I can't expect much in the way of manners in this study! Look here, have you got any more butter?"

"Pass Bunter the butter, somebody, for goodness' sake!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Let him have the lot, and perhaps it may keep him quiet for a minute or two."

"Me passee Bunter buttee!" said Wun Lung, the little Chinese junior, with a gleam in his slanting eyes. "You like plente buttee, Bunter?"

"Yes; shove it over this way!" growled Bunter. "There doesn't seem to be much, but I dare say I can manage. I'm used to stinginess."

"You frabjous, frowsy frog!" breathed Johnny Bull.

"Oh, shut up, Bull!" said the fat Owl crossly. "You jaw too much! I wish you wouldn't ask Bull here, Cherry, when I come to tea. I'm not awfully particular, but, really, a fellow must draw the line somewhere. Hand over that butter, you Chinese image!"

The butter was still in its paper from the tuckshop, plates and dishes being rather short in Study No. 13. Wun Lung picked it up, and Bunter stretched out a fat paw.

But the fat paw did not receive it! The cheerful Chinese whizzed it across the table, and it was Bunter's fat little nose that received it—plop!

Squash!

"Ooooooh!" gasped Bunter, as butter and greasy paper spread over his fat countenance. "Oooogh!"

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

"Like the butter, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter spluttered frantically. He was greasy and shiny—of the butter, buttery! He had wanted all the butter, and he had got all the butter—but it seemed that he did not want it in the way he had got it!

"You—you—your little heathen beast!" gasped Bunter. "You—you—oooh! I'm all greasy—I'm all buttery! Urrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the tea-party.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," howled Bunter. "Oooogh! Look at me! Urrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Looking at Bunter, as requested, the Remove fellows seemed to see something to cackle at. Anyhow, they cackled.

Bunter dabbed butter from his fat nose and blinked furiously through buttery spectacles. Even the worm will turn. Bunter's wrath boiled over. He grasped the milkjug from the table.

"Take that, you yellow little heathen beast!" he roared.

And he whizzed the milk across the table at Wun Lung!

It was like Bunter to aim wildly. And butter smeared on his spectacles did not improve his vision. The volley of milk from the jug did not go anywhere near Wun Lung's little, grinning face. It landed in Johnny Bull's eye and ear, on the starboard side.

The roar that broke from Johnny awoke all the echoes of the study and several adjoining studies.

He bounded to his feet.

His knees caught the table as he made that sudden bound, and it rocked. Teapot and teacups shot over. Ham and eggs and tea were distributed over several fellows' knees. There was a general howl.

Heedless, Johnny Bull turned on Bunter.

With milk streaming from one eye, he fixed the other on the fat Owl with a deadly glare. He jumped at Bunter.

Bunter jumped for the door.

One look at Johnny's infuriated face was enough for Bunter. Even the fact that his tea was unfinished did not tempt Bunter to linger in Study No. 13 at that moment. He fairly bounded.

He just escaped Johnny's clutch as he leaped through the doorway into the Remove passage.

But there was, so to speak, a lion in the path.

Coker of the Fifth, by that time, was tired of waiting in Study No. 1. He had come up the passage and had reached Bob's study when Bunter left it so suddenly.

Coker did not expect Bunter. Bunter did not expect Coker. Each, indeed, had forgotten the other's existence! They crashed together, and Coker, with a yell, staggered across the passage and thudded on the opposite wall.

Bunter, reeling from the shock, sat down in the doorway.

Johnny Bull reached him.

How many kicks Johnny landed before Bunter scrambled up and fled the fat Owl never knew. It felt like hundreds.

Bunter, yelling, disappeared into space. Coker of the Fifth was left tottering and gasping.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

And Jam for Coker!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. sat down to tea again in Study No. 13. There was no more milk, and no more butter. On the other hand, there was no more Bunter.

Johnny Bull grunted as he wiped the last of the milk from his eye and ear. He was doubtful whether he had given Bunter enough; though, to judge by the fearful howls that floated back as Bunter fled, the fat Owl seemed to have an impression that he had been given too much.

Coker of the Fifth, still gasping, looked in at the doorway. His temper had not been good, to start with. The collision with Billy Bunter seemed to have made it worse. His gleaming eye singled out Wharton.

"Oh, you're here!" he snapped. "Adsum!" said Harry cheerfully, as if he were answering to his name at call-over.

And the Removites grinned.

Coker's idea seemed to be that when he frowned mere juniors ought to tremble. He was frowning now, in Jove-like wrath. But the juniors, instead of trembling, only seemed to regard Coker as amusing.

"I came to your study to speak to you!" growled Coker. "I've been waiting there a jolly good time!"

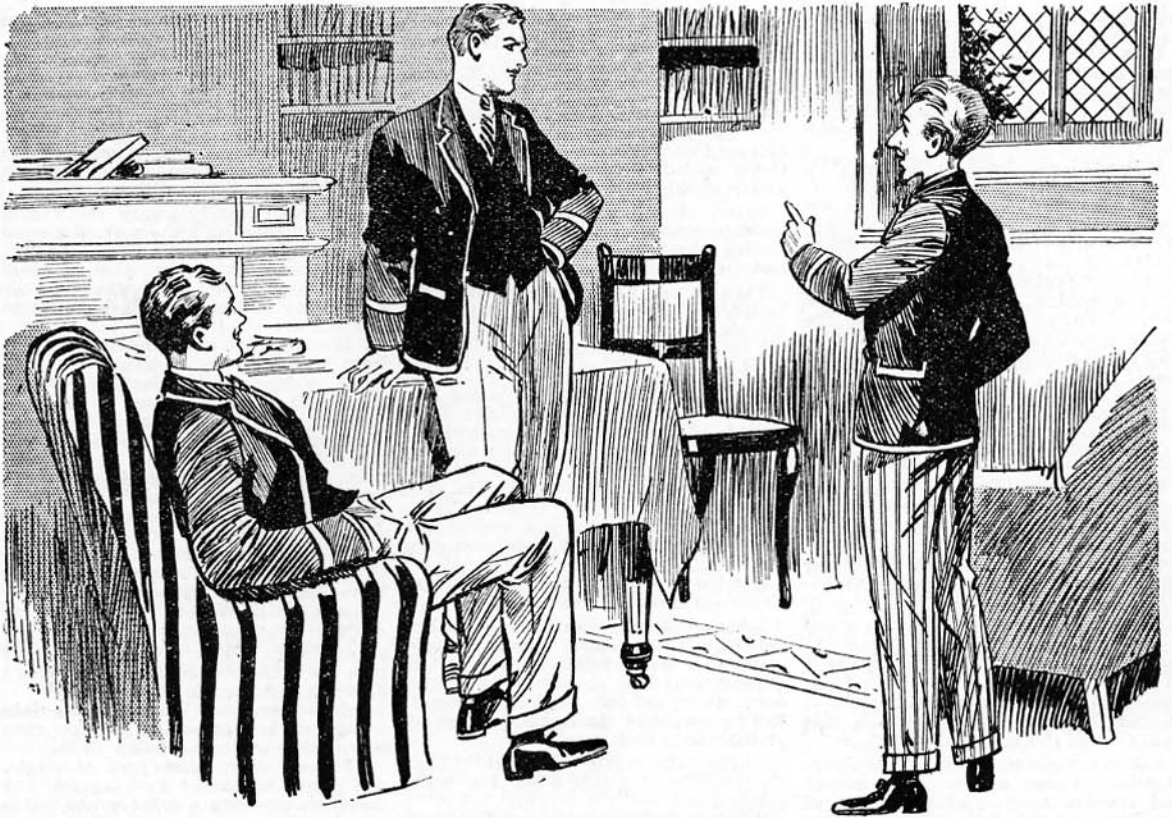
"Good egg!" said Harry. "Go and do it again!"

"What?" ejaculated Coker.

"No objection to your waiting in my study," explained Wharton. "Wait there as long as you like! I shan't want the study till prep."

Coker stared at him. With all his many gifts, the great Horace was not quick on the uptake. A fellow could pull Coker's leg for weeks and weeks without Coker getting wise to it.

"You silly young ass!" said Coker. "I came up to speak to you! What's the sense of waiting in your study when you're in this study?"



Warren and Hilton stared as Peter Todd entered the study. "I'm Coker's second, and I've come here to fix up a ferocious combat! Coker—my principal—is thirsting for blood! Name your second, Warren!" "Ass!" said Warren. "Clear!"

"No sense at all!" conceded Wharton. "But nobody expects any sense from you, Coker! You see, we know you so well!"

Coker breathed hard and deep. "I didn't come here to thrash you, Wharton," he said warningly. "But you're asking for it!"

"Don't mind me. Go ahead, old bean!" said Harry.

"The thrashfulness might be a boot on the other leg!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I'm going to thrash that fellow Warren," said Coker, "and—"

"Then you'd better give me a miss!" said Wharton, laughing. "You'll want all your beef for Warren!"

"All—and then some!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"That's right! Run away and thrash Warren!" said Frank Nugent encouragingly. "What will happen to you will keep you quiet for a bit!"

Coker breathed harder and deeper. But he did not hurl himself at the smiling tea-party, as might have been expected. He was exercising rare self-control.

"I've said that I want to speak to you, Wharton—" he began again.

"No charge!" said Harry. "Pile in!"

"I'm not going to talk to a mob of silly fags! Come along to your study—at once!" added Coker sharply.

Wharton gazed at him.

Why Coker wanted to speak to him, and on what subject, he could not begin to guess. Still, he would willingly have given Horace a few minutes of his time if Horace had put it civilly. Horace, unfortunately, had no civility to waste on such an inconsiderable microbe as a Lower Fourth junior.

"At once?" repeated Harry, smiling.

"Yes—sharp!"

"You can't talk to me here?"

"I don't choose to."

"What a little bit of luck for the lot of us!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Any man here frightfully keen on Coker's conversation?"

"The frightfulness is not terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'll tell you what, Coker," said Harry Wharton, with the air of a fellow making a useful suggestion. "Go and talk to somebody else! What about Potter and Greene? They're your pals, and it's really up to them. Or old Prout? He's your Form-master. Go and talk to Prout, and tell him how many k's there are in cat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Study No. 13. That was too much for Coker. His wrath, hard held up to that moment, boiled over.

He rushed into Study No. 13.

But all the fellows there were ready for that rush. They had, indeed, been wondering how long it would be before Coker broke out.

Every fellow jumped to his feet to meet Coker's rush. There was quite a crush to give him greeting.

His grasp fell on Harry Wharton—hard. The grasp of six other fellows fell on Coker at the same moment—harder.

Upended in the general grasp, Coker was extended on his back on the study carpet. Half a dozen fellows pinned him there.

"Hand me the butter!" shouted Bob Cherry, as he grasped Coker by both ears, which were luckily large, and gave a good hold.

"Bunter's had the butter—" "Oh, I forgot! The jam will do!"

Frank Nugent handed over the jam-dish. Coker, struggling, stared up at that jam-dish in horrified apprehension.

"Don't you dare—" he gasped. "Goooogh!"

The jam-dish flattened over Coker's nose. The jam spread over his features. Bob wiped the dish on his hair.

"Any tea left in the pot?" he asked.

"Just a little!" said Mark Linley, shaking it.

"Let Coker have it!"

The remains of the tea trickled down Coker's neck.

The sounds that came from Coker during this process were unearthly.

"Anything more you'd like, Coker?" asked Bob.

"Mmmmmmm! Urrrggggghhh!"

"Is that Dutch or Russian?"

"Wurrrrrggghhh!"

"Roll him out!" said Bob. "If he's going to thrash Warren, he may as well get on with it! Blessed if I know why he came here to tell us! Did you want us to come and see the fun, Coker?"

"Wooooooorrrghh!"

"We'll come," said Bob. "Wouldn't miss it for worlds! But roll away now, Coker! You're beginning to bore us!"

Coker rolled to the door. Some of the jam brushed off his face on the study carpet as he went. But he was still very jammy and sticky when he rolled into the passage.

There he scrambled to his feet.

He stayed only to draw one breath, and then he charged back into the study.

For whatever mysterious purpose Coker had come up to the Remove quarters, he had forgotten it now. Coker's one idea was to mop up Study No. 13 and every fellow in it.

It was rather unfortunate for Coker that the job was a size too large for him.

Coker, instead of being the mopper, was, so to speak, the mopped. For a

minute or two affairs in Study No. 13 were wild and whirling.

Then Coker came out again. This time he was carried. His arms and legs, his ears and his hair, were grasped, and the Fifth Former was borne bodily up the Remove passage to the tap at the end.

Hurree Singh turned on the tap. The other fellows held Coker's head under it.

"Urrrrrgh!" gurgled Coker, as the water flowed. "You—you—you young—urrrgh—demons! I—I—I'll—Urrrgh!"

"I'll—urrrrgh—I'll—Wurrgh!"

"You need a wash, old man!" said Bob. "You're getting one! Is the water running down the back of your neck? Never mind! There's lots more!"

"The lotfulness is terrific!"

"Wurrgh! Urrrgh!"

"Hush-a-bye, baby!" crooned Bob.

"Quiet while we wash you, little one!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker did not hush. He was not quiet. He was anything but quiet. But he was washed—almost from head to foot, clothes and all!

When the juniors left him, Coker sat and spluttered, drenched and dripping.

They went back to Study No. 13 to finish tea; and Coker limped past the door of that study without going in again, without even thinking of going in again. Coker of the Fifth seldom knew when he had had enough; but it seemed to have dawned on him this time that he did not want any more.

Without stopping to ask for any more, therefore, Coker of the Fifth limped and crawled away, and the chums of the Remove finished their tea in peace, rather wondering what Coker had come up to the Remove at all for, but not fearfully interested to know.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Second I

PETER TODD of the Remove smiled.

It was Coker who caused the smile. It was not uncommon for Horace Coker to cause fellows to smile. Coker added very considerably to the gaiety of existence at Greyfriars School.

Peter, sitting on one of the old benches under the elms, saw Coker coming along the path, and saw Potter and Greene encounter him.

Then he saw Coker turn up his nose, bestow a contemptuous sniff on his two friends, and walk on past them, ignoring them, passing them by like the ill wind which he regarded not.

Evidently there was a rift in the lute in Coker's study. Whereat Peter Todd smiled. Potter and Greene walked off, annoyed, no doubt, by Coker's disdain, but at the same time rather relieved not to have Coker's company and conversation bestowed on them. Coker, walking on under the elms, spotted the smile on Toddy's face, paused, and gave him a grim look.

But that grim look faded away, and Coker sat down on the bench.

Peter eyed him warily. A fellow never quite knew how to take Coker—his temper was a little uncertain. And a great deal had happened that afternoon to exacerbate Coker's temper. But he surprised the Remove fellow by giving him a nod.

"After all, you'll do!" said Coker thoughtfully. "You're a bit of a freak, young Todd—"

"Thanks!" said Peter. "You're a whole one!"

"Eh, what?" Coker did not heed. "Look here, I want a second!"

"You want a second?" repeated Toddy.

"That's it!"

"Got your watch on?"

"Eh! Yes! What about my watch?"

"Lots of seconds on it," said Peter gravely. "Sixty to the minute. Sixty minutes to the hour. That makes three thousand six hundred seconds in one hour. In two hours—"

"Don't be a silly young ass!" said Coker. "That isn't the sort of second I mean! You're rather dense, Todd!"

Peter smiled cheerily. One of them was rather dense, that was certain; but Toddy did not think that it was himself.

"It's a fight!" explained Coker. "I want a second to back me up in a fight. Potter and Greene have let me down. They refuse to act for me."

Peter understood now the disdainful stare and sniff with which Coker had greeted his friends. They had let him down, as Coker considered it—or they had declined to take part in his antics, as they would have considered it themselves.

"You'd hardly believe it," went on Coker, "but not a single man in the Fifth will act as my second either, in my scrap with Warren."

"Not a single man in the Fifth?" asked Peter. "That rather lets you out then, as I understand that there aren't any married men in your Form!"

Coker stared at him. Peter's face was grave, and it seemed to Coker that this junior was remarkably dense.

"I don't mean that sort of single, you young fathead!" he snapped. "I mean not one—not a solitary one. I've asked a lot, and they've all refused. Anybody might think that Warren was more popular in the Fifth than I am."

"Anybody might!" agreed Peter.

"Strange, but true!"

"Well, I've stood enough of the fellow's check," went on Coker. "I'm going to meet him in the gym with the gloves on. I'd rather have the thing fixed up in proper style! But my own Form have let me down—even my own pals—and I decided to ask young Wharton; but he was cheeky when I went up to the Remove passage to speak to him, and I had to whop him!"

Peter winked at the pigeons in the quad.

He had heard about Coker being jammed in Study No. 13, and having his bullet head held under the tap by Wharton and his friends. This was what Coker described as "having had to whop Wharton" for his check!

"But you'll do," went on Coker. "It's a bit sickening to have to ask a measly fag, but what's a man to do when fellows of his own standing in the school let him down?"

"It's an honour for the measly fag, you know!" Peter pointed out gravely. "Make him feel awfully bucked and all that."

"Yes, I suppose so," assented Coker, blind and deaf to sarcasm. "You're a bit of a fool, Todd, and a queer sort of freak altogether, but you'll do. I shall let you act as my second in this matter."

Toddy regarded him thoughtfully. Punching Coker's nose, for his check, was hardly practicable—Coker was too big and beefy. Letting Warren punch it was the next best thing. Obviously, what Coker wanted was punching, and punching hard!

From what he had seen of Warren of the Fifth, Peter had no doubt that he could make rings round Coker, big and burly and beefy as Horace was. Peter began to think this a good idea.



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"I was going down to the footer—" he remarked.

"You can wash that out!" said Coker. "I want you! Now listen to me, and I'll tell you what you're to do."

"To hear is to obey!" murmured Peter meekly.

"Eh? What? Yes, that's so, though it's rather an idiotic way of putting it!" assented Coker. "But as I've said, you're a bit of a fool. Don't jaw—listen! I suppose you know what seconds have to do?"

"Oh, yes, that's an easy one," said Peter. "They have to tick off sixty to the minute."

Coker stared at him. "Will you have a little sense?" he yapped. "I mean a second in a fight, you young idiot! Haven't you any sense? Can't I get any sense from you?"

"No; Fishy has, I think," said Peter. "You might get some from him."

"Fishy?" repeated Coker blankly.

"Fisher T. Fish of our Form," said Peter. "He's an American. I dare say he's got some cents—they're American money, you know. But I'll tell you what, Coker," added Toddy brightly, "I've got some ha'pennies, and they're much the same thing. Will ha'pennies do?"

Peter's face was as grave as an owl's as he asked that absurd question.

Coker gazed at his serious face.

"Well, of all the young idiots!" gasped Coker. "I'm not speaking of cents, you young ass, but sense! S-E-N-T-S—sense!" added Coker, spelling it out for Peter's benefit, but in his own original way, which was one of the causes of his many troubles with Prout in the Fifth Form Room.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Peter involuntarily.

"What are you sniggering at, you little idiot?" snapped Coker. "Shut up, and listen to me! You're going to be my second in a scrap! As my second, you go to Warren and give him my challenge, and fix up time and place! Any time will do, so long as it's pretty soon—any place, so long as the beaks and prefects can't interrupt before I've thrashed him! With or without gloves—tell him he can have the gloves on if he's afraid of getting hurt! Now do you understand?"

"Sort of?" assented Peter. "But let's have it clear! I fix up your fight with Warren, with or without gloves, and so on. Do I arrange about the ambulance?"

"Eh! What ambulance?"

"The one you'll have to be carried away on, when you've finished fighting Warren!" said Peter innocently.

Coker glared at him. Coker was not bright, but even Coker realised that this was not denseness of intellect, but pure cheek. His eyes gleamed, and he made a movement along the bench.

Peter Todd prudently rose and stepped round the bench. It was rather safer to keep it between him and Coker.

"I've told you what I want you to do, Todd!" said Coker, restraining his wrath with difficulty. "Are you going to do it, or do you want me to take you by the neck and bang your cheeky head on this bench?"

"I'm going to do it, old bean!" said Peter cordially. "If you scrap with Warren, the biggest idiot at Greyfriars will get what he's wanted for a long time."

"Well, Warren's a cheeky ass, but I shouldn't call him the biggest idiot at Greyfriars—there's you, for instance," said Coker. "As for his wanting it a long time, he's only been here a week or so. You're rather a fool, Todd!"

"Oh crikey!" said Peter.

"Cut off, and get through with it," said Coker. "I want the thing fixed up properly, but you can tell Warren that if he doesn't play up, and fix it, I shall punch his face in the quad, and bring him up to the scratch that way. I'd rather have it in proper style; but you can tell him that he's got to have it, anyhow. Now cut!"

Peter Todd cut. He walked off to the House in quite a cheery mood. He met the Famous Five coming out, and called to them.

"Here, you men! Do you notice that I've grown taller?"

"Taller?" repeated Harry Wharton.

"Or that my head's swelled?" asked Peter.

"Or am I bearing my blushing honours, thick upon me, without a sign of swank? Don't you notice anything revealing the fact that I've suddenly become an important person?"

The Famous Five gazed at him.

"Anything happened, you ass?"

asked Bob. "Wingate picked you out to play for the First Eleven, or what?"

"More than that!" said Peter.

"Coker's picked me out to act as his second!"

"His which?" ejaculated Bob.

"His whatter?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"His second! He's going to fight Warren of the Fifth, and I'm acting for him!" said Peter.

"It makes me so fearfully bucked to be useful to Coker, that I feel already I shall need a larger size in hats! All the Fifth have let him down, and you fellows seem to have stuck him under a tap, instead of jumping at the chance of making yourselves useful—so he's come down to me. I'm going to see Warren now. Coker explained to me that I should do, although I'm a fool—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When he put it so nicely, of course, a fellow couldn't refuse," said Peter.

"Besides, he was going to bang my head if I did. But the fact is, I'm quite keen to oblige Coker in this matter. When a fellow is badly in need of a whopping and sits up and begs for it, why shouldn't he have one?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Peter went on into the House, on his mission to Warren of the Fifth, leaving Harry Wharton & Co. chortling.

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THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Nice for Price!

"CHUCK that, Price!" said Jim Warren.

Price of the Fifth, sitting in the window seat of his study, had a cigarette in his fingers. As Warren made his remark Price looked at him, curled his lip, and deliberately lighted the cigarette.

Stephen Price, the black sheep of the Fifth, was not a fellow to take orders from a new man who had been little more than a week in the school.

Hilton of the Fifth, sitting on the arm of the easy-chair, with his elegant legs stretched out, glanced from one to the other of his study-mates—Price and Warren. Price had been his pal for whole terms, chiefly because Price wanted to, and Hilton's way was to follow the line of least resistance. But, so far as personal preference went, Cedric Hilton liked the new man better.

"Yes, chuck it, Pricey!" said Hilton.

He had been about to accept a smoke from Price; now he dropped his hand, half-outstretched. Jim Warren was so clean and wholesome and healthy that his presence in the study made Hilton a little ashamed of dingy ways. Hilton,

as a matter of fact, only smoked because Price did, and only backed horses because Price did—and Jim Warren did neither.

"I'll please myself, thanks!" yawned Price.

"But—" began Warren.

"Oh, shut up, Warren!" snapped Price. "You've got a lot too much to say for a new man."

"I was going to say—"

"Well, shut up!"

Stephen Price blew out a cloud of smoke.

He was not going to be dictated to by the new fellow—not if Price knew it! Price was already fed-up with Warren in the study.

At first he had been glad to welcome him, having heard that he was the son of the wealthy Sir Arthur Warren, of Warren Croft, Baronet—a rather big gun in the Diplomatic line, recently appointed to a post in China.

A rich baronet's son was a useful acquaintance to a fellow like Price, who was hard up and had expensive tastes.

But he had been disappointed in Warren.

Whether his father was rich or not, Jim had only a moderate allowance—a very moderate one—and he took care of it, and showed not the slightest inclination to increase it by the method of backing winners, or to decrease it—which was more probable—by backing losers.

The fellow seemed to have no vices at all, as Price realised with disgust. He did not smoke, or bet, or play cards for money; he did not slack either in class or at games. In less than a week Price of the Fifth found that there was nothing whatever to be got out of Warren, and began to dislike the fellow who was so unlike himself.

Now he proceeded to thicken the atmosphere of Study No. 4 with tobacco-smoke, chiefly because Warren had raised objections.

"Dash it all, Pricey—" murmured Hilton.

"Don't be an ass, Cedric!" drawled Price. "I suppose we're not changin' our manners and customs in this study to please a new blighter who's blown in from nowhere. If Warren doesn't like us, he can get out!"

"But—" said Jim.

"They may make you welcome in Coker's study!" suggested Price, sarcastically. "Ask Prout to change you over."

Warren laughed.

"Coker's a prize ass," he remarked. "But he doesn't make his study niff like a tap-room, Price! But I'm not interfering with your manners and customs here, as you seem to fancy. I advise you to chuck smoking now, because—"

"Because it's bad for the wind," jeered Price, "and I shan't be able to buzz a football across a field if I sap away my wind with smokes! My hat! Do you think I haven't heard that tosh since I was a fag in the Second, and do you think I want it from you?"

"No. But Wingate—"

"Are you going to tell Wingate I've smoked here?" sneered Price. "As head prefect he would have to be down on it, though I dare say he smokes a few fags in his own study."

"Rot!" said Hilton. "You know he doesn't, Pricey!"

"Some of the Sixth do!" said Price. "I know some prefects who do, and so do you, Cedric—"

"About Wingate," said Warren. "I was going to say—"

"Don't give me Wingate's pi-jaw at second-hand!" implored Price. "I've

had it from him—and it's bad enough at first-hand!"

"Look here! Wouldn't you get into a row if a prefect spotted you smoking?" asked Warren. "I've heard that it's a very strict rule here, and prefects whip a man for smoking."

"Oh, quite!" yawned Price. "But the excellent Wingate isn't on visiting terms in this study, and he's not likely to drop in."

"That's what I was going to mention—"

"Well, you can ring off. If you don't like the smoke, you can get out of the study."

"I can't very well get out—"

"Why not?" sneered Price. "Nobody wants you here, that I know of."

"I mean, because I'm expecting Wingate—"

"Wha-at?"

"He said he would drop in after tea to see me about the football—"

Price snatched the cigarette from his mouth.

"You fool!" he panted. "And you never told me—"

"I've been trying all this while—"

Price gave him a bitter, evil look.

Hilton grinned.

"Better take the new man's tip and chuck it, Pricey!" he remarked.

Tap!

The door opened.

Price was already taking the "tip"—now that he knew that Wingate was expected in the study. He did not want the head prefect of Greyfriars to catch him smoking.

Whether Wingate would have "whopped" a Fifth Form man like a fag was, perhaps, doubtful; but Price did not like taking the risk. Wingate certainly was the man to do it if he saw fit.

But Price had no time to get rid of the tell-tale smokes! He had thrown the half-smoked cigarette on the floor, and he was in the act of setting his foot on it when Wingate entered.

And that was not the worst! On the window seat beside him was an open box of cigarettes and a box of matches.

Wingate had a cheery smile on his rugged face as he came in. He had noted the new fellow's form on the football field, and had an eye on him for the First Eleven. He had come there for a pleasant chat about the game, into which he hoped to draw Hilton. He had long ago given up all hope of Price.

"Hallo, you here, Warren!" he said genially.

Then the cheery smile faded from his face, and he coughed as the whiff of tobacco struck him and he saw Price in the very act of clamping his foot on a half-smoked cigarette.

"Smoking again, Price!" he said quietly. "I wonder how many times you were warned last term."

Price made no answer. He scowled sullenly. He would have given almost anything to reply with a flippant sneer. But the power of the ashlant was in the prefect's hands, and he did not dare ask for a whipping.

Wingate glanced at Hilton. The dandy of the Fifth was rather glad now that he had not accepted a smoke from Price.

Warren stood silent.

He did not like Price, and, in fact, despised him. But he would have put him on his guard in time—but for Price himself, who had given him no chance till it was too late.

Wingate stood frowning grimly.

"I dropped into this study for a friendly chat," he said. "I didn't come here as a prefect! I don't feel that I can deal with you as you deserve."

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Price. But I warn you once more to be careful!"

"Thanks!" said Price, as impudently as he dared.

"Throw your cigarettes into the fire!" Price hesitated. Cigarettes cost money; and there was a box nearly full.

Wingate's jaw squared.

"Do you hear me, Price?"

"Look here, Wingate—" muttered Price.

He still hesitated, uncertain how far he dared go.

Wingate soon made that clear. He strode across the study and picked up a cricket stump from a shelf. Stump in hand he turned to Stephen Price.

"I give you one second! Then you'll be whopped! Now then!"

Price, with a livid face, picked up the box of cigarettes and flung it into the study fire-grate.

"Now stir it with the poker!"

Price kicked up the poker, and stirred the cigarettes into the fire. His face was almost white with rage and mortification.

Wingate threw down the cricket stump.

"Next time you'll get whopped!" he said. "If you act like a silly fag in the Second, you'll be treated like one!"

Price made no answer to that. He dared not utter the words that leaped to his lips.

But his eyes glittered at Warren. It was through Warren that the Greyfriars captain had come to the study at such an unlucky moment.

And there was a faint contempt in Warren's face that stung him deeply. A few minutes ago Price had been putting on the air of a reckless sportsman who cared nothing for rules or prefects. Now he was cutting a very poor figure indeed. He went to the door.

"Coming out, Cedric?" he muttered.

"Stay here, Hilton," said Wingate.

"I want to talk to you about the footer, as well as Warren."

Hilton glanced from one to the other.

"Oh, all right!" he said.

"Look here, Cedric—" snapped Price.

"That's enough," interrupted Wingate.

You'd better cut. Now, look here, you men," went on Wingate, seating himself on the corner of the table, facing Hilton and Warren, and taking no further notice of Price's existence.

I'm fixing up a practice match on Saturday—"

Price went out, and the study door closed with a slam.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Painful for Peter!

PETER TODD, coming up the Fifth Form passage with a cheery grin on his face, met

Price coming down the passage—looking anything but cheery.

"I say, Price, is Warren in his study?" asked Peter.

Price looked round at him.

Warren's name to Price, just then, was rather like a red rag to a bull. He did not answer. He made a step towards Toddy, kicked him, and walked on.

"Yow-ow!" roared Peter, in surprise and wrath. "Why you rotten bully, what the thump do you think you're doing?"

Price walked on.

Peter glared after him in great wrath, and wriggled. Price turned the corner and disappeared; and Peter,

still wriggling a little, went on to the study.

He thumped on the door and hurled it open.

"Oyez, oyez, oyez!" bawled Peter into the study, in the manner of a town crier. Then he jumped at the sight of Wingate.

"Oh crikey!" he gasped.

The Greyfriars captain gave him a petrifying glare.

"What the thump—" he roared.

Peter faded out of the picture promptly.

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped, as he dodged into Coker's study for refuge, lest Wingate should pursue. "Oh crumbs! Oh scissors!"

He had not, of course, expected to find so great a man as Wingate in Warren's study. Certainly he would have announced his arrival a little less uproariously had he been aware of it.

He waited inside Coker's door in considerable trepidation. However, Wingate did not come out to look for him; for which relief the playful Peter was duly thankful.

It was ten minutes later that he heard Wingate depart from Study No. 4, the "football jaw" being over by that time. Peeping from behind Coker's door he watched the Greyfriars captain turn the corner and disappear.

Then he emerged and went along to Warren's study again.

Warren and Hilton were still there, talking very amicably on the subject of the trial match Wingate had fixed up. Hilton had agreed to play in that match, though he was expecting angry words from Price afterwards.

Both the seniors stared at Toddy as that ambassador from the great Coker presented himself.

"That young ass again!" said Warren.

"Get out!" said Hilton. "What the dooce do you come bargin' into a man's study for, you cheeky young tick?"

"A message from Mars!" explained Peter.

"What?"

"Not the giddy planet! The god of war of the same name!"

"Is that kid potty?" asked Warren, staring at Peter.

"Must be, I think," said Hilton.

"Kick him out, anyway."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Peter. "Don't you senior men know that the persons of heralds and ambassadors are sacred?"

I'm an ambassador!"

"An ambassador!" repeated Warren blankly.

"Yes. Ambassadors are people who stir up strife, and mustn't be touched while they're doing it. I've come here to stir up strife, and I mustn't be touched!" Peter explained.

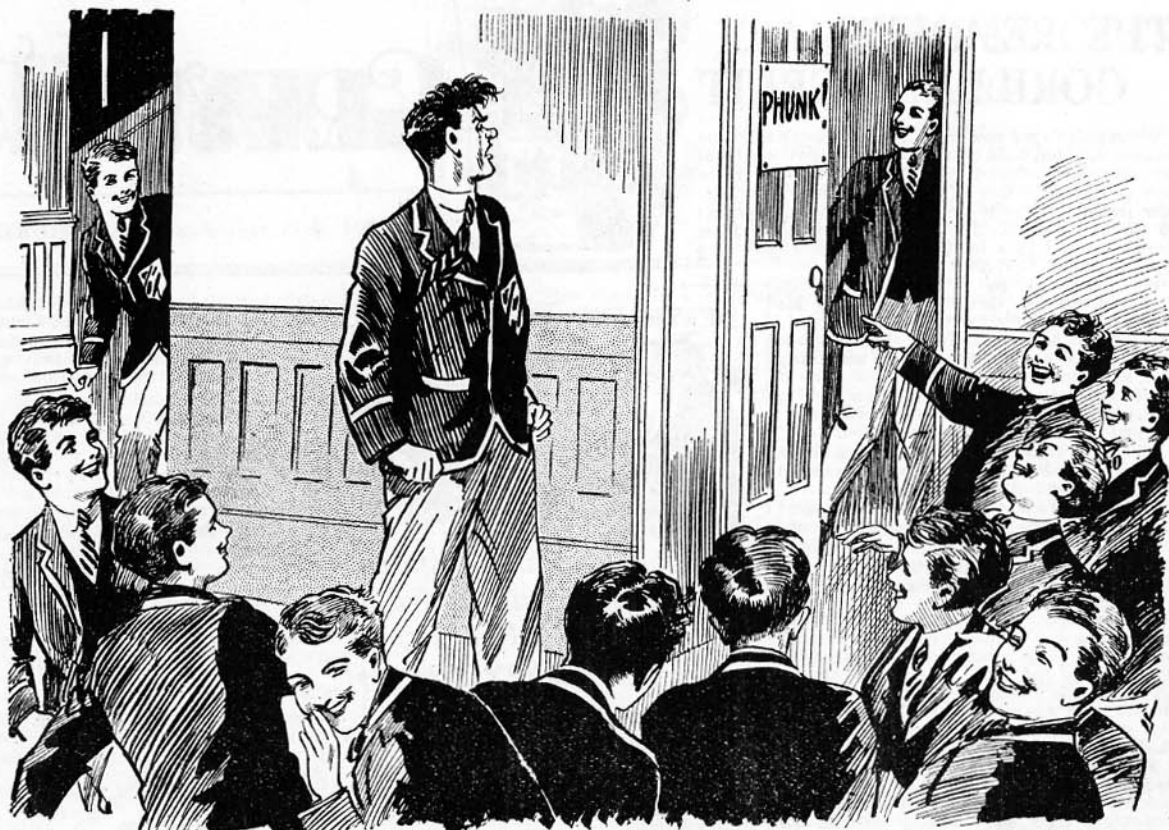
"I think you must be a little touched, to judge by your gabble!" said Warren.

Peter stared for a moment and then laughed.

"Quite bright!" he said. "A hit—a very palpable hit, as my old friend Shakespeare put it. But to come down to brass tacks, I'm Coker's second, and I've come here to fix up a ferocious combat. Coker—my principal—is thirsting for blood. Nothing but blood will satisfy him."

"You young ass!"

"Name your second, Warren!" said Peter with dignity. "Is Hilton acting for you? If so, I'll make the arrangements with Hilton. My principal wishes this matter to be fixed up in proper style—no hole-and-corner business for my man! No scrapping round



As Warren opened his study door to glance out into the passage, Coker's placard caught his eye. Warren stared at it, while Coker waited for him to take action. But Warren merely broke into a roar of laughter.

the chapel corner and bolting if a prefect appears in the offing. No, sir. Everything in proper style—seconds, Queensberry rules, basin and sponge for the casualties, and—

"Shut the door after you," said Warren.

"I'm not through yet. First of all, are you going to fight Coker?"

"No!" hooted Warren.

"In that case, Coker is going to punch your face in the quad to bring you up to the scratch!"

"Let him!" said Warren grimly. "I fancy he will be sorry soon afterwards."

"Now, look here," said Peter persuasively, "don't spoil a good thing, Warren. A rough-and-tumble scrap in the quad is horrid bad form—and if a beak barges in, it means lines and detentions. Much better have the thing fixed up according to rule. Name your second—"

"Has Coker sent you here to talk this silly rot?" demanded Warren.

"I'm his second!" said Peter, with dignity.

"Well, tell him I'm not going to fight him. I scrapped with him my first day here and licked him, and that will do," said Warren. "If he wants another licking he can get it from some other chap. I'm not going to make a regular job of thrashing Coker."

Peter chuckled.

"I saw that scrap," he said. "But Coker thought he licked you."

"He would—with a brain like his. Well, let him think so—I don't mind in the least!"

"But he wants more!" explained Peter. "I hope you're not going to funk, Warren! My principal means business, I can tell you."

"Has that ass Coker really picked a potty kid from the Remove to act as his

second?" said Hilton, with a grin. "What a howling ass the chap is!"

"I don't think he's a bad chap," said Warren. "But he is a benighted ass, there's no mistake about that. He's worried because I kept him out of a fearful row with Prout the other day. Next time he asks for the sack, I'll let him get on with it. You can tell him so, Todd. Now cut!"

"Are you refusing the challenge?" asked Peter.

"Yes; hook it!"

"But Coker says—"

"I said hook it!"

"That's all very well," said Peter obstinately. "But I'm bound to tell you what my principal says—"

Hilton and Warren exchanged a glance. Peter seemed to be taking his duties as Coker's second very seriously. The two seniors did not seem to take them, or Peter, seriously at all.

They rose, and made a grasp at Toddy, one on either side. Peter was jerked to the study table, and before he knew what was happening was lifted across it face down.

He roared.

"Here, I say—hold on! Chuck that! You can't treat a man's second like this, you fatheads!"

"I think we can!" said Warren, laughing. "Lower Fourth cheek isn't wanted in a Fifth Form study, young fellow-me-lad! Hold his neck, Hilton—this Latin dick will do!"

Hilton grinning, pinned Peter to the table by his neck.

Warren picked up Dr. Smith's Smaller Latin dictionary, which was used for Form work in the Fifth! The next moment Peter was glad that the Greyfriars Fifth did not use Dr. Smith's Larger Latin dictionary.

Whop, whop, whop! The smaller edition was quite large enough, and heavy enough for Peter, when Warren handled it.

Whop, whop, whop! "Whoop!" roared Peter, wriggling and kicking wildly. "You silly rotters—Yarooop! You blithering fatheads—Yurrooh!"

Whop, whop, whop! "Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Peter.

"There, I think that will do!" said Warren, laughing. "Now go back to Coker, and tell him that if he cares to come along, we'll give him some of the same."

Peter wriggled off the table. He was disposed to linger and tell the two Fifth Form men what he thought of them. But he decided not!

Warren and Hilton were drawing back their right boots, evidently with the intention of helping him out of the study! Peter sagely decided to depart without help. In fact, he departed quite quickly.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Phunk!

"PENNY for 'em!" said Frank Nugent, with a grin.

Harry Wharton started. The two chums were in Study No. 1 in the Remove. Harry Wharton had a problem to do for Mr. Lascolles, the maths master, and Frank was waiting while he did it—with the aid of the "Holiday Annual."

But Wharton, sitting at the table, had fallen into a brown study—forgetful of the work before him.

Nugent, for some minutes, watched

The SPY of the FIFTH!



(Continued from page 13.)

him over the top of the "Holiday Annual," and then spoke.

Wharton came out of his reverie with a jump.

"I'll make it twopence!" said Frank, laughing. "Such fearfully deep thoughts must be worth that!"

Harry Wharton laughed, too. But his face became grave again at once.

"I was thinking about that new man Warren," he said.

"Composing a funeral oration for him, after Coker's done with him?"

It's serious, Frank, old man! Outside ourselves nobody knows anything about—about— Wharton hesitated. "I'm not going to speak about it, of course, at least, till I know! But—it's a worry."

"But the chap explained that all right when you tackled him the other day," said Nugent. "You told us you were satisfied."

"So I was!" admitted Wharton.

"But—"

"The bitfulness seems to be terrific, as Inky would say."

"He made out that that hulking brute I saw at Warren Croft, who told me that he was James Warren, was pulling my leg," said Harry slowly. "But he never said so—he wouldn't say it out plain."

He paused.

"And—I've been thinking of it since, Frank. That bullying brute may have pulled my leg, of course, but—I don't believe it. He was at Warren Croft, with the run of the place. He had no reason whatever, so far as I can see, to give me his name at all, unless he gave me the right one. And—"

"And—"

"And I've remembered some things since, that I was rather forgetting when I spoke to Warren," said Harry.

"That brute of a fellow was like old Sir Arthur to look at. They had the same square chin."

"This chap Warren's got rather a square chin."

"Yes, I know; but in that fellow it was rather like a bulldog's jaw—and in old Sir Arthur it was much the same. And the features were alike, too. The fact is that James Warren was like enough to Sir Arthur Warren to be his son—and this Jim Warren isn't."

Nugent whistled.

"This chap Warren seems so decent, that if he'd speak out plain, I think I'd take his word, puzzling as it is," said Harry. "But—he won't! Well, why won't he, if all's fair and square?"

"That's so," said Frank. "But if all isn't fair and square, old bean, a lie or two wouldn't cost him much. If he's a rotter who's bagged another fellow's name and place, he wouldn't mind adding a few lies."

"Yes, that's the giddy puzzle!" said Wharton. "An impostor must be a

pretty thick liar to begin with, and one more would see him through."

"Well, old chap, if he's so jolly particular that he won't tell even one little fib to set your mind at rest and keep himself safe, he can hardly be such an awful spoofer as to be an impostor."

Wharton sat silent. That seemed unanswerable. It was difficult to imagine an impostor, sailing under false colours, who was incapable of lying.

And yet— Wharton knew, or at least felt that he knew, that the hulking fellow he had quarrelled with at Warren Croft, was the genuine James Warren. Since his talk with the new senior, a score of little circumstances had recurred to his mind which seemed to prove it.

And if that lot had been the son of Sir Arthur Warren, this handsome and popular fellow, Warren of the Fifth, certainly was not. The fact that he disliked one, and liked the other, made no difference to that.

It came back to the question—where was James?

It seemed incredible that harm could have been done him, either by the new senior or accomplices of his. Yet he must have been prevented somehow from coming to the school. How?

It seemed to Harry that he glimpsed crime as in a glass darkly! Yet one glance at Jim Warren's frank, pleasant face made the mere thought of crime, in connection with him, seem absurd.

Wharton was very far from being a fellow to take interest in what did not concern him. He would have been only too glad to dismiss the whole affair from his mind, especially as he liked Jim Warren. But if wrong had been done, if a cheat was being practised, how could he?

"I never saw that square-jawed Johnny, of course," said Frank, breaking the silence. "But—I think this chap Warren is all right, Harry. He looks it, at least. I—"

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter put a grinning fat face into the study and interrupted. "I say—he, he, he! I say—he, he, he!"

"Take that alarm-clock away!" said Frank.

"Eh? I haven't got an alarm-clock!" said Bunter, blinking at him. "Wharrer you mean?" Then, realising that Nugent was alluding to his musical laughter, he added: "Beast! Cheeky beast!"

"Buzz off, fatty!" said Harry.

"But I say, you fellows—he, he, he!" chuckled Bunter. "I say—Coker—he, he, he!" Bunter cackled and cackled.

"Oh, what about Coker?" asked Nugent, and he grinned, and Wharton grinned. One touch of Coker made the whole school grin!

"He, he, he! He's at it again!" chortled Bunter. "I say, you ought to come and see him—he's after that chap Warren—"

Bunter rolled away to spread the news further.

Wharton and Nugent jumped up at once—problem and "Holiday Annual" both being left unfinished. Coker on the warpath was too entertaining to be missed.

Quite a number of fellows were crowding across the landing at the end of the Remove passage, to the Fifth Form games study. Loud sounds of laughter could be heard—and the bull-voice of Horace Coker.

"You can cackle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared a dozen Fifth Form fellows in and out of the games study. Coker had emerged from that apartment.

He had a sheet of cardboard in one hand, and some drawing-pins in the other. On the cardboard something was inscribed in large capital letters. Fellows who could see it seemed to find it amusing—in fact, excruciating. They howled.

Coker seemed at a loss to account for the general merriment. Coker, at least, was serious. Coker was, indeed, the only fellow at Greyfriars who took Coker seriously!

"That cad Warren funks a scrap!" roared Coker. "I sent a second to him—to fix it up—and he refused to fight. Well, if the fellow's a funk, he can crawl off—but I'm going to show him up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to stick this on his study door, and every man at Greyfriars can see it, and know what he is!" declared Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, as Wharton and Nugent came scudding up. "Look here! Let the fellows see it, Coker!"

"What is it?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Look!" gurgled Bob.

Coker, evidently, had no objection to fellows seeing the placard he was going to post on Warren's study door! Everybody wanted to see it, and Horace held it high to be seen. There was another yell:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

On the card, in big capitals daubed in with a brush by Coker's artistic hand, was the one word:

PHUNK!

Coker, an original fellow in many ways, had a marked originality in matters of spelling. Prout, in the Form-room, was said to tear his hair over Coker's spelling.

"You can cackle!" hooted Coker. "Warren can cackle, if he likes, when he's shown up to all Greyfriars as a funk—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker snorted angrily and marched up the Fifth Form passage. A whole mob of fellows followed him, some chortling, some wiping their eyes.

He halted at Warren's door, which was shut. He put the card against it, and drove in the drawing-pins at the four corners with his thumb.

That denunciation of the new senior was posted up for all the school to see and read!

No doubt that placard would have been offensive had Coker's spelling been like any ordinary fellow's spelling. But the way Coker had spelt that word made it irresistibly comic.

Twenty or thirty fellows in the passage howled with laughter.

The uproar caused Warren, who was at home, to open his study door and glance out in surprise. Opening the door brought Coker's placard right under his eyes. He stared at it.

Coker, standing in an attitude rather reminiscent of Ajax defying the lightning, waited for him to take action. If the fellow wasn't a funk, and didn't like being called one, Coker was ready to oblige him with a fight on the spot, or on any other spot.

But Warren did not look warlike. He gave the placard one surprised stare, and then burst into a roar.

Coker's spelling affected him as it affected the other fellows. He yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" gasped Coker. "You think it funny, do you?"

"Ha, ha! Yes!" gasped Warren. "Ha, ha! Quite!"

"Well, if you like being called a funk, there it is," said Coker, in contemptuous disgust; and he stalked away.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Warren, laughing, closed his study door again. He did not seem to mind Coker's denunciation sticking there. There it remained.

For quite a long time after that, fellows who heard of it went up to the Fifth Form passage to look. And every fellow howled with mirth at the sight of the word "PHUNK!" pinned on Warren's door.

Coker heard them in his study, and simply could not understand it. Any fellow who had denounced Coker as a funk would have been booked for battle, murder, and sudden death. Yet Warren and all the other fellows seemed to regard Coker's denunciation as a screaming joke.

Coker just couldn't understand it. But it was only one more of the many, many things that Coker couldn't understand.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Warren Weighs In!

CECIL PONSONBY of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe smiled genially.

It was a half-holiday, and Pon & Co. were taking a walk abroad, looking for the mischief which Satan is said to find for idle hands to do.

Too slack for games, or any sort of strenuous occupation, Pon & Co. strolled and slacked and smoked and hunted for trouble. They had found a little pleasant amusement in pelting a horse grazing on Courtfield Common, till an angry man with a stick appeared in the offing. Whereupon Ponsonby and Gadsby and Monson and Drury exerted themselves for once, departing from the danger zone at considerable speed.

When they slowed down at a safe distance Pon sighted a cap in the Greysfriars colours over the furze, and then he smiled. Any Greysfriars fellow was Pon's game, so long as heavy odds were on Pon's side. This junior in a Greysfriars cap was evidently alone—and there were four of the Highcliffians—so Pon gave the word:

"Come on!" And they ran through the furze, to round up the fellow who was sauntering along the road over the common.

Pon grinned with satisfaction as he saw that it was Harry Wharton. It was his first meeting with Wharton that term, and he had not forgotten the troubles and grievances of earlier terms. This was a chance for Pon to pay off a lot of old scores all at once.

"Pin him!" murmured Pon. His comrades grinned and trotted across the grass to the road to "pin" the Greysfriars fellow.

Wharton did not hear their running footsteps on the grass, and did not see them coming. He was walking along slowly, his hands in his pockets, his eyes on the ground, a wrinkle of thought in his brow.

He was thinking of the strange mystery of Warren of the Fifth—the fellow who, unless he was strangely mistaken, had come to the school in another fellow's name. He was, in fact, taking that quiet walk on the common to think it over.

What he ought to do, and whether he ought to do anything in the matter, was a puzzle to him. Yet he felt that it could not possibly be left where it was.

He shrank from the thought of doing anything to injure Jim Warren. Yet, unless the fellow was guilty of wrong-

doing, nothing that Wharton could say would injure him.

Warren was not the fellow he pretended to be. Obviously the Head could not know that, or Prout. Could Wharton hold his tongue, and leave an impostor to carry on? Could he, without being even satisfied as to what had happened to the genuine James?

But James Warren and Jim Warren were driven suddenly from his mind as the four Highcliffians rushed on him, and grasped him suddenly before he knew what was happening.

Wharton staggered in the grasp of four pairs of hands.

"Got him!" chuckled Pon.

Harry Wharton struggled savagely. "Let go, you rotters! Four to one,

you rotten cads! Let go!" he panted. "Hold the cad!" grinned Gadsby.

It was not easy for even the four to hold Wharton as he struggled. They had his arms; but he got one loose, and a sudden upper-cut jarred every tooth in Ponsonby's head.

Pon gave a howl and sat down in the grass, clapping his jaw with both hands.

"Ow! Wow!" he spluttered.

"Ooooh!" Wharton wrenched and struggled, hoping to get loose from the three. But they clung to him like cats.

Pon was on his feet again in a few moments. He hurled himself at the captain of the Greysfriars Removs, and grasped him by the back of the collar with both hands.

(Continued on next page.)

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

Here's another snappy poem by the Greysfriars Rhymester, and this time his subject is

GEORGE GATTY,

Dicky Nugent's chum in the Second Form.

(1)

Horrid smells of burning kippers
From the Form-room greeted me,
And informed me that the kippers
Of the Second were at tea!
So I gasped and muttered: "Slay me!
Those dashed kippers, I should think,
Must be most uncommon 'gamey'
To create that awful st—smell!"

(3)

Don't imagine I was scatty
To be visiting the fags,
I was after young George Gatty,
So I risked their silly rags.
Though my job of interviewing
Often lands me in a fix,
I am always up and doing—
Up to snuff and doing nix!

(4)

So, one evening in September,
I went forth to Fagdom land,
After Gatty, who's a member
Of young Dicky Nugent's band.
There's not much to say about him,
He's as inky as the rest,
And if Greysfriars was without him—
Well, we'd try to do our best!

(6)

Then, before the strong aroma
Which was giving me the creeps
Put me in a state of coma,
I beseeched the little sweeps:
"Stop, I pray, before you scoff all
This incinerated fish!
Do not eat this poison offal,
Death itself is in the dish!"



(9)

But the fags arose in fury,
Crying vengeance with one breath!
Acting both as judge and jury,
Nugent sentenced me to death!
This, with great enthusiasm,
They proceeded to inflict;
I regretted, with a spasm,
I had been so very strict!

(2)

It was just as I had reckoned,
As I afterwards found out,
For the heroes of the Second
Think they know their way about,
And they like to save their money
On the food provision job
By accepting fish when "funny"
At a dozen for a bob!



(5)

Nearly sickened by the fragrance
(Which no phrases can reveal),
I approached and watched the vagrants
Of the Second at their meal.
And the sight held me in thralldom
As the savage creatures fed;
How they bit and tore and mauled 'em,
Those poor kippers, long since dead!

(7)

But the fags replied: "Good gracious!
Manifesting all respect,
We're compelled to feel pugnacious—"
Well, or words to that effect!
Actually they said: "You're barmy!
Hop off home, before you're kicked!"
But I thought they couldn't harm me,
And decided to be strict!

(8)

Catching Nugent by the collar,
I severely clipped his ear,
Then I kicked the wretched scholar
Accurately in the rear!
Turning then to Gatty keenly,
I said: "Just a word with you!"
And I took a seat serenely
For the coming interview.



(10)

First they lammed me with a Caesar,
Rulers, too, were used by some,
Then they emptied on my beazer
Half a gallon-jar of gum!
After that, with sticky features,
I forthwith—well, did a bunk!
Sorry I had told the creatures
That their wretched supper st—smell!

Wharton was dragged down with Gadsby and Monson and Drury sprawling over him. Pon's eyes blazed down at him.

"Drag him across the road!" hissed Pon. "We'll roll him into the ditch!" "Good egg!" chuckled Drury.

"Oh, you rotters!" panted Wharton, resisting desperately.

A car roared by, the motorist staring as he passed at the bunch of struggling schoolboys. Then the road was clear, and the Highcliffians dragged the Greyfriars-junior across to the ditch.

It was a deep and wide ditch, banked with nettles, and half-full of water. The bare idea of being plunged into the muddy water made Wharton exert every ounce of his strength.

For a full minute they struggled on the verge of the ditch. All of them were too busy to observe two cyclists coming up the road from the direction of Greyfriars School.

But the two Greyfriars seniors on the bikes observed the struggling bunch at the ditch's edge, and stared at them as they came.

"What the dickens is up?" asked Jim Warren.

"Only a fag row," answered Hilton of the Fifth. "Those kids belong to Highcliff School; no bizney of ours."

"That's a Greyfriars kid they're handling."

"Is it?" yawned Hilton.

He pedaled on. Hilton of the Fifth was cycling that afternoon with the new fellow, turning down Price, and a visit to the Three Fishers.

But he did not share Warren's interest in the shindy that was going on at the roadside. Indeed, the dandy of the Fifth was rather keen to steer clear of it.

But Jim Warren braked and slowed down as he came nearer the struggling group.

Four against one was not fair play, and though Warren, no more than Hilton, wanted to get mixed up in a junior row, he did not feel disposed to pass on and leave Wharton to it.

He jumped off his machine, slung it against a tree, and stepped rapidly on the scene, just as Wharton, exhausted by his efforts, was overpowered, and Pon & Co. were about to pitch him in.

"Chuck that!" said Warren.

He caught Wharton's arm with one hand, and held him back from the ditch. The other he swung round, knocking Ponsonby and Gadsby off their feet.

They rolled in the dusty road, and Monson and Drury jumped away in alarm.

Seeing that the new arrival was a muscular Greyfriars senior they jumped farther, turned tail, and bolted.

Pon and Gaddy, less fortunate, were not able to bolt. As they scrambled to their feet Jim Warren grabbed them, and held them.

"Let me go, you Greyfriars cad!" yelled Ponsonby furiously.

"What's the hurry?" grinned Warren. "You were very busy just now. Stay where you are, my pippins!"

Pon and Gaddy had no choice about that. In Warren's strong grip they wriggled like eels, but they could not wriggle loose.

Harry Wharton, tottering with exhaustion, stood panting, streaming with perspiration. He was dusty, dishevelled, ruffled, and wildly rumpled. It was nearly a minute before he had breath enough to speak, and Warren waited, smiling, and holding Pon and Gaddy by their collars. Hilton, riding slowly, was disappearing up the road.

"I—I say—thanks!" gasped Harry.

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He was already crimson; but his colour deepened still more as he saw who his rescuer was—the fellow of whom he had been thinking with dark doubts and suspicions when the Highcliffians set on him.

"All serene," said Warren, laughing. "Were they putting you in the ditch?"

"Yes—I should have been in, in another tick, if you hadn't chipped in." Wharton panted. "I say, it was decent of you Warren—much obliged."

"Oh, don't mench!" said Warren. "Two of the young blighters have bolted, but here's two of them if you want them."

"I do!" said Harry, his eyes glinting. "If you'd hold the cads another minute, while I get my breath."

"Pleasure!" "Look here—" mumbled Gadsby. "Will you let go my collar?" hissed Ponsonby. "I'll hack your shins if you don't, you Greyfriars' cad!"

"Better not!" smiled Warren. "You go head first into the ditch if you do." And Ponsonby didn't.

Harry Wharton recovered his breath. He was in a shocking state of untidiness, and had collected a good many bruises in that fierce struggle. Now it was the turn of the Highcliffians.

"Let them go now, Warren!" he said. "One at a time, what?" grinned the Fifth Former.

"No, both at once. I can handle two of them!"

"Good man! Go ahead!"

Warren chuckled, and pitched Ponsonby and Gadsby right at Wharton. He stood back to watch the scrap, heedless of Hilton vanishing across the common.

It was brief; but it was hot and strong.

As there was no help for it, Pon and Gaddy put up a fight! But Wharton with gleaming eyes, and fists that hammered like lumps of iron, knocked them right and left.

Gadsby was soon on his back in the dust—and stayed there! Ponsonby retreated, fighting as hard as he could, which was not very hard, as he was watching all the time for a chance to cut and run.

Right across the road he was driven, and on the grass of the common, under a shower of punches. There, with his nose streaming red, Pon desperately bolted. Wharton rushed after him, landing a kick as Pon fled—considerably accelerating his flight.

Then he turned back to Gadsby. Gaddy was up again—but he, too, was running! He vanished like a rabbit across the common.

Jim Warren, chuckling, went back to his bike.

"Thanks again!" called out Harry.

"All right, kid!"

Warren put a leg over his machine and shot along the road to catch up with Hilton. Wharton was left alone—dusty and untidy and breathless. But Warren had saved him from the reeking ditch, for which he was duly thankful.

He walked back to Greyfriars, breathing hard. Warren had helped him out of a scrape—while Hilton had passed by. When he thought of the state he would have been in, if Pon & Co. had plunged him into two feet of water and reeking mud, Wharton could hardly fail to feel grateful to the new man in the Fifth.

The problem was still on his mind, unsolved, but on one point Harry Wharton felt that the matter was already decided. Whatever he did, or did not do, he was not going to do anything to harm Warren of the Fifth.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Who's a Funk!

"ROTTER, I call it!" sneered Price.

"Oh, shut up, Pricey!" yawned Hilton.

"Coker's saying—" "Bother Coker!"

"It's not nice for this study," sneered Price. "Coker's already named this study the 'Funk-hole.'"

Jim Warren was at prep. So ought Hilton and Price to have been—but Hilton was lounging in the armchair with one elegant leg crossed over the other, and Price, standing by the fender, was talking.

Price, had he followed his own wishes, would have had the gloves on with the new fellow himself.

His dislike of Warren was turning to hatred. He had almost lost his pal, Hilton, now. Not that he cared twopence so far as friendship went, but the wealthy Hilton was a very useful friend to a needy fellow like Price.

Under the combined influence of Wingate and Warren, Cedric Hilton was taking up football with some seriousness, and his visits to the Three Fishers and the Cross Keys with Price were things of the past. Cigarettes in the study, backing horses with Joe Banks seemed to have lost their attraction for Cedric Hilton, and as the black sheep of the Fifth had few other interests Hilton was less and less with him and more and more with Warren.

Every day, Price's feelings grew more bitter. If Price had ever regretted his slack and dingy ways it was now when he had to realise that he lacked the muscle and the vigour to tackle the fellow he loathed. He would have given much to be able to handle Jim Warren.

But he could not have handled one half of him, and he had to give up that idea, if he had ever thought of it.

For that reason, he was anxious to see Warren mixed up in a scrap with Coker of the Fifth. And in a good many quiet and unostentatious ways Price had done his best to keep the flame of Coker's wrath burning—not that it was likely to go out.

Coker, though no boxer, was so big and beefy, that he looked like having a good chance in a scrap with the new fellow, at least, in Price's opinion.

Anyhow, even if he was licked he would do some damage, and the more damage that was done to Warren's handsome face the more pleased Price would be.

But Warren took every care to avoid trouble with Coker—even to the extent of letting the egregious Horace call him a "phunk." He was good-natured and easy going, and Coker's antics only made him smile.

Coker was ready, more than ready, for trouble—in fact, yearning for trouble. But it was not easy to get Warren up to the scratch.

Jim glanced up from his prep and fixed his eyes on Price's sallow, sneering face.

"The 'Funk-hole'?" he repeated.

"Yes, that's the name of this study, now, in the Fifth!" sneered Price.

"Looks as if it's deserved, too."

"More or less!" agreed Warren. "There's one funk here, I fancy! His name's not Warren, though."

Hilton chuckled and Price reddened.

"Well, if a fellow called me what Coker's called you he wouldn't get away with it!" said Price.

"What has he called me?"

"You know well enough!" sneered Price. "He's called you a funk and a good many fellows think he's hit the nail on the head, too."

Warren looked thoughtful,



Warren rushed on to the scene, just as Pon & Co. were about to pitch Wharton into the ditch. "Chuck that!" said Warren. He caught Wharton's arm with one hand, and then swung the other hand round, knocking Ponsonby and Gadsby off their feet.

"You think a fellow oughtn't to stand it?" he asked.

Price shrugged his shoulders.

"I know I wouldn't!" he retorted.

"Funk!" said Warren.

"What?"

"Funk!" repeated Jim calmly.

Another chuckle came from Hilton. Price had asked for this, and now that he was getting it Hilton was amused.

Stephen Price stared at Warren's calm, handsome face looking up from his books. He bit his thin lips hard.

"What do you mean, you fool?" he snarled.

"Exactly what I say!" answered Warren with smiling coolness. "You've been girding at me for days to get me into a scrap with Coker! I'm going to keep out of it if I possibly can—"

"And let him call you a funk!" jeered Price.

"Yes—especially the way he spells it. But you tell me that you wouldn't stand being called a funk. Well, I'm calling you one. What are you going to do about it?"

Warren gazed across the study table at Price with calm inquiry.

The red deepened in Price's sallow cheeks—and the grin broadened on Cedric Hilton's face.

In his keenness to egg on a scrap, and to jeer at the fellow he disliked, Price had, so to speak, delivered himself bound hand and foot into the enemy's hand.

He had not the remotest intention of entering into a scrap with Warren, if that smiling and cheerful youth called him a funk a hundred times over.

"If you choose to turn the matter into a joke—" he said at length. It was rather difficult for Price to know what to say.

"Nothing of the kind," said Warren. "I spotted you as a funk before I'd known you three or four days, but I

was too civil to mention it. I'm mentioning it now. You're a funk!"

"Better chuck it, Pricey!" drawled Hilton. "You're gettin' the worst of this, old man!"

"I'm not going to fight Coker if I can help it," went on Warren. "He's a howling ass, but he's far from being a bad chap in his own way. I rather like him in fact—only I wish he'd keep his distance and not play the goat. Anyhow I'm not going to fight him if I can scrape out of it. But I'm ready to fight you, old bean, any minute! Here and now if you like."

Warren rose from the table and came round it.

Price left his position by the fender and backed across the study.

Hilton watched the two of them with great amusement.

"Ready?" asked Warren, pushing back his cuffs.

Price was pale with rage and chagrin now.

"I'm not going to fight you!" he snarled sullenly.

"But I've called you a funk!" said Warren, staring at him. "That's a thing you say you wouldn't stand! You think a fellow ought to get on the warpath if he's called a funk, even by a silly ass like Coker, who doesn't know what he's talking about. Well, now you're called a funk, and I'm waiting for you to get on the warpath."

He made a forward step.

Price made a backward one, his face livid.

"Hands off, you rotter!" he breathed. "You're not going to fight!"

"No!" hissed Price.

"Not after I've called you a funk?"

Price did not answer; but his look spoke volumes. If looks could have slain, Jim Warren's career might have

come to a sudden termination at that moment.

"Well," said Warren cheerfully, "I'm a peaceable chap, and I don't want to fight you any more than I want to fight Coker. Please yourself, Price. But take this as a tip—if you give me any more of your rotten, sneering cheek, you'll have a fight on your hands, whether you want it or not! I'll stand it from Coker; but I won't stand it from you—see?"

Warren dropped into his chair again and resumed his prep. He dismissed the matter from his mind.

Price did not dismiss it. As he worked at prep that evening, his eyes incessantly left his books to glitter at Warren's bent, handsome head.

The veriest funk does not like being called one; and the fact that he had asked for it, indeed begged for it, did not make it any more palatable to Price.

His heart seethed with rage and rancour. But there were no more sneers—no more "girding." Price had taken Warren's "tip," and he was judiciously mute.

But the new man in the Fifth had made an enemy who was going to be a thorn in his side, if he could. And Stephen Price was on the watch for an opportunity if it came—and as it happened it was not long in coming.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Last Straw!

PROUT tore it, so to speak. For quite a long time—days and days, in fact—the feud between Horace Coker and Jim Warren remained in a state of abeyance.

Coker, ready for war at a moment's notice, made the discovery that it takes two to make a quarrel, and that Warren was as slippery as an eel when it came to getting him up to the scratch.

Only Coker believed that that was due to funk, all the rest of the Fifth being aware that Warren could make rings round Coker if he chose so to do.

But, as Coker believed it, it had a soothing effect on him, and he contented himself with lofty scorn, which did not worry Warren very much.

With Warren determined on peace, and Potter and Greene trying their hardest to coax Coker off the warpath, hostilities were averted—till Prout put the lid on in the Form-room!

Prout, unaware of what he was doing, tore it! He tore it, in fact, to tatters!

They were doing Livy in the Fifth. Livy is not easy to penetrate; to Coker he was impenetrable.

Often Prout yielded to the temptation to let Coker have an easy time, in order to have an easier time himself. Sometimes, conscience drove him on to drive Coker. At such times Coker sweated, and Prout came near tearing his hair. On that particular morning Prout was conscientious.

He was driving Coker. Coker was not only dense. He had an opinion that this Latin stuff was all rot, unworthy of his powers, such as they were. Utter tosh, he had told Potter and Greene often enough—and he came near telling Prout!

How many ancient Romans, Coker wanted to know, was he going to meet after leaving school, to talk Latin to! And even if he did—which was highly improbable—would they want him to talk about the Punic Wars? Of course they wouldn't!

Wasting Coker's valuable time—that was what it came to! Coker told Potter and Greene that schoolmasters taught this tosh because they had learned it themselves, and wanted to work it off on somebody!

They hadn't the brains, Coker declared, to learn anything with any sense in it, that a fellow might benefit from learning in his turn! That was why they mugged up this stuff!

And then really brainy fellows—like Coker—had to have it inflicted on them, simply because it was the only stuff that the old foolzlers could teach!

With this view of the value of a classical education, added to a brain that rather resembled a solid chunk of oak, Coker was not likely to get on well with Livy. And he didn't.

Knocking a nail into a steel ingot was an easy and pleasant task, compared with knocking Titus Livius into Coker's head.

It was not surprising that Prout lost patience. It was not surprising that he often talked to Coker in a strain that made the hapless Horace wonder how long he would keep from punching his nose. But for that meddling, cheeky tick, Warren, he would have made Prout sit up with that footer on his chivvy a few days ago, in return for his "jaw."

Prout, as usual, lost patience on this eventful morning. Autumn rains had brought on a touch of rheumatism, which made Prout unusually conscientious and painstaking in dealing with Coker.

And the long and the short of it was that Prout gave Coker up as a bad job, and told off a fellow in the Form to

explain to him the passage with which the Fifth were then dealing.

Naturally, he picked out a fellow who was good at it: and that fellow happened to be Jim Warren.

Warren was good in class—very good. He really took an interest in learning things—which was a rare pleasure for a Form-master to behold.

Prout would not have liked a "swot" or a "sap," who browsed on books like a donkey on thistles. But Warren was no swot or sap. He was good at games, and as fit as a fiddle. Health was more important than knowledge.

But Warren allowed knowledge to be a good second—not merely an "also ran."

Prout was rather proud of him in his Form. He would tell the other beaks in Common-room about him, as a sample of the "mens sana in corpore sano"—the healthy mind in the healthy body.

Indeed, he was so pleased with Warren in Form that he made it a point to forget to ask him for the two hundred lines he had given him for upsetting Coker in the quad.

So he picked Warren for the instruction of Coker.

Warren was willing to oblige. Explaining and elucidating a difficult passage to a dense, slow-witted fellow was an excellent way of learning it thoroughly oneself.

But Coker was not willing. Told to sit aside with Warren and Livy, while Prout went on with the rest of the Form, Coker breathed surprise and rage and fury.

Coker was quite unconscious of being a fathead. He was convinced that he had at least twice Warren's brains.

If he didn't mug up this classic rot like Warren it was simply because he couldn't bring his powerful intellect down to such fooling tosh.

So when Warren, in a low, pleasant voice, explained and elucidated, Coker only responded with an inimical glare.

That glare remained fixed and ferocious till the end of the lesson. Coker was at boiling point.

When the Fifth went out, after class, naturally he boiled over. He had been simmering so long.

"Smug!" hooted Coker, as soon as they were out of the Form-room.

Warren walked down the passage. "Swot!" hissed Coker, walking after him.

Warren accelerated. "Sap!" roared Coker, still on his trail. Warren went out into the quad.

"Smug! Swot! Sap! Greaser!" roared Coker, rounding him up in the quad. "Greasing up to Prout! Yah!"

"My dear chap—" said Warren. He saw that it had come at last. All his pacific efforts were in vain. Prout had torn it!

Coker exhibited a leg-of-mutton fist under his nose.

"Will you have it now, or when will you have it?" he bawled. "I'm going to whop you! I'm going to make you cringe! I'm going to give you the thrashing of your life, you smot and swug—I mean, smug and swot! I'm going—"

"Shut up, Coker!" urged Potter and Greene together.

Coker did not heed. He was too enraged and exasperated even to hear. Besides, shutting-up was not in Coker's line. He seldom shut up.

"Put up your hands, you smug!" he roared.

"If you won't take no for an answer!" sighed Warren.

"I'm going to smash you!"

"Prout's coming out!" murmured Greene.

"Blow Prout! For two pins, I'd punch him, as well as Warren!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Now, you swotting smug—"

"After class this afternoon, in the gym!" said Warren.

Prout had come out of the House, and the good-natured new fellow was chiefly anxious to keep the egregious Horace from making a fool of himself under Prout's baleful eye.

"Oh, all right!" Coker dropped his leg-of-mutton fist. "If you don't turn up, I'll come and look for you, and mop you up wherever I find you! I've been trying to bring you up to the scratch for days and days, and you're not crawling out of it again!"

"Leave it at that!" assented Warren. He walked away. And Coker turned to Potter and Greene.

"You're going to be my second, Potter?"

"No!" hooted Potter. "If you want to play the silly goat, go and play it without my help!"

"You, Greene?"

"You can make a blithering idiot of yourself on your own!" answered Greene.

They walked off together, followed by a glare from Coker. They had let him down again. Perhaps they were fed-up with Coker and his antics.

Coker, looking round, spotted Todd of the Remove. He bore down on Peter. It was a case of any port in a storm. He had to have a second in his fight with Warren.

"Here, young Todd!" he snapped. Peter eyed him.

"I've fixed it up with Warren! I told you I'd let you act as my second. Be ready after class to-day."

"Wash it out!" said Peter. "I'm fed-up with you, fed-up with Warren, and fed-up with the Fifth generally! The whole blessed lot of you can go and eat coke! And—Yarooop!"

Peter yelled as Coker fixed a finger and a thumb on his ear.

"What's that?" asked Coker grimly.

"Yow-ow! Leggo! Wow!"

"Are you acting as my second, or do you want me to bang your head on that tree?"

With the tree near at hand, and a vice-like grip on his ear, Peter Todd realised that, like Agag of old, he had to walk delicately.

"Oh! Yes!" he gasped. "Yes, rather! What-ho! Ow!"

"Right!" said Coker, releasing the ear. "Don't forget!"

Peter rubbed his burning ear as Coker left him. He was not likely to forget. He had a twinge in his ear to keep him reminded.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Price Hears Something to his Advantage!

"GOT a match?" asked Price.

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

"Look here, Cedric—"

"Rot!"

The two ill-assorted friends were walking in the Cloisters after class. Hilton had started talking football, being interested in the trial game fixed up by the Greyfriars captain in which he and Warren were to figure. Price's sneering smile had cut that subject short.

Hilton was irritable and ill-at-ease, and, in fact, wanted to get away to join the footballing fellows. But a sense of loyalty kept him where he did not want to be.

But when Price stopped at a spot by the old wall which was thickly screened by ivy, behind an old pillar, and

produced a cigarette-case, and asked him for a match, Hilton had had enough.

"If you're going to smoke, I'll leave you to it!" he said curtly, and without waiting for an answer he walked away.

Price was left alone, with a black look on his face.

Cedric Hilton had smoked with him, gambled with him, played the "giddy goat" generally—before Warren came. Now he was throwing over that sort of thing—and, as a natural consequence, Price, too, as Price had no other interests, and would not have been found dead on a football field.

The black sheep of the Fifth had led him there for a quiet smoke after class, and this was the result!

Price set his thin lips hard.

He stood leaning against the old stone wall in bitter silence and reflection. He was losing Hilton—if he had not already lost him. Nobody else in the Fifth was keen on his society. Few, if any, shared his tastes. It was all due to Warren!

If only Coker gave the meddling rotter a sound thrashing in the gym! That would be a satisfaction.

He started as a voice came round the old stone pillars, uttering the hated name that was in his mind:

"Warren!"

"Well, you young ass?"

The first voice was that of Harry Wharton of the Remove. The second was that of Warren of the Fifth.

Price started and stared blankly.

Neither Wharton nor Warren had come to that quiet corner for a smoke, that was certain. Why had they come? Why, in fact, were they together at all—a Fifth Form man and a Lower Fourth junior? Price was surprised and rather curious.

He did not move or make a sound. Leaning on the old wall, he was half-hidden by the clustering ivy, and one of the old stone pillars was almost in front of him.

Neither of them knew that he, or anyone, was there, that was certain. They had come there, because nobody would be there, to discuss some private matter.

If they had come on farther they would have seen him. But they had stopped on the other side of the stone pillar.

"You young ass!" repeated Warren. "Look here! I'm fed-up with your rot. We had a talk in the study the other day, and I told you to chuck it. Now you seem to be beginning again!"

"I must!" said Harry.

"Well, I tell you I'm fed-up with it!" "I've got to speak! Except for my friends, who won't say anything about it, I've told nobody, and I'm not going to. But—"

"You're sure there's something to tell?"

"Yes."

Price hardly breathed.

This was a windfall for him.

What in the name of wonder was it that that junior knew about Warren of the Fifth—a fellow who, as far as Price could see, was above-board in every way—too much so, in fact, to please Price.

Was there a chink in the fellow's armour? It looked like it! What had he been up to that this junior knew?

"It's no good talking rot, Warren," went on Wharton's voice. "You know as well as I do that there's something. You're admitting it, in fact."

"How do you make that out?"

"I've asked you to let me speak to you quietly! I don't want to come to your study again—that cad Price might be there, or Hilton! Well, you've come here with me for me to speak."

"Well?" rapped Warren.

"You wouldn't have, if there wasn't something in it!" said Harry.

Price heard Warren laugh. But his keen ear detected a false note in the laugh. The fellow was not so easy in his mind as he wished the junior to believe that he was.

The spy in the ivy almost trembled with eagerness.

What was he going to hear—against his enemy?

Something, perhaps, that would put the fellow in his power! What, in the name of all that was mysterious, could Warren of the Fifth have done? Something, it was clear!

"I'm frightfully worried about it," went on Wharton, and the tone of his voice told how true that was. "After you helped me the other day, when those Highcliffe cads set on me—"

"Come to the point!"

Warren's voice was sharp. "I can't make it out! I'm just puzzled and beaten!" said Harry. "I know you're a decent chap—anybody could see it! But—you're not James Warren, and I must know what it means!"

Price almost gasped aloud.

Not James Warren!

What was he learning now?

"What you said in the study the other day settled the matter, as I thought at the time," went on Wharton. "That fellow James Warren was a cad, a lout, and a bully, and it seemed likely enough that he was a liar, too, and that he gave me a false name for some reason or other. But—"

"Well?"

"I've thought it over since. I've remembered how like the fellow was, to look at, to Sir Arthur Warren! He was Sir Arthur's son! Everything he said, too—and a dozen other things. Look here, Warren! There's no doubt about it! That fellow I saw at Warren Croft was James Warren, the son of Sir Arthur Warren, and you're not!"

Silence!

Price of the Fifth almost wondered whether he was dreaming.

From the beginning of this strange talk he had fancied that the junior had found out something discreditable about Warren—and he wanted to find it out, too. But he had never dreamed of this.

A fellow in a false name. It was impossible—impossible! But it suppose it was true!

Price's eyes danced. He listened for more.

"You're not James Warren," went on Wharton, after a long pause. "I notice that you always call yourself Jim Warren, too—just as if you dislike using the name you've borrowed. I can't understand it but there it is."

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Price's eyes danced. He listened for more.

You're not James Warren—you're not the son of Sir Arthur Warren—and you're here under false colours. But—"

"But what?" asked Warren quietly.

"I can't believe that you've done wrong. I can't think of—of crime, in connection with you. But—I've got to know. Surely you can see that a fellow can't keep mum when a chap comes to Greyfriars calling himself by a false name—and the chap it belongs to doesn't come, though he's expected. What has become of him? He's a brute and a bully, but—but—"

Wharton broke off.

"Is that all?"

"No! As I've said, I can't believe you'd do wrong, but—what does it all mean? That's what I want to know! I'd take your word—"

"Thanks!" "Give me your word that no wrong has been done, that you've got a right to use a name that isn't yours, and I'll believe you, though I can't understand it. I'll take your word, and try my best to shove the matter out of my mind."

Silence again.

It was Warren who broke it.

"So that will satisfy you?"

"Yes."

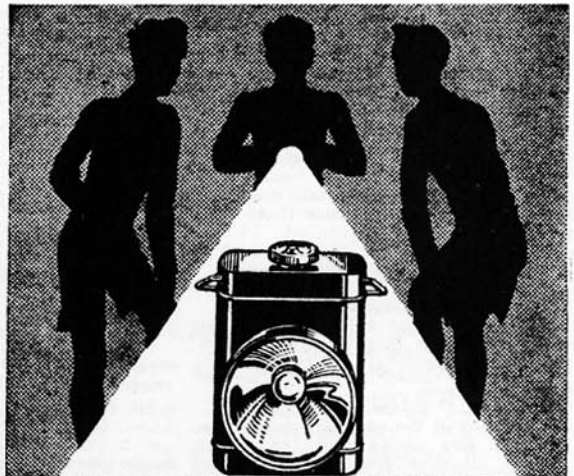
"You fancy me an impostor, yet you're willing to take my word?"

"Yes. I'd rather you explained, but—I'm willing to take your word. I know that's all right."

Warren laughed again, with a genuine ring in it this time.

"Well, you're a young ass!" he said. "But if that will satisfy you, and keep you from bothering about what doesn't concern you, all right! I give you my word, honest Injun, that no wrong has been done to anybody, and that my

(Continued on next page.)



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conscience is perfectly clear. As clear as your own—which seems to be a rather particular and touchy one!" He chuckled. "Is that good enough?"

There was a pause.
"Yes!" said Harry Wharton, at last. "I can't understand it, but I'm willing to leave it at that; if no wrong has been done to the real James Warren, it must be all right. I shan't speak about it again. Goodness knows what it all means—but I feel sure you wouldn't give your word if it wasn't straight!"
"You think you can trust me to that extent?"

"Oh, yes, that's all right."
Price heard Harry Wharton's receding footsteps.

The junior was gone.
Warren remained for a few minutes, leaning on the stone pillar that hid Price from him. Price heard him mutter aloud:

"Bother!"
Then he, too, walked down the Cloisters; and was gone.

Price of the Fifth remained where he was. He remained quite a long time—thinking. He had ample food for that.

One thing was clear. Jim Warren was not the fellow he pretended to be.

Had he been, he would have answered Wharton very differently.
Price pictured a junior telling Blundell of the Fifth that his name wasn't really Blundell, and that he had borrowed another fellow's name. He grinned at the thought.

Obviously, what Wharton had said was true, or Warren would not have taken it as he had. He had given the junior his word that no wrong had been done—which, in Price's opinion, was worth nothing at all; it was the easiest way of keeping a credulous kid quiet. He was not the son of Sir Arthur Warren, of Warren Croft—and he pretended that he was.

Price gloated.
The fellow—his enemy—was a cheat, an impostor! If he was found out he would be kicked out of Greyfriars—perhaps sent to prison. Only—there was no proof—and Price realised that he had to be wary in making use of this new and unexpected weapon against his enemy.

But he was going to make use of it. There was no doubt about that!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Real Shriek!

"I SAY, you fellows! They're going!" yelled Billy Bunter.
"Come on!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Roll up!" grinned the Bounder.
The news of the coming fight between Warren and Coker had, of course, spread all over the school. It had spread like wildfire. Almost every man had resolved to see it. Everybody agreed that it could not fail to be entertaining.

It might have been regarded as a rather serious affair had Horace Coker possessed even an elementary knowledge of boxing. Coker had lots of muscle and heaps of pluck. But Coker knew as much about boxing as the average elephant knows of tight-rope dancing! Warren had shown that he could box, and box remarkably well. So nobody expected Warren to get damaged; burly and beefy as his opponent was.

And he was so good-natured, that they did not expect Coker to be damaged much, either.

A fellow who had been fairly hurted THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,441.

and driven into a scrap, might have been expected to get wrathful, and to make the hunter and driver sorry for himself. But all the fellows knew that Jim Warren would let Coker off as lightly as he could—at least, as lightly as Coker would let him. He did not want to damage Horace.

Only Coker supposed that it was going to be a terrific battle, serious if not actually tragic. Everybody else knew that it was going to be comic, and they weren't going to miss it.

The news that Warren was walking down to the gym brought a crowd of fellows on his track after tea. Even Billy Bunter was interested—even Lord Maulverer detached himself from his study sofa—even Fisher T. Fish left off counting his money and came along. Harry Wharton & Co., of course, were all there.

Shell and Fourth, fags of the Third and Second swarmed. Fifth Form men came in numbers—even big men of the Sixth!

Wingate was seen to stroll into the gym with Gwynne and Sykes. As prefects, these great men were supposed to stop a fight, if it looked at all like a serious affair. But they did not look as if they expected anything serious. Loder, who was also a prefect, was heard to offer Walker three to one on Warren—an offer that Walker declined without thanks.

Warren strolled into the gym with Hilton, who was going to act as his second. Coker was not yet to be seen.

Potter and Greene were there, but only as spectators. Having tried their hardest to keep Coker off the war-path, and Coker having persisted in getting on to it, his pals were leaving him the war-path entirely to himself. They refused to have a hand in the affair at all.

Potter remarked to Greene that a jolly good hiding might, perhaps, do old Horace good. Greene agreed that it might, and charitably hoped that it would. About Coker getting it, neither had any doubt.

"Where's Coker?"

"Coker's late!"

"Coker! Coker! Coker!" shouted the fags, like an impatient audience at a theatre, waiting for a performer who was late.

There was plenty of space in the gym, but it was fairly well packed. Nearly all the school seemed to have rolled up.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Here's Coker!"

"Come on, Horace!"

Coker, chin up, with knitted brows, strode in. He was followed by his second—Todd of the Remove.

Horace was not proud of his second. It was humiliating to Horace to have to get a junior to act for him—him, a senior; and not merely a senior, but the most important senior at Greyfriars! But there it was—not a man in the upper Forms was going to help Coker play the goat—and it was Toddy or nobody!

Coker indemnified himself for that humiliating circumstance, by treating Peter with cutting contempt, as, of course, a fag deserved to be treated! Which made Peter very enthusiastic for his principal—perhaps!

Toddy, walking in behind Coker, closed up to him, unseen by the great Horace, who had, of course, no eyes in the back of his head, and was seen to hook a card on his back.

Coker, marching loftily on, was unaware of the card. But the fellows who saw it shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

On the card was written, in large capital letters to catch the eye:

HORACE,
THE CELEBRATED PERFORMING
DONKEY!
A REAL SHRIEK!

The crowd in the rear of Coker, who could see that startling placard, roared and rocked.

The fellows in front of him wondered what the explosion was about—as they could not see Coker's back.

But at that roar behind, Coker turned to stare round, in angry surprise.

There was a roar, fore and aft, so to speak, of Coker!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, that ass Toddy!" gasped Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, look at that! He, he, he!" squeaked Billy Bunter. I say—he, he, he!"

Coker, glaring at the laughers, turned again and marched on. Yells followed him.

"Horace—"

"The celebrated performing donkey will—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perform, Coker!"

"We're waiting for the performance!"

"Go it, Horace!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker breathed hard and deep. Not being able to see his back, he had no idea of the cause of that outbreak of irrepressible merriment.

But he could see that the fellows were not taking this serious affair with due seriousness. Even Coker could see that!

"I'm here!" he said grimly, with a glare at Jim Warren, who was laughing, like the rest. "Think it funny—what?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!" gasped Warren.

"Well, I'll soon be making you snigger on the other side of your mouth, I fancy," said Coker. "If you're ready, and not funking it, let's get going. I've no time to waste on you."

"Ready!" gasped Warren.

Hilton handed him the gloves. Basins of water and sponges were ready, for the damages—if any!

"Todd!" rapped Coker.

He glared round for his second.

But his second had disappeared into the ranks of the Remove.

Having affixed that card to Coker's back when he entered the crowded gym, Peter was done with him. It was, in fact, only judicious to be out of Coker's reach when he discovered the card.

"Todd, you young rotter!" roared Coker. "Come here!"

Peter Todd, in the midst of the Removites, grinned. But he did not answer, and he did not come. He was through with seconding Coker.

Coker snorted! He made up his mind to give Toddy the whopping he deserved at a later date. At present he had no time to look for him.

As Coker stepped into the ring someone in the crowd drew his attention to the card hooked to his back. Coker turned his head, and his eyes fell on the card.

He wrenched it off, after a struggle, gazed at it, and read: "Horace, the celebrated performing donkey. A real shriek!"—hardly able to believe his eyes as he read.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the crowd!

"Go it, Horace!"

"Perform, old pippin!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker breathed fury.

"That young villain, Todd—" he gasped



Frantic with fury, Coker hurled himself at Warren. That active and nimble youth calmly stepped out of the way, and Coker rushed blindly into Wingate. "Ooooooh!" yelled the Greyfriars' skipper, as he got Coker's right in his eye!

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I'll smash him!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Coker glared round in unspeakable wrath for Peter. He spotted him, and rushed at him. For the moment he forgot even Jim Warren.
 "Line up!" gasped Harry Wharton.
 "All hands repel boarders!" chortled Bob Cherry.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 A dozen Removites met Coker's rush. They collared him and distributed him on the floor, in a rather breathless state.
 Wingate of the Sixth came striding up.
 "Here, chuck that!" he exclaimed.
 "You can't rag with the fags here, Coker."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Coker staggered to his feet. He gave the chuckling Removites a glare, and turned his back on them. Even Coker realised that he could not deal with the whole Remove in a body, and that he had better keep to the matter in hand. He tramped back into the ring.
 "I'll keep time!" said Wingate.
 "Now then! Gloves on? Ready! Time!"
 And the great fight began.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Great Fight!

HORACE COKER, burly and beefy, looked much bigger and heavier than Warren as he faced him with the gloves on. He was in a sort of Berserker mood—panting for the fray. He was going to show all the fellows, especially Warren, whether there was anything to laugh at! He was going to hammer that irritating, amused smile off the face of his adversary. He was going to overwhelm him in the first round, knock

him right and left, leave him gasping on his back, and repeat the dose, if necessary, in the second round. After which Coker was prepared to forgive him, and let him off.

But it did not work out according to programme.

One of Coker's mighty smites would have given Warren plenty to think about if he had got home with it. But Warren, who was well aware of what a punch would be like with Coker's beef behind it, was very careful not to let one get home.

He was quick and nimble on his feet—nimble as a monkey, slippery as an eel. Coker came at him like a runaway lorry going downhill. Warren side-stepped, and Coker blundered past him, hardly knowing that he was not there.

As he passed, Warren gave him a gentle tap on the right ear.

Coker came about, like a full-rigged ship under sail, and rushed him down again.

Again Warren side-stepped, again Coker plunged wildly past, and again Warren gave him a light tap—this time on his left ear.

"Oooh!" gasped Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is this as good as a play, or isn't it?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Quite!" chuckled Wharton.

"The quietfulness is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For a third time Horace barged furiously at Warren. This time Warren backed round in a circle, with Coker following him up, panting and punching, with his adversary always just a little out of his reach.

"Time!"

Wingate was laughing almost too much to call time. However, he called it, and the first round was over.

Warren smiled, and stepped to his

corner. He had not had to exert himself a good deal.

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance. After all, old Coker was their pal, exasperating ass as he was. He wanted somebody to back him up and fan him, and sponge the streaming perspiration from his manly brow.

Potter made up his mind to do it, and joined Coker in his corner.

He made the gasping Horace sit down and fanned him with a towel.

Horace blinked at him.

"That rotter's as slippery as a worm!" he said. "But I'll pin him down! I'm going to smash him!"

"Hem!" murmured Potter.

"Time!" came from Wingate.

Coker stepped up very briskly. Experience, which is said to make fools wise, never had that effect on Coker. He started his charging and barging tactics over again from the beginning, and the entertainment of the first round was repeated.

"Can't you stand up to a man, you sneaking funk?" gasped Coker, as his big fists sawed empty space.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Warren had no intention of stopping one of those hefty punches if he could help it. Neither had he any intention of knocking Horace out, if that could be helped. Every fellow but Coker could see that he could have done it quite easily. All the while he was charging and barging Horace was open to easy attack.

But Warren kindly refrained. He really did not want to hurt old Coker!

At Coker's present rate of progress he would wear himself out in about four rounds, and fall down from the exhaustion of his own efforts. That seemed a much more kindly way of letting the combat conclude.

Coker was getting winded. A fellow could not keep on charging and barg-

ing, and brandishing brawny fists with-out the strenuous exercise telling on him.

By the time that round ended Coker was gasping spasmodically, and he was really glad to get a rest in the corner and pant for breath.

Potter dabbed his face with a cooling sponge and fanned him. Coker was as highly coloured as a newly boiled beetroot by this time.

"Time!" said Wingate, with a cheery grin.

Coker came on, though rather more slowly.

Nevertheless, the amount of effort put into that round was enormous. He had plenty of beef, and he used it all. Some of his smites were so tremendous that Coker nearly toppled over when nothing stopped them.

How he came to miss Warren every time was a mystery to Coker. But he did. That cheerful, smiling face, so near to him, might have been miles off, for all the chance Horace had of hitting it.

It really looked as if Warren was a first-rate boxer and Coker was a worst-rate one; but that explanation never occurred to Coker. He was puzzled and bewildered and annoyed.

"Time!" Coker took a much-needed rest again. Potter fanned him in silence. Coker sat and gasped.

"Time!" Coker made a deadly determined attack this time.

For once he succeeded in crowding Warren, and the new senior had to hit him. He had his choice of Coker from head to foot to select a place for hitting, and he decided on Coker's nose.

Horace had an impression that a mule had kicked his nose. He sat down with startling suddenness. The floor almost rang.

"Man down!" chuckled Bob.

"Urrrrgh!" gasped Coker.

Warren stood and smiled.

Coker scrambled up.

Frantic with fury, he hurled himself at Warren.

That active and nimble youth calmly stepped out of his way. Coker, rushing blindly on, rushed into Wingate.

Hitting out with both fists as he rushed, he took the timekeeper by surprise.

There was a fearful yell from the Greyfriars captain as he got Coker's right in his eye and Coker's left on his jaw! He crashed.

Coker stood like a fellow petrified as he saw that he had knocked Wingate down. He had undoubtedly been under the impression that he was hitting Warren!

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate of the Sixth scrambled up. He was a good-tempered fellow, though perhaps not quite so good-tempered and patient as Jim Warren. But his good temper completely failed him now.

He hurled himself at Coker.

Bang, bang!

Right and left, the Greyfriars captain banged, and Coker went over like an up-rooted tree.

"There, you footling fathead!" gasped Wingate. "There, you fat-headed fooler! There, you potty chump!"

The whole gym shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

This seemed to the happy audience to put the lid on. They howled and shrieked and yelled.

Wingate stalked away. He had had enough.

Coker staggered to his feet.

He also had had enough, if he had only known it. But he did not know it. Coker never knew when he was beaten.

He glared round, gasping, for Warren. He spotted him, and dashed at him. He hurled himself at Warren like a battering-ram. Again the new senior had no choice but to hit.

He hit!

The impetus of Coker's terrific rush added to the force of that hit, which was rather hefty, anyhow.

Again Coker did his uprooted-tree act. He went over, bunched, and crashed—and stayed over!

Wingate was gone. But five or six fellows counted Coker out. They counted ten—and might have counted

twenty or thirty! Between his own terrific efforts and that knock-out punch Coker was done.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Catspaw!

COKER was in the study—alone! Seated at the table, he was bending over a basin of water, bathing his right eye, his left eye, and his nose in turn, when Price looked in.

Coker took no notice of Price. He did not like the fellow, and was not going to pretend to.

Price coughed.

"Rough luck, Coker!" he said. "You ought to have won that scrap. I fancy it would turn out a bit different if you tried it over again."

Coker thawed.

Price might be a bit of a toad, but evidently he saw which was the better man between Coker and Warren. He was the only man in the Fifth to express this opinion.

"A fellow doesn't like to see a rotter like that get away with it," went on Price.

"I don't see that he's a rotter," said Coker. "A cheeky tick if you like, but I've seen nothing rotten about him. He's not a fellow of your kidney, for instance, Price."

"Well, what I mean is," he said slowly, "the fellow seems to be an impostor of some sort. He's come here calling himself James Warren."

"Why shouldn't he, if it's his name?" asked Coker, staring.

"That's the point, is it?" said Price. "Young Wharton is his neighbour at home, and he knows James Warren by sight, and he says this chap isn't James Warren at all."

"W-Wharton does?" stuttered Coker.

"Yes; so I've heard," said Price calmly. "I believe a lot of the fags in the Remove know. I understand that it's common talk among Wharton and his friends. They keep on wondering who this chap is, and how he got here in James Warren's name, when he isn't James Warren at all."

"Great Scott!"

"No bizney of mine, of course," said Price carelessly. "But I can't help thinking that the Head ought to know. What do you think, Coker?"

Coker stared at him blankly.

"It can't be true," he said. "But if it's true, of course the Head ought to know. I'll jolly well find out pretty quick whether it's true or not, and if it is, by gum, I'll let him see that he can't play games like that at Greyfriars. You're sure about young Wharton?"

"I heard him say to-day that he knows James Warren by sight at home, and that this Warren isn't the fellow at all," said Price coolly.

Coker's eyes gleamed.

"Leave it to me," he said grimly.

Which, though Coker did not guess it, was exactly what Price had intended to do. It could not have been left in better hands, if the idea was to get it all over Greyfriars, from one end of the school to the other.

Price nodded and left the study.

He smiled as he went. Jim Warren had made an enemy of him, and Jim Warren was going to learn that he could be a dangerous enemy. There was trouble coming for the new fellow in the Fifth!

THE END.

(Once Coker gets on the scent of a mystery there's no holding him. In next week's super yarn, he sets out to expose his enemy, Jim Warren, as an impostor—and makes himself "Greyfriars Idiot No. 1"! It's a story that shatters all previous laughter records!)

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CARSON

CAPTAIN LAWLESS

CRIBB

Trapped!

YOUNG Allenby, whilst being a very decent fellow, was an inveterate talker.

As he emerged from the theatre into the hustle and bustle of Leicester Square, with its brilliantly illumined night signs, he was talking loudly to his two pals, Carson and Cribb, with whom he had become acquainted during a brief sojourn at Abbotscourt School.

Young Allenby had enjoyed the show the trio had just seen, and he was saying so with such heartiness and enthusiasm that he failed entirely to notice a furtive little man in a macintosh and felt hat, who jostled him, not once, but twice.

Another thing Allenby failed to notice was that the little man adroitly annexed his wallet. So smooth and skilful a piece of pickpocketing was it that it stamped the little man as a past-master in the art.

Contrary to usual procedure, he did not at once merge with and lose himself in the crowd. Instead, slipping young Allenby's wallet into his own pocket, he proceeded to trail him, Carson, and Cribb.

He followed the trio as far as the nearest car park, where he listened in the dark shadow of some near-by railings, as, throwing himself into the driving-seat of his sports car, young Allenby bade his two pals "Good-night!"

Waiting until the sports car had roared off into the night, and Carson and Cribb were walking in the direction of the Piccadilly Tube, the little man made swiftly towards Wardour Street and vanished down a narrow side street.

Entering a small and dingy newspaper shop, he nodded to the swarthy-looking proprietor, and, with a familiarity which spoke of his acquaintance with the place, passed through into an untidy back parlour.

Producing the wallet, he quickly examined its contents. Strangely enough, he seemed more interested in the old letters and visiting cards it con-

tained than in the few pound notes which he found.

Laying the wallet on the table, he stepped to the telephone and picked up the receiver.

"His name's Allenby," he said, when he had got through to the number he had asked for—"Cyril Allenby, of Cranston Gardens, Golders Green. He's on his way there now. The other two? They're returning to their hotel at the moment. Yes, I'm certain of it!"

Carson and Cribb were returning to their hotel, for the hour was late. They were in London for a few days with Captain Lawless, whom they were helping in his lone fight against the great Baltic Power which was on the eve of

"Your two schoolboy assistants will die on the stroke of twelve to-day unless you deliver yourself and your flying submarine to us. . . . That was the grim ultimatum Captain Lawless received from his enemies!

declaring war on Britain and her Empire.

These were dangerous days for the two schoolboys, for they knew perfectly well that the agents of the foreign Power were determined to get them as well as Captain Lawless.

"I wonder if the skipper's back yet?" said Cribb, as they entered the foyer of their hotel in the Strand.

"I shouldn't think so," laughed Carson. "He's been dining at Sir Godfrey Carter's, and the old boy's an absolute bridge fiend. I don't suppose the skipper'll escape much before one o'clock."

"Well, let's turn in!" yawned Cribb. "I don't know about you, but I'm jolly tired—Hallo! Yes?"

He broke off inquiringly as one of the staff hurriedly approached.

"You're wanted on the telephone, sir," said the man—"either you or Mr. Carson. Cabinet No. 1."

"Who's calling?" demanded Carson. "I don't know, sir," replied the other. "The caller asked if you were in, and said he wished to speak to you urgently."

"Right-ho!" said Carson.

And, striding into the telephone cabinet, he picked up the receiver.

"Carson speaking!" he said.

"My name is Dr. Williams?" came a pleasant but hurried voice over the wire. "Are you the Mr. Carson who is a friend of Mr. Cyril Allenby, of Cranston Gardens, Golders Green?"

"Yes, that's right!" replied Carson.

"What's wrong?"

"I am very sorry to say that Mr. Allenby has met with a severe accident in his car," came the doctor's voice.

"He is in my surgery now, and is too severely injured to be moved. I have been trying to get into communication by telephone with his family, but I'm afraid they must be out, as there is no reply from that number. Mr. Allenby has asked me to ring you—"

"He's conscious, then?" cut in Carson quickly.

"Yes. His injuries are internal. I'm afraid it is going to be a bad job. If you could come along—"

"I'll come right away!" cried Carson.

"What's the address?"

"No. 57, Middle Park Avenue, Golders Green," replied the doctor.

"Please be as quick as you can!"

Slamming down the receiver, Carson dashed from the box, and, seizing the startled Cribb by the arm, whirled him towards the swing doors.

"Here, what the dickens is the matter with you, you ass?" protested Cribb. "Have you gone batty, or what?"

"It's Cyril!" explained Carson, reaching the pavement and frantically hailing a passing taxi. "He's crashed, and he's in a doctor's surgery, too badly injured to be moved. They can't get in touch with his people, and the doctor wants us to go along."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Cribb, in dismay. "He must be pretty badly smashed up!"

"He's worse than that, from what I can gather," said Carson grimly. He turned to the taxi-driver, who had brought his cab gliding in by the kerb. "No. 57, Middle Park Avenue, Golders Green—and as quick as you can!"

"Here, hold on a minute!" exclaimed Cribb, as, yanking open the door of the cab, Carson plunged inside. "Hadrn't we better leave word where we've gone for Captain Lawless?"

"Yes, Pop in and tell the night porter," assented Carson. "Make it snappy!"

Cribb made it snappy, and within a few moments the pair of them were being whirled through the thinning traffic in the direction of Golders Green.

"Poor old Cyril!" said Cribb commiseratively. "Not, mind you, that he hasn't been asking for something like this! D'you remember the idiotic way he used to rush about on that motor-bike he had at Abbotscourt?"

"Yes," nodded Carson. "I don't know what's happened now, though. I didn't have time to ask any details."

"He's probably crashed into a tram or something," suggested Cribb—"or something's crashed into him!"

He was silent a few moments, then said hesitatingly:

"I say, you're quite sure the call was genuine?"

"What the dickens d'you mean—'genuine'?" snorted Carson.

"Well, you know the skipper's continually warning us to be careful," explained Cribb. "What I mean to say, this might be a gag on the part of these rotten foreigners to get us away from our hotel and grab us."

"Don't talk rot!" snapped Carson. "They couldn't have known we were with Cyril to-night. Dash it all, we only met him in the theatre by accident!"

"Well, we ought to make absolutely sure about it, I think," said Cribb defensively.

"Oh, we'll make sure about it, if that's what you want!" snapped Carson.

He rapped on the window of the cab, and, obeying his gesture, the driver pulled up by the kerb.

"I say," said Carson, poking his head out of the window, "what kind of place is this Middle Park Avenue?"

"Ow d'yer mean, sir?" asked the cabby, staring.

"I mean, is it a respectable sort of place?" said Carson. "A residential part, or what?"

"Oh, 'ighly respectable, sir," replied the cabby promptly, "and residential! Some very wealthy people live there, sir."

"Any doctors?"

"Yessir, there's two or three doctors live in Middle Park Avenue!"

"D'you know a Dr. Williams?"

The cabby shook his head. "I don't know their names, sir," he said. "I've just seen their brass plates,

like, when I've passed in the daytime!"

"Right-ho, drive on!" said Carson. "Number fifty-seven!"

Pulling up the window, he reseated himself as the cab purred on along the street.

"There you are, you see," he said to Cribb. "The trouble with you, my lad, is that you're developing nerves!"

"I'm not!" retorted Cribb, hotly denying the charge. "I'm merely being careful, as the skipper warned us!"

Less than fifteen minutes later, the taxi turned into Middle Park Avenue and, swinging in through the open gates of a drive, came to a halt in front of a large, unlighted house standing in its own grounds.

"There doesn't seem to be anybody here," said Cribb suspiciously, leaning forward in his seat and peering up at the darkened windows. "Are you sure this is the right place? Look out!"

The latter words came in a yell, as, from the near-by bushes, there came a sudden rush of men. The cab door was yanked open, and a powerful hand seized Cribb, jerking him forward. Simultaneously, something descended with crushing force on his skull and, as the black oblivion of unconsciousness engulfed him, he pitched limply forward into the arms of his assailant.

The attack had been launched with such deadly swiftness that there had been no time even to shout an alarm. The driver had attempted to, but a fierce blow had dropped him a huddled heap over his driving wheel.

Carson, thrust back against the cushions in the interior of the cab by powerful hands, struggled desperately. But he was hopelessly outnumbered by the men on top of him, and a crashing blow descended on his head and caused him to lose all further interest in things for the time being.

The Ultimatum!

WHEN Carson and Cribb regained consciousness it was to find themselves lying bound hand and foot in an attic-like room which was furnished with a chair, table and a broken camp-bed on which lay a pile of dirty blankets.

There were two men in the room. One was the furtive-faced and macintoshed little man who had so neatly picked Cyril Allenby's pocket. The other was the tall and saturnine Nikola, head of the enemy espionage system in this country. His long overcoat was unbuttoned, giving a glimpse of immaculate evening dress beneath.

"So?" he said, crossing to where Carson and Cribb were lying. "We have got you at last?"

"I told you it was a fake telephone call, you chump!" croaked Cribb, glaring at Carson.

"The mistake was mine!" admitted Carson handsomely.

"And it is a mistake which is going to cost you very dear," said Nikola harshly, his eyes blazing. "There is a heavy score to be settled—the loss of our Baltic fleet, the disablement of Dr. Narym. You and that fiend, Lawless,

were directly responsible for all that. Well, listen!"

Crossing to a telephone standing on a low shelf, he unhooked the receiver and curtly gave a number.

"Is that you, Poska?" he demanded. "This is Nikola. Yes, we've got the boys. Both of them. Now listen carefully. Go to some public telephone call box and ring Lawless at his hotel. Give him this message word for word as I am about to give it to you!"

He glanced towards the staring Carson and Cribb, then resumed:

"This is the message. Say to Lawless: 'Your two schoolboy assistants are prisoners. They will die on the stroke of twelve to-day unless before that hour you deliver yourself and your flying submarine to us at Borgen Island.' Have you got that? Good! Get the message to him at once. No, you fool, I can't ring him from here. The number would be traced!"

Replacing the receiver, Nikola picked up his gloves from the table and commenced to pull them on.

"Please do not imagine," he said to the helpless Carson and Cribb, "that there is any bluff about that ultimatum. Unless Lawless and his flying submarine are in our hands by midday to-day you will die."

"And if Lawless and his submarine are in your hands?" demanded Carson.

"What then?" Nikola's thin, cruel lips twitched in a mirthless smile.

"You will die, just the same," he said. "I told you, there is a heavy score to be settled. It is after midnight now, and as far as you two boys are concerned, the settlement will take place at noon to-day."

"And do you think Lawless is going to be fool enough to give himself up?" demanded Carson angrily.

"I do not know," smiled Nikola. "All I do know is that if he does not give himself up he will always be haunted by the thought that by failing to do so he sent you two boys to your deaths."

"What about the police?" said Cribb, a trifle unsteadily. "And our own Secret Service? The whole lot of them will be after you within an hour of Captain Lawless receiving your message."

"The police and your Secret Service have been after me for months," returned Nikola coolly, "and have been able to prove just nothing. No, my friend, I cover my tracks well. Nothing can ever be proved against me. I laugh at your Secret Service!"

"One day they'll make you laugh on the wrong side of your face!" snapped Carson.

Nikola ignored the gibe. He glanced at his wrist watch.

"The hour is three a.m.," he said. "You have, therefore, exactly nine hours of life left to you. I trust you will spend them in pondering upon the foolishness of poking one's nose into other people's business. Good-night to you!"

He quitted the room, and was accompanied down a narrow and uncarpeted staircase by the furtive-faced little man.

"Guard them well," warned Nikola, pausing at the foot of the stairs. "If they escape, your own life will be forfeit!"

"They won't escape," the little man assured him huskily. "But who's going to do the killing?"

"I will send Rostov," murmured

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Nikola, buttoning his coat up about his neck. "There is none so skilled with the knife as he!"

The Intruder!

NIKOLA, as he had said, was a man who covered his tracks well. His every move was so carefully planned that no act of espionage could ever be traced to him.

He knew he was suspected, but he knew also that no scrap of evidence could ever be produced against him. He posed as a friend of England, and he had friends in high places who would have been aghast and vastly indignant at the slightest whisper that he was not all he appeared to be.

Reaching his house in Hampstead, where he lived alone with a manservant and cook, Nikola let himself in and mounted to his bed-room, after divesting himself of hat and coat.

He was very tired, for it had been an anxious night. But he was exultant to think that he had laid by the heels at least two of the trio who had wrought such havoc in his and his country's plans.

It had, perhaps, been somewhat indiscreet to appear on the scene himself as he had done. But it had been a temptation which he could not resist, and no harm had come of it.

The curtains of his bed-room windows had been drawn by his manservant before retiring, his sheets had been turned back, and his pyjamas laid out.

Taking off his jacket Nikola crossed to the dressing-table, and humming the latest musical comedy hit, commenced to fumble with the stud of his collar.

Suddenly he tensed, rigid and motionless, standing as though frozen, for the mirror was reflecting not only his own face, but the face of a man standing behind him.

It was Captain Lawless!

Galvanized into action, Nikola whirled, then stiffened again as he found himself covered by a squat and deadly looking automatic in Lawless' hand.

"What—what does this intrusion mean?" he demanded, striving desperately to get a grip on himself.

"I came in answer to your message," drawled Lawless.

"What message?"

"The message to the effect that if I did not give myself and my submarine up at Borgen Island by midday to-day Carson and Cribb would die!"

"I don't know what you're talking about!" snarled Nikola. "Who are you?"

Lawless smiled.

"You know perfectly well who I am," he answered. "Where are Carson and Cribb?"

"If you don't get out of here at once," shouted Nikola, "I'll have you given in charge!"

He raised his voice to a yell:

"Kaspar! Where are you, Kaspar? Kaspar!"

"You may as well save your breath," said Lawless. "We attended to your manservant some time ago."

Cold fear clutched at the heart of Nikola, but nothing showed of it in the fury which blazed in his deep-set eyes.

"We?" he repeated thickly. "We? How many of you are there?"

"Just myself and Jobson, one of my crew," said Lawless. "At the moment he is down in the kitchen with your cook. I do not think she will give us much trouble."

"You'll pay dearly for this tom-



Nikola turned from the mirror to find Captain Lawless covering him with a squat and deadly looking automatic!

foolery!" swore Nikola savagely. "What do you want here, anyway?"

"I've told you," said Lawless calmly. "I want to know the whereabouts of Carson and Cribb!"

"And I tell you I've never heard of Carson and Cribb!" shouted Nikola. "You're either drunk or mad, or you've come to the wrong house."

"I am neither drunk nor mad," returned Lawless evenly. "Neither have I come to the wrong house. Where are Carson and Cribb?"

Nikola looked at the automatic so unwaveringly covering his heart, then raised his eyes again to those of Lawless.

"Will you tell me," he said quietly, "who you really think I am?"

"Certainly," replied Lawless. "You are Serge Nikola, reputed friend of England, but head of a vast espionage service which is plotting her downfall."

Nikola touched his dry lips with the tip of his tongue.

"Yes, I am Serge Nikola," he answered. "But I am no spy. I will be frank with you. I have been suspected before of espionage. It is, I think, because of my foreign blood. But nothing has ever been proved against me, because there is nothing to prove. I am no spy. I am a friend of England!"

"Really?"

The biting word snapped the last remnant of Nikola's self-restraint.

"Yes, really, curse you!" he screamed. "Get out of my house, before I call the police and have you arrested. Get out of my house, you dirty, thieving blackguard!"

Ignoring the gun, Nikola leapt forward, murder blazing in his eyes. But Lawless' fist stopped him in mid-stride, whipping up with the speed and precision of a piston.

The blow took Nikola full on the point, jerking back his head as though

his neck would snap. Then, as Lawless stepped aside, the master spy swayed forward to crash face foremost to the floor.

The Clock Strikes!

"**C**OO lumme, guv'nor, tork abaht a knock-ah!" came the delighted voice of Jobson, the little Cockney seaman, from the doorway. "I ain't seed a better one since the night—"

"Help me to get him downstairs, Bert," cut in Lawless quickly. "It'll save a lot of trouble if we can manage it before he comes round."

"Comes rahnd?" echoed Bert, obediently grabbing the prostrate Nikola by the ankles. "'E won't 'ave come rahnd this side o' next week by the look of 'im. Lumme, wot a wallop!"

"How's the cook?" asked Lawless, as he and Jobson bore the unconscious man from the room and down the wide, thickly carpeted stairway.

"She's orlright!" grinned Bert. "I locked 'er in 'er room, and we won't 'ave no trouble from 'er. She knows more'n she lets on, and she's scared stiff to fling up 'er winder and yell for the police in case she's arrested as a spy along wiv this 'ere cove. Has 'e told you where Mr. Carson and Mr. Cribb is?"

"No, he denies all knowledge of them," replied Lawless grimly. "Come on, in here with him!"

They carried Nikola into the library, and when that individual eventually came round, it was to find himself tied hand and foot and lashed to a chair.

Lawless and Bert were leaning against the table, enjoying a cigarette and a cup of tea. Through the thick

window curtains was creeping the first grey light of dawn.

"Well?" asked Nikola jerkily. "And what now?"

He spoke with difficulty, for his jaw felt as though it had been dislocated.

"Will you tell us where Carson and Cribb are?" reiterated Lawless.

"I tell you I don't know where they are," flared Nikola. "I don't know what you're talking about!"

Lawless straightened up from the table.

"You observe that clock?" he said pleasantly.

Nikola stared at the grandfather clock directly in front of him, and as he did so, his eyes suddenly narrowed. For fixed to the side of the clock was a heavy automatic, its blue-black barrel pointing straight at his head.

From the trigger of the gun trailed a loose length of string.

"What's the idea?" demanded Nikola hoarsely.

"The idea," replied Lawless evenly, "is very simple. According to the message I received, Carson and Cribb are to die at midday. You will also die!"

Nikola's face was livid with fear.

"After the clock has struck eleven," continued Lawless, "I will attach that trigger string to the striker. As the striker rises preparatory to striking the first stroke of twelve, it will pull the trigger. The gun will go off, and the bullet will enter your head right between the eyes. The other five bullets in the chamber will be discharged in a like manner. That will not interest you, however. You will already be dead!"

"You—you infernal scoundrel!" choked Nikola.

"If before the fateful hour of twelve," went on Lawless unheeding, "you decide to tell me where Carson and Cribb are to be found, your life will be spared."

"I tell you, I know nothing about anyone called Carson or Cribb!" snarled Nikola. "You'll hang for murder if that gun goes off!"

His voice rose, shrill and hysterical.

"Why, you fool, how do you think you can get away with this? My manservant—"

"Is lying upstairs gagged and bound!"

"I am expected at the office—"

"I shall telephone to say you are engaged on important business at home here!"

"But people will be coming to the door. Tradesmen will be calling—"

"Jobson will attend to all callers. He will be your new manservant!"

Beaten, Nikola subsided in his chair. Then suddenly he commenced to writhe

frenziedly in his bonds, oaths and curses pouring from his lips.

"Shall I gag 'im, sir?" asked Jobson.

"Yes," nodded Lawless.

When Jobson had gagged the frantic man, Lawless went on:

"I am leaving the curtains drawn across the window, Nikola. No help can come to you from outside. I will come and see you every half-hour. You have until midday to tell me where Carson and Cribb are!"

He quitted the room with Jobson, closing the door, and leaving the master-spy to watch the minutes of life which remained to him ticking remorselessly away.

Minutes?

No, hours, Nikola told himself. It was a quarter past five. Six and three-quarter hours till midday. Four hundred and five minutes.

A lot could happen in that time. Something was bound to happen. But how hushed and still the house was! Like a house of the dead.

How the devil had this cursed Lawless got on to him, Nikola wondered. Was he bluffing? Yes, of course he was bluffing. If he wasn't, why hadn't he denounced him to the police and had him arrested?

Lawless was bluffing!

The thought of his failure to bring the police into this, convinced Nikola of it. And Nikola was right. In the kitchen, his face strangely drawn and haggard, Lawless was standing watching Jobson frying bacon.

"I'm certain he's the ringleader, Bert," he said. "As certain as the Secret Service are that he's the head of these foreign spies. But if I've made a mistake—"

He broke off. If he had made a mistake, then the consequences would be appalling.

"You're going through with it, sir?" asked Jobson quickly.

Lawless squared his shoulders.

"Yes," he answered grimly.

Slowly the morning dragged by. Helpless in his bonds, Nikola sat and watched the sands of life running out to the ponderous tick-tock of the stately old clock.

Was Captain Lawless really bluffing? He looked so sure of himself, so self-possessed. But at every half-hourly questioning, when his gag was removed, Nikola snarlingly denied all knowledge of Carson and Cribb.

At long length the clock struck eleven. Fascinated, Nikola watched Lawless attach the trigger-string to the striker. The clock did not strike the half-hours. When next it struck it would sound the death knell of Serge Nikola.

At half-past eleven his gag was removed again.

"For the last time," he screamed. "I tell you I know nothing of your cursed Carson and Cribb!"

Lawless replaced the gag. Then, quitting the room, he left Nikola to spend his last thirty minutes of life alone.

Thirty minutes—twenty minutes—ten minutes— Five minutes to twelve!

Horror was dawning in Nikola's eyes. He glared at the menacing blue-black barrel. If he jerked his head aside would the bullet miss? No, for there were six of them.

By a dreadful effort Nikola tore his gaze away. He looked again towards the door, and saw Lawless standing there, silent and immobile.

Nikola's nerve broke. Frantically he jerked his head, beckoning dumbly and frenziedly.

Springing towards him, Lawless whipped the gag away.

"I know where they are!" shrieked Nikola. "Stop that clock—the telephone—quick!"

"The clock goes on!" rapped Lawless, thrusting the telephone into Nikola's hand. "It is up to you!"

Sobbingly, babblingly, Nikola mouthed a number into the receiver. It wanted but one minute to twelve. Would he get through?

"Oh, please—please hurry!" he croaked. "It is life and death!"

Maybe the operator at the exchange sensed that there was stark drama on the wire. Anyway, she did her best.

"Is that you, Rostov?" gasped Nikola. "Have you? No? Thank Heaven! Turn them loose! D'you hear? They're to go free—turn them loose—"

Bang!

With a scream, Nikola dropped the telephone. But the bullet had embedded itself in the floor as Lawless knocked down the muzzle with the flat of his hand. Before the clock could strike again Lawless snapped the string attached to the trigger.

Nikola slept that night in a cell in London. Carson, Cribb, and Lawless, however, dined quietly together at their hotel.

"Will they shoot him?" demanded Carson.

"No," replied Lawless. "We are not at war yet. He will probably serve a term of imprisonment and then be deported!"

"And jolly good riddance!" said Cribb.

(Another great triumph for Captain Lawless! In next week's super-thrilling story you will read how he and his two young assistants score yet another smashing victory over the enemy Power which seeks to make war against Britain!)



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**TOM BROWN on—
THE REMOVE'S
GORILLA RECRUIT**

We expect to see new faces in the Remove after the summer vac, but none of us expected to see the kind of new face that showed itself round the Form room door on the first day of the new term. The face, dear reader, believe it or not, was that of a gorilla! To add to the shock, the body that followed the face, though dressed in a lounge suit, was also that of a gorilla. In fact, it WAS a gorilla!

We gazed at it, open-mouthed. Mr. Quelch stood up then collapsed into his chair again, completely overcome!

The gorilla had a good look round the class, then waddled cheerfully across to an empty desk and sat down. There was a sort of petrified silence. Mr. Quelch, after licking his dry lips, managed to murmur: "Wharton! Do you know anything about this?"

Wharton didn't. Mr. Quelch made a move for the door to see if any explanation was to be found outside.

The Remove's new recruit seemed to object to that move. He grabbed a weighty volume and sent it whizzing across at Mr. Quelch's head. Mr. Quelch, with a gasp, fell back and decided to postpone looking out of the Form-room.

The next twenty minutes was just about as tense a time as I've ever seen in the Remove Form-room. One after the other, we tried to get out of the room to give the alarm; but the gorilla saw to it that not one of us got out. He was a most amiable lad all the time we kept quiet. The cheerful way in which he tore up school books, threw chalk about, and splashed ink all over the floor captured our hearts completely. But whenever any of us made a move for the door, a man-eating tiger had nothing on him for ferocity!

Eventually Smithy managed to climb out of one of the windows, and our troubles were soon over then. It turned out that the gorilla had escaped from a travelling menagerie and had climbed up to one of the dormitories and donned the first suit of clothes it found. Keepers from the menagerie were scouting round the quad, looking for the gorilla, and it wasn't long before they captured it.

The most screamingly funny thing about the incident is that the Head looked in through the doorway in the middle of the gorilla's visit and didn't even notice anything unusual.

He said afterwards that he thought the gorilla was Bolsover Major!

**FIFTH FORM FELLOWS
ARE FUNNY FREAKS
Declares DICK RUSSELL**

Early in the new term, I went along to the Fifth Form to see Fitzgerald about a book on footer he promised to lend me. The first thing I noticed was that the Fifth Form passage was as silent as a giddy tomb.

A study door opened and Bland came out. He was walking on tip-toe. When he saw me he frowned and put his finger to his lips. Soon after, Potter came slithering along, wearing rubber shoes and holding his hand to his mouth, as though he didn't want anyone to hear him breathing!

I got to Fitzgerald's study and barged in. Fitz rose from an armchair, wearing a look of utter horror on his face.

"Quiet, you young ass!" he whispered, hoarsely. "What do you want?"

"Your footer book," I said. "And also I want to know what this Silence Zone bizny means!"

(Continued at foot of extreme right-hand column.)



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**GREYFRIARS WON'T
HAVE BILL STICKERS**

By BOB CHERRY

Are we to allow Bill Stickers at Greyfriars, lads? NO! Let's make up our minds that, whatever happens, Bill Stickers will never be tolerated at this old school of ours! Let it be clearly understood that every appearance of Bill Stickers at Greyfriars will be followed by a prosecution with the utmost rigour of the law!

What's that? Who is Bill Stickers? Ha, ha! Pardon my mirth, but you got the wrong end of the stick about Bill Stickers! Bill Stickers is in the plural, not the singular! Bill Stickers are (NOT "is") the chaps who have been sticking bills on the walls, trees and lamp-posts of Greyfriars!

It was early in the new term that Mr. Prout was found in a dead faint under a tree in the quad, and we woke up to the Bill Sticking menace. Prouty had spotted an advertisement for the Courtfield Cinema stuck on the trunk of the tree, and the shock had been too great for him!

That was only the first of a series of shocks. Within a couple of hours, an advertisement for the Courtfield Boxing Ring was found posted on the wall of the gym, and another for Uncle Clegg's Friardale Bunshop on one of the balusters of the School House steps. After that, bills began to appear as if by magic all over the place.

Nobody had the foggiest idea who was at the bottom of it, and Spotting Bill Stickers became quite a craze.

But the secret is out now. Coker, of the Fifth, went to the trouble of disguising himself as a petrol pump outside the Head's garage, and had the satisfaction of nabbing a couple of fags in the very act of sticking an ad. for Chunkley's model yachts on him.

The culprits were Gatty and Bolsover Minor. They tearfully admitted that they were getting free seats for shows and a model yacht out of the deal.

Coker, with that public spirit for which he is noted, agreed to buy them a model yacht and seats at the Courtfield cinema if they stopped it—and Bill Sticking came to a sudden end so far as Gatty and Bolsover minor were concerned.

The obvious danger now is that the rest of the fags will be sticking bills all over the place, in the hope of earning the same reward! That's why I say: Rise in your wrath, boys, and, at all costs, keep Bill Stickers out of Greyfriars!

(Continued from foot of column one.)

"Here's the footer book," breathed Fitzgerald. "This hush-hush business—that's Blundell, you know. He's been to an Anti-Noise meeting during the vac and it turned him into an Anti-Noise fan. He wants to make the Fifth passage a Temple of Silence—a temple free from the nerve-shattering din of modern life, so he says. We're backing him up, of course; Blundell's a great man, and you have to allow great men a little rope when they want it!

So the Fifth weren't quite so potty as I'd imagined 'em to be, you see. Still, they're a funny lot of freaks. On the following morning, I passed through the Fifth passage again and the most fiendish din was going on. Fellows were clumping along like navvies, conversation was being carried on in the studies by means of deafening yells, and crockery and tin cans were crashing all over the place!

On inquiry, I found that Blundell had changed his mind about noise. He'd been reading a pamphlet by a learned professor who maintained that noise was essential to good health—and promptly turned right about face on the noise question!

'NEATH THE TIRANT'S HEEL!



*Another smashing instalment
of Dicky Nugent's weird and
wonderful serial:
"Dr. Birchermall's Prottegy!"*

"Where's Birchermall?"

It was Mr. Lickham, of St. Sam's, who asked that question—in a voice that rang out across the Fourth Form room like a pistol-shot. As he spoke, Mr. Lickham glanced at the empty desk of Bert Birchermall, the Head's nephew.

Tubby Barrell rolled to his feet.

"Please, sir," he said. "Bert Birchermall told me to tell you he'd be late for class this morning. He said he was too bizzy to bother about it just now!"

"TOO BIZZY?"

Mr. Lickham fairly shrieked out the words. A spasm of fury seemed to grip him. His eyes almost bolted out of their sockets, while a grate noddid vein stood out on his forehead.

"Why, I'll spifficate him!" he cried. "If he thinks he can do as he likes in the Fourth just because his uncle happens to be headmaster, he's made a jolly big mistake! Barrell! Go and fetch Bert Birchermall at once!"

"Someone want me?" drawled out an insistent voice, as Mr. Lickham finished speaking.

Every head turned round towards the doorway from which the voice had come. It was Bert Birchermall himself, and Jack Jolly & Co. notissed with a start of surprize that he was carrying the birchrod his uncle had given him the nite before, when he became kaptein of the Fourth.

Mr. Lickham grabbed his cane.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Bob Cherry plays at right-half-back for the Remove XI, and opposing winners dread being pitted against him. Bob tackles with deadly accuracy, and "hangs on" to his man with the tenacity of a terrier. No "half" measures about Bob's play! He "backs up" nobly.



Sammy Bunter enjoyed a trip round the Zoo in London during the vac, and saw the tarantula spiders, which he wanted to bring back and put in Mr. Twigg's desk. He did once put some spiders in Mr. Twigg's desk, but was seen doing it. Sammy was caught in a "spider's web"!



Skinner startled the Remove by turning out for footer practice, and throwing himself heart and soul into the game. He netted once—but when later things didn't go right for him, he showed his temper by hacking Johnny Bull! Skinner was "put out" in more senses than one!



William Gosling, the school porter, claims he puts in a fifteen-hour-day, up at six every morning, and locking up at nine p.m. He does not refer to the fact that he doesn't overwork in between—but Gosling is fond of a "nip" and a snooze after meals. Gossy g(r)ins and bears it!



Harry Wharton has already shown great form at football, and his marksmanship will be a big asset to the Remove forward line! At centre-forward Wharton hits the ball "in the middle" every time. He rarely misses a chance—though his shots usually miss the goalkeeper!



When Friars paraded in gas masks for experimental air raid drill, the spectacle of Billy Bunter in a gas mask redreived Removites to hysterics. Skinner said air raids had "the virtue" though Bunter looked more like a fat frog than ever, the mask kept his tongue from wagging!

"Birchemall!" he roared. "Come here and hold out your hand!" Bert Birchermall did nothing of the kind! Instead he calmly poked out his tung at the petrified Form-master! "Birchemall!" hooted Mr. Lickham. "I'll slawter you! I'll—" "Chuck it, Lickham!" chimed in the Head's newfow. "You don't seem to know who you're talking to, old sport! Haven't you heard that I'm the new kaptein of the Fourth?" "I have—and I also heard that you were elected by means of a raskally trick!" thundered Mr. Lickham. "But whatever you are makes no difference to me!" "Oh yes, it does!" "Because why?" "Because my dear uncle has given orders that, as kaptein of the Fourth, I am to do just eggssactly as I please!" leered Bert Birchermall. "I'm going to be dictator here now. Everybody takes orders from me and I take orders from nobody, See?"

"No, I'm blowed if I see!" shouted Mr. Lickham furiously. "Come here and hold out your hand!" "Shan't!" "Then I'll jolly well make you!"

Mr. Lickham made a rush at the new Form kaptein. About two ticks later, he had the surprize of his natcheral. It hadn't occurred to him that Dr. Birchermall's newfow would defend himself with his uncle's birch. But that was eggssactly what he did do! The deadly weppon wissled through the air and hit the master of the Fourth fairly and squarely on his mortar-board.

Wallop! "Yarooo!" Mr. Lickham buckled up completely, slid a cupple of yards, and then sat down with a bang on the hard, unsimperthetick floor of the Form-room.

That bump aroused the blud of Mr. Lickham with a vengenz! He jumped to his feet in a jiffy and fairly flung himself at Bert Birchermall. Another instant and the Form-room was filled with the clash of birchrod against cane as master and pewpil fought a furious duel!

Bang! Crash! Wallop! Thud! "Wooooop! Ow! Yooooop!" "Stoppit, you rotter! Yarooo!" Jack Jolly & Co., whose simperthies were

all with Mr. Lickham, stood up and cheered lustily as they saw their Form-master driving the cadd of the Fourth before him.

"Go it, Mr. Lickham!" "Give him one on the boko, sir!"

Bad luck soon befell the master of the Fourth, however. Before Mr. Lickham could give his opponent the *coop de grace*, he tripped over the waste-paper basket and fell to the floor. And it wasn't long before Bert Birchermall took advantage of it, either. In a brace of shakes, that mean, sneaking, cowardly cadd was jumping up and down on Mr. Lickham's prostrate body in a way that would have done credit to any Russian klassical dancer!

Jack Jolly jumped up with a gleem in his eye.

"Leave Lickham alone, you cadd!" he cried, in a wringing voice. "I'll wring your neck if you don't!"

"Ratts!" yelled back the Head's newfow, jumping harder than ever.

Jack Jolly went from words to deeds. He made a rush at the new skipper of the Fourth—and most of the Fourth rushed with him.



Before Bert Birchermall had a chance to do any more of his jumping stunts, a duzen pairs of hands grabbed him and wisked him, off his feet. An instant later, he was being bumped with such vigger that half the other Forms rushed out into the quad, thinking an earthquake had started!

Bang! Boom! Crash! Thud! Bang! "Wooooop! Yooooop! Reskew! Help me, Unkle Alf!" yelled Bert Birchermall.

Help was at hand. The clumping of heavy, hob-nailed boots was heard outside the Form-room. A mitey kick sent the door flying open.

"BOYS!" "Oh, crums! It's the Head!"

"Boys!" cried the Head, in a grinding voice. "What's happening here?"

"Well, it's like this, sir—" "Silence!" roared Dr. Birchermall. "How dare you back-answer me, you disperpint yung welps? I don't need to be told what's wrong. I can see for myself!"

"I can tell you, sir," groaned Mr. Lickham. "These boys were saving me from a savvidge assault by your newfow—that's what it was!"

"Lickham! Lickham! How dare you stand there and tell me such a barefaced whopper?" cried the Head, tugging fiercely at his beard. "You must be in the plot yourself!" "Plot, sir?" "The plot against my newfow! Oh, it's no good you shaking your head, Lickham! I know there's a plot! The truth is that my newfow is too good for the Fourth—too jentle and noble and kind-harted! The Fourth are jellus of him—hence the plot to nock him about as much as possible! That's true, isn't it, my dear newfow?"

"Yes, rather, dear unkle!" wined Bert Birchermall.

"But, sir—" gasped Mr. Lickham.

"But me no 'buts,' Lickham! I can deal with this matter without you butting in—and I'm going to deal with it, too! Boys, when my newfow became kaptein of the Fourth, I told you I wanted him to be a dictator, ruling with a rod of iron, didn't I?"

"Ye-es, sir!"

"Well, from now on, I'm going to see that he is!" snorted the Head. "Martial law shall rain in the Fourth—with my newfow in sole charge! Do you all savvy?" "W-w-we savvy, sir!"

"Good! Now, to impress on you that you are under the heel of a dictator," cried the Head, "I order you all to get down on your neeze and flatten your faces against the floor! My newfow will then walk round over your necks—and by the time he finishes, I hoap you'll all realise what's what!"

Jack Jolly & Co. were too nervous of the Head's birch to think of disobeying, and a minnit later, Bert Birchermall, with an evil grin, was walking on the necks of the juniors! The Fourth were seething with revolt, as he went off with his unkle. They were 'neath the tirant's heel with a vengenz, now—but they didn't intend to remain under it long, if they could help it!

(Don't miss the "eggssiting" developments in next week's instalment of "Dr. Birchermall's Prottegy"!)

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!